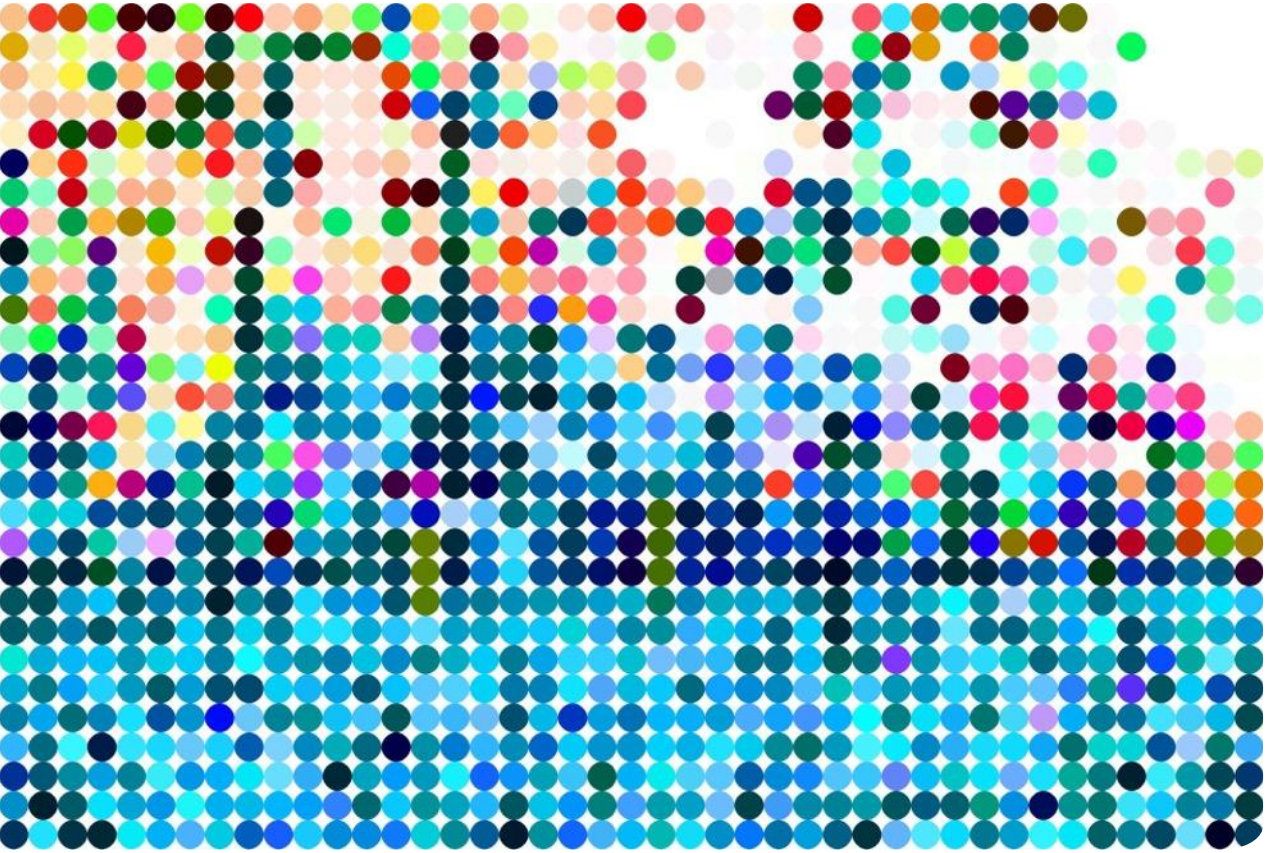
SWISS–BULGARIAN
Cooperation Programme



Digital Civil Society: SWISS Tools & Practices

Jordanka Tomkova, PhD
INNOVABRIDGE Foundation

Sofia, 17 June 2025

FRAMING OUR DISCUSSION

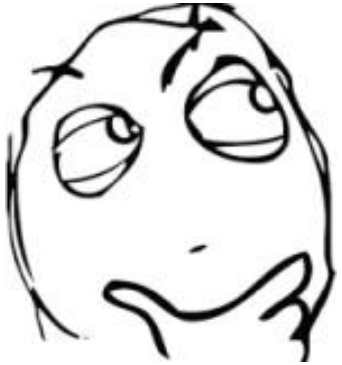
How **Swiss Civil Society** uses new technologies in :

- Advocacy & Representation
- Social Accountability & Service Provision
- Collective Action & Reach
- Community Building & Social Cohesion
- Social Innovation & Social Change
- Education, Awareness Raising & Engagement
- Protection of Rights & Freedoms

QUICK FACTS

- 100 000+ registered CSOs in Switzerland – highly localised in 26 cantons & municipalities
- Sports associations (30%), churches (20%), specific interest groups (20%), cultural organisations & social organisations (13%), political parties and functions (11%), youth organisations (7%).
- Approx.1.8 million volunteers (22% of population), 80% of voluntary commitment takes place at the local level
- In 2023, Switzerland was among the highest OECD-DAC contributors who committed (27.3%) its bilateral foreign development assistance to flow through CSOs

INCORPORATING DIGITAL … is it worth IT?



- **A Reality** – new hybrid & fluid forms of civic activism/ online-offline
- Enable CSOs **to solve** social & environmental challenges
- Help CSOs to **work more efficiently** & effectively
- Offer **innovative ways of engaging** constituencies & targeted stakeholders
- Increase overall potential to **amplify CSOs` impact**
- **Risk & harm mitigation** – civil society as important watchdogs

THE DIGITAL MENU

SIMPLE → COMPLEX

STARTERS

- Outreach (SNS, newsletters)
- Polling, surveys
- Hashtag activism
- M-Apps
- PM tools
- Donate Now!

CLASSICS

- Platforms
- Crowdfunding
- Tech assisted Participatory Budgeting
- E-Learning
- E-petitions
- E-campaigning

SPECIALS

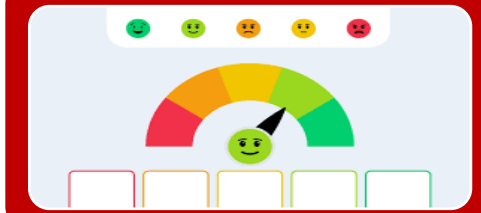
- Social Innovation
- Collaborations
- Multi-Tool Blending
- Blockchain for Transparency
- Digital Twins
- AI analytics

AMPLIFYING efforts to promote, grow an inclusive & vibrant democracy.

WHAT WE`LL DO...

IMPACTFUL USE OF DIGITAL TECH BY SWISS CSOs

- Classic Blended Functions
- New, Innovative Digital Functions



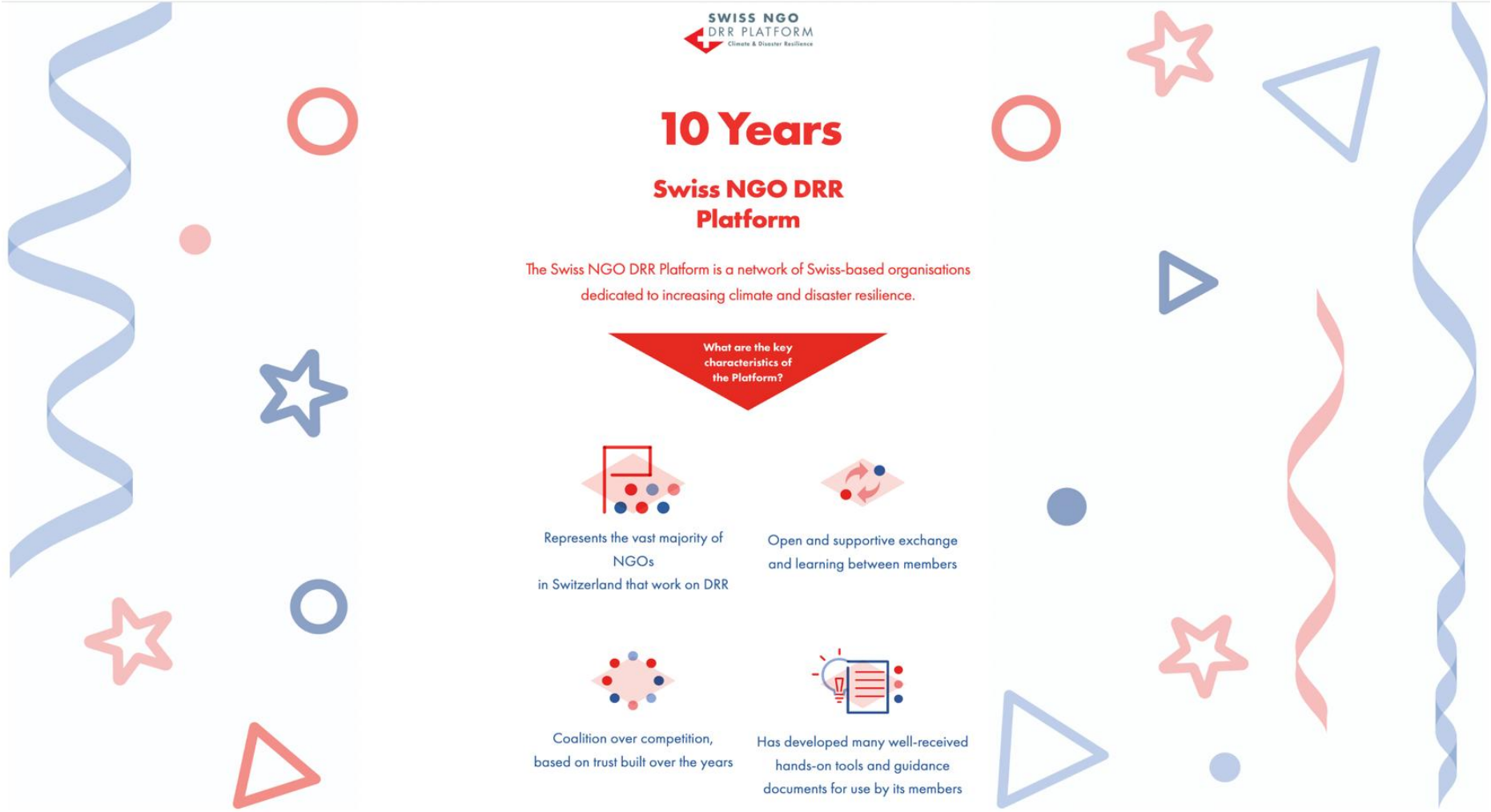
QUICK ASSESSMENT: How digital are your organisations?

INTERACTIVE DISCUSSION: Your experience & `Digital` Needs

SWISS EXAMPLES

COLLECTIVE ACTION

Disaster Risk Reduction: Issue Based Collaborative Platform Built Over Time



Est. in 2011

Learning & exchange

Conceptual support

Advocacy & policy dialogue

The Platform now has 17 members

HELVETAS
MEDAIR
SOLIDAR SUISSE – FIGHTING FOR GLOBAL FAIRNESS
CARITAS Schweiz Suisse Svizzera Svizra
HEKS EPER
Terre des hommes – Helping children worldwide.
Swiss Red Cross
Save the Children
World Vision – SCHWEIZ · SUISSE · SVIZZERA
cbm
BREAD FOR ALL
ADRA
zoï – environment network
tearfund.ch – Hinsehen. Handeln.
INNOVABRIDGE
PLAN INTERNATIONAL
GLOBAL RISK FORUM GRF DAVOS – GRF

The Platform launches the DRR and CCA Indicator Toolbox

See Toolbox

What are evidence-based indicators to measure impact of DRR and CCA projects? What benchmarking options allow a more in-depth learning and sharing among Platform member organisations? These were the questions leading to the development of the DRR and CCA Indicator Toolbox. The toolbox contains an excel-based set of 12 outcomes and 70 related indicators that are formulated in a generic way, and guidelines providing step-by-step guidance. For each outcome, at least one standard indicator is proposed which comprises additional guidance for data collection and analysis.The toolbox can be used online and offline.

Main findings

Increased capacities at institutional and individual staff level

Contributed to the Swiss engagement in international DRR processes

Stronger commitment of members towards DRR and CCA

Recommendations

Stronger focus on the field and stronger focus on joint approach and action

SWISS NGO DRR PLATFORM – Climate & Disaster Resilience

Annual topic: Urban Resilience

CIVIC/ POLITICAL EDUCATION

POLITOOLS

SMART VOTE

Voter advice applications

HOW SMARTVOTE WORKS

1. Candidates & Parties

Candidates & parties answer questions on a wide range of current policy issues.

2. Voters

Voters answer the same questions on the smartvote website.

3. Matching

Voters receive a ranked list of candidates & parties that best match their political profile.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO DEMOCRATIZATION & CIVIC EDUCATION

Voter Mobilization & Engagement

smartvote has been shown to increase political participation and voter turnout, and encourage citizens' interest and engagement in politics.
=> Source

Issue-Based Discourse

smartvote promotes an issue-based discourse by focusing on differences in policy positions, not ideology or character.
=> Source

Candidate Transparency

smartvote allows voter's to learn about candidates' positions on a wide range of important policy issues, therefore building a more informed and engaged electorate.
=> Source

https://smartvote.org/

Community Building & Social Cohesion

CROSSIETY

INNOVABRIDGE

crossiety

OVERVIEW FUNCTIONS REFERENCES CROSSIETY FOR MAGAZINE LOGIN

The Digital Village Square

The resident app for your community, city and region

authorities

Resident

Schools

Clubs

Business

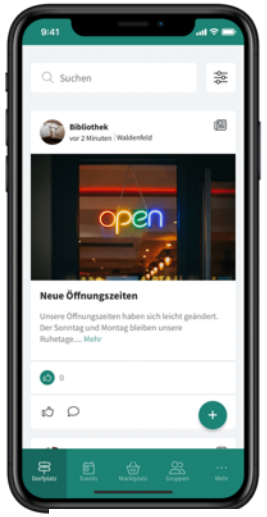
Communities

CONTACT US NOW

www.crossiety.ch

Overview of Crossiety features

- news
- Groups
- Defect reporter
- Events
- Marketplace
- Help
- Waste calendar
- Chat
- Interfaces
- Discussions
- directory
- Notifications
- Surveys
- Helper list
- Find an appointment
- Much more



Village square

- Inform and be informed
- Contributions from individuals and groups
- Interface to the administration website possible

- news
- Surveys
- Events
- Discussions

DO IT YOURSELF | STORIES | CROSSIETY | TIPS & TRICKS

Sharing instead of throwing away – How the Crossiety marketplace strengthens the circular economy in communities

The digital marketplace on Crossiety is booming: Every year, tens of thousands of items are given away,

Share your news with the people it really affects

Do you, as an individual or community, have important news and want to share it with the local community? Or do you need to inform the members of your community about an important decision? With the news card, you can...

6 prerequisites for a successful Crossiety group

This is how you unlock the full potential of your Crossiety group. With a Crossiety group, you can reach your members in the forum easily and efficiently. Now it's up to you to make the most of this opportunity and build your community with a structured and...

SOCIAL & DATA DRIVEN INNOVATION

OPEN DATA.CH & SWISS DEMOCRACY FOUNDATION

OPEN DATA.ch

Develops open data technologies 4 Public Good to improve people's daily lives based on key principles:

Open: technology should not be developed in secret, providing open access to process (source code), standards & outcome.

Collaborative: reviews processes to ensure that only high quality inputs make it into the software.

Interdisciplinary: Software developers + designers, thematic experts or media specialists jointly make the best solutions.

Human-centered instead of profit-oriented: Tech serving people – e.g. personal data, human-centric design.

Socially relevant challenges: Technology is not an end in itself, focus should be on challenges to improve people`s lives.

Sustainable: reused & developed further to save resources, time.

Partners with the the Federal Statistical Office to strengthen usage of Open Government Data in Switzerland.

Hackathons

We bring together interdisciplinary teams to work on innovative, (open) data-driven solutions in a wide range of sectors.

Advocating Openness and the Public Interest

We advocate for a legal and political framework enabling the efficient provision, governance and use of (open) data in the public interest.

Open Parl Data

We are collaboratively building an open standard and API for harmonized Swiss parliamentary data to promote transparency, innovation and participation in Swiss politics.

Energy Data Innovation Hub

We promote open and sustainable innovation in the energy sector through digital transformation and data usage.

OpenGLAM Working Group

A working group that promotes the adoption of the OpenGLAM Principles in Switzerland.

Prototype Fund

More inclusion, sustainability and participation: We enable innovative open source projects that strengthen the public good in Switzerland.

Data Café

An awareness campaign to promote understanding of the value of data and help people to understand, protect and use data.

Prototype
Fund.ch

Gallery

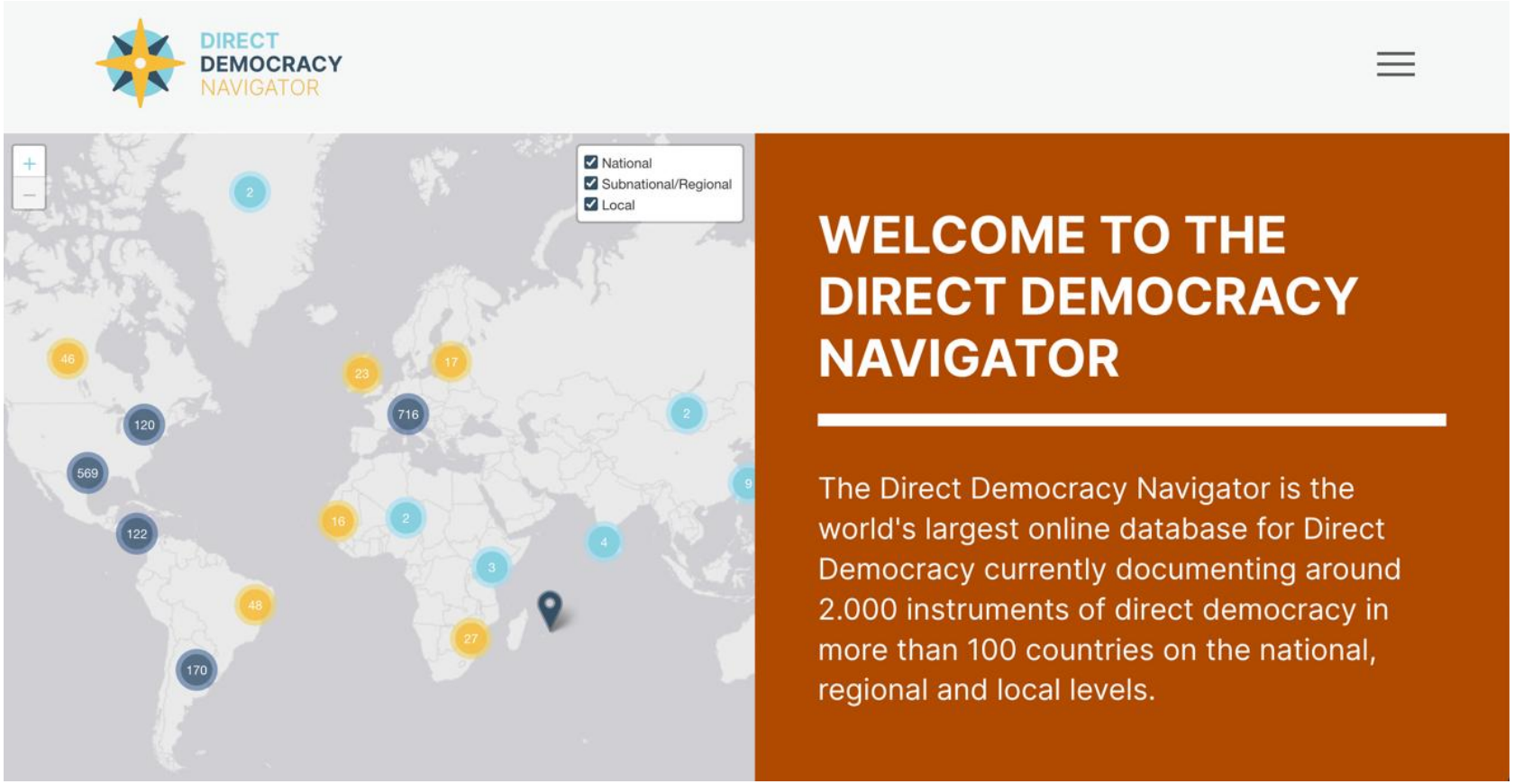
ABOUT ↓ BLOG APPLICATION ↓ PROJECTS DE/FR/EN

We Fund More Sustainable Tech Projects.

More sustainability, inclusion, and participation: Since 2020, we have been strengthening the common good in Switzerland with open-source projects. This funding round focuses on projects that reduce Switzerland's ecological footprint through or with digital technology.

- Climate Gains →
- Crossroads →
- Demokratis →
- ExoDAO →
- Bootis →

Evidence Based Advocacy: Research & Data Visualisation

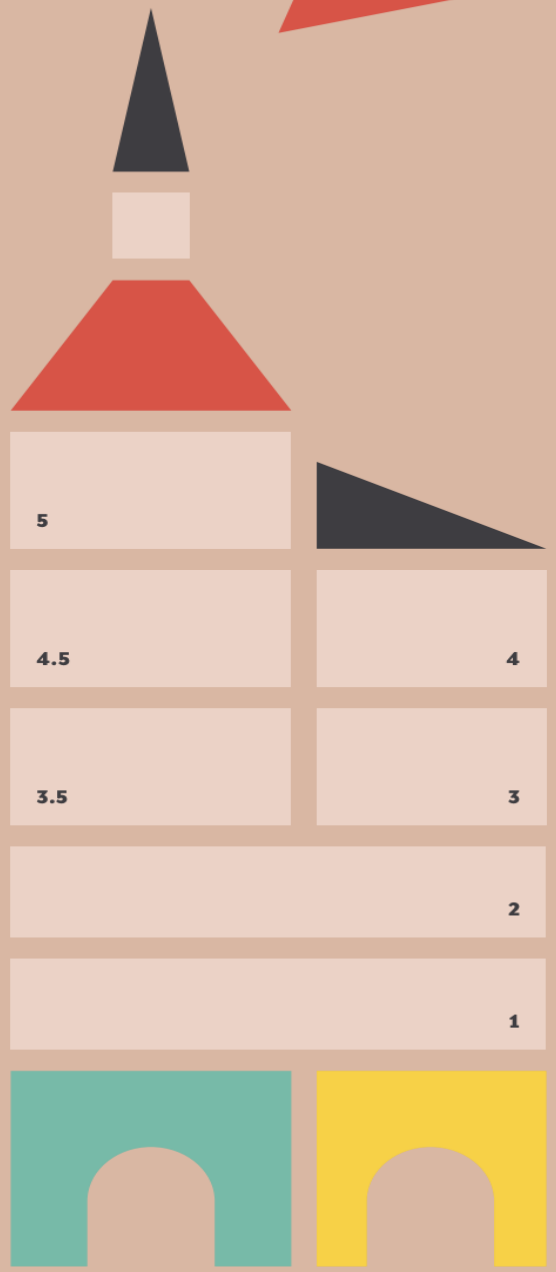


https://direct-democracy-navigator.org/

Swiss Democracy Foundation

World's largest online database documenting 2.000+ instruments of direct democracy in more than 100 countries on the national, regional & local levels.

DEMOCRACY TOWER IN BERNE



5 SOUNDS OF DEMOCRACY
As the tower's giant clock dating from 1694 ticks in the background, visitors can listen to a sound collage and short speeches on the future of democracy.

4.5 EXPERIENCES
People from different backgrounds and experiences talk about their approach to democracy.

3.5 IN THE NEWS
Temporary exhibitions and documentations on the latest democracy-related issues.

2 CONFERENCES
The event room can be hired for political events free of charge.

4 PODIUM
The home of topical debate and discussion.

3 DEMOCRACY BAR
The ideal spot for informal, relaxed chats about democracy over a glass of wine or a glass of water. You will find the current bar programme on our website. The bar also features democracy-related objects and artefacts.

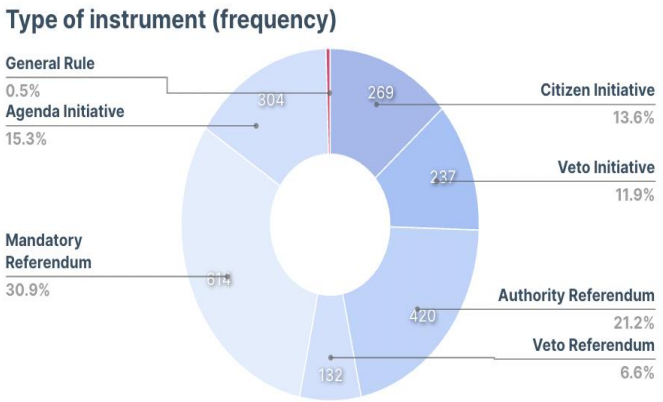
1 INFO + ATELIER
The Atelier is used by young people for assorted civic education activities: debating classes, discussions, democracy games, etc.

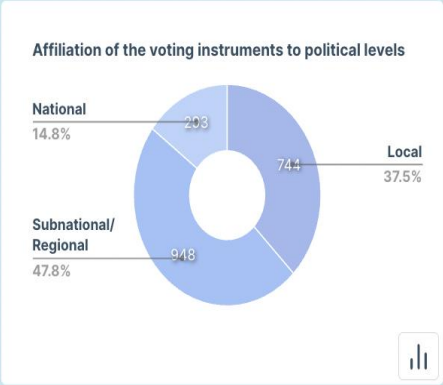
DIRECT DEMOCRACY NAVIGATOR

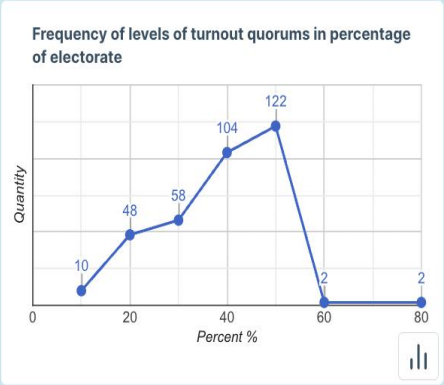
LEGAL DESIGN FILTER

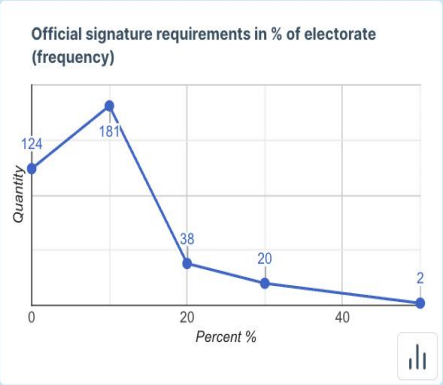
The Direct Democracy Navigator legal design filter offers you the possibility to browse through our dataset. Choose from the different criteria below to display specific cases and to design your own diagrams.

When publishing work using the Direct Democracy Navigator Dataset please reference accordingly: Direct Democracy Navigator Dataset, https://direct-democracy-navigator.org/, accessed on (date).









Swiss Democracy Foundation

https://www.swissdemocracy.foundation/index.php/home/projects/publications

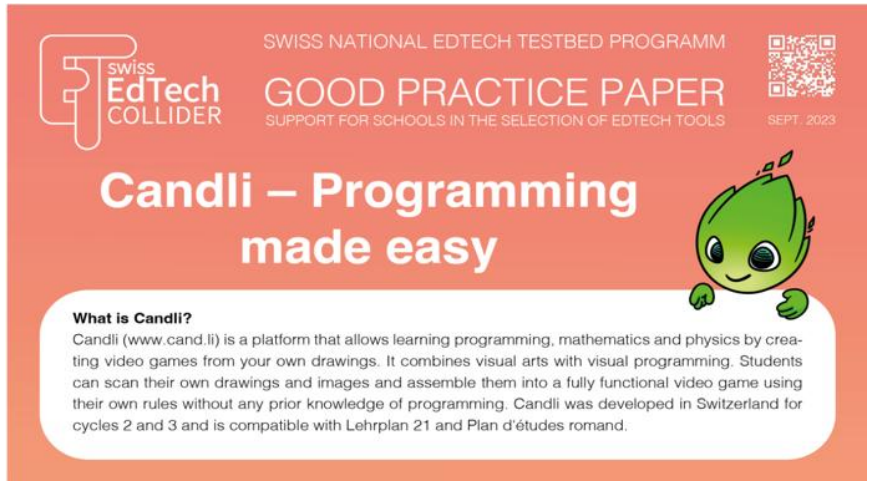
NEW FORMS OF SERVICE PROVISION

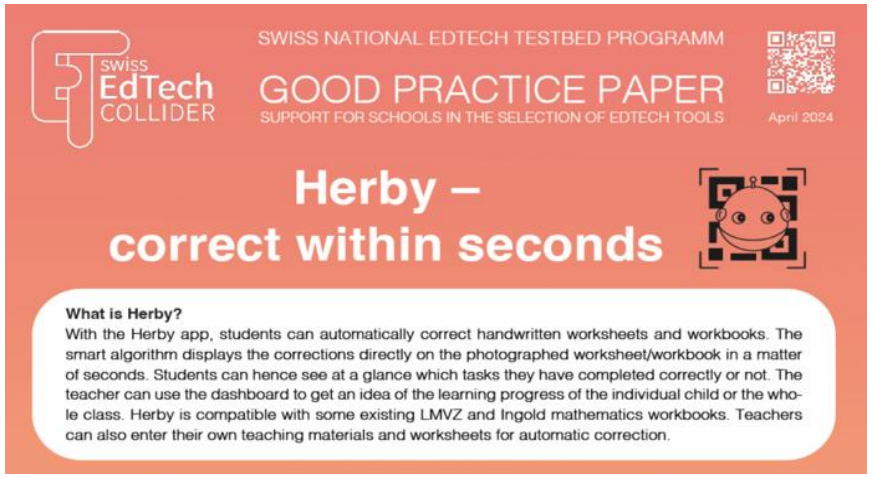
SWISS EDTECH COLLIDER

SUPPORT to EDUCATION SECTOR - AI INTEGRATION

Swiss National EdTech Testbed program - est. In 2017

EPFL Innovation Park & EPFL's Center for Learning Sciences, Lausanne





AI 4 CSOs` INTERNAL EFFICIENCY

Speed up task management – speech to text transcriptions, policy paper/legislation summaries, survey analytics

AI-tailored fundraising campaigns, personalisation sending right message to the right person at the right time → to higher engagement & donation rates.

AI-driven impact analytics - analysing data from various sources to track progress, identify trends, and predict outcomes.

Satellite & Visual imagery – Environmental monitoring, data processing

LESSONS LEARNED

FIT-FOR-PURPOSE

SOLVES REAL-LIFE PROBLEMS.
NOT TECH 4 TECH ONLY

ONLINE-OFFLINE BLENDING

DESIGN MATTERS

HUMAN CENTRIC, TRUST-BASED, ETHICAL, OPEN SOURCE

SUSTAINABILITY

INCLUSIVE, INSTITUTIONALLY INTEGRATED (BUDGET, STAFF ETC.)

STAY AHEAD OF THE CURVE –

ADAPTIVE DIGITAL LITERACY

RESOURCES

Policy Papers & Initiatives

- European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles for the Digital Decade 2023/C 23/01
- OEDC (2023) Policy Paper Series Digital transformation and the futures of civic space to 2030
- CSOs Engagement on EU Digital Services Act
- Role of civil society in AI governance

Civil Society Digital Toolkits

- World Bank (2025) Digital Citizen Engagement (CE) Catalog: A Global Toolkit for Participatory Governance – 75 tools + Country Examples
- **IDEA`s KoBoToolBox** – Solutions for Internal Organisational Management of CSOs
- CIVICUS – Citizen Generated Data Toolkit

INTERACTIVE DISCUSSION

Good examples and/ or any key lessons learned from Bulgaria ?

Your key future digital needs & interests ?