



evoice: rationale

Interest in politics in the North Sea Region has dwindled to such an extent over recent decades that the legitimacy of our elected leaders is being brought into question. Figures show that:

- fewer people are using their right to vote;
- membership of political parties has plummeted, and
- the choice of political representatives is narrowing as fewer people put themselves forward for election.

If these trends continue, the proper functioning of the democratic system could be endangered.

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for more information, visit:
www.evoice-eu.net

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evoice and the Council of Europe

In the summer of 2005, the **Municipality of Dantumadeel (NL)**, lead partner of the **evoice** project, started the successful pilot 'mobile phones for youngsters'.



Seventy young people in the village of **Zwaagwesteinde** agreed to advise their local authorities on the development of a (spatial) vision on the future of their village. They could

do this by submitting their (visual) contributions consisting of photos or a short footage made with their mobile phones, and accompanying texts, to the supporting community website, www.heelhetdorpzwaagwesteinde.nl.

The pilot project attracted a lot of regional and national **media attention** in The Netherlands.



Because of the success of the pilot 'mobile phones for youngsters', the Dutch **Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties** (Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations) invited the Municipality of Dantumadeel, as one of five Dutch municipalities, to take part in the international roadtest of the CLEAR model in October 2005. This CLEAR model has been started by the **Council of Europe** to stimulate political participation by citizens.



evoice: the CLEAR model

Across Western Europe, authorities on local, regional and national level struggle with the issue how to involve their citizens better in political participation.

At the special request of Spain, the United Kingdom and Sweden, the **Steering Committee on Local and Regional Democracy (CDLR)** of the **Council of Europe** decided, in May 2005, to develop a research instrument for the assessment of citizens' participation on the local level.



Council of Europe at Strasbourg (F)

Mr Gerry Stoker, professor of Political Sciences at the University of Manchester (UK) and special advisor of the UK Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, developed the CLEAR model, the prototype of a (diagnostic) toolkit that aims to help policy makers and practitioners understand what may block and what might drive citizens' participation in their communities, thereby helping them to enhance citizen engagement.



More than twenty municipalities (cities, towns and villages) in five member states of the Council of Europe: Finland, The Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia and Spain, volunteered in testing the prototype. The results of this roadtest were presented at the Council of Europe Conference **'Tools for strengthening democratic participation at local level'** at Tampere (Finland) on June 28th and 29th, 2006.

The word CLEAR is an acronym, that consists of five letters representing five factors affecting the level of citizens' participation. It argues that this is most effective where citizens:

- **Can do** - that is, have the resources and knowledge to participate;
- **Like to** - that is, have a sense of attachment that reinforces participation;
- **Enabled to** - that is, are provided with the opportunity for participation;
- **Asked to** - that is, are mobilised through public or voluntary groups;
- **Responded to** - that is, see evidence that their views have been considered.

For a description of the ideas behind the CLEAR approach, click:

[The development, testing and validation of an auditing tool of participation by citizens in local public life](#)

Report (September 2005) by Vivien Lowndes and Lawrence Pratchett (De Montfort University, UK) and Gerry Stoker (University of Manchester, UK)

[How was it for you? - A report on the CLEAR road test](#)

Report (June 2006) by Valeria Guarneros, Vivien Lowndes, Lawrence Pratchett (De Montfort University, UK) and Gerry Stoker (University of Manchester, UK)

evoice: targets and aims

Despite the gloomy background described on the first page, people are interested in single-issue politics. Building on this, evoice will combine traditional communication channels such as local newspapers with high-tech, innovative approaches to show people that they are also effected by general politics, and encourage them to participate.

evoice takes into account local variations in legislation and regulations, culture, and the differences in style between administrators and politicians in different countries and regions.

evoice assumes that local and regional authorities are the appropriate organisations to work with to reach the **evoice** aims because of their direct links to the citizens.

evoice: the multi media dialogue approach

The evoice project believes in the potential of modern ICT instruments and tools to increase citizens' participation and to access the administrative system, but only if they are employed in a well-structured, well-considered manner and over a longer period of time.

Therefore, **evoice** develops, tests and advocates the multi media dialogue approach: a combination of classic media (newspaper, radio, tv, phone, etc.) and the modern ones (internet, e-mail, chatroom, forum, sms, mms, etc.) in all phases of the policy cycle.

evoice aims to increase public influence and citizens' participation in political processes



mobile phones: an interactive tool in e-democracy

evoice: contact information

If you would like to get more information about the **evoice** project and its activities, please contact:

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For contact information on the project partners, visit the **who is who** on www.evoice-eu.net

evoice in Germany: Stephaniquartier in Bremen



A Bremen district changes its face: towards a modern media quarter

The Stephani- quartier will change to a considerable extent in the next years by the establishment of Radio Bremen and the Volkshoch- schule (adult education centre).

The pilot project offers the present and future users of the quarter, and all those who are interested in issues concerning urban (spatial) development the opportunity to participate.

Therefore, a website was launched in April 2006 to function as an information pool; several public meetings were held; and three focus groups were installed to inform the citizens about the measures to revive the Stephaniquartier.

Finally, an **Ideenbörse** (exchange of ideas) was established on the internet to enable the citizen, the entrepreneurs and visitors to submit their own ideas in the enhancing of the quality of life and work in the district.

A presentation team with people from the district and others, structures the discussions.

Reinklicken und mitmachen!

[Stephaniquartier](#)
[Ideenbörse](#)

evoice in Norfolk County: UK Bus Stop 39



We are all guilty of taking local authority services for granted. We expect roads to be properly maintained, streets to be swept, children to be well educated, the fire service to turn out day or night, rubbish to be collected, books to be free to borrow from libraries. The list goes on and on.



These services are the responsibility of elected councillors. So why don't more voters turn out in local elections? One reason is that people simply don't know what their councils actually do, and how important their services are to everyday life.



Therefore, Norfolk County is working together with the Borough Councils of King's Lynn & West Norfolk, and Great Yarmouth to start the Norfolk Soap Opera: **Bus Stop 39**. This soap opera is aimed at young people who are unlikely to know or care much about their local councils, but who are only a few years away from being entitled to vote.

The begin of the soap opera:

Young people gather at a bus stop in a Norfolk town. There is a screech of tyres. And then

What happens next is up to young writers in five county schools, because they are helping to write Norfolk's own soap opera.



Bus Stop 39 really is a soap with a difference - and not just because young people in five Norfolk schools will be helping to steer the story, to develop the characters and to decide which issues to include. The story is told in a 'blogging' style on a specially-created website. And while the young writers will be making sure that a gripping storyline emerges, the soap also has a more serious purpose - helping to promote the work of local authorities with a young audience.



Bus Stop 39 makes use of young people's confidence with keyboard and keypad communications, their appetite for soap opera, and the increasing popularity of internet 'blogging'.



Every entry in the A-Z of council services - from Abandoned Cars to Zebra Crossings - offers dramatic potential. For some, such as the Fire Service, it's very easy, but for others it will take just a little bit of creative thought and imagination from the young production team and their professional coaches.

The emphasis is on a strong storyline that keeps readers logging on. This is supported by text teasers, opportunities to comment and put forward ideas, and even to listen to the characters' favourite local bands. There are links to county and borough web pages so that people can find out more about the services featured in the developing story.

The first episode will go live in October 2006.



evoice in Uddevalla (S): general elections 2006

How can we get young people to take part in the democratic process, engage in political parties - and get them to vote and use their democratic possibilities to influence? Well, young people know what young people want and how they think. So the best solution is to let young people write for young people.



At Uddevalla, Sweden, we engaged the media course at the senior high school for different activities in the **evoice** project.

Two students, Sara and Lisa, made a brochure for 4,000 pupils at the senior high schools at Uddevalla. How is it to be young and uncertain about what is going on in society, about expectations and hopes.

In the brochure they write about the general election in Sweden on September 17th, 2006, but also about how important it is to vote and be able to get things changed, but also to keep democracy alive. They present the political parties in Uddevalla, and also the youth leagues.

A poll among the youths shows that 68 percent among the young females will go and vote this coming election, while only 46 percent among the young men will do that.



Vänsterpartiet *Katarina Hansson*

Vänsterpartiets viktigaste frågor till valet i höst är framförallt jobben till ungdomarna. Att få komma in på arbetsmarknaden är viktigt, framförallt för att det kan vara svårt att skaffa sig en egen bostad. Om vänsterpartiet vinner valet så vill partiet i Uddevalla förändra miljön. Att den blir bättre och att oljan ersätts med något annat bränsle. Mer hyreslägenheter nära vattnet, helt enkelt satsa mer på ungas miljö både i skolan och på fritiden.

Socialdemokraterna *Jngemar Samuelsson*

Det är svårt att ta en fråga ur sitt sammanhang då politik handlar om att forma helheter. Men något som är väldigt viktigt är jobben. Att alla som kan jobba har ett jobb och att det ger individen möjlighet att försörja sig. Om socialdemokraterna vinner valet så kommer vi att fortsätta att utveckla Uddevalla från bra till bättre. Mer satsningar på skolan och åtgärder för att minska utsläppen från oljeanvändning.

Centerpartiet *Hans-Jøge Sältenberg*

Våra viktigaste frågor för centerpartiet under de närmaste åren är att satsning ska i alla delar av kommunen, såsom Ljungskile, Bokenäset, Lane-Ryr o s v., och även i de bostadsområden som ligger i centralorten.

Att spara på energin och stimulera enskilda att på olika sätt spara är viktigt. En annan viktig fråga är att skapa bebyggelse i kustnära och attraktiva områden. Och vi vill skapa bättre förutsättningar för företagande och nyföretagande i Uddevalla.

evoice in Uddevalla (S): our own story

Our names are Sara Erlandsson and Lisa Johannesson and we are two girls from Färgelanda in Sweden, age 17, who attend senior high school (media course) in a Swedish town called Uddevalla.



*We were going to have four weeks of working practice in March 2006. Uddevalla Kommun searched high school students to work for a project called **evoice**. One of our teachers suggested this as a 'job' during our working practice to our class. We became interested of this so we signed up for it and got it.*

In the beginning we didn't know exactly what we were supposed to do. But after we talked to our 'boss' during this working practice, Gary Bergqvist, we knew that we were going to make a brochure which would make young people more interested in politics and, hopefully, increase the voting number. This was all we were told and the rest was up to us.

We began with a little brainstorming and then the work could come into progress. We took some photos in Uddevalla and we talked to politicians. We made an enquiry, searched the web for information and created a good layout. Most of the time we worked in our school but also at the community house in Uddevalla where Gary has his job.

This was really fun to work with even though none of us really was interested in politics from the beginning. It was fun that we ourselves could decide what the brochure would look like and what would be in it. It felt more special then. It could be hard sometimes and things didn't always go our way but in the end it all worked out and this brochure is the final result of four weeks working practice.

If you want to download the complete brochure, please click: [Young Uddevalla](#)

evoice: international European partnership

evoice is a European co-operation between:

- the Municipality of Dantumadeel (NL), lead partner;
- the Municipalities of Uddevalla, Ale and Härryda with the support of Västra Götalandregionen (S);
- Norfolk County (UK);
- Intercommunale Leiedal, district Kortrijk (B);
- the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen (FRG);
- the Municipality of Groningen (NL).

