INTRODUCING: THE NETWORK OF OPEN DATA LABS → NOODL.EU

Insights from Open4Citizens.
A European Project

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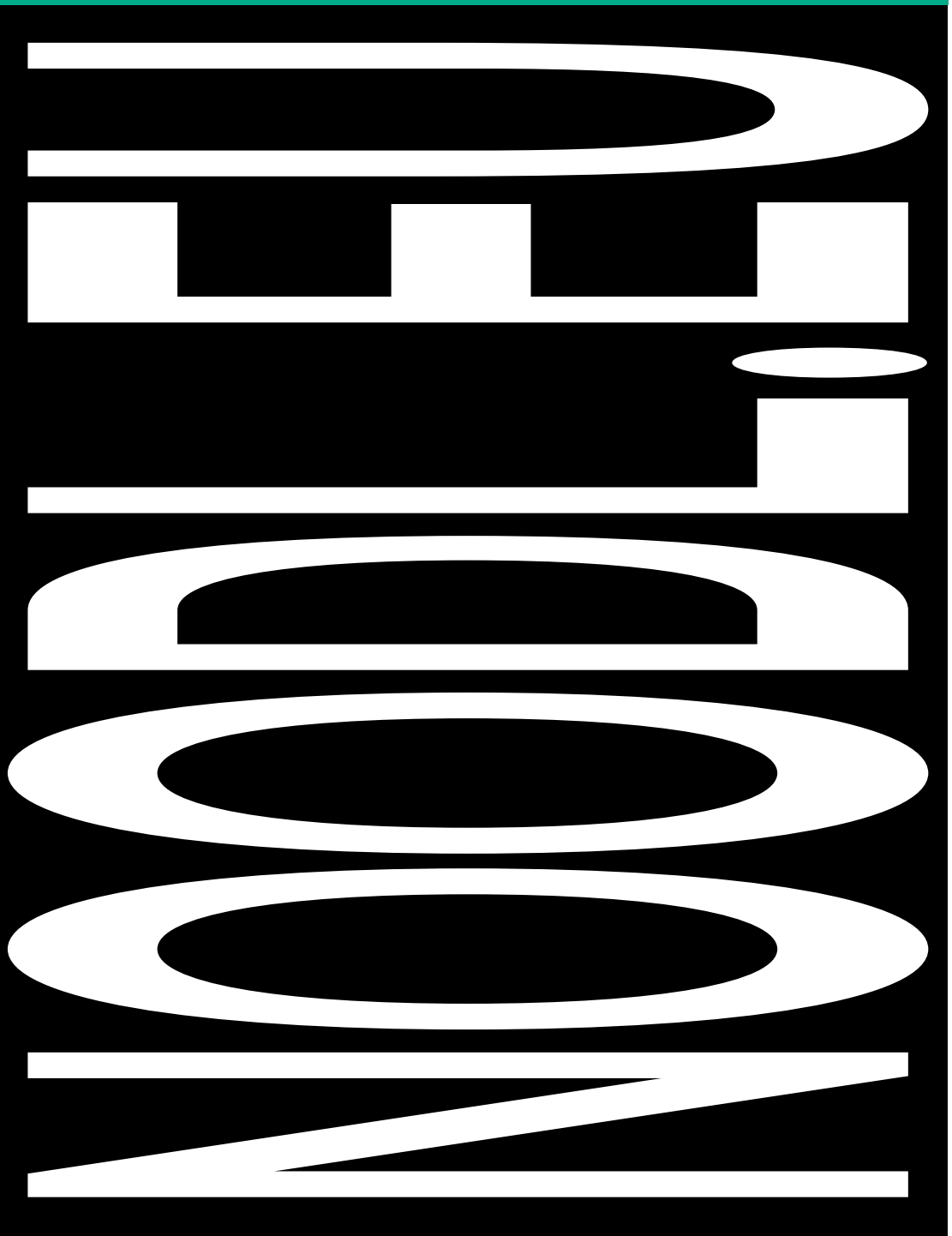
5 Pilots:
Milano (IT)
Copenhagen (DK)
Rotterdam (NL)
Barcelona (ES)
Karlstad (SE)

OPEN4CITIZENS

INTRODUCTION



An increasing computing capability is raising the opportunities to collect a very large amount of data, that can become a resource for a new generation of services. The potential of this phenomenon is still largely unexplored. Even if the production of new datasets (input side) is becoming very diversified, what can be done through open data (output side) is only visible to few stakeholders. There is a clear gap between the opportunities offered by the abundance of open data and the citizens' capability to imagine new ways of using such data.

OPEN4CITIZENS works to reduce such gap. The project is experimenting on new forms of collaboration between citizens, public authorities, interest groups, local businesses and IT experts, with the aim of a) generating new services, b) aggregating communities around the resource c) creating new infrastructures for the use of open data. In 30 months, from 2016 to 2018, this EU-H2020 (CAPSSI) project has involved more than 500 people with different skills and cultures in 10 co-design events (hackathons). The consortium consists of 7 partners from 5 different EU countries.

This brochure is proposing an international initiative (NOODLE.EU) for exchanging knowledge, experience and support tools for local communities to learn how to work with Open Data. Here you will find an overview of:

- ➔ The practices to involve citizens in designing new services with data
- ➔ The tools and the strategies for working with data
- ➔ Policy recommendations

BEST PRACTICES

A better awareness on open data can be achieved through the development and cultivation of new practices at different scales.

Supporting individuals: supporting citizens, who want to know more about open data as a resource, by proposing tools that inspire them and allow them to explore what can be done with open data, help them to search in public data repositories, support interpretation and visualisation of data, help with data curation, filtering and combining datasets and offering help while integrating open data in new and existing services.

Organising events: Open data can become a new commons, if a community is aggregated around this new resource, and new practices are developed, for those communities to raise their awareness and to share knowledge. Framed within different topics and themes, different events can be organised, such as hackathons, data sprints or design jams, all of which promote the dialogue between different competences and stakeholders. In particular it is crucial to force a dialogue between problem owners, such as citizens passionate about a particular issue or representing a selected neighbourhood and solution owners, i.e. coders, hackers, or any expert that knows how to work with data - as well as relevant data providers.

Organising open data campaigns: The effectiveness of the events depends on the possibility to mobilize an ecosystem of stakeholders, from data owners to public administrations, from citizens to hackers. A campaign to aggregate people around a open data co-creation event should take into account three dimensions:

- → **People: aggregating people with different competences, interest, perspective;**
- → **Data availability: making sure that open data - the raw material - are available for the co-design event;**
- → **Challenge: identifying and framing topics that can catalyze the interest of a community.**

TOOLS AND STRATEGIES

The O4C project created a number of tools for supporting individual and group initiatives to make sense of on open data.

→ SUPPORTING INDIVIDUAL WORK

Inspiration cards: describe relevant case studies that inspire citizens by showing concrete examples of how open data can be used, what social benefits this can create and who in particular might possibly gain from these benefits. They are a description of the 'gold in our hands', i.e. the social, data and expertise-related resources out in the world that are already used in existing services. On the front side there is an illustration and a question that inspires the citizen to think about new possibilities. On the reverse side of the card there is a description of the case study with more detailed information.

Data Cards: can be used by individuals or in hackathon events, to support people finding, visualising and interpreting data.

Basic data cards: provide a quick overview of the basic types of data and the most common techniques that can be applied on datasets. They can be used as a reminder of alternative options, as well as a quick reference to navigate through a dataset.

The data techniques cards: describe the most typical techniques to apply on a dataset, in order to extract further meaningful information out of the data. An example of a typical data technique is map visualization, which can easily be done when there are GPS coordinates in the dataset.

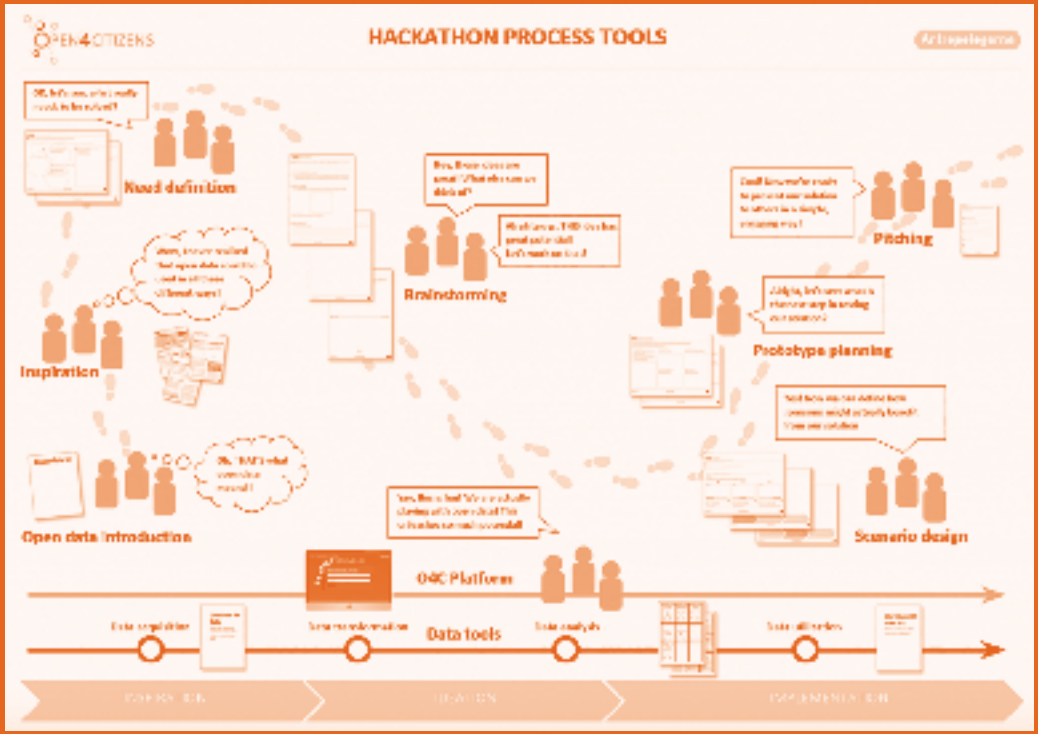
The "Questions for Data" booklet: provides guidance for the users of the method to get them unstuck . The booklet is based on the insight that at first, it is daunting to open a new dataset without knowing its content. The booklet contains triggering questions that can hint towards a successful strategy when daring the first steps of processing a dataset.

The "Working with Data" booklet: is a practical quick-start guide from opening a comma-separated value (CSV) file for doing more advanced data operations on it. The booklet covers various tips and tricks for the most typical data operations one may face in the beginning.

Visualisation tools: are provided for citizens to learn how to collect, transform and explore data, while analyzing and reaching new insights from iteratively manipulating them.

→ SUPPORTING EVENTS AND CAMPAIGNS

Facilitation tools: The hackathon event need to be accurately planned and diligently tailor-made to each context and topic. For this reason a facilitation toolkit is available to hackathon organisers.The toolkit suggest a process for innovation and co-creation, but invites adjustments fit for specific contexts, events or audiences in which they will be used in order to be relevant and effective. The toolkit includes a hackathon tools map - a guide through the co-creation process - inspiration cards and templates for need definition, concept definition and scenario building.



RECOMMENDATIONS TOWARDS A POLICY FOR OPEN DATA

Data are a new commons: they are a valuable resource for developing a new generation of public services, however the activation of this new resource as a commons requires that a community is taking care of it and a set of practices and infrastructures are consolidated. Inclusive open data events and campaigns foster citizen participation through personal development/learning and activation of citizens around issues and data opportunity.

Policies supporting the use of open data should be based on bottom-up initiatives, that raise the awareness of the opportunities offered by this resource and close the gap between data production and publication - the production side - and the communities' capability to make meaningful use of open data - the demand side. Collaboration, commitment and motivation is necessary across all levels of the 'data chain' although perspectives and priorities may vary depending on needs, fears and opportunities - e.g. among top level politicians and the municipal employees who make data openly available.

Feeding open datasets: strengthening a demand for data could also help defining the production of new datasets, specifying what data are needed, what formats, what aggregation of data are more interesting.

Communities of practices: Developing, promoting and disseminating practices, tools, algorithms and APIs, would support the growth of a new generation of public services.

Consolidating knowledge: An infrastructure is needed, that could help collecting the knowledge generated by individuals, events and open data campaigns. Like FabLabs became physical reference centres for exchanging knowledge and competence on physical fabrications, OpenDataLabs can become a one stop shop for open data initiatives, they can inspire citizens, assist and encourage the organisation of events, incubate the best ideas and support continual development of the arena.

OPEN DATA LABS AND NOODL

Open Data Labs are inclusive innovation hubs that connect differently talented citizens, IT-experts, hackers, makers, public authorities and entrepreneurs. They support flexible data intermediaries that promote, enable and generate social value with open data.

How does an ODL work? Open Data Labs contribute to meaningful use of data through methods, mindsets and approaches. Through the ODL, people gain access to an experimental space of tools, know-how, activities, hackathons and training. An ODL is a participatory eco-system for co-creating a new generation of public services. Everyone will be able to work with data according to their experience and knowledge: it will be possible to visualise data, to experiment or to develop new ideas from more expert citizens.

European Network of OpenDataLabs (NOODLE.EU). Starting from the Open4Citizens pilots in Barcelona, Karlstad, Milan, Copenhagen & Rotterdam, we invite other labs to join this network. Together, we can use data to develop ideas into real services. We bridge local communities around OpenDataLabs with an European Network. Open is the standard, as we promote data as a common asset in community building that supports local initiatives.

YOU CAN JOIN THE NETWORK BY SIGNING THE LETTER OF EXPRESSION OF INTEREST, AVAILABLE AT:

OPEN4CITIZENS.EU/NOODL/

COLOPHON

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