



Citizen OS Foundation

Annual Report 2023

Published February 2024

Contents

Index	Page
A Message from our CEO, Anett	3
Citizen OS – Let’s Decide Together!	4
The Platform Revamp	5
Our Platform in Numbers	6
Highlights – Our Projects in 2023	7
Strengthening Democracy – Our Projects in Indonesia	13
Our Projects in Numbers	15
Inspiration Through Meaningful Partnerships	16
Our Funding in 2023	17
It’s All About People – Our Team & Volunteers	18
Stage for Celebration	20
What’s Next? Our Focus in 2024	21

A Message from our CEO, Anett

Cooperation Over Competition: A Year of Collaboration for Citizen OS

We live in a highly polarised world where our governments, business organisations and individuals are competing with each other in every imaginable field. Competition has rooted so deeply in our values system, reflecting back in our societies in the form of wars, health issues and destruction of nature, that being under constant threat of losing freedom, justice and personal dignity has become a new norm in many countries of the world.

We at Citizen OS believe we still have hope to turn the wheel. There are many great people and organisations who know that if we want to live in a peaceful and environmentally sustainable world, we must collaborate instead of competing with each other. If we value collaboration, we value **respectful and peaceful problem-solving solutions** where **everyone has a voice and everyone is listened to**.

We believe there is a solution for any problem, and to find the best solutions, we need to come together, and take time to discuss, argue and reflect. With the support of technology, we don't even have to come together physically. We can use technology to connect people no matter which part of the world they live in, and by giving technology the task and purpose of connecting people, we are able to better solve global problems. Collaboratively.

The year 2023 has been **a year of collaboration** for Citizen OS. We are grateful to have many wonderful like-minded people and organisations, who value cooperation over competition.



In the work of Citizen OS, this is reflected by the **30 young activists** who participated in our **Democracy Defenders Accelerator** and started a network to continue coming together to inspire and support each other. With new skills and connections, they can contribute to defending open societies and democratic values.

Our Indonesian team joined forces with the government agencies, local NGOs, universities and many other partners to provide a space for **almost 4000 people** to come together and hold respectful and argument-based discussions on the topics that matter the most for them. It was the third time Indonesia held their Opinion Festival, and in 2023, they organised it both online and offline. Our whole team is extremely proud of our Indonesian team and the many volunteers who made this happen!

Not all steps to defend democracy have to be connected to massive movements and big projects. We safeguard our democracy in many ways. In routine and small actions, as well as big cooperation projects. In this issue of our Annual Report, you'll get a glimpse of some of our highlights – big and small. Both of these matter.

Anett Linno, CEO

Citizen OS – Let's Decide Together!

Our Mission

Our mission is to empower people to participate in respectful, meaningful discussions in order to collaboratively decide on issues that affect them.

We strive to empower as many people as possible around the world to engage in such decisions, focusing our efforts on those that directly impact both people's wellbeing and that of the planet.

Our Vision

Our vision is a world in which no one person or group rules over others, but where people govern together.

In this world we dream of, every person has the right and opportunity to participate in decisions they wish to be part of. We believe that by making collaborative, deliberative, respectful and evidence-based decisions, we will better take into account the interests and wellbeing of all the inhabitants of Earth, as well as the planet itself.

Established in 2015 in Estonia, we have now gained international momentum and years of experience.

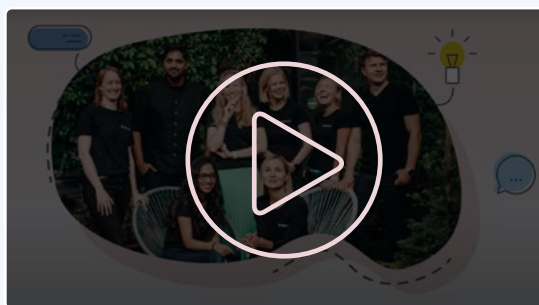
What do we offer?

The platform

We offer a **free open-source participation platform** for anyone who wants to make decision-making more participatory, transparent and inclusive.

Empowering projects

We also **coordinate international projects and organise training** to help citizens and decision-makers become better at civic engagement.



Learn more about our work in our video!



The Platform Revamp

We've been busy implementing the designs for a **new look and feel**, improved user interface and smoother user experience for our participation platform, Citizen OS, in collaboration with our longstanding UX/UI design partners, DUX.

We're currently usability testing and bug-catching, working to have the first phase of our redesign ready for launch this Spring. The initial launch will be a much improved version of our existing platform, with similar features but set out with a refreshed visual identity and better usability for both leaders and participants.

Throughout the year, we'll be **gradually rolling out new features** and further improvements, such as the addition of an **ideation feature for gathering ideas**. Through user research with our target groups and organisations – including local governments, local communities, professional bodies, political parties and youth organisations – we'll be prioritising our users' needs to make sure the platform works as smoothly as possible for their participation processes, with every new rollout.

Watch this space!

The screenshot displays the Citizen OS dashboard for a user named Anett. The interface includes a sidebar with navigation options like 'Dashboard', 'My topics', and 'My Groups'. The main content area features a 'Latest achievement' section for 'Brain Storm' and an 'Engagement in your topics' section with a circular progress indicator for 99,999 topics. Below these are several topic cards, each with a title, date, and a small image or icon. The cards include: 'Looking for a Common Good - But How to Agree' (873 of 1000 votes), 'Are migration crises the new normal in Europe?' (12 new arguments), 'Technology: always a 35 year old white man's' (3 new ideas), and 'How does Ukraine maintain internet during' (Deadline in 5 days).



A huge thank you to all the usability testers who have generously contributed their time and insights to validate and refine our designs!

Special thanks are due to Viimsi Municipal Government, Estonian Social Democratic Party, Estonian National Youth Council, Let's Do It World, Maison de l'Europe de l'Eure, Tallinn University, and Gaia Academy for their invaluable assistance.



“

“Prior to the Citizen OS platform, we had never used online tools for decision-making and it was a completely new departure for us. Even having Members of Parliament attending board meetings via Skype was quite rare. It was just normal that the commute to attend a two-hour meeting from one city to another took 2.5 hours each way.

Had we not created a way to participate online, approximately half of the delegates would have been left out. This would have been a serious problem for such an important event as choosing the leaders of our party.”

Maris Sild,
Social Democratic Party in Estonia

Read the full story of
their experience here!



”



“

We are proud to be the first city government in Indonesia to use the Citizen OS platform. Before we designed a training programme for young people, we conducted an opinion gathering and discussion session with them.

We are happy because the collaboration between Banda Aceh City Youth & Sports Agency and Citizen OS in the Youth Engagement Programme Banda Aceh has gone very well and received widespread attention from the community, especially the youth leaders who took part in this collaboration programme.”

Teuku Muhammad Hairunis,
Head of Youth Services Division
of Banda Aceh City Youth & Sports Agency

”

Our Platform in Numbers

Since the beginning*

New in 2023**

4459

Discussions

582

Discussions

16874

Votes

2599

Votes

643

groups

155

groups

10878

users

894

users

**Since Citizen OS first began in 2015, up until 1 Jan 2024*

***Between 1 Jan 2023 and 31 Dec 2022*

Highlights – Our Projects in 2023



Democracy Defenders Accelerator January 2023–January 2024, international

Democracy Defenders Accelerator (DDA) was a ten-month hands-on programme where participants learned how to design and deliver civic engagement projects and practise participatory leadership skills – through both the running of real-life projects and working on project ideas. The entire

learning process was supported by mentors and facilitators. The topics of the projects concerned women’s rights, accessibility to public transportation for disabled people, climate change and media education, among other issues.

Applications

88

people

27

countries

Participants

44

participants

20

countries

17

project ideas

Outcomes

30

participants from
14 countries completed
the programme


Increased capacity

to tackle complex
problems

11

projects in action


Critical skills improved

Programme

20
Online sessions

A week-long
Bootcamp in Estonia

Dedicated
mentoring

Developing
project ideas

Impact

The international
Democracy Defenders Network was initiated

Read more about the
programme outcomes here!



The project was financed by the Citizen OS Foundation and the **Active Citizens Fund**, which is mediated in Estonia by the **Open Estonia Foundation** in cooperation with the Network of **Estonian Nonprofit Organizations** (NENO).



“

“As someone who cares deeply about social and climate justice, democracy is really important to me. During the COVID-19 pandemic, I saw firsthand how policies meant to protect vulnerable people, like myself as an immuno-compromised person, could be seen as taking away people’s human rights. This made me want to understand this conflict better and be a leader in standing up for democratic values.

Joining the Democracy Defenders Accelerator has been my way of getting better at promoting democracy, fighting for justice, and making a positive impact in our society.”

Andee Pittman,
Canadian human-centred designer, researcher
and public servant

”



Democracy Defenders Network

November 2023–ongoing, international (online)



The Democracy Defenders Network is our new global community for activists who have taken part in Citizen OS civic engagement programmes, and like-minded individuals working to promote democratic values.

This volunteer-driven participatory network aims to help build skills, foster cooperation and launch new projects to enhance democratic participation and boost the impact of civil society leaders across the world.

The initiative is born from the ten-month immersive **Democracy Defenders Accelerator** programme.



Who is this programme for?

Activists.

Civil society activists, both individuals or representatives of groups or organisations.

Participants & partners.

Participants, partners and volunteers of initiatives run by the Citizen OS Foundation.

Researchers.

Researchers who are focused on democratic participation.

In this phase, we are most eager to welcome network members between the ages of 18–35. The core team is led by nine voluntary core team members. Network members are welcome to join the core team.

[Apply here to join the network!](#)



Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Programme: Artificial Intelligence for Sustainable Societies (AISS) 2023–2029, in Estonia, Finland and Portugal, and online

Citizen OS joined the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Programme (EMJM) in **Artificial Intelligence for Sustainable Societies**, which focuses on sustainability, artificial intelligence and data-driven decisions, as well as participatory design methods to engage citizens.

The programme is designed together with three universities: Tallinn University, School of Digital Technologies; Tampere University, Faculty of Information Technology and Communication Sciences; and Lusófona University, Faculty of Natural Sciences, Engineering. In addition, societal NGOs and industry partners such as Citizen OS, Estonian Anthropocene Center NGO, Lääne-Harju municipality, Inspirators!

In 2024, we will lead a 6 ECTS course where we tackle open society values and possibilities for transforming public life, developing critical thinking and argumentation skills, leveraging Artificial Intelligence, Open Source Software and Open Data in engaging people and making data-driven decisions.



[Learn more about the course here!](#)

Development Leap of NGOs April–July 2023 in Estonia

2023 was also the year of strategic planning! We were selected to take part in the “Development Leap of NGOs” programme which was funded by the **National Foundation for Civil Society** in the amount of 4000 EUR.

The aim of the project was to explore and analyse the possible development of the two main activities of Citizen OS and to define a roadmap for their implementation over the next 3 years.

We explored:

- The possibilities of adding artificial intelligence to the existing platform.
- The role of public web discussion organisers in society.

Five focus group interviews and five individual interviews took place during this time, with a total of 36 people providing their input.

These consultations and discussions were formed into work plan objectives and now guide us in our planning.

[Click here to see the key findings and decisions!](#)



Open Governance Partnership Global Summit

5-7 September in Estonia



The past year brought thousands of open governance leaders and enthusiasts to Tallinn, Telliskivi Creative City, right into our “hood” where our office is located.

We took part in the official programme of the OGP Summit by running a **workshop “Digital tools for civic engagement”** to hundreds of participants and opened our office as part of the **NGO Open Doors Initiative**. The workshop was organised together with our good partners

Kristina Mänd and Kristina Reinsalu from the **E-Governance Academy** (eGA) and Maarja-Leena Saar from the **Estonian Cooperation Assembly**.

The Summit focused on open government in the digital age, the potential of technology to make governance and policy-making more transparent and accountable, and the preservation of democracy.



Strengthening Democracy – Our Projects in Indonesia

Indonesian Opinion Festival 2023

24–29 October 2023, in Indonesia and online

The third Indonesian Opinion Festival brought together almost 4000 people to discuss how to improve democratic participation in the country. In contrast to the previous years, this time the democracy festival was held both online and offline in three different regions – Bali, Central Java, and Aceh.

The Indonesia Opinion Festival 2023 is organised by Citizen OS Indonesia, in partnership with Indorelawan and Gerakan Mari Berbagi and supported by the Indonesian Ministry of Communication and Informatics. This 2023 event has successfully involved 3947 participants in total, with more than 200 volunteers taking part in organising it.



[Read more about this project here!](#)



Youth Engagement Programme 2023 Banda Aceh

June–August 2023, in Indonesia

Continuing from the successful launch of the **Youth e-Engagement Programme** in 2021, Citizen OS Indonesia conducted the Youth Engagement Programme 2023 in Banda Aceh City, Aceh Province, Indonesia.

In the Youth Development Index (2021) report submitted by the Indonesian Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs, Aceh was reported to be one of the lowest ranking provinces in Indonesia in terms of employment opportunities, youth participation and youth leadership. This programme aims to **empower and increase youth participation** through training for leaders of local youth community organisations.

118 young people applied and 54 young Banda Aceh community leaders were selected to participate in the training. The participants led 13 social projects, which focused on environmental issues, sexual violence, entrepreneurship opportunities and other social issues in Aceh. With this, they **created real social impact in their community**.

The initiative was organised by Citizen OS Indonesia in collaboration with Banda Aceh City Youth & Sports Agency and Australia Awards Indonesia. The programme is supported by the Aceh Province Government, Banda Aceh City Government, PT PEMA and Bank Aceh.

[Read more about the Youth Engagement Programme here!](#)





“

“Being brave enough to convey ideas, in my opinion, is a must-have skill for Indonesian youth. In the midst of confusing information and the dominance of ideas that tend to harm Indonesia’s current development, the Indonesia Opinion Festival is the right forum for young people to hone their insights and skills and be actively involved in issues that they think are important. Indorelawan is happy and proud to support the implementation of IOF because of the same mission to involve young people in actively contributing to social issues. For this reason, I, on behalf of Indorelawan, invite the entire social and business community to support this movement in the future, so that more and more young people can become enlighteners with big ideas for Indonesia in the future.”

Shendy Ristandi,

Indorelawan Community Engagement Coordinator
Indonesia Opinion Festival organising partner

”



“

“It was an exciting experience for the Indonesian Institute and Suara Kebebasan to have an initial collaboration with the Citizen OS during the third Indonesian Opinion Festival 2023 in Bali, on the Youth Pledge Day (28th of October). The event showed how the Citizen OS has a rich network of multi-stakeholders and is strongly supported by a hardworking, solid, committed, and passionate team, not to mention the power of volunteers! We also had the opportunity to share our research and experience and expand our networks at the event. Through their works of activism and collaboration, the Citizen OS has contributed to the effort to promote public participation, especially youth, in policy processes in Indonesia.”

Adinda Tenriangke Muchtar, Ph.D.,

Executive Director at The Indonesian Institute, Center for Public Policy Research (TII) and Chief Editor of Suara Kebebasan (Voice for Freedom Indonesia).
(IOF 2023 Speaker and Community Partner)

”

Our Projects in Numbers

4048

People involved in our projects

244

Volunteers engaged

30+

Countries involved

Inspiration Through Meaningful Partnerships

We have had the pleasure of working together with a range of esteemed partners.

- We have joined forces with **Tallinn University**, **Tampere University** and **Lusófona University** to create the **Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Programme in Artificial Intelligence for Sustainable Societies**. More about this can be found under our projects section of this Annual Report.
- With the **Network of Estonian Non-Profit Organisations** (NENO), the **e-Governance Academy** and **Citizen Initiative Portal** we worked together to design the programme and a workshop for the **Open Government Partnership Summit 2023**. We were also part of the Open Government Associations Roundtable and helped to shape the pre-event. More about this can be found under our projects section of this Annual Report.
- **Domus Dorpatensis Center for the Development of Democracy** partnered with us to promote the scientific understanding and research of the constitutional role of the Estonian Parliament. Citizen OS, together with many other democracy innovators in Estonia, contributed to considering Parliament's constitutional role and the status of the investigation and jointly set expectations for future work. As a result of the Parliamentary Research Development Process, a document summarising the process and results was published. The document is available **here**.



Our Funding in 2023

The Citizen OS Foundation is a non-profit organisation which is funded from **civic society funds** and donations. We are very grateful to have stable financial support from our **philanthropist funder** and other private donors.

Investing to support a strong democracy!

- We received a **54,253.80 EUR** application grant from the **Active Citizens Fund** to develop a **10-month civil society leadership programme** for young activists from around the world. Read more about the **Democracy Defenders Accelerator** [here](#).
- Thanks to the Active Citizens Fund and the **Open Estonia Foundation**, our team has had the chance to participate in several events related to democracy. Participation was funded in the event “The Role of Civil Society in Countering Disinformation and Promoting Media Literacy” in Bulgaria and in the Norwegian Democracy Festival “Arendalsuka”.

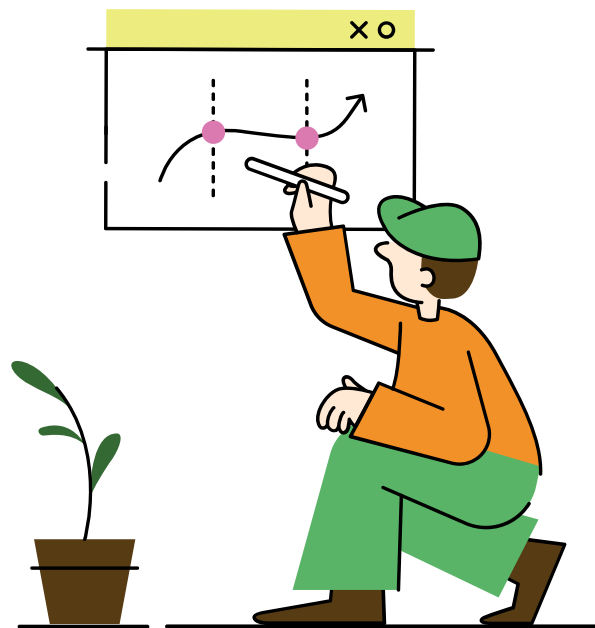
* The Active Citizens Fund is operated in Estonia by the **Open Estonia Foundation** in cooperation with the **Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organizations (NENO)**.

- We were approved for support with **3533.68 EUR** by the **National Foundation for Civil Society** as part of the programme “**Preparatory Call for Proposals 2023 for the Development Leap of NGOs**”. This enabled us to carry out focus interviews with 36 people – civic society activists, government officials, community leaders, technology experts, researchers and political decision makers. Based on these consultations and strategic decisions, strategic focus topics for our work plan were chosen. [Learn more about the outcomes here](#).
- We were given **360,000 EUR** in private donations from the philanthropist funder to **develop and improve the Citizen OS platform**.

Invest in respectful discussions and inclusive decision-making!

We’re a small organisation but we dream big, and in order to bring our dreams to life in 2024 we would love to engage more like-minded people in our mission! If you are one of them or know someone who would be willing to support our initiatives, get in touch with us.

More information about donations to Citizen OS Foundation [here!](#)



It's All About People - Our Team & Volunteers

Citizen OS Foundation



Anett Linno,
CEO and Product Owner



Becca Melhuish,
Designer & UX Researcher



Ilmar Türk,
Chief Technology Officer



Kati Vellak,
Lawyer



Margit Kattai,
Bookkeeper



Margo Loor,
Co-Founder
& Technology Evangelist



Meelika Hirmo,
Communications Lead



Oksana Naidjonova,
Localisation & Website
Management



Osama Mohammad,
Developer



Sara Sinha,
Partnership &
Community Lead

Volunteers



Roland Pihlakas,
AI developer



Rajashekhar V

Citizen OS Indonesia



Agustina Iskandar Crombach,
Head of Citizen OS
Indonesia



Faransina Olivia Rumere,
Secretary



Ivana Rahmania Widyaningrum,
Programme Manager



Irwan Saputra,
Supervisor



Leo Zulfikar,
Finance



Leony Chrisanti,
Visual Designer



M. Fauzan Febriansyah,
Advisor



Nyoman Try Widhyastuty Mertha Saputry,
Programme Support



Richard Hartono,
Partnership Support



Sarah Maulina,
Partnership Lead



Tasia Rosalina Tedjo Purnomo,
Marketing Manager



Wawan Putra,
Independent Advisor



Citizen OS Indonesia wants to applaud their **231 volunteers** who helped to make dreams come true and organise the third Indonesian Opinion Festival and the Youth Engagement Programme.

Stage for Celebration

In 2023, several people and organisations played a special role in our work. They have motivated, inspired and engaged us and we want to give them a special mention and celebrate them!

E-Governance Academy



Liia Hänni



Kristina Mänd



Kristina Reinsalu

The **E-Governance Academy** team contributed to the programme of the Democracy Defenders Accelerator and, together with them, we delivered a joint session on the **2023**

OGP Global Summit. New cooperation ideas are currently being designed and we're excited to continue the joint mission to foster democratic participation through using technology.



Avatud Eesti Fond
Open Estonia Foundation

Open Estonia Foundation

It has been a privilege to work in partnership with the entire team for the Democracy Defenders Accelerator as well as the Norwegian Democracy Festival Arendalsuka.



Merja Bauters, Research Professor in Digital

Transformation (Tallinn University). Together with Merja, we have been designing the Erasmus Mundus joint Master's programme "Artificial Intelligence for Sustainable Societies". She has shared her expertise and input to our work several times, which has helped us choose the right direction for our organisation.



Roland Pihlakas, AI developer. A knowledgeable expert whose consultancy has helped us to evaluate the use of AI in our work and make evidence-based decisions regarding this.

What's Next? Our Focus in 2024

In 2024 we will primarily focus on **two key topics**.

First, we will focus on **improving reliability related to product development** and **increasing users' experience of the platform** to bring deliberative democracy closer to people and communities.

Second, we will focus on **engaging like-minded investors and philanthropists** who would like to live in a world where people would be engaged in the decision-making process on the topics that affect their lives and well-being.

The Citizen OS platform gets a new look!

By spring, we will be launching our new UX and UI redesign, which makes our platform visually more appealing, user friendly and intuitive to use. Step by step we are adding new features and enhancements to support **more people to lead and participate in high-quality discussions and make better collaborative decisions together**.

We will also continue with revamping our website, giving it a brighter look with more content about who we are, what we do and how people can benefit from our platform and projects the most.

Support democratic participation

We are extremely grateful to our philanthropic funder, who believes that what we do helps to innovate and advocate democracy in a world, where democracy has been declining in many ways.

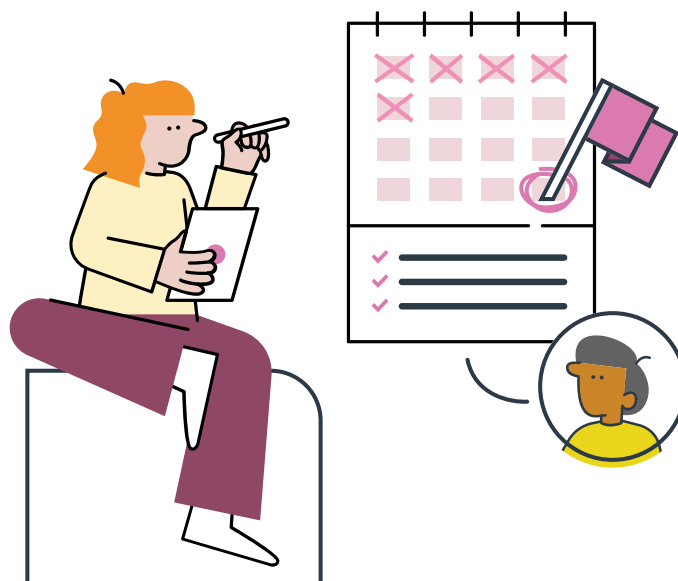
Our plans and dreams are big, and that is why, in 2024, we would love to engage at least one more like-minded and kind-hearted person who would help our plans and dreams come true.

If you are one of them or know someone who would be willing to support our initiatives, get in touch with us.

More information about donations to Citizen OS Foundation here!



We are also thankful with recommendations about additional funding. Get in touch with us if you have any leads on this!





Citizen OS

Let's connect and stay in touch!



/citizen_os_foundation



/citizenos.web



/company/citizenos



/Citizen_OS