



Summary of the Final Report – Evaluation of the “Hallo Bundestag” Project

Client:

Demokratie Innovation e.V. - Initiative Es geht LOS

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1 Summary

The "Hallo Bundestag" project of the *Es geht LOS* initiative aimed to further develop a **format to strengthen representative democracy in Germany**. The diversity of the participants was to be achieved through an outreach lottery procedure. Other aims were to strengthen trust in representative democracy and its representatives and to increase the participants' voluntary (political) commitment. In addition, the acceptance of this deliberative process among members of the Bundestag was to be strengthened.

The programme was implemented in six electoral districts, with three so called "**Electoral District Days**" for each district, between March 2023 and June 2024. The participants, drawn by lot, spent a day dealing with a topic relevant to federal politics and had discussions with the members of the Bundestag from their electoral district.

To check whether objectives were achieved, the evaluation used a combination of participant observation, a standardised before-and-after survey of the participants of the Electoral District Day (n = 430) and an online survey of participating Members of the Bundestag (MBs) and their staff from the constituency offices, respectively (n = 12).

The results are briefly summarised below.

1.1 Inclusive participation through diversity

The **aim of involving people with different perspectives and backgrounds was achieved:**

The gender ratio was balanced and people of all age groups and people without German or European citizenship took part. People without or with a low level of education and people who do not (or no longer) work were also represented. In addition, people with low to high household incomes took part in the Electoral District Days – as did non-voters and people with little political interest. Only a subset of the survey participants were involved in voluntary work at the time before the Electoral District Day.



It was a very good experience and showed me that it is important to regularly exchange ideas with people with whom you would otherwise have no points of contact in everyday life, because you come from very different contexts or are in different phases of life.

- Participant Electoral District Day -



The diversity of the participants is also reflected in the perception of the participants: many emphasised the diversity of the opinions and perspectives represented.

Approaching the participants involved unique steps: there was **(1) a personal visit, (2) meetings for the young people to get to know each other** and **(3) catering individual needs** of the participants (e.g., language assistance). There are several indications that this **approach contributed to greater diversity**:

- 1) A high participation rate compared to other procedures.
- 2) 10 % of the participants only confirmed their attendance after being personally approached.
- 3) The most common reason for cancellation was a lack of time.

The approach worked particularly well with young people. As intended, younger people were proportionally overrepresented compared to the population. The response rate among young people was also significantly higher than among adults.

1.2 Process quality

The participants surveyed assessed the moderation and dialogue during the Electoral District Days as highly positive: For the most part, they had the opportunity to make relevant contributions to the discussions and results of the event. From the perspective of the vast majority of respondents, the results of the Electoral District Days were not predetermined and represented concerns of the general public. The Electoral District Days offered the majority of participants individual gains in knowledge. For the vast majority, participation in the Electoral District Day was a **positive self-efficacy experience**.

The high process quality suggests that, for the vast majority of the participants surveyed, it was possible to engage in a deliberative exchange with each other.

1.3 Impact - strengthening the motivation to participate in politics

The results of the before-and-after comparison clearly indicate that the Electoral District Days motivated participants to become more politically involved.

The **intention to participate in politics** by, e.g., partaking in another civic participation event, contacting politicians concerning a specific topic or engaging in an organisation targeting political, social or environmental issues, **has increased**. This effect is particularly evident among those who had previously been rather less involved in politics.

The before-and-after comparison shows a significant **strengthening of participatory, collective and political efficacy and self-esteem beliefs**. Participants who reported a low level of political interest and/or activity, showed a stronger increase in internal political efficacy and self-worth beliefs.

Qualitative results show that political interest has increased among some participants.

The motivating effect can also be seen in the active support of the outreach programme by individual participants and in the level of participation in the Electoral District Council meetings following the Electoral District Days. These meetings are to be continued independently by the participants beyond the end of the project.

Trust in political institutions is higher after participation than before. In particular, trust in politicians was strengthened. This effect can be well explained by the participation of (several) MBs in an Electoral District Day.

1.4 Acceptance of the format by the participating Members of the Bundestag

For the MBs, the insights gained from the Electoral District Day, provided **added value for their political work** at a reasonable cost. Almost all of the MBs interviewed, were able to talk to people at the Electoral District Day with whom they would otherwise not come into contact and thus learn about **new perspectives**.

A large majority were more convinced of the format after their participation than before. The MBs and their staff believe that Electoral District Days should be held in all electoral districts in the future, and the majority of the MBs would use this format. According to the MBs surveyed, Electoral District Days can help to strengthen democracy.