INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC ENVIRONMENT DEVELOPMENT

IPED
Institute for Public
Environment Development

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The Institute for Public Environment Development was founded in 2003 as a public non-governmental organization.

The Organization's **main mission** is promotion of civil culture and assertion of the values and principles of democratic law and order**,** encouragement of citizen control and popularization of the forms of citizen participation in the of decision making process.
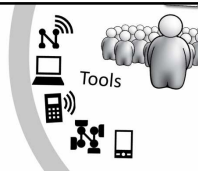
- **Our activities:**

❑ **monitoring, reporting** and **evaluating** the execution of public policies, concerning the reform in Bulgarian judicial system, parliamentary and judicial anti-corruption strategies and tools;

❑ **fair and democratic election process** in Bulgaria; research of the mechanisms for "state capturing" by criminal networks; evaluation of the effectiveness of the tools for management of the European funds and the possibilities for civil control over their absorption;

❑ **watchdog activities**, guarantying openness, accountancy and transparency of the institutions; ensuring citizens' access to the decision - making process

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Digital tools

Increasing Citizen Engagement in the Political Process of Their Countries
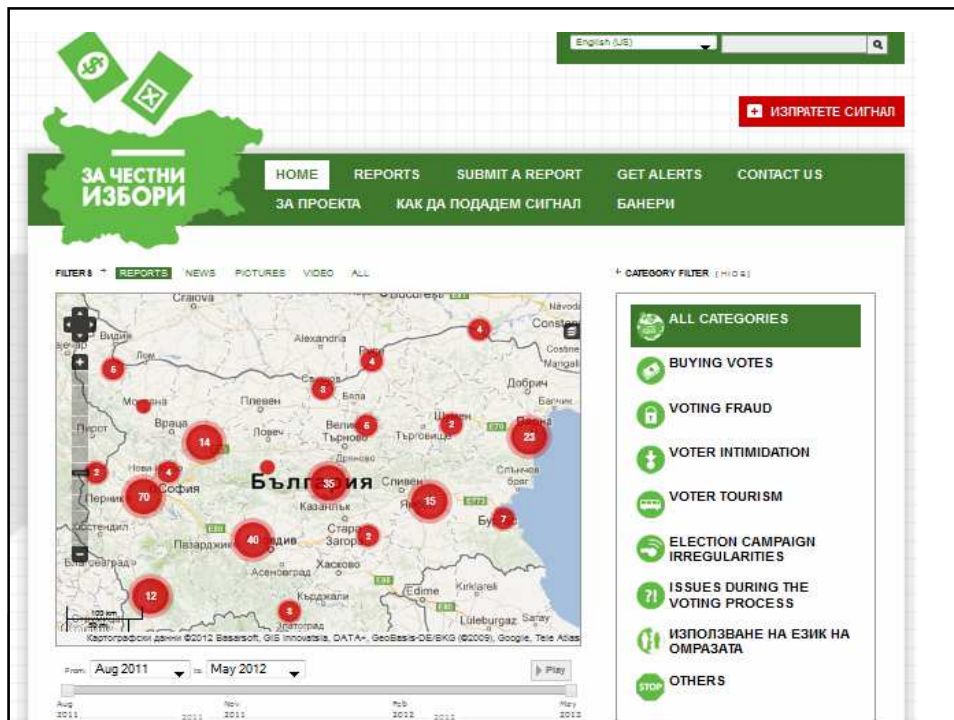
Why digital tools?

❑ Digital tools are so effective for NGOs today, because they can impact society and institutions and they do it at relatively low cost.

❑ By using the network, citizens are getting involved with the governance at all levels. As long as civil society can rely on the sources of public information, it can adequately demand for good governance.

❑ NGOs should guarantee that open sources of information exist - by leading advocacy for open institutional information, or by developing new tools to be used by the civil society.

The Fair Elections Platform

❑ The Fair Elections Platform is an online crowd-sourcing map, which collects signals from citizens for violations of the election legislation, sent on-line, through Facebook, Twitter, e-mail or by phone. It was developed by the IPED for the Presidential and Local elections in Bulgaria in 2011.

❑ Submitted signals are shown on the Bulgarian map and for each location, where a problem was indicated, there is a text, displaying the description of the election violation.

❑ Along with their messages, people were able to upload photos and videos as well.

The Fair Elections Platform

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❑ *Guaranteeing the legitimacy of the received signals was the main challenge of the project.*

❑ We had to create a set of criteria based on which our website evaluated the signals of election frauds.

- ❑ Information had to be received from a trustworthy sources;
- ❑ Information had to be confirmed by more than 1 person;
- ❑ A photo or a video material could confirm the submitted signal;
- ❑ We were able to connect with people and receive their feedback on the submitted signals;

What was the success story of the project?

❑ We received more than 350 signals about election violations in the
country. And around 250 of them were published on the public module
of the platform.

❑ The Fair Elections Platform became a source of information for the
mainstream Media in Bulgaria. 8 investigative movies were made by
the three national television channels, based on many of the signals.

❑ The platform demonstrated clearly that there is a problem with the
implementation of the election legislation in Bulgaria.

❑ We were able to analyze the signals and to defend the voters' rights
during and after the entire election campaign.

The Open Parliament Portal

www.OpenParliament.net

❑ The Open Parliament portal is an independent digital tool that collects
credible data, structured in specific profiles of the deputies, showing their
relations with the public and private sector.

❑ Integrated in the portal, you may find the blog – "Open Parliament – Civic
Voices". It is an instrument that runs the debate for the use of open data by
the civic journalism.

The Open Parliament Portal

❑ The main challenges in front of The Open Parliament Portal are related to:

   ❑ The advocacy campaign, that our team has to lead in front of the institutions. How can we make them to present public information in open data formats;

   ❑ Connecting the different registers containing public information in the country;

   ❑ Popularizing the portal. It was not made to be a traditional media and that is why we have to constantly develop new approaches for citizens to use it.
      I.   Social networks inclusion - https://www.facebook.com/OpenParliamentBG ;
      II. Stream portal of important for the civil society events;
      III. The "Angry young people" channel – online debates with citizens on themes that are often neglected by the mainstream media;
      IV. Making data speak – using different types of infographics etc;

Are tools like Open Parliament changing the environment for the better of civil society?

❑ By using digital tools, the IPED managed to create the foundations of a critical community around the organization, that is constantly growing.

❑ We gained the trust of society as an organization, that is close to the citizens and that can defend adequately their civil rights.

❑ We are gaining arguments and information from direct civil society feedback, that we are using in order to defend human rights;

❑ Our digital tools are alive. We are constantly receiving feedback from the community and the institutions.

❑ Our digital tools make institutions to act:

   ❑ Fraud reports, sent to the European Anti-Fraud Office –
   OLAF;

   ❑ Amendments to the election legislation of Bulgaria;

   ❑ Increased publicity of the institutional activity;

Contact us:

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