



CHANGE STATEMENT

The public in Germany, particularly younger citizens, are alienated and disengaged from politics and political process. Distanced by the lack of transparency in parliamentary activities and the lack of direct connection to elected officials, citizens distrust, and are disconnected from, the system. By providing the public with data on politicians' records through a non-partisan online platform, Abgeordnetenwatch generates dialogue between elected officials and citizens, and increases transparency and accountability of government thereby helping to engage Germans in the political process and democratic citizenship.

THE IDEA

STRATEGY

- Increase the **supply, quality, and use** of news and information, as well as increase **freedom of and access to information** that is of public interest through:
- A moderated, nonpartisan, **duel-benefit public dialogue forum** that allows citizens to ask questions directly of both elected officials and candidates, and provide an opportunity for politicians to engage directly with the public.
 - **The cataloging of public records** on voting and attendance as well as key political speeches in an easily searchable online database.
 - **Media partnerships** with major media outlets that benefit both media, by providing new and relevant political information for reporting, and Abgeordnetenwatch, by prominently displaying its logo and linking directly to the site.

INTENDED OUTCOMES / IMPACT

- **Quality.** Provide media outlets with news and information that affects overall coverage of political decision making and politicians' records.
- **Supply.** Increase the supply of news and information that is politically relevant in the run up to elections and supports in-depth reporting on legislative processes and decisions.
- **Freedom and Access.** Media and the public hold elected officials accountable as a result of direct dialogue and easy access to public statements on issues and voting records.
- **Use.** People benefit from direct dialogue with elected officials, are active in the political process, and equipped to make informed decisions. Politicians engage with citizens and are more responsive to constituents. There are changes in the German electoral process that trend toward more direct democracy.

OUTPUTS AND REACH

- | STARTUP | PILOT | GROWTH | MATURITY |
|---------|-------|--------|----------|
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- **Individuals/Communities.** 4 million unique visitors per year. Approximately 1,000 users support Abgeordnetenwatch through micro-donations and gain access to a newsletter and richer search functions.
 - **Journalists.** Significant numbers of journalists are quoting Abgeordnetenwatch as a reliable source for independent source of political information.
 - **Mainstream media.** Over the last 3 years, Abgeordnetenwatch has established strong partnerships with major media outlets (e.g. Spiegel and state public radio and TV) as well as 40 regional newspapers.

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PRODUCING EXPECTED OUTPUTS

RESULTS TO DATE

OUTCOMES / IMPACT

- **Quality.** Political news coverage is being directly affected as journalists turn to Abgeordnetenwatch as a significant source of nonpartisan information.
- **Supply.** 100,000 questions have been asked of politicians and 80,000 have been answered. 95% of members of parliament have responded to questions. These numbers have all increased significantly since election. Abgeordnetenwatch currently covers all federal members of parliament and the members of 5 state parliaments.
- **Freedom and Access.** Media and citizens are tracking and reporting on the records of elected officials. Information supplied by Abgeordnetenwatch on one member of parliament's poor attendance led to his resignation.
- **Use.** Citizens are demanding more accountability of elected officials and media is examining politicians decisions and actions more closely. Several German states have amended their constitutions to allow for more direct voting of members of parliament.

NOT ON TRACK INSUFFICIENT DATA TOO SOON TO TELL ON TRACK

PROGRESS TOWARD OUTCOMES

EVIDENCE OF SYSTEMS CHANGE

Sources: Fellow Survey, Fellow Interview, Stakeholder Interviews, Web Site Analytics, Document Review

KEY LEARNINGS

SUCCESS FACTORS Abgeordnetenwatch's **leadership** is effectively balanced between Gregor Hackmack, an experienced and active member in the direct democracy movement, and Boris Hekele, a programming expert who develops the infrastructure for the site's platform. Together the two established a truly nonpartisan site that ensures questions directed at elected officials are neither biased attacks, or coordinated propaganda by relying on a **strict moderation protocol** for all questions. The **adoption and acceptance by members of parliament** has resulted in a simple solution that is quickly dismantling the distance between the general public and elected officials. The ability to build effective **partnerships with major media outlets in Germany** has led to increased coverage of the political process, official decisions, and an increased transparency of public records. Abgeordnetenwatch is creating a **digital voter's memory** that is increasing political accountability and civic engagement.

CHALLENGES In a philanthropic landscape that provides little support for initiatives focused on the political arena, financing the Abgeordnetenwatch model remains a challenge despite its early success. Growing Abgeordnetenwatch and expanding internationally will require a strategic and financial plan.

LEARNINGS/OBSERVATIONS Abgeordnetenwatch's early success is very promising. The crucial next step in the organization's promotion of a more engaged and active electorate is to create greater participation and utilization of its information by a broader swath of the German public.