

Citizen Service Co-Creation Case – From NemID to MitID

Introduction

With the transition from NemID to MitID, Citizen Service has experienced increased pressure. Many older citizens struggle to adapt to the new system, as the guidelines provided by the Digital Agency are insufficient for them to understand how to use MitID practically.

It's clear that this challenge cannot be addressed with traditional solutions alone, as the municipal staff is insufficient to handle the task by themselves. As a result, several employees have come together to consider how to explore the problem and investigate possible solutions from the citizen's perspective.

Curiosity About the Case

The project begins with staff actively listening to citizens' feedback, both positive and negative. Overall, citizens are dissatisfied due to longer waiting times and queues at Citizen Service, as well as the limited number of computers available for use.

Upon further investigation, it becomes clear that the queues are primarily caused by older citizens needing help with MitID. Many citizens bring in their computers and phones, expecting staff to install MitID on their devices. It's also apparent that about half of the citizens who have already been helped once return to the town hall after receiving MitID because they are still unable to use it. In other words, there are comprehension and competency challenges for this group of citizens, which continue to place pressure on the administration.

After exploring the target group linked to this issue, an employee suggests involving a volunteer organization in the process.

Involving a volunteer organization has several advantages:

- They have specialized knowledge of specific citizen groups and their needs.
- Their different perspective, combined with that of the municipality, can contribute to a more holistic, citizen-centered approach.
- Their diverse perspectives may lead to new, innovative solutions.

When involving a volunteer organization, it's essential to ensure mutual respect between the municipality and the organization. For example, the volunteer organization should not be expected to comply with the same documentation requirements and legal regulations as municipal employees. Additionally, there may be different values, norms, and practices between the municipality and the volunteer organization. It's important to respect these differences and not attempt to assimilate the organization into municipal operations. Furthermore, volunteers should not be expected to take over tasks handled by the municipality. Volunteers are motivated by helping others, not by solving tasks for the public sector. Their engagement depends on what makes sense to them and the people they help, not on municipal strategies or budgets. The work of the volunteer organization should complement the services provided by the municipality. All these factors are considered by the Citizen Service staff before involving a volunteer organization.

Exploring Solutions

After considering the above, the staff initially decides to involve the Senior Council (Ældrerådet) due to the elderly being the primary group struggling with MitID. The Senior Council then suggests involving Ældresagen (Ældresagen is a Danish organization dedicated to advocating for the rights and well-being of older adults.), a large nationwide volunteer organization.

The municipality first examines the organization's statutes and notes that Ældresagen focuses on fostering valuable collaborations between the public sector and volunteers. Together with a representative from the Senior Council, they contact Ældresagen, and through an open dialogue,

they formulate a shared vision for the future work. They focus on leveraging life experience and knowledge, and explore how to create value through social networks.

Exploring Possible Solutions

Together, Ældresagen and Tønder Municipality explore various ways the volunteers can assist the elderly through the transition from NemID to MitID.

Given Ældresagen's deep understanding of the target group's needs, their perspective is especially valuable in developing solutions.

One solution discussed is organizing decentralized events in different towns. For example, a "data room" could be set up at Center Royal in Løgumkloster, which is already a meeting place for many elderly people. This would allow them to meet with peers and volunteers who could assist with basic IT tasks. Another similar idea is for Ældresagen to provide volunteers for specific events at the library, which could be incorporated into the library's regular event catalog, ensuring wider outreach to elderly citizens who already have a routine of visiting the library.

Another possibility is to involve students from SDU (University of Southern Denmark) to guide the elderly in Tønder Municipality. Ældresagen has connections at SDU, and the students could provide assistance over the phone or in person at decentralized meetings across the municipality.

This would involve selecting students through interviews and having them sign a declaration of intent. Similar initiatives have been implemented in other municipalities, such as Slagelse.

A third option is to have a few volunteers assist at the town hall in the mornings, guiding the elderly in using the digital solutions. Volunteers are more flexible in terms of what they can help with, as they are not bound by the same regulations as municipal employees. The idea is for volunteers to demonstrate how to use MitID, allowing elderly citizens to then try the solution themselves.

Co-determination

After considering the various options, Citizen Service and Ældresagen decide to combine the first and third solutions. A few volunteers will assist at the town hall in the mornings, while decentralized meetings will be organized to help elderly citizens become proficient with MitID and other IT solutions. The volunteer organization brings a fresh perspective to both the challenge and the solution, ensuring the citizen's voice is heard and their perspective understood. The citizen's involvement is clear, as the help from volunteers is always an optional resource the citizen can choose to use.

Co-Responsibility

Through the new solution, citizens have a clear co-responsibility in mastering the task themselves. Rather than placing the responsibility for logging into MitID on the municipality or the volunteers, citizens are now, to the extent possible, equipped to do it themselves. The way in which Ældresagen's volunteers assist in empowering citizens is different from the municipality's approach, as volunteers are not bound by the same rules. Volunteers are on a more equal footing with the citizens—they don't hold the same authority as municipal employees. Additionally, Ældresagen's specific knowledge of this target group positively influences the outcome of the solution.

The volunteers from Ældresagen also participate in short workshops facilitated by municipal staff, which equip them to assist elderly citizens with the specific challenge of using MitID.

It's clear that this new solution can support citizens' mastery levels in a completely different way, ultimately helping them achieve a greater sense of control over their own lives.