



**YOUTH POLICY AND PARTICIPATION
IN EASTERN PARTNERSHIP COUNTRIES**



YOUTH IN TRANSIT

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IN EASTERN PARTNERSHIP COUNTRIES





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INTRODUCTION

PUBLICATION INTRO

“Youth in Transit” is a publication about young people from post-Soviet countries and people responsible for their well-being and development. The focus is on the situation of youth in the European Union calls Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. We called this publication “Youth in Transit” because we think that youth here are on the move - moving themselves and their countries from post-Soviet to European, from dictatorship to democracy, from people being taken care of to the people in charge. This publication focuses on youth policy and fields in youth participation that are particularly “in transit,” or should be “on the move” for developing states and hybrid democracies. In this publication we reflect on the challenges regarding this matter and offer readers some solutions.

HOW THIS PUBLICATION WAS CONSTRUCTED:

Youth policy is an area full of general recommendations but what is often reported missing is specificity - what specific actions can be taken in youth policy with limited budget or no budget? In this publication we try to focus on transitioning from recommendation to concrete action steps for local municipalities by providing cases and examples that can be undertaken in the field of youth.

The publication spins around the “Revised European Charter on Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life” which was adopted by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe at the Council of Europe in 2004. We have taken the 13 sectoral policies and eight instruments of youth participation from the Charter and provided examples of good practices for each. We have also provided what not to do’s – “DON’Ts.” We think bad practice can be widespread and hard to identify and it is important to reflect on and recognize them.

We created this publication for people and structures that are involved in the youth field - youth organizations, youth centres, youth workers and local municipalities. We hope with this publication they will be able to sign and implement better policies and projects and find effective collaboration.

“Youth in Transit” is divided into six chapters. After the introduction of the publication itself, chapter one runs through youth policy - what is it for, how it is understood and what are the challenges. The second chapter gives an overview of the revised Charter on youth participation. Chapters three, four and five are where you find the cases and examples for 13 specific policy area and instruments of participation. The sixth chapter covers recommendations to relevant stakeholders in order to improve youth policy management in the Eastern Partnership countries. Finally, the glossary can help you out on understanding the key terms and in the end one can discover further readings about the fields explored throughout the publication.

INTRODUCTION

● TEAM BEHIND THE PUBLICATION

The team behind “Youth in Transit” consists of young people, researchers, youth workers and experts in the field of public policy and youth field. The team members come from Eastern Partnership Countries or have an expertise in youth matters in these countries.

● CONSORTIUM

This publication was created within the framework of the project “Triangle of Participation - Local Municipalities, Non-governmental Organizations and Young People” - which was supported by Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency under the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union - Capacity Building in the Field of Youth. The project was implemented by Youth Association DRONI (youth workers’ association established in 2003 in Tbilisi, Georgia) in cooperation with:

SONDIP from Turku, Finland;

KEKS (network from Gothenburg) and the City of Borås from Sweden;

YCDDP from Yerevan, Armenia;

National Youth Council of Moldova;

Gori and Zugdidi Municipalities from Georgia.

The project “Triangle of Participation” was fostering cross-sectorial cooperation in the field of youth and promoting youth participation in decision-making on the local level. This publication is sought as an instrument to support this cause.

● ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE PUBLICATION

EU - European Union

EYF - European Youth Foundation

YNGO - youth non-governmental organisation

LGBTQI - lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex

NEET - Not in employment, education or training

UN - United Nations

NYC - National Youth Council

NGO - non-governmental organisation

CSO - civil society organisation

NFL - non-formal learning

EaP - Eastern Partnership

CoE - Council of Europe

ICT - Information and Communication

Technology

YOUTH POLICY

WHAT IS YOUTH POLICY? HOW IS IT UNDERSTOOD IN EUROPE?

Youth policy is an umbrella term that refers primarily to public policy focused on the needs and expectations of a group of young people. Its central premise is creating appropriate conditions for the development of young people's potential. Youth policy refers to both obligations of public authorities and specific practices aimed at providing appropriate living conditions as well as specific development opportunities for young people. Youth policy is an evolving and ambiguous term with multiple definitions, and its delimitation is challenged. Youth policy can be formal and explicit – embedded in a single policy document (legal act) or a set of documents (policy, strategy, action plan), or informal and implicit (set of norms and values regarding youth). A narrow definition of youth policy defines it as policies concerning young people, but not falling within the scope of other public policies (e.g. educational, social, employment, health) – this narrow understanding limits youth policy to youth work, non-formal education and volunteering. A broad definition includes all policy areas concerning and influencing young people (including in particular education, employment policy and youth rights).

Youth policy can be understood as positive measures only (activities/acts) as well as both positive and negative measures, including their absence (e.g. lack of action, withdrawal of state activity, policy gaps, negative youth policy).

Youth policy refers to a complex and multi-level set of activities. On the basis of current research, mainly conducted by international organisations such as the Council of Europe or the European Union (EU), the following key elements of youth policy can be identified:

- Central/government youth policy
- Local youth policy
- Parliamentary supervision
- Legal (constitutional and other) regulations.
- Youth services
- Implementing institutions
- Youth organisations
- International co-operation in the field of youth
- Youth participation in policy-making and decision-making
- Youth policy evidence base



YOUTH POLICY

● EUROPEAN HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

All European countries have their youth policies, either formulated in specific legal acts (formal, explicit) or scattered across different policy areas (informal, implicit). The history of youth policy cannot be traced back to a specific moment – especially in the broader sense, policies supporting and affecting young people were part of governmental activities for a very long time (education, housing, health). In a more narrow sense, the emergence of the welfare state after World War II prompted more coordinated efforts of European states to address youth needs. At international level, the Council of Europe pioneered international youth co-operation in Europe with the establishment of the European Youth Centre in 1972 and fostering the development of international co-operation in the youth field through its Youth Department.

Although there is no European Union youth policy as such, the 1999 White Paper on youth later followed by the Youth Pact and the first European Youth Strategy have created a de-facto space of European co-operation in the field of youth. The last two decades have seen a dynamic development of European youth policy-cooperation, including the introduction of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC), a form of voluntary coordination of policies across the EU. The European Union increased its research and monitoring of youth matters including commissioning the EU Youth Report. The Council of Europe developed multiple new framework documents for youth policy document, with a strong focus on participation, including recommendations on youth participation in 1997 and followed by recommendations on the participation of young people in local and regional life (2004), citizenship and participation of young people in public life (2006), the role of national youth councils in youth policy development (2016) and most recently, the use of youth work as a youth policy instrument (2017).

● WHY IS YOUTH POLICY IMPORTANT?

Youth policy (either explicit or implicit) is essential to the development of young people's potential in all sectors. According to the Council of Europe's documents and approaches, the purpose of youth policy is to 'create conditions for learning, opportunity and experience, which ensure and enable young people to develop the knowledge, skills and competences.' This, in turn should allow young people 'to be actors of democracy; integrate into society; and, in particular, enable them to play an active role in both civil society and the labour market.'

YOUTH POLICY



CLASSIFICATION / MULTI-STAKEHOLDER APPROACH IN YOUTH POLICY

Cross sectoral co-operation refers to co-operation between different youth work and youth policy sectors. Different institutions apply different terms to refer to a similar set of measures: inter-sectoral, cross-sectorial, inter-agency, integrated, inter-institutional. The main common denominator is that cross-sectoral cooperation involves different groups and institutions. There are different types of cross-sectoral co-operation – most can be divided into horizontal and vertical ones:

Horizontal cross-sectoral co-operation refers to work done jointly by public, private and third sector organisations. Another type of horizontal cross-sectoral co-operation entails bringing together youth sector co-organisations with those working with youth in other sectors such as education, social work or health. In other instances, horizontal cross-sectoral co-operation occurs between different government departments and units – this is also called inter-ministerial co-operation.

Vertical cross-sectoral co-operation can bring together different levels of public administration, including national, regional and local/municipal.

Vertical co-operation can also help to connect youth policy-making bodies (e.g. ministries or parliaments) and young people themselves.



YOUTH POLICY AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION

There is no universal definition of youth participation but international frameworks including UNCRC and EU/Council of Europe policies demand that young people be involved in the decisions concerning them.

Participation can take different forms - either 'direct participation' where political decisions are influenced directly and structural links to political decision-making processes are enabled or 'indirect participation' whereby young people are reached through various means as citizens and community members and encouraged to support certain issues and positions, also enabling discussions, opinion-building as well as campaigning.

Youth participation is fundamental to efficient, inclusive and multi-stakeholder youth policy. It is also central to key European youth policy frameworks. The 2003 Council of Europe's 'Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life', states that 'participation in the democratic life of any community is about more than voting or standing for election, although these are important elements. Participation and active citizenship is about having the right, the means, the space and the opportunity and where necessary the support to participate in and influence decisions and engaging in actions and activities so as to contribute to building a better society.'

YOUTH POLICY



WHAT ARE THE MAIN CHALLENGES (FOCUS ON EAP)?

Youth policy development in the Eastern Partnership region is a dynamic policy area that has seen significant developments notably in the last decade. Some of the challenges it faces are typical of any policy area in the region, due to the legacies of the Soviet period and general problems in participatory policy-making, notably: lack of inclusion of all stakeholders in policy development, lack of open and consultative policy processes, lack of transparency in budgeting and spending, lack of long-term planning and continuity and lack of citizen (youth) oversight over policy implementation. Some problems are specific to youth policy, notably: politicisation of youth and its participation, tokenism and lack of genuine active youth participation and patronising approaches to young people as passive rather than active contributors to policy processes. Finally, there are multiple challenges deriving from the issues faced by young people in the region, including high unemployment, lack of quality education, local and regional conflicts, disinformation and low levels of participation.



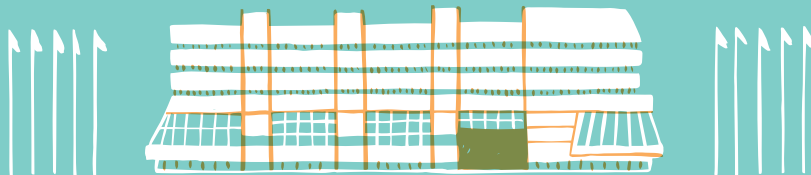
PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

● INTRODUCTION TO THE REVISED CHARTER

As mentioned before, this publication was built on the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life which was adopted in 2003 by The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (CLRA). This charter was proposed with a core idea that young people have the right and should have the opportunity to have a real say when decisions affecting them are being made at local and regional level.

The Charter was later backed by the recommendation adopted by the Committee of Ministers (Rec(2004)13) to member states on the participation of young people in local and regional life.

We chose these two documents as a blueprint for the project and for this publication as well, because it has a good coverage of the areas which should be explored in order to have quality participation on local and regional levels.



● COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Council of Europe is an intergovernmental organisation which was created after the Second World War with an idea to support building peaceful Europe. For this reason, three main directions were set - human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Today Council of Europe stands as a safeguard of liberties of individuals and societies in Europe with instruments like European Convention of Human Rights, which is considered as the most effective human rights system in the world.

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities a political assembly which brings together local and regional authorities from the 47 member states of the Council of Europe promoting local and regional democracy, improving governance and strengthening self-government.

Committee of Ministers - the organ that has adopted the recommendation, is Council of Europe's decision-making body. It consists of the ministers of the foreign affairs and decides on the policies, budget and the programme of activities.

Young people has been in the scope of Council of Europe's work from the very beginning. Through the youth department, Council of Europe supports international youth activities aiming to promote youth citizenship, youth mobility and the values of human rights, democracy and cultural pluralism. It has been supporting building the capacities of organisations and individuals which work for and with young people. Besides that, Council of Europe brings together young Europeans with the representatives of ministries and bodies responsible for the youth issues together to decide together through co-management on the priorities, programmes and budget of the youth sector.

IN LOCAL AND REGIONAL LIFE

● BACKGROUND AND APPLICATION TO THE REVISED CHARTER

This Charter is not binding, meaning that authorities take no legal obligation to fulfill the norms and guidelines laid down in it. However, it has a form of a recommendation, which means it's a good stimulus for policy transfer and diffusion. In addition, we should not forget that participation is a right to every citizen and the authorities have an obligation to have the rights of the citizens secure and fulfilled.

The name itself gives you a hunch that it was revised, therefore, there was something before revision. The first charter on participation of young people was adopted in 1992, ten years after the CLRA and the Advisory Council on Youth Questions of the Council of Europe to appoint experts to prepare proposals for amending the European Charter. This led to adoption of the revised charter in 2003.

The primary subject of the recommendation are the local and regional authorities of the member states, however, there are roles to play for other stakeholders like state governments, youth organisations, youth centers, youth councils etc

● CHARTER CONTENT IN BRIEF

The Revised Charter is divided into 3 parts: sectoral policies; instruments for youth participation; and institutional participation by young people in local and regional affairs.

Part I contains a review of different policy areas – such as health, urban environment, education, etc. – and suggests a number of concrete measures that can provide the necessary support for young people's involvement in their communities.

Part II explores ideas and tools that can be used by local and regional authorities to enhance youth participation such as training, information services, information and communication technologies, youth organisations, etc.

Part III focuses on institutional participation and the sort of structures and support that should be established in order to involve young people in processes where they can identify their needs, explore solutions, make decisions that affect them, and where they can plan actions with local and regional authorities on an equal footing. These may include youth councils, youth parliaments or youth forums and so on.

● CHARTER AND THIS PUBLICATION

This publication goes through all three parts and gives examples of practices that can be undertaken by the local authorities. Besides the good practices, we also have deliberated "DON'Ts" - what not to do, or what we think are the bad moves in these areas. We thought, it's sometimes hard to recognise some actions which can lead to negative outcomes or low quality participation. Other than that, we also provide our opinions on what else could work in each policy area or instrument. We tried to have "Eastern Partnership" dimension, we opted out the examples that we think fits the context and capacities of the municipalities in those countries.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND INSTRUMENTS

WHAT IS YOUTH PARTICIPATION?

Youth participation is young people being able to actively influence and be involved in the decisions that affect the quality of their lives - from the individual level up to the societal level. This covers all areas of life, including economic, political, social and cultural, and includes many areas of a young person's life - school, free time, employment, family, and health, to name a few. At its heart, the practice of youth participation is about building a good relationship with young people, supporting their development and leading together with them. Youth care about their communities and want to be taken seriously as important contributors to society.

Working with good and quality practices in youth participation also benefits municipalities in many ways. There is an increased ownership, relevant and effective policies that foster meaningful change and growth, engages more citizens and increases trust in governmental institutions. It makes policies relevant and effective so that it reaches the groups it's intending to reach and achieving what it's setting out to achieve. When youth have access to resources they can also contribute more to the growth of themselves, their communities and society.

HOW TO CREATE A PRECEDENT OF QUALITY YOUTH PARTICIPATION?

Three areas municipalities can focus on to ensure quality youth participation are:

Decision-making - are the voices, ideas and needs of youth integrated in local decision-making?

Welcome young people into decision-making about the use of youth policy and its resources and give them a say in the matters that concern them - which can be anything! Some mechanisms of participation in decision making include dialogue, consultations, mapping, research, co-management, and advisory boards.

Representation - are you reaching all youth in your municipality?

Some youth will have a harder time participating - there are more barriers, maybe physical, such as they live in rural areas, or social barriers - they don't speak the same language, are part of communities that are outsiders, (Roma, refugees, religious minorities), economic barriers, for example their family does not have the financial resources to support their participation. Girls and boys also have different opportunity to participate. Representation is ensuring that youth policy reaches all youth.

Activities - what opportunities are there for youth to meet new people and try new things and do things they like to do?

Participation is also about being active and doing things together, having fun and cultivating space for learning and growth! What is there for young people to do in your municipality? Who decides what activities there should be and is there possibility to try new things? Through activities young people also have the opportunity to express themselves.

Youth Participation is also a partnership between youth and adults trying to solve challenges together. Adults working with young people should be supportive, understanding, communicative, trusting, available, open to learning and teaching, curious. The voice of adults is given more power in society, be aware of that and lift the voices of young people. Young people should think about how adults can be focused on safety, risks, stability, and consequences and remember that this is based in experience.

FOR YOUTH PARTICIPATION



DON'TS IN YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Hierarchical, manipulative and patronizing relationships can have a negative impact on both young people and adults involved. It's important that the opinions of adults and young people have equal weight. While youth participation is about trusting young people with more responsibility, it does not mean leaving young people to do everything alone. Participation is most successful when there is a supportive, but not controlling, structure from adults. Both young people and adults can have a lot of stereotypes about each other so spend time breaking them down. Also, if you are having a hard time getting young people involved, don't assume young people are just not interested. Take the time to understand what the barriers to participation are. And if they do express disinterest, understand why! Even choosing to be disinterested is a form of participation.



SITUATION IN EAP COUNTRIES

In general, a common trend that appears while analyzing youth policies in the EaP region is double sided. On one end it integrated European youth policy trends and quality criteria in the legislation. But in reality, when it comes to the youth participation, events organised for youth, including the training activities, the post-soviet topics, such as patriotic education, military participation and education on family values are emphasised (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 9). Such activities rather focus on development of historical memory, promote the national culture, raise awareness on national identity and engagement of young people in activity beneficial for society. Furthermore, most of the policies aim at solving the social issues of young people (which is understandable in the context of difficult economic situation of youth in these countries, high unemployment and issues with housing, healthcare etc.), rather than programs focused on youth participation. In most of the EaP countries the NGOs, international organisation and donors are actively involved in creating educational programs, peer-educator networks, youth centres, and grant support schemes focused in youth participation (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 11).

TRAINING IN YOUTH PARTICIPATION

In many of the youth policy projects focused on youth work and training, as well as provision of youth leisure time activities at local level are overlapping. As there is neither a clear division of competence of institutions, as well local actions are done by municipalities, ministries, NGOs, political parties, international donors. The activities provided are often very similar. The lack of division of responsibilities and competence, lack of cross-sectoral cooperation, provision of activities based on self-realization of people working with youth and not youth needs, leads to the involvement of the same active youth. Another challenge connected to this lack of coordination is uneven distribution of these activities, when in one town, there might be several clubs financed from different donors or facilitated by NGOs and municipalities, while in another area, there are literally no activities at all (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 40).

Another challenge to be mentioned, which is connected to development of youth participation and implementation of the youth policies in EaP is lack of evidence based on youth research and analysis of the needs. As a result, an example of Moldova can be mentioned, where a variety of youth participation support structures such as the Youth resource centres exist all over the country, different types of youth consultative bodies exist in the country at a local, regional and national levels. However, due to the services and activities not being based on the actual needs, the significant number of structures does not assure higher level of youth participation as in the country it reaches only 11 % (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 31).

As a result, participation of young people in the youth policy cycle is mostly limited to the implementation phase, with little evidence of participation of young people in policy development or evaluation. Most participation measures remain ad hoc and mostly aimed at organised youth through youth organisations (Motamed-Afshari, Fras, 2015: 10). Moreover, the developed consultative structures become only a decoration, being not even incorporated in the youth policy implementation process.

The role of the international organisations, donors and private youth NGOs in the youth participation training should be mentioned. The documents from all the EaP countries mention the youth structures benefiting from the countries membership in CoE and EU Eastern Partnership programme and the opportunities for youth, youth workers and NGOs to take part in the international and local training activities of European Youth Foundation, Erasmus+ and SALTO-Youth Programmes. However, the lack of coordination and cross-sectoral collaboration doesn't allow all the benefits from these opportunities to be used, larger numbers of young people to benefit from them and their results to be transferable and reflected in the national or regional youth policies.



INFORMING YOUNG PEOPLE, PROMOTING YOUTH PARTICIPATION THROUGH ICT AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN THE MEDIA

The youth information is an essential aspect of youth support in participation in civil society. Most of the countries in the EaP region announced youth information as important priority. But existence of youth information strategies or papers on youth information was not found. However, youth information networks exist and implement their information dissemination work. Only in the Republic of Moldova youth is involved in creation, collection and dissemination of information. The main challenge is that the youth is seen as consumers rather than providers of information and the full potential of involvement of youth in to media activities is not used. Youth information is being developed in the region and the first steps are already taken. However, it is important to develop strategies aimed at youth information and broader the use of ICT and media activities to involve youth to participate. (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 15)

In 2017 the web page youth.gov.ge was created by the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia which is intended as an united web portal and incorporates all the stakeholders working in the field of youth policy. (Tsereteli, 2016: 10) However, this website hasn't been updated since 2017.

Regarding the international opportunities for youth, it is worthy to mention Erasmus+ Info Centres specialising in youth work both on local and international level. At the same time, the Info Centres are experienced in organisation of promotional and informational events in their countries. Main aim of the Info Centres is to provide information on opportunities for young people and youth organisations within the Erasmus+ programme and support stakeholders in implementation of their projects (Salto-youth.net).



ENCOURAGING YOUNG PEOPLE TO UNDERTAKE VOLUNTARY WORK AND DEDICATE THEMSELVES FOR COMMUNITY CAUSES

There is no documented policy framework for skills recognition for youth volunteering and no governmental instruments to provide validation and/or recognition of youth volunteering. (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 30)

In the analysed data the need to develop recognition of volunteering, youth work and non-formal education is mentioned. According to the documents from Ukraine, close cooperation with the EU and introducing the steps for adopting European youth policy standards and principles for volunteering is being taken. However, programs are declarative and principles are only partly introduced and often are adapted to the Soviet traditions such as patriotism education, work with talented youth and mass youth activities (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 30).

According to Georgian legislation, volunteering is defined as “a socially useful activity voluntarily and gratuitously performed by natural persons, using their knowledge and skills, under organised conditions”. Georgian government policy considers youth volunteering as one of the effective means of non-formal education which aims to raise civic awareness among the youth and develop skills and values of free-of-charge labour that is beneficial to the public. The policy of the Government of Georgia aims to promote volunteering among the youth, engage unemployed young people, spread volunteering at the international level and involve volunteers in areas such as sports, social welfare, culture, human rights and environmental protection, humanitarian aid, health care, poverty reduction and agriculture, among others (Fras, 2018: 4).

There are several national programmes focused on promotion of volunteering, including The “Leaders’ House”, the “Volunteer” Programme, the “Two Generations” Programme and The “Trainers Working with Young People” programme (Tsereteli, 2016: 12).

The main direction of volunteering in Armenia is the volunteering of young people in YNGOs. Here the level of awareness of youth workers is quite low and very few of them can distinguish the volunteering in their organizations from being members of the organization.

There has been a specific scheme for the volunteers with Armenian origin from Diaspora coming to volunteer projects to Armenia. (Galstyan, 2018: 6).

One of the obstacles in popularisation of volunteering in EaP countries might be the experience of “forced volunteering” during USSR era - organised cleaning of large public spaces, usually carried out on Saturdays. A number of recent studies argue that currently observed negative attitudes towards volunteering in some of the post-socialist societies are a consequence of “subotnik” and similar experiences (Fras, 2018: 3)

In all the countries, the documents mention a positive impact of EU Eastern Partnership countries’ involvement in the Youth in Action and later Erasmus+ Programme and its European Voluntary Service. The opportunity of volunteering in an EU country has been a motivation for many youngsters. At the same time, the international volunteers in the communities also contributed to the general knowledge about volunteering and its principles.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND INSTRUMENTS



SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES;

When it comes to the support of the youth initiatives, the country reviews indicate funding as one of the most essential problem. In most of the countries the budgetary sources for youth affairs are very limited, an exception is Azerbaijan. Challenges such as mismanagement, lack of transparent mechanisms of resource distribution, political limitations on support for youth activities (and usage of youth resources for political reasons), absence of independent monitoring and evaluation mechanisms measuring the effectiveness of expenditures hinder allocation of bigger grants for youth policy (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 17). One of such extreme examples might be found also in Georgia in the project of Youth Camp Anaklia and its Project "PATRIOTI" where several millions GEL from the state budget were spent without any evidence of positive impact on youth participation (Asanidze, 2011: 55).

Another problem emphasised in the reports from Ukraine, is that organised youth is often part of political parties, youth leaders are politically biased. Situations of interest conflict often happen in youth policy funding matters. It often happens that civil servants, politicians and the NGO leaders represent the same structures in processes of public consultation or division of resources (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 30). Any benefits to young people are limited and therefore target by corruption (Borenko, 2011: 12).



PROMOTING YOUNG PEOPLE'S ORGANISATIONS, YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND CO-MANAGEMENT

The sphere of supporting the young people's organisations, participation has been on one side driven by the effort to meet the European standards and introduce the principles co-management, on the other side has been problematic due to lack of strategy and efficiency in the implementation, which leads to the principles of co-management being only in the documents but only partially implemented in reality. The emphasis in the region is made on consultative structures, but only recently the first actions in Moldova have been started to create such structures. Co-management is one of the highest forms of youth participation in decision-making and it is a future of the youth policy of the region that has yet to be developed. (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 16)

Especially difficult situation for youth organisations exists in Belarus where political participation of youth or use of freedom of speech is prosecuted by the Belarusian state power structures. As the report on youth policy and youth work in Belarus states: youth participation in civil society in Belarus happens in the areas chosen by the state. It clearly means that youth is welcome to participate and share their opinion as long as it is social, sports, culture, patriotic education and tourism field related. Political participation and criticism of the regime is persecuted. (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 23)

FOR YOUTH PARTICIPATION



YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND POLITICAL PARTIES.

Generally, youth in EaP is not very active in politics, culturally young male are more active than female in politics, but the situation is changing. Moreover, the youth supports political changes in the communities taking part in revolutions (Armenia, Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and Belarus), protests and demonstrations in all countries. It suggests that the youth is an important part of civil society, which supports and promotes political and social changes in which they trust. (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 11)

The most popular way of participation in civil society for youth is through the NGOs. There are more than 190 NGOs working on youth issues in Georgia (Tsereteli, 2018: 6). The working environment for NGOs is stable with few or no restrictions from the government.

More than 200 registered youth non-governmental organizations in Azerbaijan. There was no data provided in the country reports on youth political participation in Azerbaijan. No data was provided on a number of young people joining political parties or political youth movements (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 21). Throughout 2014 and 2015, a series of new laws officially aimed at tackling corruption and money laundering in relation to foreign funds and in NGOs were adopted in Azerbaijan. These laws were officially aimed at stopping the financing of illegal anti-governmental activities through international funds. However, a number of NGO workers have complained that this has had a major negative effect on the NGO and youth sectors (Polese, 2017: 17).

The main types of youth structures operating in Armenia are youth NGOs, student self-government organizations and youth wings (branches) of political parties. There were more than 3000 NGOs registered in Armenia of which around 50% are youth NGOs or work with youth (Tadevosyan, Lavchyan, Minassian, 2011: 6). The reports from Ukraine state, that although there are plenty of youth NGOs, they are mostly inefficient in involving people as surveys show that only 2% of young Ukrainians are their members and only 6% participate in their activities (Polese, 2017: 8).

Up to 10 % of all NGO field in Belarus is formed by youth organisation. These organizations can be categorized in 2 groups: 1st recognized and supported by the state and 2nd formally existing organization which struggle to survive. The later also trying to cope with state limitations and regulations (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 24).

INSTRUMENT 1

INFORMING YOUNG PEOPLE



WHAT DOES THE REVISED CHARTER SAY ABOUT IT?

Information is key! Having access to relevant information about activities, opportunities, and events for young people increases their ability to be involved in the community. Furthermore, information about many important issues that affect young people can help them make informed decisions in their lives and participate in the local and regional political, economic and social life. These may include: housing, homelessness, employment, sexuality, law, rights, education, drugs, health, career development, and transportation, to name a few. Young people are curious to learn and know more and lack of relevant and available information is a major barrier to participation and growth.

Support information centers that young people are able access and feel comfortable coming to. These centers can be independent or located in schools, libraries, cafés, youth clubs; any place where young people gather. Informing young people also means going to them, just because you have an information center doesn't mean that people will come there until you've made a connection with them and invited them.

Develop digital information platforms, such as websites and communication apps to provide this information. Continuously update the information and adapt it to the expressed needs and interests of young people. Informing young people also means staying informed about the world through the eyes of young people!

Communicate the information in a professional, consistent manner and allow for two-way communication so that youth can ask questions, give feedback, and be involved in spreading information. Word of mouth is still one of the best ways to spread information!

Make an effort to disseminate the information to every youth who lives in your region, taking into account youth who are excluded in some way. This can be youth who lack of access to the internet, youth with disabilities, speak other languages, are involved in crime, live in disadvantaged areas, for example.

GOOD EXAMPLES

DIGITAL PLATFORMS AND TELECOMMUNICATION

Ungdomar.se is an example of a digital platform made for and with young people. It is a website administered by a Swedish NGO, Fryshuset, where young people can discuss with each other, blog, ask questions and get information. Young people are a part of creating the content, are directly talking in contact with each other, and youth workers can use the site as a tool for consultation.

YOUTH AMBASSADORS

Youth are great ambassadors! An organization working in Colombia with rural youth in peace processes has community-elected youth representatives for each village in the region. These youth meet regularly to discuss different information and when they return to their home villages they spread the information to other youth in their communities. Have representatives from the municipality and political leadership drop by from time to time for youth to have direct contact with them. It is also possible to invite different representatives and experts from different organizations to lead discussions with youth during their meetings.

Invite young people to come speak with groups and classes of young people. Youth are very good at reaching other youth and can often create open discussions with each other that is hard for adult leaders to do. The young people can share about their experiences, run workshops about human rights, active citizenship and participation, and do activities. Inviting Young European Ambassadors to speak in schools, such as Tetritskaro Municipality did, informs young people about opportunities they have and inspires them to make connection.

MOBILE YOUTH WORKERS

A project in Kuopio, Finland, focused on reaching out to rural youth, who face a big challenge of mobility and travelling from place to place. There a youth worker travelled regularly between villages to have activities, connect with youth, listen to them and share information.



DON'TS

DON'T OVERUSE COMPLICATED TERMINOLOGY

Formal language is important and often mandated, but be sure to adapt to the needs of your public and deliver information tailored to different age groups of young people. Learn to communicate effectively with youth by having or attending a training course from ERYICA. Apply for financial support to work with youth information from the Youth Information Development Fund.

DON'T BE SLOW

Retro and vintage is cool, but information technology is evolving so fast that it is sometimes hard to track. It is very important to be up-to-date on what kind of means of media are the young people using to get the information and use them actively.

DON'T FORGET VISUALS

Involve young designers in creating the posters for the events or news to best reach young people. Avoid plain Word documents pinned to the announcement board is surely not enough. Putting in effort will go a long way to get attention on social media and by hanging up posters.

QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

It is tempting to brag about how many young people you have informed but the quality of this information is more important than number. How many young people understood the information they received?

Therefore, try to set yourself standards not only for numbers but also the quality of the information delivery.

DON'T BE DISRESPECTFUL

Young people appreciate when they are treated as equals, it is important to show respect and acceptance while communicating with them.

DON'T EXCLUDE YOUTH FROM CREATION OF THE INFORMATION

The best way how to create and spread information to young people is including young people in the process. They are the best ones to know what language and messages and channels young people use and hear. Involve youngsters in development of the websites, manage social media channels and even in creation of the leaflets.

INSTRUMENT 2

TRAINING IN YOUTH PARTICIPATION - INCREASE KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION

WHAT DOES THE REVISED CHARTER SAY ABOUT IT?

The success of youth participation is dependent on adults with knowledge of youth participation, the skills to work with and support youth, and how to coach them in implementing their ideas. Schools, associations and local communities are where youth spend a lot of time and have a lot of contact with adults so it natural to start implementing youth participation in these spaces.

In order to work effectively with youth participation, make sure teachers, youth workers, and all others working with and for young people, have training in methods of youth participation, human rights, civic education and non-formal learning. Young people should be given advice, guidance and support how best to be involved in decisions and actions that affect them in schools, youth groups and in their community.

They should also provide training, advice, and support to young people and should make sure it is run and organized to suit young people's needs.

Increase participation of students in schools by introducing civic education programmes in schools focused on participation and informing on rights, and how to be involved in decisions and actions that affect them.



GOOD EXAMPLES

TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Recognize youth work as a specialized profession that requires vocational training in youth participation. In countries such as Finland and Sweden, working as a youth worker requires a degree obtained from about two years of study. This is to equip youth workers with the knowledge to support the social development of young people, and the skills to organize meaningful and engaging activities for and with young people. Teach for Armenia is an organization which trains young people with knowledge in both formal and non-formal education methods. These young people then teach in schools that are in underserved area with the mission to increase the implementation of non-formal education.

School-based youth clubs in secondary schools, where informal gatherings take place. Activities in youth clubs are diverse and include sports, hobbies, and art. Pupils can choose and join their favorite clubs and establish one if desired

EXCHANGE AND COOPERATION

Support pedagogical innovation and encourage teachers to integrate non-formal/creative learning methods in lesson planning and to exchange good practices. eTwinning is one tool where classes from different countries can make exchanges over Skype. One eTwinning project between Moldova, Ukraine, Romania and Italy served to introduce students and teachers to new countries and cultures, and also engage children in presenting their cultures in their own ways.

WORKSHOPS IN YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Communities across the world organize events for international youth day. Organize workshops in youth participation for International Youth Day that is dedicated to learning and training in different aspects of youth policy and youth participation. This can be done in cooperation with youth, NGOs, schools, and municipal leaders. Young leaders can lead different parts of the day so that both youth and adults can practice participation. The UN offers a toolkit guide for what kind of events could be organized.

DON'T S

DON'T DO IT ALONE

Cooperate! Consult regularly the NGOs, youth workers in your area and young people in order to understand the needs for training and activities. Use all the capacities and potential existing in your municipality to plan long-term strategies for involvement.

DON'T DUPLICATE

The activities provided by NGOs and international organizations might be very similar to what you are planning. Find a way to collaborate instead of doing two different activities. Make sure to implement complimentary activities in the areas where young people do not have such opportunity otherwise.

DON'T CREATE ACTIVITIES THAT SERVE FALSE AIMS

Organizing big recreational events, patriotic education and national awareness actions does not equal youth participation. Focus on the types of activities young people are interested in, not those which you think are necessary for the nation. Young people's interests are necessary to the nation.

INSTRUMENT 3

SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE'S PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

WHAT DOES THE REVISED CHARTER SAY ABOUT IT?

Young people often have ideas about how to improve life or tackle problems in their community and need encouragement and the necessary support from the authorities to make them a reality. Supporting young people's ideas and initiatives builds trust between youth and authorities. Doing things together: young people and people who work in government care about the same things! Joint workshops, community projects or platforms can all help bridge the divide between youths and government officials. This also helps young people learn how the system works, who do they talk to, how to write and present proposals, and how to communicate professionally.

Some of the best ways for supporting young people's projects and initiatives is to facilitate the implementation of youth projects and provide professional help to run these projects. Local and Regional Authorities can also support the initiatives by providing financial, material and technical assistance.



GOOD EXAMPLES

MEETING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE - Gori and Zugdidi, Georgia

Have meetings with young people who have project ideas and initiatives. During a youth exchange in Gori, Georgia a group of young people had the opportunity to present needs of young people in Gori and also present ideas they have to meet the needs of these young people. Actively listen when young people make suggestions to the council. In Zugdidi municipality a group of young people wanted to fix the roads where there were holes. They took the initiative to write to the municipality and campaigned for the roads to be fixed. Recognize and respond to these initiatives.

FUNDS FOR YOUTH PROJECTS - Borås and Angered, Sweden

Set aside some budget for this so that young people (10 - 25) can apply for funds to support projects. The City of Borås, Sweden has a budget from which young people who are organizing activities for other young people can seek funds, up to 300€. In this case, a team of municipal youth workers make the decision about accepting the project. In another part of Sweden, Angered, the local youth council reviews the applications and decides how to distribute the funds for activities organized by young people. This funding also comes with support from a youth worker who coaches the young people in how to apply but also how to execute and evaluate their initiatives.

DON'T S

DON'T GIVE SPACE TO FAVORITISM OR NEPOTISM

This malpractice is not universal but is definitely wide-spread. This is a dagger in back of youth participation and cultivates a bad reputation for leaders and representatives which lasts through generations.

DON'T LEAVE THEM ALONE

Sometimes financial support is not really enough, young people might need support at all stages of the project - coming up with the initiatives, implementing and evaluating. Consult with the youth workers on how it should be done, in order not to overdo it.

DON'T IMMEDIATELY SAY NO!

Remember no idea is too small or too big - when you first hear an idea don't say no! Work together to make the idea doable. Young people often see possibilities and

INSTRUMENT 4

PROMOTING YOUNG PEOPLE'S ORGANISATIONS, YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND CO-MANAGEMENT

WHAT DOES THE REVISED CHARTER SAY ABOUT IT?

Groups that are set up and run by young people themselves are an ideal way for young people to learn about participation. In these groups, young people can have a real say in deciding what they want to do which allows them to take full responsibility and learn about the challenges of decision-making processes. All young people should be able to join or start a group or organization if they would like.

Local and Regional Authorities should have a specific fund to support youth clubs and groups, with special emphasis on helping those groups set up and run by young people themselves.

At the European level and at the local and national level in some countries, a system called “Co-Management” is in place. This means that there is a structure where the authorities and young people representing youth organizations meet frequently in order to make decisions together. Both sides should have the same number of representatives and they should have the same rights.

When local and regional authorities set up these structures young people have the opportunity and ability to directly participate in decisions and actions affecting them.



GOOD PRACTICES

LEADERSHIP TRAINING AND EDUCATION - Borås, Sweden

Leader Academy for Young People is a training for young people active in NGOs and voluntary organizations active in vulnerable communities. 10 young people between 16 and 18 years old attend 30 hours of leadership workshops and work 120 hours in the associations, applying skills they have learned during the workshops. This is an interdepartmentally supported project in the municipality between the departments of Recreation & Public Health, Employment as well as the local associations and NGOs.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

CO-MANAGEMENT

Establish a network of young people's organizations and hold regular meetings to develop local youth policy together with them. Serbia?

<http://www.mmh.hr/files/ckfinder/files/co-mng-report.pdf>

http://www.mos.gov.rs/public/ck/uploads/files/YP_Serbia.pdf

As an example, dozens of local youth councils were established in the aftermath of the 2011 Arab Spring revolution in Tunisia — an initiative that has fostered newfound confidence between youths and local politicians.

<https://www.netmedyouth.org/news/shaping-national-youth-council-tunisia>

DON'T S

DON'T PRIVILEGE ORGANIZATIONS AFFILIATED TO YOUR POLITICAL PARTY OR THE GOVERNMENT

Even though it might be challenging in practice, the entire society will benefit from its elected representatives promoting pluralism and diversity of opinions on all levels. By only privileging the groups who promote and support your policies you are doing a disservice to your entire community and society.

DON'T PROMOTE FALSE PARTICIPATION

Consultation is not co-management. Especially when you do not really take the perspectives of young people seriously and do not include them in the policies and solutions. Pretending you are interested in young people's opinions might demotivate them and undermine their trust in the democratic system, which will have a long-lasting negative impact on society.

DON'T FORGET YOUNG PEOPLE'S SKILLS

Do you want to have strong youth organizations that can contribute to youth policies? Youth groups who can participate in co-management of the local youth issues? Organize or support trainings focused on development of competences young people need for such responsibilities, e.g. project management, debating, communication, budgeting, and deepened knowledge in thematic areas, i.e. environment and culture.

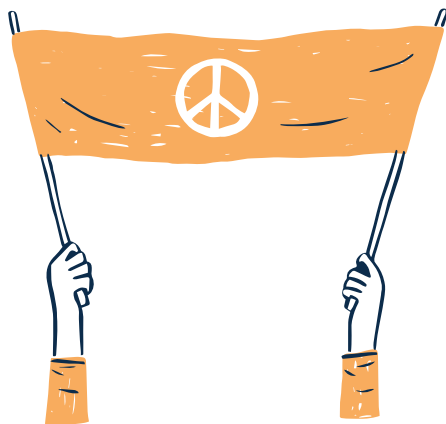
INSTRUMENT 5

PROMOTING YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND POLITICAL PARTIES

● WHAT DOES THE REVISED CHARTER SAY ABOUT IT?

Encourage young people to get involved in all types of organizations and causes. It is important that they have the choice, opportunity, and support to be involved in all types of organizations and groups, such as political parties and issue-specific organizations.

Local and Regional Authorities should provide funding to groups and organizations who actively welcome and support young people to be



GOOD EXAMPLES

OPPORTUNITY FAIR - Turku, Finland

Market of Opportunity, organized by NGO Sondip, is a fair where people can come to learn about global issues and about the work that more forty NGOs do in the area. It is to raise aware and encourage participation in organizations. People can talk to representatives from a wide range of NGOs and learn about different opportunities to get involved. This can be adapted to your local context and could include businesses, political parties and cultural and sports organizations. Design the day together with young people!

INTRODUCE YOUNG PEOPLE TO THE ELECTORAL PROCESS AND TO DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Leeds, England incorporates experience in participating in electoral processes as part of their Child-Friendly Cities initiative. As part of this, every year this is a “Children’s Mayor” elected by the young people of Leeds. Each school enters a candidate from Year 5 (11 years old) who then present ideas about what they want to change in Leeds. A panel of young people then select 12 candidates who then all youth 18 and under may vote for in an election. The winner then becomes “Children’s Mayor” and represents young people at different civic functions. Beyond that, the city council also votes to implement the Children’s Mayor manifesto into policy and supports the implementation of the initiative. 7,770 youth and children participated in the 2018 election, voting for a young boy pushing to tackle racism in Leeds community.

DON'TS

DON'T TRY TO CREATE YOUTH NGOs TO SUPPORT YOUR POLITICAL AGENDA!

Having youth NGOs, student associations and councils existing as a young wing of a political party or supporting your political agenda might seem as an attractive way for winning the votes of more young people. However, in the long term perspective, this only brings problems with polarization. By seeing the youth NGOs and youth groups as partners, listening and respecting what they have to say, you will bring positive changes to your community.

DON'T PERCEIVE YOUTH NGOS AS A THREAT!

The youth NGOs are a great way for young people to develop their competences and learn to participate in public life. By not respecting them and not supporting this way of participation, you might demotivate the new generation to be active in the development of the society, which is a threat to democracy. Cultivate the public discussion and consult the YNGOs, even when you might not agree with their perspectives.

INSTRUMENT 6

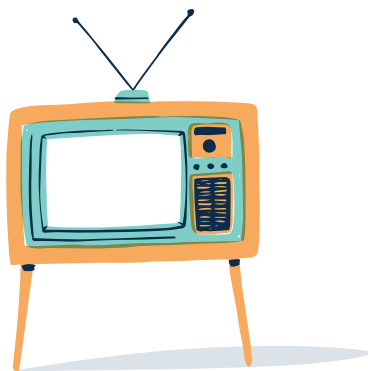
PROMOTING YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN MEDIA

WHAT DOES THE REVISED CHARTER SAY ABOUT IT?

Magazines and newspapers, radio and television programmes and the internet play an important role in the lives of young people. They can provide entertainment, information and can help consumers to develop their opinions and make decisions. Young people rarely have the opportunity to be involved in and contribute to media production. It is more difficult for them to contribute or develop their own media products, such as newspapers, local radio and television programmes.

Local and Regional Authorities should provide young people with easy access to media and means to express their voices. They should provide support for both the creation of young people's own media projects and representation in already existing local media through production of youth-led programming. To realize this they should ensure relevant training programmes for young people in communication, journalism and media production.

Beyond this, these governing bodies should ensure young people can access media and communication technologies. This means building efficient communications infrastructure, including network and internet.



GOOD PRACTICES

VISUAL MEDIA - Kyrgyzstan

An initiative in Kyrgyzstan, Children's Media Center, worked with young people aged 14 - 20 to produce a monthly, bilingual television newsmagazine (in Russian and Kyrgyz) on topics that the youth chose to explore. Examples included homeless children, mountain climbing, and child abuse. Adults were present to support and coordinate and youth make editorial and production decisions. These episodes were broadcast on state television channels.

RADIO SHOW - Lithuania

Dedicate airtime to youth-produced and run programming. In 2017 Lithuanian Youth Council produced a radio show that gave voice to the countries millennials. The show aired weekly and each week interviewed a different 20-something guest about their lives and issues relevant to them. This is great for communicating with the rest of the population about youth perspectives and participation.

WORKSHOPS IN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT - Alexandria, Egypt

For International Youth Day in 2018, the UNIC organized a four day camp for young people to develop skills in creating media campaigns in a number of different issues. A big focus was campaigning for young people to be involved in development processes.

DON'T S

DON'T SEE YOUTH AS CONSUMERS ONLY!

When developing media oriented to youth, do not think about young people as mere consumers. Involve them in the process as citizen journalists, producers, and writers. This doesn't mean practicing tokenism. Putting a young person in front of the camera only to present some information does not mean they are truly involved. Letting them making decisions about which information is presented and how it is presented is true involvement.

DON'T IGNORE NEW MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES!

Social media is one of the main sources of information for young people and they have better knowledge and experience of producing social media contents than many adult youth workers. Involve youngsters in managing social media pages in your municipality.

DON'T COMPETE!

To achieve higher efficiency of reaching young people in the municipality, make sure you cooperate with other organizations, schools, clubs, international initiatives, etc. Share the information from these institutions in your information channels and ask them to share the information about your activities at their media channels.

INSTRUMENT 7

ENCOURAGING YOUNG PEOPLE TO UNDERTAKE VOLUNTARY WORK

WHAT DOES THE REVISED CHARTER SAY ABOUT IT?

Support young people in doing voluntary work. Voluntary work can be beneficial for both themselves and the community. Through voluntary work young people can also learn new skills and knowledge which is relevant for them to find work. It is also an opportunity for young people to meet new people and make new friends. Young people today are in a lot of pressure to do well in school and in work and recognizing and validating voluntary work in formal education and employment can ease this pressure and stress.

Local and Regional Authorities should assist young people to volunteer by supporting the establishment of volunteer centres and funding voluntary organizations, especially youth organizations and volunteer centres. They can organize promotional and information campaigns on volunteering and give recognition to young people for their voluntary work.

Voluntary work also helps young people learn to find solutions to problems and know they have the power to change society and help others.



GOOD EXAMPLES

YOUNG VOLUNTEERS AT EVENTS - Göteborg, Sweden

NGO Passalen connects young people with disabilities to volunteer opportunities in different events around Göteborg, including festivals and concerts, through team Göteborg. Team Göteborg is made up of a group of young people of all abilities, and works together with Passalen to provide the extra support some young people need in order to contribute as volunteers. The volunteers and their mentors meet monthly to get to know each other, learn each other's needs and develop skills together so the volunteer days can be positive, fun and productive.

VOLUNTEERING WITH INTERNATIONAL YOUTH - Gori, Georgia

Be informed about volunteer opportunities for young people and host volunteers from abroad, through European Solidarity Corps (ESC), for example. Learn about opportunities for young people to volunteer abroad or in other parts of your country and inform others. During a youth exchange in Gori, May 2018, part of the Triangle of Participation project, youth participants organized different volunteer activities together, including picking up trash from the street. One group of young people received ice cream and soda from locals who stopped to share their appreciation for the actions the youth were taking.

DON'T S

DON'T IGNORE THE INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES!

Learn about the activities of Erasmus+ Youth Information Centre. Invite them to deliver the presentation in your local youth centres. Invite the international volunteers who can contribute to positive attitudes towards volunteering and non-formal education.

DON'T DEMOTIVATE YOUNGSTERS WITH SUBBOTNIK-LIKE ACTIVITIES!

Think about meaningful motivation for the volunteers and activities which develop their competences and contribute to your community. Design strategies for formally recognizing skills young people acquire through volunteering - many young people turn to volunteering as a way of increasing their employability.

CHAPTER IV

INSTITUTIONAL PARTICIPATION BY YOUNG PEOPLE IN LOCAL AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS

WHAT DOES THE REVISED CHARTER SAY ABOUT IT?

Local and regional authorities should undertake to put in place the appropriate structures or arrangements enabling the participation of young people in the decisions and debates affecting them.

These structures will take on different forms according to the level at which they are established, be it that of a village, a town, an urban neighborhood within a city, or even a region. They should create the conditions for genuine dialogue and partnership between young people and local and regional authorities and they should enable young people and their representatives to be full actors in the policies affecting them. Such structures should normally be representative and permanent, dealing with all matters in which young people express an interest. In addition, it can be envisaged that an ad hoc structure can be made to debate or act upon a specific issue. On occasion, it may be appropriate to combine different forms.

SITUATION IN EAP COUNTRIES

1. Youth councils, youth parliaments, youth forums

The efficiency of the youth policy system can be easily evaluated through the existence of youth participation structures, the principles used for their creation, management; legitimacy of youth representation, accessibility and attractiveness to young people. According to the external analysis of The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, the EaP region youth policy implementation structures and youth participation in civil society has a common characteristic of the National Youth Councils (except Belarus). All the countries state in their national youth strategies that youth participation and involvement in national and local decision making is one of their priorities. However, neither of the countries mentions the youth councils or any other youth institution as a part of decision making about the youth policy in a sense of co-management. Moreover, experts from the region mentioned the fact, that although according to the strategic documents the opportunity to take part in decision making and consultations should be open to young people and youth organizations, the rights are often reserved to specific organizations, which are supporting or not criticizing the state. An exception is the Belarusian National Youth Council, whose activities are illegal in the state and they are working “underground”. The Belarusian NYC is active at the European level and not in Belarus. According to the national report they are not seen as a representative body due to the reason that the NYC is not cooperating with the local youth field actors. (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 12)

As it was already described, typical youth participation structures for the region are consultative bodies, the evidence of co-management structures is lacking. Their role often is more symbolic. Young people are invited to join, but their legitimacy is limited as they are not elected by other young people (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 13).

The Georgian National Youth Policy Document mentions the plan to facilitate the development of instruments and mechanisms that will ensure institutional participation of young people in decision-making process and to provide opportunities to engage the youth in the decision-making process affecting them as well as in the implementation and evaluation process of the decisions (Government of Georgia, 2014: 7). However any tools are not described, as well as the process of monitoring are not envisioned. Similarly, Armenian documents mention The European Youth Parliament Armenia founded in 2012 as a forum designed to actively engage young people in modelling their future society. The Youth Parliament established in 2004 under the Standing Committee on Science, Education, Culture and Youth Affairs of the National Assembly for the purpose of facilitating youth participation in legislative processes has not been active at the moment (Voskanyan, 2017: 9).

The same report mentions that the programmes aimed at youth participation are mostly not coordinated. Several programmes are implemented in the same area, and in another area such programmes are not implemented at all (Voskanyan, 2017: 13). In Moldova, the latest reports only emphasise the necessity for developing, implementing and evaluating youth policies and the application of the co-management principle (Turcan, 2018: 14). In Ukraine there is no special legal framework for youth councils, even though it is mentioned that the regional and local administrations and municipalities may initiate creation of public youth councils under the general law regulation on participation of civil society in decision-making processes (Borenko, Ostrikova, 2017: 12).

Some positive steps to be mentioned have been initiated and supported by the non-governmental organisations working in the region. World Vision Georgia together with the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia supports the Telavi and Baghdati municipalities in effective functioning of youth councils formed by the elected community leaders who voluntarily join the group. Youth councils are supported through the Participatory Budgeting Model (PBM) through a project funded by the European Commission (Tsereteli, 2018: 6).

2. Support for structures of youth participation

As it was mentioned before, the general problem of supporting the structures of youth participation on the national and local level in all the EaP countries are limited budgets and economical situation of the countries. The state financial support for youth work and youth NGOs has been minimal, which is a current problem as well. It is also problem to get the long-term financed projects from international institutions, which supports sustainability on the organizations. The work with international donors also brings the challenges connected with the necessary skills of project writing, lack of experience, insufficient core funding for training of the experts and management issues in the youth structures (Tadevosyan, Minassian, 2011: 36).

Most of the country reports specify certain national programmes financing the activities of youth initiatives, however rarely the process of decision making shows any evidence of youth participation, as well as clear principles preventing favoritism. Specifically in Ukraine the reports mention lack of directions for de-centralised youth policy and its funding, when the main tool for support are open calls for proposals from civil society institutions, children and youth on the state, regional and local level, where no binding requirement to provide the calls exist (Borenko, Ostrikova, 2017: 15). Armenian reports emphasise launching of the online grants system <http://crager.am/> for the implementation of the objectives and priorities of youth state policy. The online grants system was supposed to allow more transparent and public access to state support for youth organisations and increase the effectiveness of the process (Voskanyan, 2017: 16). However, the system is not operating at the moment, probably due to the massive governmental changes in the country in the previous year. In Georgia the advisory council at the Ministry of Youth and Sport (currently at Ministry of Education) which makes decisions on giving funds from Children and Youth Development Fund is mentioned. Advisory council comprises with 15 members, 6 from youth NGOs and 9 appointed by minister included himself (Asanidze, 2011: 39).

In conclusion, most of the youth initiatives and structures of youth participation are dependent on and compete for the international funding. Among them might be funds from different UN agencies, as well as European Union, such as Erasmus+ specifically focusing on (among other topics) youth work, non-formal education, youth participation and active citizenship.

GOOD PRACTICES

ROLE-PLAY AND SIMULATIONS

Introduce young people to the processes of decision-making in government. In Ontario, Canada in the Parlements au secondaire program young people participate in a three day long program which introduces them to major actors in the government. They also have the opportunity to role the parliamentary process, including taking on roles representatives and ministers for a day and debating different issues. <https://www.ola.org/fr/visiter-apprendre/programmes/simulation-parlement-secondaire>

CITIZEN-DIALOGUE AND ADVISORY BOARD

Örnsköldsvik, Sweden

The municipality facilitates forums where young people can meet with politicians and discuss issues brought to the table. The main goal for the forums is for young people to ask questions and for politicians to understand issues from young people's point of view. Even ones they don't expect for youth to have opinions on, such as retirement homes. The municipality also has an advisory board made up of 16 youth, 13 - 25, who represent many different identities. Different actors, such as municipal departments, companies, and schools for example, contact the board when they are looking on input for different projects and decisions.

SOLICITING INPUT THROUGH TECHNOLOGY UNICEF U-REPORT

This is a free SMS-based platform through which people can express their views on what is happening in their communities and offers promising spaces for expression and influence. This is in place in Moldova and Ukraine - community members can give opinions on different issues and respond to polls to influence and inform policymakers.

YOUTH PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING - EXAMPLE: PORTUGAL

Participatory budgeting is when citizens get a direct voice in deciding where to send a part of their municipal, regional or national budget. Portugal has been working to implement these models on municipal levels. In the youth participatory budget, launched in 2017, a part of the national budget is set aside for specifically for young people 14 - 30 to decide which public investment projects to do. They do this by making applications for projects, that must follow criteria decided by the national youth council and the ministry.

file:///C:/Users/EU526/Downloads/RCM_opjovem.pdf

<https://opjovem.gov.pt/projetos2018>

The government cited that the method proved to increase democratic literacy among young people, as well as greater understanding for decision-making processes and knowing they are a fundamental part of society.



DON'TS



DON'T MISTAKE CONSULTATION FOR CO-MANAGEMENT

Creating institutions in which young people have only symbolic role, consultations which are not really being taken seriously and their results are not projected in practical policies only demotivate the youth and lowers their determination to participate, their trust in democratic institutions and wastes the potential young people have.

DON'T RELY ONLY ON NATIONAL STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS

In many cases the specific path and directions for developing institutional participation of youth on the national level don't exist. Learn from the positive examples around and initiate such structures in your municipality. Try to find international partners who might help with training, facilitation and also with seeking the necessary funding for such initiatives.

DON'T KEEP GOOD PRACTICES FOR YOURSELF

If you have a good experience with introducing institutional participation of young people, make sure that others learn about it. By exchanging information with other municipalities, you can improve the processes, build up a network of youth councils and contribute to the change also on the national level

- CHAPTER V

SECTORAL POLICIES

WHAT DOES THE REVISED CHARTER SAY ABOUT IT?

The revised Charter contains a review of different policy areas – such as health, urban environment and education – and suggests a number of concrete measures that can provide the necessary support for young people's involvement in their communities. Youth policy is a cross-cutting meaning it is absolutely necessary to incorporate youth needs and perspectives in different policies, projects and services implemented by not only the local and regional authorities but also state governments, non-governmental organizations and private sector. This chapter goes through 13 different sectors and gives brief situational analysis, good practices and DON'Ts.

AREA 1

HOUSING & WHERE YOU LIVE

WHAT DOES THE REVISED CHARTER SAY ABOUT IT?

Living independently is important for young people to develop as responsible and capable citizens. It should be possible for young people to access quality affordable housing. To make this possible, Local and Regional Authorities should provide housing information as well as funding and counsel to young people who want to buy or rent a home.

Local and Regional Authorities should also involve youth and young adults in decisions about use of space in cities and municipalities. In particular, this should happen when new housing and facilities are being built or renewed. This would ensure that there are more facilities, i.e. sports grounds, parks, playgrounds and places to hang out for young people. Authorities should also actively encourage and support young people and their organizations to be involved in decisions and projects aiming to protect and improve the places where they live.

Consult young people in the urban planning process to think about to address their needs for housing, transportation, and how they use the city space - where do they go, where do they not go, what is missing and so on. This can also contribute to increased safety in these spaces.

Housing is hard to secure particularly because there is a big financial barrier for young people who are studying or are without job security. Think about low-costs schemes that can be done locally and providing accessible information about housing.

WHAT IS THE SITUATION IN EAP COUNTRIES?

Generally, social issues such as housing and homelessness, are major obstacles to youth participation. In EaP countries, housing, together with youth unemployment and health care, is one of the big challenges that contributes to migration and brain drain. There is not up-to-date data on the housing situation of young people. However, judging by the difficult economic situation, it is reasonable to predict that the situation would be similar to or worse than in the post-Communist countries of the EU where about half of young adults aged 25-34 live with their parents. Some of the countries report state programs supporting young families' access to housing, in a form of financial assistance, subsidy or loans. However, the number of young people reached by these programs is very low.

One of the serious problems in EaP countries is the devastating situation of homeless children. In 2008, the first thorough survey (Public Defender of Georgia, 2009) initiated by international and local organizations was carried out to study the real situation of homeless children in Georgia. This survey revealed that 1,600 minors spent almost all day on the streets with no access to shelter because of hard social conditions or other reasons. Even today the problem has not been fully resolved and affects specific communities in all the EaP countries (Asanidze, 2011: 16; Polese, 2017: 26).

GOOD EXAMPLES

INTERGENERATIONAL COLLABORATION (The Netherlands) A policy in the Netherlands has approached this issue through an intergenerational approach. In five nursing homes dispersed through different municipalities of the Netherlands university students are allowed to live rent-free alongside the elderly residents. This aims both at warding off the negative effects of aging and providing housing for young students.

A HOME THAT FITS: Creativity for affordable housing (Helsinki, Finland)

A Home That Fits tries to solve the problem of housing for youth using existing space and buildings in unconventional and creative ways. The project involves a team led by a designer who specializes in community development and transforming spaces into temporary or long-term homes for young people. The team looks for facilities in unexpected places, for example, shipping containers. For example, container homes can provide affordable short-term living options for students in transition towards longer-term apartments or can also be permanent options for those who like.

DON'TS

DON'T IGNORE HIGH RENTS AS A BARRIER TO STABLE HOUSING

High rents and property values put young people in a situation when they cannot offer the rent or buy housing. Access to finance and stable income contributes to this, as well as speculators with short-term rentals controlling the housing market. Regulate and control the short term business and find pathways for young people to secure financial stable

DON'T GET RID OF SOCIAL HOUSING

If an institution of social housing exists in your country or city do not privatize it, as this benefits people who have already secured stability. If there is not such existing housing, research ways how to start it and how to support young people and other vulnerable groups seeking to secure affordable living.

DON'T GIVE PRIORITY TO WELL-CONNECTED YOUNG PEOPLE

It is important that public programmes benefit everybody without discrimination, housing programmes can be life-changing and must benefit those who need it the most.

AREA 2 — WORK & EMPLOYMENT

WHAT DOES THE REVISED CHARTER SAY ABOUT IT?

Young people who are unemployed can experience financial insecurity, isolation and exclusion from society. As a result, unemployed young people may become disinterested or find it harder to get involved in activities and groups.

Together with young people, Local and Regional Authorities should develop ways to help them find jobs and reduce unemployment. This can be done by setting up and running job centres that prepare young people for the world of work and help them find employment. There should also be support for young entrepreneurs to launch their business ideas..

WHAT IS THE SITUATION IN EAP COUNTRIES?

The rate of youth unemployment is high in most of the EaP countries, reaching up 40% in Armenia, 30% in Georgia, 23% in Ukraine, 13% in Azerbaijan, and 12% in Moldova (UNDP). Youth unemployment leads to rural-urban migration and emigration (i.e. to Russia or EU countries) as young people seek educational and employment opportunities that offer stability and access to growth (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 11). In spite of the this, we notice that comprehensive policy frameworks for youth employment with a clear set of policy priorities, targets and outcomes are rare. Where relevant programmes exist they are very limited in scope and outreach (Motamed-Afshari, Fras, 2015: 10).

Career guidance is a key measure across all countries; it is often linked with higher education institutions, with a focus on university graduates and students. There is a tendency across the region to improve employment and employability at regional/rural level through the provision of opportunities for apprenticeship and through voluntary youth work camps.

Emphasis tends to be placed more on supply side measures, while interventions to increase labour demand for youth (investing in skills employers look for and incentives for businesses to hire young people) are less frequent, especially at rural level. Young entrepreneurs face numerous challenges mainly of financial nature (e. g. insufficient start-up capital, high taxation rates and unfavourable credit conditions) while few initiatives address these challenges (Motamed-Afshari, Fras, 2015: 11).

It is interesting to notice that also among youth NGOs, the support of unemployed young people is not strong, fed by an attitude that sees young people as strong, full of energy and thus able to find employment independently. Unemployment is seen as a personal choice or laziness rather than a result of structural problems (Polese, 2017: 11).

GOOD EXAMPLES

MUNICIPAL SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO FIND JOBS (Québec, Canada)

As part of its Youth Action Strategy, the Municipality of Quebec supports services for young people to secure employment. In order to promote transition into working life and preparing young people for the global context, the services are wide ranging and comprehensive. These include job counseling, creating a customized action plan, free access to computer and the internet, regular follow-up, support in resume, cover letter writing and interview practice, coping with job loss, educational opportunities and information about the labour market. The program enables young people aged 18 to 24 to become independent and be supported during entry into the workforce and the retention of their first job, a return to studies, or in the realization of a career.

MEANINGFUL SUMMER JOBS (Borås, Sweden)

During summer Borås Municipality provides short term summer jobs for youth. Young Municipal Developers employs 27-29 young people for three weeks in the summer as consultants in different municipal departments. This is to get young people's input on and solutions to different challenges in the development of the municipality. The young people work in groups of two to three and receive an assignment on a wide variety of issues, such as making a movie for first-time voters, safety in pedestrian tunnels, the pyramid of violence prevention project, good parenting, and neighborhood safety.

DON'TS

DON'T FORGET THE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

There has been many different projects implemented on reducing unemployment of young people. In order to distinguish what works for your context, put a focus on quality impact assessment. This will help you to create more efficient projects next time.

DON'T ENCOURAGE INHUMANE AND EXPLOITATIVE EMPLOYMENT

In some cases due to absence of proper labour code, young people have to work long hours for disproportionately small pay. Young people cannot participate in the local and regional life if they have no time for it and are struggling to survive without a living wage.

DON'T LEAVE THEM ALONE

Try to stimulate activities focused on unemployed young people and employers build relationships and to develop their competences and qualification. This might require cross-sectoral cooperation of the NGOs, companies, vocational and other educational institutions and information services to spread info on job openings, courses, workforce reentry training and support for entrepreneurial initiatives.

AREA 3 EDUCATION & SCHOOL



WHAT DOES THE REVISED CHARTER SAY ABOUT IT?

Young people are obligated to go to school to get an education and acquire relevant knowledge. As a result, a lot of their time is spent in school studying different subjects and preparing for exams. But schools should also focus on social development, since school is a place where young people form their views and attitudes towards the world around them. Schools are an opportune place where young people can learn about participation, democracy and democracy in action. This means that it should expand from reading about democracy on paper to learning to practice it.

Local and Regional Authorities should work with students and teachers to ensure young people are consulted and have a real say in how their school is run. Students should also have the right, opportunity and funding to set up independent school councils. Teachers and school authorities should recognize that student councils have an important role to play and should work together with them in running the school.

Furthermore, adolescent and youth perspectives on education quality are missing from discussions on education policy and development. The lack of relevance of school curricula to the job market, the politicization of learning content, the inadequate preparation of teachers, violence in schools, the disconnect between curriculum content and exit/entrance exams and the lack of youth participation in education decision-making are also challenges to be transformed together with young people.



WHAT IS THE SITUATION IN EAP COUNTRIES?

Regulations for ensuring that young people have equal access to high quality education and training are in place in most of the EaP countries. Considerable obstacles hinder access to education for young people with fewer opportunities, including those with disabilities and those from rural and deprived areas. Although there are measures in place to increase capacity and staff training, the impact and efficiency of such measures cannot be measured due to lack of reporting. Most of the EaP countries have already started to develop frameworks to ensure recognition of youth work and non-formal education as well as assuring quality in these areas. Measures for improving the transition between education and training and the job market are limited in scope and outreach. Reducing early school dropout is not a policy priority (Motamed-Afshari, Fras, 2015:11).

It is relevant to point out that more and more young people in EaP have started to take part in short training courses or other educational programmes implemented with methods of non-formal education. These seem, to some extent, to help young people develop some skills they need to get a job (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 11). From these youth structures the most experienced ones are youth NGOs. Despite the lack of attention from the state, youth work is advancing step by step and managing to establish its importance. Many new youth NGOs working with non-formal education, human rights, participation, cultural, educational and youth policy fields have been started. However, the cooperation between these NGOs and formal educational institutions is limited and many of young people not involved in YNGOs miss out on these opportunities (Asanidze, 2011: 6).



GOOD EXAMPLES

DEVELOPING A CULTURE OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY (Lisbon, Portugal)

SOMOS for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education is a local education programme in democratic citizenship and human rights, run by the municipality of Lisbon using non-formal learning methods to develop a shared culture of human rights and democracy in the city. From the city council staff to a wide scope of target groups in the city, it provides training for free by cooperating with a broad range of partner organizations and institutions. It also promotes awareness-raising campaigns tackling discrimination and fostering social reflection and debate. Besides the training and networking dimension, the programme host activities which are open to the wider public such as cinema sessions and living libraries in themes such as the rights of the child, racism, LGBTQ rights, disability, gender violence and bullying.

PRACTICAL CIVICS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS (Illinois, United States)

Proven successful practices in public schools include encouraging students' participation in simulations of democratic processes and procedures. For example, by combining lessons on law, public speaking, and the responsibilities of attorneys and others inside the courtroom, Mock Trial simulates a court case in which students take on all the roles in the court, from judge to lawyer to witness. It serves

DON'TS

DON'T EXCLUDE NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Do not exclude the opportunities offered by the NGOs and other institutions promoting non-formal learning from the mainstream educational system. They are mostly providing educational activities in the areas which very valuable to young people's personal and social development, future employability or understanding to the human rights and civic participation. This compliments what teachers teach in school!

DON'T DECIDE WITHOUT YOUNG PEOPLE

Sometimes young people are best to tell you what kind of subjects they need in order to pursue their interests. Bring together various actors at the table in making decisions about curriculum and always include young people themselves.

DON'T JUST BASE JUDGEMENT ON YOUR OPINION

Decisions for educational content should be based on comprehensive evidences and needs analysis. Decide what kind of competences are missing by doing quality research to find the gaps.

AREA 4 THE RIGHTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE & THE LAW

WHAT DOES THE REVISED CHARTER SAY ABOUT IT?

Every community and country needs universally respected rules and regulations in the form of laws. These laws state what people's rights and responsibilities are as well as those of the state. However, many young people are not aware of their rights and responsibilities and sometimes it is not clear what is expected of them and what they should expect in return.

Local and Regional Authorities should provide young people with information on laws in all places where they spend time, such as in schools, youth clubs, public spaces, etc. They should develop and provide more information to young people on their rights and responsibilities. Authorities should also ask them for their views when they are changing the current rules and laws or when they plan to make new ones.

WHAT IS THE SITUATION IN EAP COUNTRIES?

Each country has policies and policy papers formulated about the legal concept of youth. Youth policy documents define youth as a group of citizens of a country whose age range is from 14 to 35 years old. The age range can vary from country to country, for example, Belarus and Ukraine have lower age limit (14), but no upper age limit, while Moldova and Armenia have the same age ranges for youth, which is 16-30. Most countries do not have analytical divisions of sub-groups of young people. Therefore analysis of participation of various youth groups such as rural youth, young refugees, LGBTQ, etc is not possible (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 10).

Youth have rights, but the level of participation is relatively low. According to the legislation youth can use their rights and freely participate in civil society and political life, but often the local reality is different (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 10). In general, external human rights watch organizations monitoring EaP report police and military violence, the violation of right of assembly, limited access to information and restricted freedom of speech.



GOOD EXAMPLES

INFORMING YOUNG PEOPLE (Bavaria, Germany)

Bavaria has a network of 2,000 youth coordinators who function as contact persons for youth policy in their municipalities. The Bavarian Youth Council started an initiative to establish youth coordinators in the 1990s. Today, almost all municipal and city councils in Bavaria designate one of their members to be a youth coordinator. These volunteers represent, assist with and promote child and youth matters, municipal youth policies, and thus also child and youth welfare work in their respective communities. Youth coordinators make sure that the local councils pay adequate attention to the concerns of young people and ensure the rights of young people.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH

UNIFORMED PROFESSIONS (East Gothenburg, Sweden)

The Person Behind the Uniform (MBU) is a program started in 2009 in East Gothenburg as a response to violence, vandalism and misunderstanding between young people and uniformed officers. A group of young people and a youth worker developed a ten-week course where youth could meet people working in different uniformed professions in their work environment, including ambulance drivers, police officers and firefighters. MBU seeks to increase youth participation, reduce crime and create good meetings between youth and uniformed professions to create a better understanding of each other as individuals and build mutual relationships and good reputations for both sides. The program has been replicated across Sweden.

DON'TS

DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES

It is important to fully recognize discriminatory practices and thoroughly prevent them. Training in analysis through intersectionality can help give the tools to easily identify discriminatory practices. This means understanding the experience of citizens through many different perspectives.

DON'T SHRINK THE SPACE

The right of freedom of association, assembly and expression is vital for the civil society and youth participation to develop. When the space for this is infringed, controlled or prohibited, the rights of young people are being violated.

PREVENTION OVER PERSECUTION

Many legal frameworks are based on persecution, not prevention or resocialization. It is not within the scope of the municipality to change the national law, however they can play an active role in prevention, resocialization and cultivating the rule of law.

AREA 5 HEALTH



WHAT DOES THE REVISED CHARTER SAY ABOUT IT?

Young people should be able to get information and advice about how best to live a healthy life. In particular, they should be given information on the effects of tobacco, alcohol and drugs. This information and advice should be provided without going into the rights and wrongs but focus on making healthy choices. Young people also need access to comprehensive health care, including mental health.

Local and Regional Authorities should provide advice, support and information that young people need to make informed decisions about these issues. This should be done in close cooperation with young people and their organizations.



WHAT IS THE SITUATION IN EAP COUNTRIES?

In most of the countries the emphasis on the promotion of the healthy lifestyle is part of the national youth policies. This usually includes promotion of participation in sports and spreading information on the negative impacts of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs. Most of the countries also specifically mention prevention and information campaigns on HIV/AIDS. However, in most of the countries the level of prevention programs is fairly low, including those focused on awareness raising (for example about drug addiction), and rehabilitation (Polese, 2017: 10).

The question of access to healthcare is problematic, as basic health insurance is not wide-spread and public health insurance programmes only cover small groups of the population and offer only partial coverage. For example, according to 2010 survey in Georgia, general medicine services are very expensive and for 28% of young people are not accessible at all. Specialized care is inaccessible to 32% of young people. Access to medication is at 40%, but 23% are unable to buy medication at all (Asanidze, 2011: 13). Even though the system has been reformed since 2010, the access to quality healthcare is still problematic.



GOOD EXAMPLES

SECOND CHANCE FOR ADOLESCENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES (Tbilisi, Georgia)

Life Chance is an orphanage and youth shelter that offers for young people between the ages of 18 and 25 who did not receive the support they need to succeed in school.. They identify young people at risk together with them advocates for access to services. The non-governmental organization collaborates with the Ministry of Health, international non-governmental organizations and a local church. Life Chance provides all kind of medical support for the adolescents including medication, doctor's visit, psychologist service, healthy lifestyle training, sports activities and excursions in nature.

AT THE COMMON TABLE (London, United Kingdom)

Recently, the municipality funded a participatory action research process followed by a large community learning event in which practitioners, community leaders, and decision-makers were brought together in dialogue with young people to develop understanding and explore responses to young people's health needs as a collaborative process. Youngsters at schools, universities and youth centers presented visuals to represent and communicate what health challenges they face, which can also limit their ability to participate. It drew attention to the 'policy gap' between professional understandings of young people's health needs and young people's lived realities and how this is reflected in differences in what young people and professionals consider appropriate responses to stress.

DON'T S

DON'T FORGET THE VULNERABLE GROUPS

Even though this usually falls under national policies, see what your municipality do for groups who are particularly vulnerable due to restricted access to affordable and appropriate healthcare, such as young women, LGBTQ youth, and young people with disabilities and chronic health problems. What are the national and international programs targeting them and is your municipality implementing them?

DON'T FORGET THE PRIMARY PREVENTION

Primary prevention is a key approach public health in order to reduce both illness and economic burden. It's important that municipality supports a healthy environment not only by words but also the way the city is planned, the way pollution is monitored and prevented and the way the waste is managed.

AREA 6 – SOCIAL, SPORTS & CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

WHAT DOES THE REVISED CHARTER SAY ABOUT IT?

Leisure, sports, cultural activities and events run by youth groups, clubs and organizations play a very important part in the lives of young people. In many communities there are very few interesting or exciting activities for young people. These activities and events not only help those involved to learn new things, such as leadership and organizing, teamwork, they also help them learn more about the local community, allow young people to build skills and confidence and make new friends, fostering social cohesion.

Local and Regional Authorities should encourage and support young people to get involved in, set up and run clubs and groups for young people. They can do this by budgeting money and providing facilities to youth groups and clubs, so that they can run activities and events in the local community. Such activities could be sports, plays, concerts, cultural evenings, and trips.

WHAT IS THE SITUATION IN EAP COUNTRIES?

A lot of youth policy actions are implemented through youth participating in recreational activities such as training courses, camps and big events. The activities provided aim to develop creative and artistic skills, project management training courses, sports activities, activities aiming to reduce human trafficking and campaigns on HIV/AIDS prevention (Polese, 2017: 10). Such actions do not attract many young people, as they are not based on their interests and are not initiated by them. From the national reports one can notice that at a local level, NGOs, municipalities and other actors organize very similar activities for youth in their free time, causing unnecessary repetition. The focus is slowly shifting to leisure and cultural activities truly initiated by young people and youth organizations and those are experiencing difficulties accessing public funding and are dependent on international donors (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 14).



GOOD EXAMPLES

THE ALLEY PROJECT (Detroit, United States)

The Alley Project (TAP) has engaged more than 120 young people in workshops working with local professional artists to produce work for a local garage gallery, an alley gallery, a small studio, and a garden lot. The program has built unexpected relationships with local stakeholders and decreased the levels of vandalism in their community. Graffiti may have a negative reputation but can also be seen as a medium and a tool for communicating with young people. The public nature of the project exposes the community to new ideas and breaks down stereotypes.

ULTIMATE SURVIVAL - Canadian Way (Shelburne, Canada)

The local youth thoroughly enjoy sports and recreation activities provided by the district of Shelburne. Courses in canoeing and kayaking are offered to give young people the chance to try out basic paddling and learn safety skills. All equipment is provided including kayaks, canoes, paddles and life jackets as well as any other safety gear. Another activity is humans versus zombies, an epic game of tag for children and youth with missions that must be completed in order to survive the zombie apocalypse. A free afterschool program runs twice a week for four weeks, providing the opportunity for children to try out different sports.

DON'T S

DON'T DEVELOP ACTIVITIES YOU THINK YOUNG PEOPLE SHOULD TAKE PART IN

Young people's interests might be quite different from what the adults at the municipalities think they are. By only developing and supporting the activities proposed by adults, you might demotivate young people to join the activities. You will see that if you use the resources on activities proposed, developed and co-managed by youth, you will have a much more interesting and diverse range of events.

DON'T GIVE TOO MANY LIMITS AND INTERVENTIONS

Especially when it comes to artistic expression, keeping an open mind can really stimulate unexpected creativity in young people and lead to unique outcomes which will enrichen your municipality. Appreciate and promote such initiatives with pride.

AREA 7 YOUNG PEOPLE IN RURAL AREAS

WHAT DOES THE REVISED CHARTER SAY ABOUT IT?

Living in the countryside and outside a city or town can be great, but there are some downsides. Young people living in these communities have little or no access to transportation and as result might be involved in fewer activities. They may also find it had to get a job in their local area.

Local and Regional Authorities should make special efforts to provide transport, employment and housing for young people in rural areas so that they can have a good quality of life. Local and Regional Authorities should also fund, support and help groups and clubs run by young people in rural areas. These investments allow young people who want to continue living in rural areas to do so.

WHAT IS THE SITUATION IN EAP COUNTRIES?

Youth NGOs are usually vibrant in the biggest cities of the country and active in all spheres: political, social, cultural, educational. Yet, scarce support to development at the local level of youth work as well as low capacity of local public authorities makes it difficult for initiative groups and youth organizations in the rural areas to survive. In most of the cases, little or no opportunities in rural areas push people to bigger urban centres and make it more difficult to find qualified or any volunteers, in these depopulated areas, which further hampers development of the youth sector in these areas (Polese, 2017: 23).

It is also important to note that regional and local youth participation structures have not been systematically developed and lack established management principles and performance quality standards. Moreover, the local and national structures are not integrated. It is important to develop systemic link between local and national youth participation structures. By linking local and national levels youth representation would become more legitimate and the system would expand its reach for young people (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 13).



GOOD EXAMPLES

RURAL LEADERS BUILDING PARTNERSHIP – Kinross, Scotland, UK

Rural Youth Project organized an Ideas Festival to help facilitate the involvement of young people in agricultural and rural life. To ensure relevance, the project organizers designed a survey to better understand rural young people's perception on their situation, aspirations, opportunities and challenges. The festival brings together young people who have shown leadership potential in their communities, organizations and workplaces, who could then apply their learning in their home communities. They had the opportunity to develop networks, skills and make connections with potential mentors. Rural entrepreneurship was lifted by involving local micro-businesses and suppliers. Multiple workshops focused on sharing skills, i.e. a mixology masterclass, wooden surfboard crafting and sausage making. Some workshops were held by young attendees themselves who shared the power of networking, how to grow micro-business and how to curate your story.

COMMUNITY BUILDING IN RURAL AREAS - Uدابno, GE

Using Erasmus+ funding, a small YNGO Compass created a practice of cross-sectoral cooperation by inviting municipality workers, NGOs and youth leaders from the Sagarejo Municipality to promote participation. They introduced youth work tools and event management for community building. Compass integrated the educational methods of mobility, mentoring and training, all cultivating in a festival at the end of the project. The festival contributed in mobilizing young people and adults to work towards a common goal to promote the potential of the village and local production. Youth workers played a key role in organizing a meaningful communication between relevant stakeholders and young people.

DON'TS

DON'T FOCUS SOLELY ON THE CITIES

There are usually many more existing opportunities in urban areas, facilitated by a myriad of NGOs, youth groups, and universities. Youth in rural areas need the attention of the public institutions, to create stimulating opportunities and overcome the barrier of distance and isolation.

DON'T ONLY GIVE UP ON RURAL YOUTH

Even though the resources are scarce, there are always creative solutions for reaching rural youth. One of the solutions might be supporting mobile youth work, reaching several villages in the region on specific days. Another strategy is to provide further training for engaged youth workers, volunteers and teachers in villages, and recognize their efforts!

GOOD INTENTIONS ARE NOT ENOUGH

Good intentions are necessary but not enough, supporting young people in words and action, giving the space, means and opportunities in meaningful ways, are considered key to the success of young people.

AREA 8 — TRANSPORT

● WHAT DOES THE REVISED CHARTER SAY ABOUT IT?

Community. They often have difficulties getting to their local youth club or other leisure or sporting activities because public transportation does not run when they need it, is too expensive, does not go where they are trying to go, or is not available at all. This can especially be the case in the countryside. As a result, many young people are excluded from activities and from being involved in local clubs and groups.

Local and Regional Authorities should, in cooperation with young people and youth organizations, work on improving these services and design public transport meet their needs.

● WHAT IS THE SITUATION IN EAP COUNTRIES?

Mobility is another big obstacle for youth participation in EaP countries. A majority of youth (except Belarus) are living in rural areas where public transportation network is ill-developed. As a result youth living in remote areas cannot reach and take part in existing opportunities (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 14).



GOOD EXAMPLES

FREE MUNICIPAL TRANSPORT FOR EVERYONE! (Tallinn, Estonia)

The public transport system in Tallinn consists of trams, trolleybuses and ordinary buses. The new policy - free public transport - increased mobility within the city limits as well as decreased air pollution and noise. The municipality saw an 21% increase in the frequency of bus users, 8% increase in new users on business days, evenings and weekends. More people were going out to spend free time and money in the city. Car traffic in the centre also decreased by 15%.

FARE-FREE, ALTERNATIVE, SELF-ORGANISED RURAL TRANSPORTATION (Ånge municipality, Sweden)

The Village Bus is a rural transportation system, which tests alternative rural transport solutions in order to develop sustainable rural transport systems. The village of 100 residents pilots transport solutions, most recently with a minibus with no fixed routes, or departure times. The bus is stationed in the village, is free of charge and people can ask the bus to be there at specific time. The bus also stops to pick up people standing on the road, often on its way to the bigger town 45 kilometers away. In one year, The Village Bus of Kölsillre transported more than 4 100 passengers, which is substantial for a population of only 100 inhabitants. People without a driving licence or access to a car can remain living in these remote areas. Even car owners use the bus since for them this is environmentally friendly and cost-effective. The bus also offers opportunities to establish social contacts. In March 2018, The Village Bus won a competition arranged by the Swedish Public Transport Association for the best solutions in public transport in Sweden.

DON'TS

DON'T BE A BAD EXAMPLE

Be a role model by using smart transportation, we suggest promoting cycling, walking or public transportation. Avoid driving a big, black, eco-unfriendly, taxpayer-funded car.

AREA 9 RESPECT FOR EVERY YOUNG PERSON



WHAT DOES THE REVISED CHARTER SAY ABOUT IT?

Everyone is equal and full of differences. Our community is made up of people from different backgrounds and situations, i.e. customs, cultures, identities and lifestyles. This also includes people with disabilities. We all expect to be treated equally and with respect and we should treat others likewise.

Local and Regional Authorities should promote understanding and a respect for human rights. They should also make sure that all young people no matter what their background or situation, be guaranteed equal access to all public services and facilities such as schools, public places and activities. Local and Regional Authorities should work with and consult young people and youth groups to promote equality and understanding among people from different backgrounds.



WHAT IS THE SITUATION IN EAP COUNTRIES?

Some of the EaP countries are characterized by a multiethnic population and due to conflicts also have large groups of internally displaced persons (IDP) and refugees. However, there are groups of young people that are omitted from the national strategies and who might be marginalized also due to the dominant norms in patriotic education, religion and promotion of traditional values. Such groups include certain national minorities, LGBTQI youth, migrants and ethnic minorities, such as Roma youth. Even though the policies stress participatory and co-management approaches, these specific groups are mostly excluded, or when included, used as decoration and tokenized instead of taken seriously (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 31).

In many cases NGOs are the advocates for work with youth with special needs or disadvantaged youth. This includes:

- Young people with physical, sensory and mental disabilities;
- Young people facing geographical obstacles;
- Young people facing discrimination due to sexual and gender identity;
- Young people facing educational difficulties;
- Young people from minority cultures (Polese, 2017: 4).

These categories are not equally supported by the state structures and public. For instance, work with LGBTQI may be hindered by general homophobic attitudes of the population, increasing the risk of working openly with LGBTQI communities and decreasing the degree of support from state institutions. In general, it is easier to work with disadvantaged groups that are officially recognized and publicly acknowledged as needing support, such as people with physical and mental disabilities. IDPs are also a widely recognized countries where a conflict is acknowledged by the authorities (Polese, 2017: 4).



GOOD PRACTICES

ACCESSIBILITY IN TRANSPORTATION (Stockholm, Sweden)

The City of Stockholm works to make the public transportation system accessible to all people regardless of physical ability. Trains and the platforms are at the same level and all buses have floor level access and ramps, so wheelchair and walker users can easily get on and off the bus. There are audio-visual digital information displays on all public transportation systems, showing line information and the name of the approaching station. There are digital information displays and automatic service announcements in bus terminals and at frequently used bus stops.

COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY IN CHALLENGING FINANCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES (Alessandria, Italy)

When the municipality was declared bankrupt in 2012, they turned to the private sector and local associations to ensure continuity of their plans to improve accessibility. In partnership with 40 associations of disability rights, the Office of the Accessibility has implemented initiatives such as a new bridge with a separate pedestrian facility and refurbishment of play equipment useable by all children including those with physical, sensory or intellectual impairments. There are also activities in schools to increase the awareness of children and young people including a solidarity race with sports demonstrations by disabled athletes and a virtual fines scheme engaging teenagers to detect traffic violations that impede accessibility (such as thoughtless parking).

CITY COUNCIL CAMPAIGNING FOR EQUALITY (Richmond, VA)

Richmond was recognized by Human Rights Campaign as a city 'leading the way to LGBTQI equality.' The city council of Richmond established a Human Rights Commission and anti-discrimination laws on the local level, designating a policy advisor to serve as the Mayor's LGBTQI liaison, and offering transgender-inclusive health benefits for city employees. One of the major directions of the city council is to create and support inclusive workplaces for the representatives of vulnerable groups. OutRVA is Richmond Region Tourism's award-winning campaign to highlight the area as a welcoming travel destination for LGBTQI visitors. In 2014, Richmond, Virginia paved the way in being welcoming by writing thoughtful coming out letters addressed to cities and LGBTQI celebrities, coming out as gay.

DON'TS

DON'T DISCRIMINATE

Do not discriminate and ignore youth organizations and young people from specific groups. Overcome the stereotypes. The entire society benefits when all its members are thriving and are not pushed out from decision making and public life.

MAKE SURE YOUR CITY/TOWN IS ACCESSIBLE

Did you make all you could for making the city accessible for the people with disabilities? Some cities install ramps which are in fact useless because they are built in such ways a person on a wheelchair could not use them. Sidewalks filled by parked cars make mobility around the city for the people with disability impossible.

AREA 10 – CRIME & VIOLENCE

WHAT DOES THE REVISED CHARTER SAY ABOUT IT?

Crime and violence is a major issue for young people. Many are victims of crime and violence, while a small minority are also involved in it. There is a need to involve young people in tackling crime and violence and to build trust between all the authorities, young people and the police.

Local and Regional Authorities should work with these young people at risk of becoming involved in crime and violence, and those already involved. They should also support projects, groups or agencies working to prevent crime and violence of all types, including the sexual exploitation of young people. Authorities should also ensure that young people are consulted and involved in local structures such as crime prevention councils.

WHAT IS THE SITUATION IN EAP COUNTRIES?

On paper, some of the countries of EaP emphasize programmes helping young offenders in socialization in society involving rehabilitation and social integration with a support social workers, mental health specialists and career/employment advice (Tsereteli, 2016: 12). The goal to create the penitentiary and probation system that is commensurate with European standards is mentioned in the documents of most of the countries. One of the fundamental parts of these reforms should be development of the juvenile justice system (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 31). However, there are many serious prevailing problems and lack of resources to implement such programmes in reality.

Furthermore there are reports of police violence in many of the countries, the violation of rights for demonstrations, free access to information and freedom of speech, as well as access to the rights for young offenders (Polese, 2017: 36). Young people can end up in the justice system as a result of these violations. Another serious problem in reality might be also criminalization of drug users and violence against them, which exists despite the declared emphasis on rehabilitation.



GOOD PRACTICES

THE LGBT+ HELPLINE (Bern, Switzerland)

The LGBT+ Helpline is the reporting service for homophobic and transphobic violence, as well as the advisory service for all LGBTQI issues. Volunteers respond to all questions about homosexual, bisexual or transgender issues, coming out, safer sex, information services, advice and more. In 2016, the LGBT+ Helpline began to collect the cases of homophobic and transphobic violence and report to it via the online form, by telephone, during face-to-face sessions or by e-mail. LGBT+ Helpline advisors are volunteers. They are of varying ages and backgrounds, with craftspeople, office workers, lawyers, doctors, psychologists, social workers and students.

BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAM FOR SCHOOLS (United Kingdom)

Youth Matters is a two-year school-based bullying prevention program that encourages positive relationships between students and school adults and promotes healthy norms in the school community. The main target of the program is upper elementary school students with a high risk of bullying behavior. The curriculum uses interactive instruction and emphasizes the consequences of bullying to both victims and perpetrators. Each module is conducted over ten sessions and ends with a classroom or school-wide project that focuses on the negative consequences of bullying and aggression and changing norms.

DON'T S

DON'T NEGLECT PREVENTION

Prevention programmes, when it comes to working with the youth with a problematic background, as well as preventive programmes focused on drug abuse are a must! Work with the experts on developing such programmes and make them one of your priorities.

DON'T STIGMATIZE

This is indeed a question of the national policies, but marginalization of young offenders, without the proper support and resocialization will indeed lead into more socio-pathological issues and crime. Cooperate with the non-governmental organizations, social workers and don't stigmatize the youth.

AREA 11 EQUALITY FOR WOMEN & YOUNG MEN

● WHAT DOES THE REVISED CHARTER SAY ABOUT IT?

Women and men are often not treated the same. This is a problem for both, but in particular limits young women's ability to participate and advocate for their needs and ideas. It would be better for all if everyone was treated equally.

Local and Regional Authorities should make sure that young women and men are treated equally in their activities and work. They should provide training on this topic and support for all, especially young women to achieve their full potential in school, university, work and all areas of their lives.

● WHAT IS THE SITUATION IN EAP COUNTRIES?

Most of the documents reviewed fail to mention any policies or priorities of equality of young women and men. The exception is Azerbaijani youth policy that aims to ensure equal rights for women and men. According to national reports this priority exists due to the challenges for women's employment and participation in other social spheres (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 22), as young women (even with higher education level) have much more difficulty finding a job than young men (Gafar-zada, 2011: 9). However, there hasn't been any evidence of how this policy is being implemented.

Gender equality is stated as one of the priorities of all the countries, even though it is not formulated as a specific policy focused on youth. However the countries' overview of the representation of the women in high positions and the political representation suggest that there is a lot left to be done on this level. Furthermore, countries such as Armenia, Azerbaijan and partly Georgia still have high levels of selective abortions when female fetuses are aborted, which is a cultural issue that needs to be addressed by education. In all the countries there are NGOs working on gender equality, and mostly receive support from international donors, as well as few smaller local foundations. Furthermore, LGBTQI services are not always easy to provide because of lack of awareness and sometimes hostility from some parts of the society (Polese, 2017: 19).



GOOD PRACTICES

LOCAL LEVEL GENDER QUOTA FOR EQUAL PARTICIPATION (Germany)

The aim of the Helene Weber Kolleg initiative, created in 2011, aimed to get more women into local politics, to improve their political career opportunities and create a network of support and cooperation. The Kolleg arose from the campaign Frauen Macht Kommune ('Women Power Municipalities'), launched in 2008 by the NGO EAF Berlin in cooperation with the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ). They do this through supporting female politicians through 10,000€ awards who execute local activities promoting gender equality in politics and a nine-month mentoring scheme for women who want to break into local politics (65 pairs so far), including job shadowing, networking and seminars.

MULTI-LEVEL GENDER POLICY BASED ON MUNICIPAL CONSTITUTION (Buenos Aires, Argentina)

The municipality of Buenos Aires promotes gender equality in its founding constitution, integrating gender considerations throughout all of its issue areas, and included a specific chapter dedicated to the promotion of equality between women and men. This gender-sensitive document was the result of a collaborative effort between the city government and various women's groups that were working to ensure respect for women's rights and the creation of an environment in the city that would allow women the fullest opportunity to realize their potential. Specific measures in the constitution include: assistance for women heads of household to access housing and credit, the consultation of women's organizations in the design of public policies, gender quotas for electoral lists, which has given women a greater voice in the local decision-making process. The initiative has led to a greater awareness of gender issues relevant to good governance and local democracy.

DON'TS

DON'T IGNORE GENDER ISSUES

Support youth initiatives focused on gender equality and work with the female experts on addressing the issues. Be a positive example yourself and make sure that representation in your municipality is balanced.

DON'T THINK "ONLY MEN"

Recent studies suggest that the policies, projects and even urban environment is predominantly designed for men, this is mostly because the decision are made by men. It is important to understand that public workers are accountable to every citizen regardless of their gender. Fostering diversity while making decisions or designing another public project should be an indivisible part of the process.

AREA 12

INTERCULTURAL LEARNING



WHAT DOES THE REVISED CHARTER SAY ABOUT IT?

Traveling to and living in another European country for a short or long period can help young people to find out and experience how others live. This can help develop a greater understanding among people from different backgrounds and countries.

Local and Regional Authorities should support and help young people, schools, youth organizations, volunteers and others to organize and run exchanges between young people and groups in their countries.



WHAT IS THE SITUATION IN EAP COUNTRIES?

According to the external studies, there are significant differences in tendencies and modes of internationalization and engagement with the Erasmus+ funding programme and other programmes, such as those of CoE European Youth Foundation. While Azerbaijan seems to be benefiting from the programme less and less, preferring local donors for a number of reasons, organizations from the other countries have a relatively good awareness of international funding opportunities available and engagement in the programmes (Polese, 2017: 26). The main drive in popularization of these programmes are the youth organizations which have been using them for many years and which have been actively promoting non-formal and human rights education and intercultural learning through international experiences and various local events. There is an imbalance in reaching the young people in the bigger cities and in rural areas. In all the countries, there have also been a few national programmes supporting mobility of young people, through study exchanges and participation in different international events, mostly focused on gifted youth.



SIMULATION: GOOD

MOBILITY FOR INTERCULTURAL LEARNING (Pasadena, United States)

The city of Pasadena has four sister cities through which the municipality provides various intercultural learning projects for young people. The student exchange program offers a special opportunity for students, ages 16 to 30, to participate in summer exchanges with the following international sister cities: Ludwigshafen (Germany), Mishima (Japan), Jarvenpaa (Finland) and Vanadzor (Armenia). Each of the sister cities provides accommodations with host families and visits to local attractions. Host families are unpaid volunteers who offer the students the invaluable opportunity to experience foreign family life and opportunities to participate in various planned activities. During this experience, young people are able to develop their language skills, participate in the social events, meet locals and learn about living abroad!

A GOOD USE OF EUROPEAN MOBILITY PROJECTS (Turku, Finland)

Turku Youth Services invests in young people to go to Europe for voluntary service, and for young volunteers to come to Turku. In order to achieve its goals, the municipality cooperates with associations, twin cities, partner organizations and the EU's European Solidarity Corp programme. Talking about negative phenomena, such as discrimination, racism, and violations of physical integrity, is also part of the operations. Through intercultural learning, young persons explore how they should react to such things, how to get help, and how important it is to go against these things. Possibilities include European youth projects, international youth exchanges, seminars and events, ERASMUS and Youth in Action programmes. There are more activities for immigrants, such as supporting immigrants and organizations in intercultural communication, navigating authorities, and organizing different events and training.

DON'TS

DON'T IGNORE INTERCULTURAL LEARNING

Get informed about the youth organizations in your municipality working on the topics of intercultural learning, invite them to discuss what can be done to involve more youth in intercultural and international activities. Not all have heard about them. Facilitating cooperation between youth organizations and local schools may contribute to more youth benefiting from such opportunities. And remember, you don't always have to go abroad to experience intercultural learning!

DON'T MISUNDERSTAND COUNTRY CULTURAL PRESENTATION FOR INTERCULTURAL LEARNING

Intercultural learning involves a complex methodology and approach. Organizing an event with presentation of one country and its culture may be only a small part of it. Support events managed by the experts. Like that the young people in your municipality will develop much more intercultural skills, which are extremely important in this interconnected world.

AREA 13

LOVE & SEXUALITY



WHAT DOES THE REVISED CHARTER SAY ABOUT IT?

Being in love and being in a relationship can be great. However, everybody has questions and doubts about love, relationships and sexuality. Young people are no different and in some cases may need more support because they may have less experience in dealing with these issues. So it is important that they get advice about how to avoid unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases, as well as abusive relationships.

People have different sexual orientations. Many are straight, but others are gay, lesbian and/or bisexual. Everyone wants to find love and happiness, however, sometimes they find it more difficult than straight young people because of the lack of support and understanding from others.

Local and Regional Authorities should support families, agencies and groups who are providing young people with information, advice and support they need about love, sex and sexuality. Young people and youth organizations should be actively involved in developing and running these services.



WHAT IS THE SITUATION IN EAP COUNTRIES?

Sexual health and healthy relationships are serious topics for young people. However, due to the cultural norms of most of the EaP countries, the topic is rather a taboo and is not discussed openly in educational institutions, media or even families. In some countries, the ministries of education struggle or even resist to include the topic in the national educational curricula and meet backlash of religious and conservative groups. Lack of proper knowledge thus leads to unwanted pregnancy (followed by much more frequent abortions than before) and STDs (Tadevosyan, Lavchyan, Minassian, 2011: 16).

Once again, the topic is mostly opened by non-governmental organizations, international organizations and youth NGOs. An example is the EU/UNFPA funded programme Reproductive Health Initiative for Youth in Georgia, focusing on the health development and empowerment of young people in sexual and reproductive health and rights issues (Asanidze, 2011: 5). There have been also examples of initiatives from Belarus, Georgia and Armenia focusing on youth reproductive health and healthy relationships that has been able to develop a network of youth multipliers on the topic of health, based on a peer-to-peer method (Polese, 2017: 20).

GOOD PRACTICES

ALLABOUTYOU.GE (Tbilisi, Georgia)

This website from Georgia by Women International Network about sexual education which aims to create educational content based on the lives of youth, feminism, sex-positivity, the freedom of choice, and tolerance and inclusion. The website gives correct, up-to-date information in clear, understandable language. The content includes articles about the body, physiology, sexual orientation and gender identity, sex, sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, and violence.

LOVE & RESPECT (Armenia, Georgia)

This project focused on prevention and awareness of teen dating violence and spread the principles of healthy a relationship. The project includes work with peer educators and uses new technologies, such as on-line apps, quizzes and communication through social media to reach the teenagers and young people. The project is a long-term international cooperation financed through Erasmus+ Programme.

DON'T S

DON'T BE AFRAID OF BREAKING A TABOO

Not talking about sexuality and healthy relationships and making the topics shameful and taboo might have a devastating impact on young people. Many of them may be using dubious sources of information. Make sure you promote the sources and events which provide accurate information, reflecting what is happening in young people's lives and are not simply forbidding or demonizing their sexuality and relationships.



CHAPTER VI

RECOMMENDATIONS

TO NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS:

- Involve young people and youth organisations in all elements of the policy cycle, including planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation
- Ensure inclusive consultations on all youth-related matters, involving key stakeholders from all sectors (public, private, civil society)
- Strengthen the evidence base for youth policy development, in order to ensure more evidence-based policy making and provide information on youth and youth policy to young people
- Ensure national-level validation and recognition of non-formal learning and volunteering in order to increase incentives for youth participation and contribution to policy-making
- Ensure co-management in all youth-relevant institutions and organisations

TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES

- Involve young people and youth organisations in all elements of the policy cycle, including planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation
- Ensure inclusive consultations on all youth-related matters, involving key stakeholders from all sectors (public, private, civil society)
- Ensure co-management in all youth-relevant institutions and organisations

To donors

- Provide joint support opportunities (funding and capacity-building) to all youth policy stakeholder groups, including young people, youth organisations, local and national authorities
- Enhance support to smaller and grassroots organisations, notably those from rural and deprived urban areas and those involving marginalised and excluded groups in order to foster a more inclusive and equal youth policy
- Tie youth donor funding to co-management and participation of young people in all elements of the project cycle

TO THE CSOs

- Involve other stakeholder groups and organisations in activities concerning youth policy, including local and national authorities, donors, for-profit organisations and other civil society organisations and groups (research, media, social partners/trade unions)
- Enhance outreach to members and communities in order to build stronger constituencies around organisations – this can help to better target work programmes and give CSOs a stronger voice in dialogue with authorities and donors

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CONFERENCE

On 14-16 of February 2019, there was a conference implemented in Tbilisi which was also part of project “Triangle for Youth - Young Leaders - Youth NGOs - Local Municipalities”. The conference hosted various actors working in the youth field and gave space for drafting recommendations to complement the ones above.

Based on the general recommendations of the conference, the high-quality participation of young people in the community life and decision-making processes should be maintained in a sustainable way. The state governments should increase the capacity of regional and local authorities in the implementation of youth policy in order to ensure the decentralised way of decision-making and problem-solving in the field of youth. Decision-makers should have a rights-based approach while working on youth policies on and the discriminatory practices should be addressed to improve the young people’s access to rights.

The conference participants also highlighted the role of youth work and the need to provide support to the youth workers with the cooperation with the local self-government. Municipalities should provide training for trainers, teachers, tutors, lecturers, and youth workers in the field of youth work, youth participation, and human rights education. Young people should be able to have youth-friendly spaces for meetings, educational activities with own media and free space.

Youth policy should be more inclusive in the disadvantaged areas and increase opportunities for young people who face different social, economic and geographical obstacles. Due to the fact, that youth unemployment appeared to be one of the biggest issues in the communities of participating EaP countries. Therefore, programs which raise employability skills in young people should be provided and supported. Also, information about existing opportunities e.g scholarships for education, internships, exchange programs, projects, and services should be provided through different channels.

TO NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Policy & Strategy
 - Review, keep what’s good, improve what is not working;
 - Consult other stakeholders
 - Ensure there is a budget for implementation
 - And that each ministry has a youth strategy and that there is expertise to make it relevant and new.
2. Needs – Research them to make evidence-based work. Use participatory methods and have a monitoring and evaluation system;
3. Provide access to spaces for free for youth
4. Improve processing statistical information about the youth of different categories in one right range as youth is considered nationally (young persons with disabilities, NEET youth etc)

RECOMMENDATIONS

TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES:

The municipality should have a database of its young people and their education, moreover, there should be a labor market research done which will enable the local municipalities to create youth policies that fits the needs. In addition, private businesses should be stimulated with a cut of local taxes if they have young employees, or young people with disadvantage background within their companies. Every city should have a Youth Council which consists of representatives from smaller administrative units, e.g. villages/lands/communities nearby. At the same time, these units should have small local councils where they would decide which needs they want their representative to take to the Youth Council from the city. In order to spend the usually limited budgets as effectively as possible, municipalities should adjust the allocated money according to the Youth Council's decisions. On the other side, to increase the number of young people that benefit from Municipality's efforts, the Youth Council and its representatives would spread the word about every activity and opportunity for Youth to be involved in. Media should be encouraged to have more news about Youth in their publications. Keeping Youth's activity on the radar will make it an always relevant topic.

TO THE DONORS:

The challenges, that were identified/revealed, stated that it is a very important task for a person or organization to identify to what category does the "Donor" belongs to, and whom must applicant turn to when they are applying for their projects or ideas.

Therefore, the recommendations are the following:

To conduct international and local research for places of projects and ideas implementation;

To conduct a structural dialogue process with governmental and non-governmental representatives;

To provide administrative support of the development process: financial and technical as well as providing them with space and etc.

Improve quality control mechanisms;

For the EU Commission to learn concrete needs of each individual organization, also providing direct monitoring of the person or organization, for a better understanding of the request message and receiving fine feedback.

To give opportunities to newcomers/beginners.

TO THE CSOs:

- To give more independence to the volunteers at planning and managing projects based on their perspectives, needs and interests;

- To create more projects and initiatives involving municipality workers to support raising understanding in the field of youth;

- To increase the number of young people in every part of the project, including planning, implementing and evaluating;

- To provide more educational activities for young people which will be based on the sharing best practices;

- To provide voluntary work opportunities for young people in order to raise their employability skills for easier access to labor market.

- To provide further support for the beneficiary youth after the projects are finished and help them stay engaged and develop follow-up projects.

GLOSSARY

ACCESS TO RIGHTS

removing barriers and enabling young people to fully enjoy human rights.

ACTION PLAN

detailed plan outlining actions needed to reach aims and objectives, usually involving tasks, indicators, budget, responsible entities or persons, deadlines,

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

active participation of citizens in economic, social, cultural and political fields of life.

AGEISM

stereotyping and discrimination against individuals or groups on the basis of their age; ageism can take many forms, including prejudice, discriminatory practices, or institutional policies and practices that perpetuate inequality.

CIVIL SOCIETY

voluntary collective action that centres on shared interests, purposes and values. A civil society organization is an organizational structure whose members serve the general interest through a democratic process, and which plays the role of mediator between public authorities and citizens.

CHARTER

a document of a public importance which consists of the rights and laws, can be binding (parties adhere to the points laid down in the document) or non-binding (parties choose to mandate themselves).

CO-MANAGEMENT

a model of youth participation practiced for example in the Council of Europe youth sector. Representatives of both the governments and the young people decide together on the priorities, budgetary priorities, implementation of work priorities and on the allocation of the resources.

CONSULT

asking people for their views.

CULTURE

the software which allows the human hardware to function, while disputing the levels of influence that the software package actually has. The software is loaded by a process of enculturation; we absorb values, customs, normative standards, notions of common sense, and our ability to read the symbolic environment from influential factors in that environment.

DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

the idea that the government is elected by the people.

DISCRIMINATION

occurs when people are treated less favourably than other people in a comparable situation only because they belong, or are perceived to belong to, a certain group or category of people. People may be discriminated against because of their age, disability, ethnicity, origin, political belief, race, religion, sex or gender, sexual orientation, language, culture and on many other grounds.

EQUAL

the idea that even though we are all different, we all have the same rights, ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents.

GLOSSARY

GENDER

the socially-constructed set of expectations, behaviours and activities of women and men which are attributed to them on the basis of their sex. Social expectations regarding any given set of gender roles depend on a particular socio-economic, political and cultural context and are affected by other factors including race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation and age. Gender roles are learned and vary widely within and between different human societies, and change over time

HUMAN RIGHTS

your basic rights as a person, based on respect for each individual human life and human dignity.

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

refers to educational programmes and activities that focus on promoting equality in human dignity, in conjunction with other programmes such as those promoting intercultural learning, participation and empowerment of minorities.

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION INCLUDES:

promoting awareness and understanding of human rights issues, in order for people to recognize violations of human rights (learning about human rights);
developing the skills and abilities necessary for the defence of human rights (learning for human rights);
developing attitudes of respect for human rights, so that people do not willingly violate the rights of others (learning through human rights).

LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

public administration structures, led by elected officials, responsible for aspects of citizens' lives in their local communities.

LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

a settlement that has administrative borders and an administrative center, has an elective representative and executive organs, budget, revenues and estates.

Media products
press and media, e.g. TV, radio, newspapers.

NEET

youth who are not involved in education, employment or training.

New Media

means of mass communication using digital technologies such as the internet.

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

any educational action that takes place outside of the formal education system. Non-formal education is an integral part of a lifelong learning concept that ensures that young people and adults acquire and maintain the skills, abilities and dispositions needed to adapt to a continuously changing environment. It can be acquired on the personal initiative of each individual through different learning activities taking place outside the formal educational system. An important part of non-formal education is carried out by non-governmental organizations involved in community and youth work.

PUBLIC POLICY

a set of measures taken by a legal authority responsible for improving the living conditions of the citizens and designing of measures to stimulate economic growth.

GLOSSARY

SOCIAL INCLUSION

improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of people, disadvantaged on the basis of their identity, to take part in society - or the process of removing the factors that cause the social exclusion.

SOCIAL EXCLUSION

the failure of society to provide certain individuals and groups with those rights and benefits that are normally available to members of society.

STRATEGY

a directed course of action to achieve an intended set of goals. In contrast to policy, strategies are more flexible and it can be modified as the environment changes.

STRUCTURED DIALOGUE

a class of dialogue practices developed as a tool to focus discussion and energy on problem understanding and consensual action.

YOUTH ORGANISATION

generally understood to be youth-led, non-profit, voluntary, and participatory non-governmental associations. Under some circumstances, youth organizations may form part of the state apparatus.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION

having the right, the means, the space and the opportunity and where necessary the support to participate in and influence decisions and engaging in actions and activities so as to contribute to building a better society.

YOUTH COUNCILS

a form of youth involvement in a participatory decision making process. There are various forms of youth councils depending on their structure, on how they are elected, on which level they exist, which young people or groups of young people they represent.

YOUTH POLICY

a strategy implemented by public authorities with the purpose of providing young people with opportunities and experiences that support their successful integration into society and enable them to be active and responsible members of their societies, as well as agents of change.

YOUTH WORK

activities carried out for, by and with young people through non-formal and informal learning for the purpose of personal and/or professional growth.

FURTHER READING

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Grace, P. and Grace, J. (2017), 360 Degree Participation Handbook, Birmingham: Youth Work Europe

Matthews, H. (2001) 'Citizenship, youth councils, and young people's participation', Journal of Youth Studies, 4 (3), 299-318.

Recommendation No. R (97) 3 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on youth participation and the future of civil society, Strasbourg: Council of Europe,

Recommendation Rec(2004)13 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the participation of young people in local and regional life, Strasbourg: Council of Europe,

Recommendation Rec(2006)14 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on citizenship and participation of young people in public life, Strasbourg: Council of Europe,

Recommendation Rec(2006)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the role of national youth councils in youth policy development, Strasbourg: Council of Europe,

Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on youth work, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2017

Williamson, H. (2007) Social exclusion and young people: some introductory remarks, in H. Colley, P. Boetzelen, B. Hoskins and T. Pareva (eds) Social inclusion and young people: breaking down the barriers, Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

Youth Policy Essentials (2017), Council of Europe and European Commission

Websites/online resources:

EU-CoE Youth Partnership
<http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/citizenship-participation-and-information>

Council of Europe – Youth Policy
<https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/council-of-europe-youth-policy>

European Youth Portal
https://europa.eu/youth/EU_en

EU Youth Report
https://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/implementation/report_en

FURTHER READING

The Value of Youth Work Report

http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/youth/library/study/youth-work-report_en.pdf

SALTO-Youth Portal

<https://www.salto-youth.net/>

European Youth Forum

<https://www.youthforum.org/>

Youth Work Essentials - Council of Europe,

<http://www.coe.int/en/web/youth-portfolio/youth-work-essential>

Instruments for Youth Participation:

Informing Young People

Digital Platforms and Communication

Ungdomar.se

Young European Ambassadors

<https://www.euneighbours.eu/en/east/eu-in-action/youth/stories-young-european-ambassadors>

Mobile Youth Workers

Good Practice in Youth Information, 2017, 10 SHE-yrica)

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59ab1130ff7c50083fc9736c/t/5bd9654ccd83666261ba9e53/1540973907525/Sheryica_2018_online+%281%29.pdf

Training in Youth Participation

Teach for Armenia

<http://www.teachforarmenia.org/>

eTwinning

https://issuu.com/maiaamaia6/docs/e-me__e-you__e-us.pptx

UN Toolkit

http://www.un.org/en/events/youthday/assets/pdf/IYD_Toolkit_2018.pdf

Supporting Young People's Projects and Initiatives

Meeting with Young People

<https://www.triangle4youth.com/blog>

Funds for Young People's Projects

<https://www.boras.se/upplevaochgora/barnochunga/utbytvolontararbetprojektstodochledarskap/projektkontor/projektpeng.4.22d8dbdb158917ddc57b28bb.html>

Promoting young people's organisations, youth participation and co-management

Co-management in Serbia

<https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/9848726/YOUTH+WIKI+SERBIA.pdf/d687393b-8b29-472e-9848-a81b199a592a>

<http://www.mmh.hr/files/ckfinder/files/co-mng-report.pdf>

<https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/9848726/YOUTH+WIKI+SERBIA.pdf/d687393b-8b29-472e-9848-a81b199a592a>

Promoting youth participation in non-governmental organisations and political parties

Opportunity Fair

<http://www.sondip.com/fi/en/events/>

Child-Friendly Cities

<https://breezeleeds.org/have-your-say/leeds-childrens-mayor>

FURTHER READING

Promoting youth participation in media

Visual media

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000149279>

Radio

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59ab1130ff7c50083fc9736c/t/5ba26b8b4d7a9c88ca64c733/1537371025374/Sheryica_2018_online.pdf

Workshops in Skills Development

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/international-youth-day-2018/world-map-of-events-2018.html>

Encouraging young people to undertake voluntary work

Young Volunteers at Events

<https://passalen.se/aktiviteter/goteborg/team-goteborg/>

Volunteering with International Youth

Institutional Participation of Young People

Young Parliamentarians

<https://www.ola.org/fr/visiter-apprendre/programmes/simulation-parlement-secondaire>

Participatory Budgeting

file:///C:/Users/EU526/Downloads/RCM_opjovem.pdf

<https://opjovem.gov.pt/projetos2018>

Sectoral Policies

Housing

Intergenerational Collaboration

<https://internationalsocialhousing.org/2017/05/29/learning-best-practices-in-housing-for-the-elderly-from-the-dutch/>

A Home That Fits

<https://www.muotilutarinat.fi/en/project>

<https://www.theguardian.com/housing-network/2016/sep/14/lessons-from-finland-helping-homeless-housing-model-homes>

http://www.mmh.hr/files/ckfinder/files/steps_towards_successful_youth_policy.pdf

Work and Employment

Municipal Support Programmes

<https://cijad-cjelaporte.org/services/>

Young Municipal Consultants

<https://www.boras.se/kommunochpolitik/kvalitetresultatochjamforelser/ungdomspolitik/ungakommunutvecklare.4.2cfd8fa7158d2732081dea05.html>

<http://www.youthfarmproject.org/>

<https://publications.iadb.org/publications/english/document/Technical-Notes-on-Gender-Equality-in-Municipal-Development-Experiences-from-Latin-America-and-the-Caribbean.pdf>

http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/youth/policy/youth_strategy/documents/youth-participation-brochure_en.pdf

<https://www.childtrends.org/programs/youth-matters>

<https://www.pps.org/article/young-people-and-placemaking-engaging-youth-to-create-community-places>

<https://www.accessibletourism.org/resources/toolip/doc/2017/07/08/access-city-award-brochure-2017.pdf>

https://www.eurochild.org/fileadmin/public/04_News/Members/POS_Jugendgerechte_Kommunen_EN_LL_KF.pdf

<http://pasadenasistercities.org/mission/>

