



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



YOUTH IN TRANSIT

YOUTH POLICY AND PARTICIPATION
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 the people responsible for their well-being and development. The focus is on the situation of youth policy in Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries of the European Union: 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 reality, from dictatorship to democracy, from people under control 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 met in these areas and offer readers some solutions.

HOW WAS THIS PUBLICATION 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 or no budget? In this publication, we try to focus on transitioning from recommendation to concrete actions for local communities by providing cases and examples that can be undertaken in the field of youth.

The publication is built 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 2003. 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 practices can be widespread but hard to identify and it is important to reflect on and recognize them.

We created this publication for people and  are involved in the youth field: youth organizations, youth centres, youth workers and local authorities. We hope with this publication they will be able to write 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 include cases and examples for eight instruments of participation, methods for institutional participation, and 13 specific policy areas. The sixth chapter covers recommendations to relevant stakeholders in order to improve youth policy management in the EaP countries. Finally, the glossary helps in understanding the key terms and one can discover further readings about the examples 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 and 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, a youth workers’ association established in 2003 in Tbilisi, Georgia, in cooperation with:

- SONDIP from Turku, Finland;
- KEKS (network based in Gothenburg) and the City of Borås from Sweden;
- YCIDDP (Youth Club for Intercultural Dialogue, Democracy and Peace) from Yerevan, Armenia;
- National Youth Council of Moldova;
- Gori and Zugdidi Municipalities from Georgia.

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

● ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE PUBLICATION

CoE - Council of Europe
CLRA - Congress of Local and Regional Authorities
CSO - civil society organization
EaP - Eastern Partnership
EU - European Union
EYF - European Youth Foundation
ERYICA - European Youth Information and Counselling Agency
ICT - Information and Communications Technology
IDP - Internally Displaced Person/People
LGBTQI - lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex

OMC - Open Method of Coordination
NEET - Not in employment, education or training
NFL - non-formal learning
NGO - non-governmental organization
UN - United Nations
UNIC - United Nations Information Centre
UNCRC - UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
YNGO - youth non-governmental organization

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 encompasses a complex and multi-level set of activities. On the basis of current research, mainly conducted by international organizations such as the Council of Europe (CoE) 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 organizations
- International cooperation in the field of youth
- Youth participation in policy-making and decision-making
- Evidence-based youth policy



YOUTH POLICY

● EUROPEAN HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

All European countries have 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 have been a part of governmental activities for a very long time (education, housing, health). The emergence of the welfare state after World War II prompted more coordinated and focused efforts of European states to address youth needs. At the international level, the Council of Europe pioneered international youth cooperation in Europe with the establishment of the European Youth Centre in 1972 and fostering the development of international cooperation in the youth field through its Youth Department.

Although there is no consolidated European Union youth policy, the 1999 White Paper on Youth later followed by the Youth Pact (2005) and the first European Youth Strategy (2010-2018) have created a de-facto space of European cooperation 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 documents, 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 (2003), 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, 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 cooperation refers to cooperation between different youth work and youth policy sectors. Different institutions apply different terms to refer to a similar set of measures: inter-sectoral, cross-sectoral, 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 cooperation – most can be divided into horizontal and vertical ones:

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

Vertical cross-sectoral cooperation can bring together different levels of public administration, including national, regional and local/municipal. Vertical cooperation 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/CoE 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 are 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 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 policy development 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: politicization of youth and their participation, tokenism and lack of genuine active youth participation and patronizing 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.

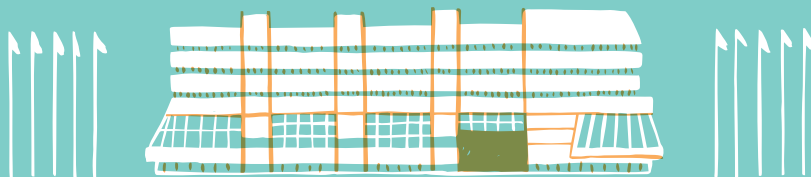


PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

● 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 the 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 a 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 because it has good coverage of the areas that should be explored in order to have quality participation on local and regional levels.



● COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities is a political assembly which brings together local and regional authorities from the 47 member states of the Council of Europe to promote local and regional democracy, improve governance and strengthen self-government.

The 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 of each member country and decides on the policies, budget and programme of activities.

The scope of work of the Council of Europe has encompassed young people 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 organizations and individuals that work for and with young people. Besides that, Council of Europe brings young Europeans together with the representatives of ministries and bodies responsible for the youth issues 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

The Charter is not binding, meaning that authorities take no legal obligation to fulfill the norms and guidelines laid down in it. However, its recommendations are excellent stimuli for policy transfer and diffusion. In addition, we should not forget that participation is a right of every citizen and the authorities have an obligation to secure and fulfill the rights of all citizens.

The name itself indicates it was revised meaning there is a previous version. The first charter on the 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, in order to appoint experts to prepare proposals for amending the European Charter. This led to adoption of the revised Charter in 2003.

The primary targets of the recommendations are the local and regional authorities of the member states. However, there are roles to play for other stakeholders including state governments, youth organizations, youth centers, and youth councils

● 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, and education – 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, and youth organizations.

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.

● CHARTER AND THIS PUBLICATION

This publication goes through all three parts, first examining part two, followed by part three and finishing with part one. It gives examples of practices that can be undertaken by the local authorities to achieve progress in these areas. Besides the good practices, we also have deliberated “DON'Ts” - what not to do, or what we think are negative approaches in these areas. It is sometimes hard to recognize actions which lead to negative outcomes or low quality participation. We also provide our views on what else could work in each policy area or instrument. Keeping in mind the realities in EaP countries, we selected examples that we think fit 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 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. Most importantly, youth care about their communities and want to be taken seriously as key contributors to society.

Like any good relationship, youth participation is mutually beneficial. Working with quality practices in youth participation benefits municipalities in many ways, including an increased sense of ownership, more engaged citizens and greater trust in governmental institutions. It makes policy relevant and effective so that it reaches the groups it is intending to reach and achieves what it sets out to achieve. It can also increase the possibility and desire for young people to stay in or return to their municipalities.

HOW TO CREATE A PRECEDENT OF QUALITY YOUTH PARTICIPATION?

We suggest focusing on three areas when looking to start and deepen your practices of youth participation: decision-making, representation and activities.

Decision-making

Ensure the ideas and needs of youth are integrated in local decision-making processes. Invite young people into decision-making about youth policy and its implementation and give them a say in matters that concern them, this can be anything and everything! There are many mechanisms of participation in decision-making, including dialogue, consultation, mapping, research, co-management, and advisory boards.

Representation

'Young people' constitutes a large, diverse group of people. Representation is ensuring that youth policy reaches all youth. Some youth have a harder time participating because they meet more barriers. These can be physical, such as they live in rural areas, social barriers, for example they do not speak the same language, are part of communities that are outsiders, ie Roma, refugees, religious minorities, or 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 based on different norms and expectations.

Activities

Participation is also about being active and doing things together, having fun and cultivating space for learning and growth! Evaluate what there is for young people to do in your municipality and who decides what activities there should be. By being involved in planning activities young people also have the opportunity to learn leadership skills and other skills, as well as express themselves and make connections.

Remember, youth participation is 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, and 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. It is 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 build a relationship with them and 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

An analysis of youth policies in the EaP region reveals two conflicting realities. On one hand there are trends to integrate European youth policy and quality criteria into legislation. But in reality, post-Soviet approaches for youth participation, such as patriotic education, military participation and family values are emphasized (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 9). Such activities focus on the development of collective historical memory, promote national and cultural identity and the organizing of activities for young people deemed by adults in power to be 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 and healthcare without using participation as a method. In most of the EaP countries, it is the NGOs, international organizations and donors who are actively involved in creating educational programmes, peer-educator networks, youth centres, and grant support schemes focused on youth participation (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 11).

TRAINING IN YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Youth policy projects focused on youth work, training and provision of recreational activities for youth at a local level are implemented by municipalities, ministries, NGOs, political parties, and international donors. The activities provided are often very similar and repetitive, including in reaching the same group of active youth. This can be contributed to a lack of division of responsibilities and cross-sectoral cooperation, missing competencies, and provision of activities based on self-realization of people working with youth and not youth needs. This lack of coordination also results in an uneven distribution of existing activities; in one town there might be several clubs financed from different donors or facilitated by NGOs and municipalities while in another area there are no activities at all (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 40).

Another challenge connected to development of youth participation and implementation of youth policies in the EaP is the lack of evidence-based research and analysis of the needs of young people. For example, in the Republic of Moldova there is a variety of support structures for youth participation, including youth resource centres throughout the country and different types of youth consultative bodies on local, regional and national levels. However, despite a significant number of structures for participation, youth participation lies at 11%. This could be due to the services and activities not being based on an analysis of the expressed needs of young people (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 random and mostly aimed at already organized youth through youth organizations (Motamed-Afshari, Fras, 2015: 10). Moreover, the developed consultative structures become only a decoration as they are excluded from the youth policy implementation process.

The role of the international organizations, donors and private youth NGOs in youth participation training is important to look at. The documents from all the EaP countries mention the youth structures benefiting from the countries' membership in CoE, the EU Eastern Partnership agreement 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 inhibits the benefits from these opportunities to be used and disseminated to a wide range of young people. The impact of the international training opportunities are hard to find identify in either national or regional youth policies.



YOUTH PARTICIPATION THROUGH SPREADING INFORMATION, ICT AND PARTICIPATING IN THE MEDIA

Spreading information about opportunities is an essential aspect of youth participation. Youth information is being developed in the region and the first steps have already been taken. Most of the partnership countries confirmed youth information work as an important priority, but actual youth information strategies on youth information are hard to find. Youth information networks exist and disseminate information, although these are mostly led by adults. Only in the Republic of Moldova are youth involved in the creation, collection and dissemination of information. The biggest challenge is that the youth are seen as consumers rather than providers of information and the full potential of youth involvement in the media is not recognized. It is important to develop strategies aimed at youth information and broaden the use of ICT and media activities to involve youth (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 15).

Regarding international opportunities for youth, it is worthwhile to mention Erasmus+ Info Centres specializing in youth work both on a local and an international level. Info Centres are experienced in the organization of promotional and informational events in their countries. The main aim of the info centres is to provide information on opportunities for young people and youth organizations within the Erasmus+ programme and to support stakeholders in the implementation of their projects (Salto-youth.net).



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

There is no documented policy framework for validating skills youth gain through volunteering and no governmental instruments to provide recognition of youth volunteering, the need to develop recognition of volunteering, youth work and non-formal education is mentioned. (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 30) According to documents from Ukraine, close cooperation with the EU to introduce the steps for adopting European youth policy standards and principles for volunteering are being taken. However, programs are declarative and principles are only partly introduced and often are adapted to Soviet approaches such as patriotic education, work with gifted youth and large-scale youth activities (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 30).

According to Georgian legislation, volunteering is defined as an “organized, socially useful activity undertaken voluntarily and gratuitously by individuals, using their knowledge and skills.” Georgian national policy considers youth volunteering as one of the most effective means of non-formal education which raises civic awareness among youth and develops skills and values that are beneficial to the public. The policy of the Government of Georgia aims to promote volunteering among 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 Leaders’ House, Volunteer Programme, Two Generations Programme and Trainers Working with Young People (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 also been a specific scheme for volunteers from the Armenian diaspora coming to do volunteer projects in Armenia. (Galstyan, 2018: 6).

One of the obstacles in the popularization of volunteering in EaP countries might be the experience of subbotnik, forced volunteering during USSR era - organized cleaning of large public spaces, usually carried out on Saturdays. A number of recent studies argue that the currently observed negative attitudes towards volunteering in some of the post-Socialist societies are a consequence of subbotnik and similar experiences (Fras, 2018: 3). In all the countries, 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 (now European Solidarity Corps). The possibility of volunteering in an EU country has been a motivation for many youth and young adults. International volunteers in the communities have 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 youth initiatives, the country reviews indicate funding as one of the most essential problems. In most of the countries, with the exception of Azerbaijan, budgetary sources for youth affairs are very limited. Challenges include mismanagement, lack of transparent mechanisms for resource distribution, political limitations on support for youth activities and the use of youth resources for political reasons, and the absence of independent monitoring and appropriate evaluation mechanisms, hindering allocation of bigger grants for youth policy (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 17). One extreme example is a Georgian project “PATRIOTI” in Youth Camp Anaklia, where several million GEL from the state budget were spent without any evidence of positive impact on youth participation (Asanidze, 2011: 55).

Another problem emphasized in the reports from Ukraine is that organized youth are often part of political parties, so youth leaders are politically steered. Conflict of interest happens often in youth policy funding decisions. Civil servants, politicians and NGO leaders often 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 targeted by corruption (Borenko, 2011: 12).

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

In supporting young people's organizations, participation has been driven by an effort to meet European standards and introduce the principles co-management, but has been problematic due to lack of strategy and efficiency in the implementation. This leads to the principles of co-management being on paper but only partially implemented in reality. The focus in the region has been on consultative structures, only recently have the first actions in Moldova 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 youth policy in the region that has yet to be developed. (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 16)

An especially difficult situation for youth organizations exists in Belarus where political participation of youth or use of freedom of speech is prosecuted by the Belarusian state. 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. This means that youth are welcome to participate and share their opinion as long as it relates to social events, sports, culture, patriotic education and tourism. 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 are not very active in politics, culturally young men are more active than young women in politics. However, the situation is changing. Youth support political changes in the communities, and are taking part in revolutions (Armenia, Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and Belarus), protests and demonstrations in all countries. This suggests that youth are an important part of civil society who support and promote 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 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. Azerbaijan has more than 200 registered youth non-governmental organizations in Azerbaijan. Throughout 2014 and 2015, a series of new laws were adopted in Azerbaijan targeted at tackling corruption and money laundering in relation to foreign funds and in NGOs. These laws were officially aimed at stopping the financing of illegal anti-government 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 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 at involving people. Surveys show that only 2% of young Ukrainians are members and only 6% participate in their activities (Polese, 2017: 8). 10 % of the NGOs active in Belarus are youth NGOs. These organizations can be categorized in two groups: first, recognized and supported by the state and second, informally existing organization who is struggling to survive. The latter are also trying to cope with state limitations and regulations (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 24).

A specific situation in some of the EaP countries concerns student unions, whose focus should normally be centered on advocating the rights of students. The unions have often been used by youth trying to enter politics, with the covert or overt support of different political powers. Many of the student unions were in fact extensions of youth wings of political parties or social movements and therefore not focused exclusively on advocacy for student rights. This tendency was also related to the leaders of these student unions and not to all the members, but is still occurring in some countries. (Asanidze, 2011: 34).

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. Young people are curious to learn and know more and lack of relevant and available information is a major barrier to participation.

Support information centers that young people are able access and feel comfortable coming to. These centres can be independent or located in schools, libraries, cafés, youth clubs, any place where young people gather. 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.

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.

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

Invite young people to come speak with groups and classes of young people. Inviting Young European Ambassadors to speak in schools, such as Tetrtskaro Municipality did, informs young people about opportunities they have and inspires them to make connection. 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.

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.

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'T S

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 GET BEHIND

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

DON'T FORGET VISUALS

Involve young designers in creating posters for the events or news. Avoid plain Word documents pinned to the announcement board; putting in effort will go a long way to get attention.

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? Try to set yourself standards not only for numbers but also the quality of the 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 know what language, messages and channels young people use and hear. Involve young people in the the design.

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. 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 areas with the mission to increase the implementation of non-formal education. This also encourages school-based youth clubs in schools.

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 with 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 much 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, such as 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 potholes in the road. 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 youth workers on how it should be done, in order not to overdo it.

DON'T IMMEDIATELY SAY NO!

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 creative solutions and need adults to advocate for them.

INSTRUMENT 4

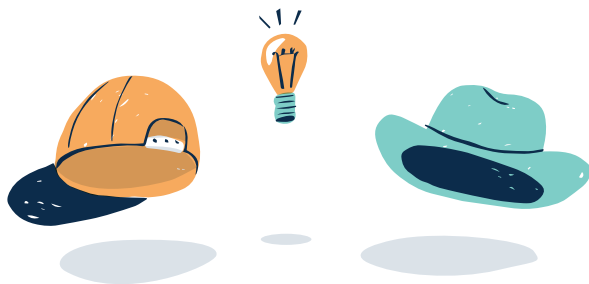
PROMOTING YOUNG PEOPLE'S ORGANISATIONS, YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND CO-MANAGEMENT

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, allowing them to take full responsibility and learn about the challenges of decision-making processes. All young people should have the opportunity to join or start a group or organization.

Local and Regional Authorities should have a specific fund to support youth clubs and groups, with special emphasis on helping those youth-started and youth-led groups.

At the European level and at the local and national level in some countries, the practice of 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 and the local associations and NGOs.

CO-MANAGEMENT -

Co-management is a complex practice that requires a lot of relationship building, power shifts and cycles of failures and successes. The principle has been used as a foundation for many projects attempting to include youth councils in policy decisions on equal footing as adults. In the 2000s Serbia incorporated it in its national youth policy and in 2008 trainings were held in three regions of Serbia as part of the national implementation strategy. A conference was also organized together with Croatian Youth Network (Mreža mladih Hrvatske), the Forum MNE, Montenegro and the Association of Secondary school students in Bosnia and Herzegovina (ASuBiH) to discuss the concept, share successes, and identify challenges and recommendations for improving the model. It has different levels of success and is continued to be worked with.

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 political 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 local youth issues? Organize or support trainings focused on development of competences young people need for such responsibilities, such as project management, debate, communication, budgeting, and deepened knowledge in thematic areas, i.e. environment and culture.

INSTRUMENT 5

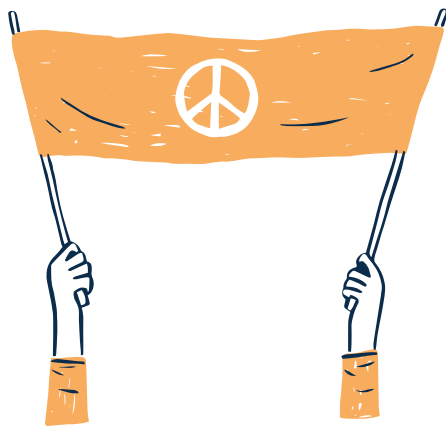
PROMOTING YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND POLITICAL PARTIES



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 involved in their activities and structures at all levels. They should support all political parties to encourage young people to become interested and active in politics.



GOOD EXAMPLES

OPPORTUNITY FAIR - Turku, Finland

“The 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 than forty NGOs do in the area. It is to raise awareness of 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 participation in electoral processes as part of their Child-Friendly Cities initiative. Every year a “Children’s Mayor” is 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 the Leeds community.

DON'TS

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

Incorporating youth NGOs, student associations and councils as a youth wing of a political party or supporting your political agenda might be an attractive way for winning the votes of more young people. However, in the long term this brings problems with polarization. By seeing 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!

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 discourage the next generation from being active in the development of the society, which is a threat to democracy. Cultivate the public discussion and consult YNGOs, even when you might not agree with their perspectives.

INSTRUMENT 6

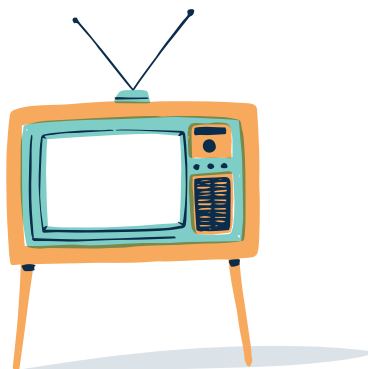
PROMOTING YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN MEDIA

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

With an initiative in Kyrgyzstan, Children's Media Center worked with young people aged 14 - 20 to produce a monthly, bilingual television newsmagazine 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 made 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 content than many adult youth workers. Involve youth 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, and international initiatives. Share information from these institutions on your information channels and ask them to share the information about your activities on theirs.

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. Young people also have the opportunity to meet new people and make new friends. Young people today are under a lot of pressure to do well in school and in work; 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 Gothenburg, 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 the 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'TS

DON'T IGNORE THE INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES!

Learn about the activities of Erasmus+ Youth Information Centre. Invite them to give a presentation in your local youth centres. Invite 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 put in place the appropriate institutional structures and practice enabling the participation of young people in official decisions and debates affecting them.

These structures will take on different forms according to the level at which they are established, be it a village, a town, an urban neighborhood within a city, or even municipality or 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 interest and concern. In addition, temporary structures can be created to focus on actions around a specific issue. On occasion, it may be appropriate to combine different forms.



SITUATION IN EAP COUNTRIES

Youth councils, youth parliaments, youth forums

The efficiency of youth policy for institutional participation can be analysed through the existence of pathways to participation, the principles they are grounded in, transparent management, legitimacy of youth representation, and accessibility and attractiveness to young people. According to the Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, all countries in the EaP, with the exception of Belarus, have established national youth councils as a step towards youth policy implementation and facilitating youth participation in civil society. All the countries state in their national youth strategies that youth participation and involvement in national and local decision making is a priority. However, none of the countries mention decision making through co-management with youth councils or other youth organizations. Moreover, experts on the region point out that while the strategic documents recognize 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 who support the state. In Belarus the national youth council is illegal and is working underground in Belarus and openly at the European level. (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 12).

As was already described, typical youth participation structures for the region are symbolic, consultative bodies and evidence of co-management structures is lacking. 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). Georgian national youth policy mentions the plan to facilitate the development of participatory instruments and mechanisms to include young people in the decision-making, implementation and evaluation process of decisions affecting them (Government of Georgia, 2014: 7). However, concrete tools are not described and monitoring processes are not envisioned.

Documents from Armenia mention the European Youth Parliament of Armenia founded in 2012 as a forum designed to actively engage young people in shaping society. Another youth parliament was 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, but is not active at the moment (Voskanyan, 2017: 9).

However, the programmes in youth participation are largely uncoordinated. Several programmes are implemented in the same area while other areas receive not attention (Voskanyan, 2017: 13). This is also all in transition as the government undergoes changes after the revolution in 2018.

In Moldova, the latest reports emphasize the necessity for developing, implementing and evaluating youth policies and the application of the co-management principle, but do not evaluate action being taken (Turcan, 2018: 14). For Ukraine there is no special legal framework for youth councils, even though it is mentioned that the regional and local governments may initiate creation of public youth councils under the general law regulation on the participation of civil society in decision-making processes (Borenko, Ostrikova, 2017: 12).

Some positive steps have been initiated by the non-governmental organizations working in the region. For example, together with the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, World Vision Georgia supports the municipalities of Telavi and Baghdati in facilitating youth councils on which elected community leaders serve. The youth councils use participatory budgeting models supported by a project funded by the European Commission (Tsereteli, 2018: 6).

Support for structures of youth participation

As mentioned previously, limited budgets and economic opportunity on the national and local level in the EaP countries presents problems to supporting structures of youth participation. The state financial support for youth work and youth NGOs has been minimal and there are challenges to securing finance for long-term projects from international institutions who seek accountability. Work with international donors also requires specific experience, knowledge and skills in project writing and management. Furthermore, states fail to invest sufficient 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, but rarely reveal evidence of youth participation in decision making, or clear practices preventing favoritism. Lack of direction in decentralized young policy and funding can also be a problem, as in Ukraine. There the main instrument for support is built on open calls for proposals from civil society institutions, children and youth. However, there is no binding requirement for the governments to put out calls for proposals, making it difficult to submit proposals (Borenko, Ostrikova, 2017: 15). Armenian reports mention launching an online grants system for the implementation of the objectives of youth state policy. The online grants system was intended to allow for more transparent and public access to state support for youth organizations 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 2018. In Georgia the advisory council at the Ministry of Youth and Sport (currently at Ministry of Education) which makes decisions on granting funds from the Children and Youth Development Fund is mentioned. The advisory council is comprised of 15 members: six from youth NGOs, eight appointed by the minister, and the minister himself (Asanidze, 2011: 39).

Most of the youth initiatives and structures of youth participation are dependent on and compete for international funding, including different UN agencies, the European Union and Erasmus+ funding for youth work, non-formal education, youth participation and active citizenship.

GOOD PRACTICES

YOUNG PARLIAMENTARIANS – Quebec, Canada

Introduce young people to the processes of decision-making in government. 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.

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 and can be implemented in other EaP countries. Community members can give opinions on different issues and respond to polls to influence policymakers. Policymakers can also seek input on specific issues.

YOUTH PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING - Portugal

Participatory budgeting is when citizens get a direct voice in deciding where to spend 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 submitting applications for projects that must follow criteria decided by the national youth council and the ministry. The government cited that the method proved to increase democratic literacy among young people, as well as a greater understanding of 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 a symbolic role, consultations which are not really being taken seriously and the results are not projected in practical policies only discourages youth and dampens 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 do not 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 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 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 providing 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 how to address their needs for housing, transportation, and how they use space - where do they go and not go, what is missing and what works well. 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 implemented locally and provide accessible information about housing.

WHAT IS THE SITUATION IN EAP COUNTRIES?

Generally, housing and homelessness are major obstacles to youth participation. In EaP countries, the challenge of affordable housing, together with youth unemployment and health care, contributes to migration and brain drain. There is no 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 is 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 the 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 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 live rent-free alongside 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. Container homes can provide affordable living options for students in transition or can 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 afford the rent or housing. Lack of 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 attain financial stability.

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 reached stability. If there is no 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 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 and 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, i.e. investing in skills employers look for, while interventions to increase labour demand for youth such as incentives for businesses to hire young people are less frequent, especially at rural level. Young entrepreneurs face numerous challenges, especially financial, (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 as opposed to a structural problem (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 the summer Borås Municipality provides short term summer jobs for youth. One employment program, 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, educating in the violence prevention project, good parenting, and increasing 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 develop efficient, successful projects.

DON'T ENCOURAGE INHUMANE AND EXPLOITATIVE EMPLOYMENT

In some cases, due to the 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 connecting unemployed young people and employers and developing their competences and qualification. This might require cross-sectoral cooperation with NGOs, companies, vocational and other educational institutions and information services. Spread information 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 for young people to 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 relevant 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 initiatives cannot be measured due to lack of reporting. Most of the EaP countries have already started developing 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 through non-formal education. YNGOs have the most experience in doing this and these help young people, to some extent, develop some skills they need to get a job (The Institute for Policy Research and Analysis, 2012: 11). Despite a lack of attention from the state, youth work is advancing step by step and managing to establish its importance. Many new YNGOs 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, run by the municipality of Lisbon, is a local education programme in democratic citizenship and human rights 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 broad scope of target groups in the city, it provides free training 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 training and networking, the programme hosts activities which are open to the wider public, such as cinema sessions and human libraries with themes such as the rights of the child, racism, LGBTQI 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 as an effective learning tool for students at any grade level. Mock elections are also widespread, as well as real elections to student councils for high school students.

DON'TS

DON'T EXCLUDE NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Do not exclude 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 that are very valuable to young people's personal and social development, future employability and understanding of human rights and civic participation. This compliments what teachers teach in school!

DON'T DECIDE WITHOUT YOUNG PEOPLE

Sometimes young people are best positioned 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 evidence 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, and public spaces. 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 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 define youth as 16 -30. Most countries do not have analytical divisions of sub-groups within young people. Therefore, analysis of participation of various groups such as rural youth, young refugees, and LGBTQ youth, 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 as youth coordinator. These volunteers represent, assist with and promote child and youth matters, municipal youth policies, and 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 increase 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 civil society and youth participation. The rights of young people are being violated when the space for this is infringed, controlled or prohibited.

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 national youth policies emphasize the promotion of a healthy lifestyle. 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 information and prevention campaigns on HIV/AIDS. However, in most of the countries prevention programs are minimal, including those focused on awareness raising (for example 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. According to a 2010 survey in Georgia, general medicine services were very expensive and for inaccessible to 28% of young people. Specialized care is inaccessible to 32% of young people. Access to medication is at 40%, but 23% are unable to buy medication (Asanidze, 2011: 13). Even though the system has been reformed since 2010, the access to quality healthcare remains problematic.



GOOD EXAMPLES

SECOND CHANCE FOR ADOLESCENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES - Tbilisi, Georgia

Life Chance is an orphanage and youth shelter for young people between the ages of 18 and 25 who did not receive the support they need to succeed in school. Together with young people at risk they advocate for access to services. The NGO collaborates with the Ministry of Health, international NGOs and a local church. Life Chance provides multidisciplinary medical support for the adolescents including medication, doctor's visits, psychologist service, healthy lifestyle training, exercise and time in nature.

AT THE COMMON TABLE - London, United Kingdom

The municipality funded a participatory action research process followed by a large community learning event. 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. Youth 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 revealed differences in what young people and professionals consider appropriate responses to stress.

DON'TS

DON'T FORGET THE VULNERABLE GROUPS

Even though this usually falls under national policies, see what your municipality does for groups who are particularly vulnerable due to restricted access to affordable and appropriate healthcare, such as young women, LGBTQI 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 in public health used to reduce both illness and economic burden. It is important that the municipality stimulates a healthy environment that can prevent certain illness from developing. One way is through city planning, monitoring pollution and managing waste.

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 role in the lives of young people. In many communities there are very few interesting or exciting activities for young people. Activities and events not only help those involved to learn new things, such as leadership, organizing and teamwork, they also help them learn more about the local community, allow young people to build 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. Many activities aim to develop creative and artistic skills, project management, and sports activities. Other activities focus on reducing human trafficking and 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, resulting in unnecessary repetition. The focus is slowly shifting to leisure and cultural activities truly initiated by young people and youth organizations, which 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 the 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 district of Shelburne organizes sports and recreation activities which the local youth thoroughly enjoy. Courses in canoeing and kayaking are offered to give young people the chance to try out basic paddling and learn safety skills with all equipment provided. Another activity is 'Humans vs. Zombies', a game of tag for children and youth with missions that must be completed in order to survive the zombie apocalypse. A free after school 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 adults in the municipalities think they are. By only developing and supporting 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 engagement and a 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 or outside a city or town can be great, but there are some drawbacks. 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 hard to get a job in their local area.

Local and Regional Authorities should make special efforts to provide transportation, 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 support, fund 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 big cities of the country and active in all spheres: political, social, cultural and educational. Yet, for youth initiatives and organizations in rural areas, scarce support to development at the local level of youth work as well as low capacity of local public authorities makes it difficult to survive. In most of the cases, little or no opportunities in rural areas push people to urban centres and make it more difficult to find qualified volunteers 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 with each other. It is important to develop a 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

To help facilitate the involvement of young people in agricultural life, the Rural Youth Project organized the “Ideas Festival” in 2018. 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 brought together young people who have shown leadership potential in their communities, organizations and workplaces, and who could apply their learning in their home communities. They had the opportunity to develop networks and make connections with potential mentors. Rural entrepreneurship was lifted by involving local micro-businesses and suppliers. Multiple workshops focused on skills-sharing, 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 a micro-business and how to tell your story.

COMMUNITY BUILDING IN RURAL AREAS - Udabno, Georgia

Using Erasmus+ funding, the small YNGO Compass fostered 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 to 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 villages in the region on specific days of the week. Another strategy is to recognize the efforts of and provide further training for engaged youth workers, volunteers and teachers in villages!

GOOD INTENTIONS ARE NOT ENOUGH

Good intentions are necessary but not enough, supporting young people in words and action, and 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?

Lack of access to transportation is a major hindrance to youth participation in the community. Youth 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 to 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. A new transportation policy - free public transport - increased mobility within the city limits as well as decreased air pollution and noise. The municipality saw a 21% increase in the frequency of bus users, and an 8% increase in new users as more people were going out to spend free time and money in the city. Car traffic in the centre 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 that had no fixed routes or departure times. The bus was stationed in the village, people can ask the bus to be there at specific time, free of charge. 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 Kösillre transported more than 4,100 passengers. People without a driver's licence or access to a car can remain living in these remote areas. Even car owners use the bus as it 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 their background or situation, are 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. There are groups of young people that are omitted from the national strategies and who might be marginalized due to the dominant norms in patriotic education, religion and promotion of traditional values. Such groups include certain national minorities, LGBTQI youth, and 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 youth are not equally supported by the state structures and public. For instance, work with LGBTQI is hindered by widespread homophobia,, 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 when ongoing conflict is acknowledged by the authorities (Polese, 2017: 4).



GOOD PRACTICES

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 continue 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).

ENSURING THE SAFETY AND PARTICIPATION OF LGBTQI YOUTH - Romania

A major barrier to the participation, health and safety for LGBTQI youth is homophobia and ignorance around LGBTQI issues. A major step that local and regional authorities can take is to facilitate teachers, youth and youth professionals to gain new knowledge and awareness for LGBTQI issues and two major resources here are NGOs and youth activists! In Romania, the NGO ACCEPT hosted a seminar between young people from Eastern and Western Europe to come with strategies and information campaigns to make schools a more secure environment for LGBTQI students. LGBT Youth Scotland sets up various commissions to ensure policy addresses issues LGBTQI youth face, such as gender recognition and housing and homelessness.

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

Have you done all you can 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 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 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 in 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 right of assembly, limits to access of information and freedom of speech, as well as access to 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 a reporting service for homophobic and transphobic violence, as well as an advisory service for all LGBTQI issues. Volunteers respond to all questions about homosexual, bisexual or transgender issues, coming out, safe sex, information services, advice and more. In 2016, the LGBT+ Helpline began to collect the cases of homophobic and transphobic violence through an online form, by telephone, during face-to-face sessions or by e-mail. LGBT+ Helpline advisors are volunteers of varying ages and backgrounds, including craftspeople, office workers, lawyers, doctors, psychologists, social workers and students.

BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAM FOR SCHOOLS - UK

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 how to change 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, rights 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 in order for 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, including highly educated young women, 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 women in high positions and 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 who mostly receive support from international donors, as well as a 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 society (Polese, 2017: 19).



GOOD PRACTICES

LOCAL LEVEL GENDER QUOTA FOR EQUAL PARTICIPATION - Germany

The Helene Weber Kolleg initiative, created in 2011, aimed to get more women into local politics, 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 to 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.

GENDER BASED APPROACHES IN YOUTH WORK - Northern Ireland

YouthAction is an NGO in Northern Ireland that works for equal inclusion and respect for young people's voices in their local and national communities. To address gender inequality they have the Gender Equality Unit and the Work with Young Men Unit who work on understanding individual, social and structural inequalities to participation for young women, men and non-binary people and come up with methods based on research and experience. One example, the Moving On Programme, focused on employability of young mothers by addressing financial issues, employment discrimination and burden of care which prevent young mothers from full participation in the job market. Another project focused on young men and violence to explore the roots of violent and abusive behaviours, challenging expectations put on men and helping them to make more effective and safe choices to solve problems.

DON'TS

DON'T IGNORE GENDER ISSUES

Support youth initiatives focused on gender equality and work with women and non-binary 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, mostly because the decisions 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 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 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 programmes 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 engage in the programmes (Polese, 2017: 26). The main drive in popularization of these programmes are the youth organizations who have been participating in the programmes and actively promoting non-formal and human rights education and intercultural learning. There is an imbalance between reaching young people in big cities and those 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 volunteer host families and visits to local attractions. During this experience, young people are able to develop their language skills, participate in 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 do voluntary service in Europe and for young volunteers to come to Turku. 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 programme. Through intercultural learning, volunteers explore how they can react, how to get help, and how important it is to interrupt these things. There are more activities for immigrants, such as supporting immigrants and organizations in intercultural communication, navigating authorities, and organizing different events and training.

DON'T S

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 MISTAKE 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 experts in order for young people in your municipality to develop deepened intercultural skills, an extremely important asset 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. It is important that they get advice about good communication, avoiding unwanted pregnancies, protection from sexually transmitted diseases, and getting out of abusive relationships.

People have different sexual orientations. People can be straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, asexual, pansexual and many more. Everyone of all sexual orientations wants to find love and happiness, however youth in non-straight relationships lack acceptance, 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 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 education 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 health 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 have 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 administered by the Women International Network about sexual education aims to create educational content based on the lives of youth, feminism, sex-positivity, 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 spreading the principles of a healthy relationship. The project includes work with peer educators and uses new technologies, such as apps, quizzes and communication through social media to reach teenagers and young people. The project is a long-term international cooperation financed through the 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 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, a conference was held in Tbilisi within the “Triangle for Youth - Young Leaders - Youth NGOs - Local Municipalities” project. 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, sustainable, high-quality participation of young people in community life and decision-making processes should be maintained. State governments should increase the capacity of regional and local authorities in the implementation of youth policy in order to ensure decentralised decision-making and problem-solving in the field of youth. Decision-makers should have a rights-based approach while working on youth policies and discriminatory practices should be addressed to improve 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 disadvantaged areas and increase opportunities for young people who face different social, economic and geographical obstacles. Youth unemployment appears 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:

- Review the youth policy and strategy, keep what's good, improve what is not working through consultation with other stakeholders. Research needs to make evidence-based policy and implementation. Use participatory methods and have a monitoring and evaluation system.
- Ensure there is a budget for implementation.
- Each ministry has a youth strategy and that there is expertise to make it relevant and new.
- Provide access to spaces for free for youth
- Improve processing statistical information about the youth of different categories (young persons with disabilities, NEET, homeless, refugee, etc.)
NEET youth etc)

RECOMMENDATIONS

TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES:

- Do labor market research, including having a database of its young people and their education. This will enable the local municipalities to create youth policies that reflects the needs. In addition, incentivize private businesses (ie local tax cuts) to employ diverse young people within their companies.
- Set up a Youth Council in every city which consists of representatives from smaller administrative units, e.g. villages/lands/communities nearby, as well as small local councils where they decide which issues to take to the Youth Council from the city. Municipalities can adjust the allocated money according to the Youth Council's decisions to ensure effectiveness. The Youth Council should ensure spreading information about every activity and opportunity to all youth.
- Encourage the media to have more news about Youth in their publications. Keeping youth activities on the radar will make it an always relevant topic.

TO THE DONORS:

- Communicate clearly what kind of projects and partnerships you are looking to fund based on international and local research for places of projects and ideas implementation.
- Initiate a structured dialogue process with governmental and local non-governmental representatives.
- Provide administrative support of the development process: financial and technical as well as providing them with space and etc. This in particular to give opportunities to newcomers and beginners, especially young people.
- Improve quality control mechanisms.
- The EU Commission should continue to learn concrete needs of each individual organization and provide direct monitoring of the person or organization.

TO THE CSOS:

- Give more independence to the volunteers in planning and managing projects based on their perspectives, needs and interests.
- Create more projects and initiatives involving municipality workers to support raising understanding in the field of youth.
- Increase the number of young people in every part of the project, including planning, implementing and evaluating;
- Provide more educational activities for young people which based on sharing best practices.
- Provide voluntary work opportunities for young people in order to raise their employability skills for easier access to labor market.
- Support for the beneficiary youth after projects are finished to 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 before decisions are made for public.

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

Books and papers:

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EACEA, (2013b) Youth Participation in Democratic Life, Brussels: EACEA.

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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,

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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/maimai6/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/utbytensvolontararbeteprojektstodochledarskap/prjektontor/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

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Workshops in Skills Development

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