

Youth Partnership

Partnership between the European Commission
and the Council of Europe in the field of youth



Symposium on youth participation in a digitalised world

14-16 September 2015

Key messages of participants

European Youth Centre Budapest

Zivatar utca, 1-3

1024 Budapest, Hungary

23/09/2015

Key messages for the four Symposium themes

Participants of the symposium “youth participation in a digitalised world” had been invited in a final session to four working groups aiming at the elaboration of key messages addressed to youth policy, youth research and youth work. The messages should look from a perspective of the four key topics that had been discussed in-depth during the symposium: Communication, Education, Economic sphere and working life, Democracy and Political Participation. Each of the four groups came up with a number of messages including concrete ideas addressed to existing instruments. A final panel with representatives of different stakeholders had the opportunity to react to these messages.

This paper summarizes the messages as presented to the plenary and discussed in the panel in the closing session. It does not cluster or synthesise the various messages, to be done at a later stage.

In a nutshell the messages propose:

- promoting all forms of youth participation, on- and offline, conventional and unconventional, new and old ones in all spheres of their lives to foster democracy and active citizenship
- providing blended learning approaches, including formal, non-formal and informal, as well as using a variety of digital and traditional tools and holistic education methods to innovate our education systems
- addressing all young people including the marginalised and hard-to-reach, amongst refugees and asylum seekers to strengthen solidarity, anti-discrimination, social cohesion and inclusion
- supporting mutual respect, understanding and learning between young people and their counterparts and making young people producers of their lives as well as critical consumers
- fostering democratic structures by preventing patronising approaches and establishing real partnerships and promoting flat hierarchies in education, training, working life as well as in their local communities
- exploring the future role of youth work, including the role of youth NGOs, youth workers and youth leaders in supporting young people to master the digital age, defining the competences of youth workers needed in this regard, identifying knowledge gaps and defining a respective research agenda and envisaging a more systematic and coherent youth policy approach.

The messages in detail had been reported as follows:

Communication

- Mix online and offline tools together to enhance coherent engagement and participation
- Look deeper how digital tools are shaping communication and engagement and at the specifics of the digital environment and how it is changing youth engagement

- Connect better existing data and surveys on how to shape programmes and better engage youth and 'translate' existing knowledge to understand it better
- Create a virtual community for sharing experiences and good practices using digital tools for getting inspiration
- Create an open space of discussion and debate among young people, youth workers, researchers and policy-makers
- Continue and develop a network to share best practices
- Go from a policy point of view beyond the EU digital agenda
- Look at the less connected and disadvantaged youth and regions and make possible what technologically or economically seems to be impossible
- Support programmes to offer free Wi-Fi- open spaces for accessing the internet
- Support initiatives to equip the youth for using digital tools
- Create more projects in the youth sector facilitating the gap between online and offline
- Support the dissemination of data and information as well as networking at EU/ CoE level

Education

- Describe the world in a new way (not online offline) based on a new working theory which can be connected to this reality
- Master the big change related to learning and teaching, since the old educational approach is not valid anymore
- Realise that not only in digital terms students are sometimes more competent than adults
- Examine through research the impact of digital learning, e.g. how to cope with students that are learning on-line?
- Understand young people, who they are, what they need and what they think, e.g. on risks in the digital world
- Develop and provide new instruments and new educational tools, a new pedagogy to connect to digital literacy; train teachers in this respect
- Promote evidence based policy and face the higher responsibility for researchers, not only for scientific reasons but as well for policy making

Youth work

- Recognize the important role of youth workers in educating young people, as 'connectors' and mediators between digital resources, stakeholders and young people.
- Consider the balance between online and offline methods (blending together)
- Define common ground on the concept of digital participation
- Train youth workers on the use of digital tools and provide spaces for sharing experiences and creating synergies among them
- Bring politicians and youth researchers to educational activities
- Reflect on the intersection of diverse areas in digital world and their relevance for education
- Promote youth centres to become hubs between different stakeholders

- Recognise digital youth participation and link it with different policies, not only with regard to the digital agenda.

Policy

- Promote training and education around the digital agenda
- Apply principles of development and implementation of real youth policy
- Promote and adopt a cross-sectoral approach especially in the area of e-participation
- Do not overestimate the meaning of digital technologies
- Focus on holistic education, since technologies are without emotions and values
- Switch from patronising and protecting to empowering and preparing for real life
- Understand the principles of development of youth policy
- Train schools teachers and youth workers in e-participation
- Promote personal responsibility
- Provide holistic education promoting values for youth participation
- Keep in mind the different realities of young people while implementing youth policy
- Be aware of the threads coming from the digital tools

Research

- Describe the world in new terms, blended, not divided in online and offline
- Develop a new terminology theory related to digital youth participation
- Explore new ways of doing research, for example ethnographic participatory research
- Apply a holistic approach to research
- Support a new pedagogy to serve the learning on/offline
- Provide a study on the impact on learning and the role of new education digital tools
- Provide new research on the analogue - digital generation and identity

Economic sphere and working life

- Bridge the success of online with the success in the real world
- Increase financial literacy based on values
- Provide incentives to create jobs, no precarious but quality jobs
- Support the transition of young people to the labour market, e.g. through guidance activities in schools (and not only in employment offices)
- Provide ICT tools for career management skills, self-empowerment, how to use them
- Increase digital reputation as a link to accessing labour market and digital footprint
- Cultivate a culture of taking-risk and acceptance of failure
- Provide incentives for young entrepreneurs, ease opening enterprises, to cheap conditions, easy going regulations, online
- Support young businesses rather than punishing
- Promote social innovation and create informal spaces to discuss innovations
- Overcome problem-solving in old ways, e.g. putting people back to work
- Bridge success stories between games and real life while learning from the gaming industry

- Prepare young people for the skills needed for future jobs and explore how currently needed skills fit to those needed in the future
- Shape policy-making through big data and explore effective interfaces to tap into it
- Explore how traditional approaches can co-exist with new paradigms, such as crowd-sourcing, , crowd-investing, start-ups, bitCoins....
- Address the real situation of young people.
- Measure impact of policy making and implementation of programmes
- Test and develop pilot solutions

Youth work:

- Create and provide sufficient volunteering opportunities, where young people can gain skills, including useful skills for the digitalised world
- Activate young people in the digital sphere, not waiting for them, but going to them
- Balance better economic aspects with other fields (e.g. in youth guarantee)
- Tailor social entrepreneurship to local realities and develop tailor-made support
- Recognize digital participation as real participation
- Remember the most disadvantaged by supporting access to the digital sphere

Researchers

- Challenge the agenda through thorough new narratives.
- Consider both, some problems are individual, some are structural
- Redistribute better taxes to counter raising inequality
- Use media as instrument to fill youth knowledge gaps in policies
- Involve journalists in qualitative research and produce more story-telling in favour of young people
- Examine the conflict or dialogue between generations and advocate for societal support

Democracy and Political Participation

- Explore cross-sectoral cooperation with youth workers, researchers and policy makers
- Explore how marginalised groups of young people use the internet for empowerment

Policy

- Make youth participation at the heart of good governance in the 21st century
- Look on open governance strategies and bring the focus to youth participation
- Acknowledge the need of resources and specific support for young people and the role youth work can play
- Promote civic education and participatory methods and skills

Youth work

- Provide education about participation and develop participatory education
- Educate the networkers

- Guide youth work by informing and easing access to information for active citizenship
- Know what and how to change
- Include youth in the process of decision making
- Empower youth via learning
- Encourage freedom and security of expression
- Provide a safe environment and allow to fail
- Study further the new forms of participation
- Highlight success stories
- Participate in developing youth policies and analyse how it functions

Policy

- Involve of young people end to end as legal obligation
- Add in training curriculum on citizenship education how to participate digitally
- Train and provide support measures for administrative and policy staff for mind shift to understand and better integrate digital participation
- Consider the existing structures and tools and implement them on the various levels
- Pay additional attention and action to empower those in vulnerable situations
- Analyse the new and different forms of political activism, protests etc
- Increase the accountability of politicians by taking care for more coherence between values and actions
- Accept digital participation as useful tool but not as instrument to renew democracy
- Take note of the fact that a new culture of cooperation and sharing arises from e-participation and the digital sphere, leading to new forms and experiments
- Implement by policy-makers throughout Europe the already known measures
- Consider on- and offline participation as part of good governance in the 21st century leading to power sharing
- Complete strategies on open government or digital agendas by adding specific youth participation strategies

Research

- Reflect on how to improve communication between youth work, policy and research
- Understand the needs of youth workers and policy makers and increase dialogue between academia and surrounding society in local, national and international level
- Provide research on misperceptions and miscommunication e.g. young people vs. politicians/policy makers AND young people vs. youth workers
- Provide more longitudinal qualitative research to understand the long-term effects and changes in time, of attitudes and actions of youth political participation, of youth policies
- Increase research on the marginalised/silenced voices (online and offline)
- Explore different kinds of visual data & research (online & offline), e.g. by collaborating as researchers/ ethnographers with young people practicing political art
- Provide more research on institutionalised politics and on intergenerational politics

Annex: Programme of the symposium

Monday, 14 September 2015

09h00 – 12h30	Arrival of participants
12h30 – 14h00	Lunch
14h00 – 14h20	Welcome by Antje Rothemund, Council of Europe and Karin Lopatta-Loibl, European Commission
	Introduction to the programme by Hanjo Schild
14h20 – 15h30	Keynote speeches, including discussion and exchange: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Roman Gerodimos, Bournemouth University: Online youth civic attitudes- Julia Kloiber, Open Knowledge Foundation, Germany: Open knowledge and net policy
15h30 – 16h00	Coffee & tea break
16h00 – 17h00	Keynote addresses on youth participation in a digital world: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Snežana Samardžić-Marković, Director General of Democracy at the Council of Europe- Tibor Navracsics, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport in the European Commission- László Szabó, Parliamentary State Secretary and Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Hungary
17h00 – 18h00	Getting to know each other – who are the participants of the symposium?
19h30 – 20h15	Official opening – anniversary addresses at occasion of the 20 th anniversary of the Council of Europe's European Youth Centre in Budapest
20h15 – 22h00	Buffet dinner

Tuesday, 15 September 2015

09h00 – 09h30	Two parallel reflections on risks and opportunities for youth participation in the field of ... <ul style="list-style-type: none">- "Communication" – Anna Ludwinek, research manager EUROFOUND, Ireland- "Education" – Manfred Zentner, researcher Krems University Austria
09h30 – 11h00	Four parallel labs "Communication"

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lab I.1 Input by Martin Fischer, Nerdy, Austria: GameOverHate - communication in videogame communities - Lab I.2 Input by Sargis Khandanyan, CivilNet.TV, Armenia: challenges & opportunities of digital journalism
	"Education"
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lab II.1 Input by Merja-Maaria Oinas, Koordinaatti, Finland: Nuortenideat.fi: education for e-participation services on local, regional, national levels - Lab II.2 Input by Stefan Ubiparipovic, European Federation for Intercultural Learning, Serbia: Intercultural dialogue and learning
11h00 – 11h30	Coffee & tea break
11h30 – 13h00	Four parallel labs
	"Communication"
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lab I.3 Input by Airi-Alina Allaste, University of Tallinn, Estonia: Social media and youth participation - Lab I.4 Input by Ivett Karvalits, Eurodesk Hungary / Kate O Connell, NYCI, Ireland: No Hate Speech Movement
	"Education"
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lab II.3 Input by Dmitry Khromakov, Politica Externa, Latvia / Russia: How a university of the 21st century should look like - Lab II.4 Input by Karsten Lucke, Europahaus Marienberg: Digital and social media in political out-of-school education
13h00 – 14h30	Lunch break
14h30 – 15h00	Two parallel reflections on risks and opportunities for youth participation in the field of.....
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Economic sphere and working life" – Inga Tiede, Liquid Democracy e.V. Germany - "Democracy and Political Participation" – Geoffrey Pleyers, FNRS/Université de Louvain, Belgium
15h00 – 16h30	Four parallel labs
	"Economic sphere and working life"
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lab III.1 Input by Pierre-Julien Bosser, Belgium / Régis Pradal, France, InternsGoPro: Social entrepreneurship& community building - Lab III.2 Input by Miriana Bucalossi, Provincia di Siena, Italy: JobTribu Project- new technologies for career guidance
	"Democracy and Political Participation"
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lab IV.1 Input by Jochen Butt-Posnik, JfE / Daniel Poli, IJAB, Germany: Thinking online & offline participation together - Lab IV.2 Input by Raluca Diroescu, SALTO Resource Centre Participation, Belgium: Current challenges in youth participation
16h30 – 17h00	Coffee & tea Break
17h00 – 18h30	Four parallel labs
	"Economic sphere and working life"

- Lab III.3 Input by Jelena Miljanic / Marija Novkovic, UN Agencies Montenegro: Youth Employment Services and Tranzit Platform
- Lab III.4 Input by Antonio Carlos Ruiz Soria, Economia Creativa Consultancy: Digital and creative economy

“Democracy and Political Participation”

- Lab IV.3 Input by Vadim Georgienko, Ukraine: votings from mobile, Civil Society app and e-selfgovernment
- Lab IV.4 Input by Nadine Karbach / Eva Panek, Liquid Democracy e.V. Germany: Project „EUth“ – Tools for e-Participation

19h00 – 20h30

Dinner

20h30 – 22h00

Project fair and networking evening

Wednesday, 16 September 2015

09h00 – 09h45

Impressions from the first 1,5 days of the symposium by Matina Magkou (rapporteur), followed by questions and answers

09h45 – 10h30

Nuala Connolly, National University of Ireland, Galway: Towards digital literacy for the active participation and engagement of young people in a digitalised world, followed by questions and answers

10h30 - 11h00

Coffee & tea break

11h00 – 12h00

4 working groups on

Key messages to youth policy, youth research and youth work from a perspective of

- Communication
- Education
- Economic sphere and working life
- Democracy and Political Participation

12h00 – 13h00

Closing session:

- Key messages from the working groups
- Conclusions by Karin Lopatta-Loibl (European Commission), Antje Rothemund (Council of Europe), Marine Manucharyan (Advisory Council on Youth), Jan Vanhee (Youth Working Party / European Steering Committee on Youth), Ida Birkvad (European Youth Forum), Manfred Zentner (Pool of European Youth Researchers); Moderation: Hanjo Schild (EU-CoE youth partnership)

13h00

Lunch and departure

The symposium was facilitated by Dariusz Grzemny and Andreea Hanganu; facilitation of the labs were additionally supported by Adina Calafateanu and Marine Manucharyan.