

NETWORK: YOUTH AND PARTICIPATION PROJECT

PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG CITIZENS IN NEW AGES CONFERENCE

MAY 9-10-11, 2014 santralistanbul

Network: Youth and Participation Project (NETWORK) is project for young citizens' participation in the decision making processes. The project objective is to strengthen capacities of nongovernmental organizations (CSO) and young citizens for improving participation level of civil society organizations in public debate and decision making processes, and for young citizens to have strengthened capacities for better civil dialogue and participation.

In accordance with these objectives, NETWORK aimed to produce and to share the knowledge needed for strengthening the participation of young citizens.

In the course of this Project; a training program including mainly distance learning methods was applied in two terms, a board game was developed, 2 interactive educational materials were produced, national and international study visits were conducted, 10 short videos were shot, 1 field research and 4 academic researchs were conducted, 6 books were translated to Turkish via scanning the sources of European Council related to youth and participation and 3 workshop were organized. All those works were done in order to start new debates on the participation of the young citizens, to extend the existing knowledge, to produce new academic knowledge and to develop tools.

All the works and studies mentioned above will be gathered and shared with public on May 9-10-11, 2014 in santralistanbul during the framework of the international conference.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:

Relationship between "citizenship and participation" is the main concept of the current debates on democracy.

The reason behind the importance of this relationship is the decision making process which relies on the active and continues involvement of the citizens as the main axis of democracy. The way to actualize this relationship will also determine the social decision making processes.

Participation can be defined as the process that the citizens to be involved in decisions regarding to their public life and ability to effect those decisions. From this point of view participation is one the indispensable stones of democracy. As for citizenship, it can be defined as the multidimensional connection between the state and people (citizens). Citizenship claims to provide equal status to each individual who forms the society over their civil, social and political rights.

Formal equality of rights may be insufficient in the point of providing fair and equal status to the citizens. For equal status to exist, besides the formal equality of rights, the ways to reach the sources and decision making processes need to exist as fair and equal too.

In this point, the status, providing a notional equality by citizenship in terms of rights, is needed to be questioned over the effect on economical, social and cultural differences and the effects of these differences to participation. That's because a lot of variables (gender, sexual tendency, religion, mother tongue, ethnicity, social class, economical and social status etc) can affect the compact of citizenship. Another variable that affects the compact of citizenship but less argued is the age. Although being young has significant inequalities, it is not debated sufficiently.

Following this concept, the compact of citizenship of the young citizens and their involvement to decision making processes was evaluated in three sub-categories which are political, social and economical dimensions during the course of NETWORK.

In the studies conducted in the frame of the NETWORK, political involvement ways, the relations between political organizations and citizens, the participation of young citizens to creating policies and participation to decision making processes was evaluated under the political category. Participation of young citizens to civil field and their relations with NGOs were taken to consideration under social category. Since the economical dimension was handled in details in the previous studies, young autonomy was studied in the course of NETWORK.

Instead of conducting separate discussions and research for each social, economical and political subjects, it is needed to consider those subjects as concepts having connections with each other and affecting each other from various aspects and allow discussions in several common platforms. Conducted researches, translated texts, organized workshops and discussions done during the conference are among the studies in the scope of NETWORK all of which were realized by considering the interactive characteristics of those three subjects..

"The Young State of Citizenship" was defined in order to create a conceptual platform to the subject being in the scope of this Project, which are, as discussed above, effecting young citizens' involvement in the decision making processes

The Young State of Citizenship: The Young State of Citizenship could be defined as the whole social and economical factors which effects the status of the citizenship of young citizens "because of being young" in an advantageous and/or disadvantageous way. Youth perception, cause and effect relation created from the advantages or disadvantages due to being young, needs of the youth in national and international level, access to social and economical rights, senses of belonging and identity, their positions and effects in the decision making processes and other factors on citizenships of the youth can be counted under the title of "The Young State of Citizenship"