

Youth Partnership

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



Compendium

**“The future of young people’s political participation:
questions, challenges and opportunities”**

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this work, commissioned by the European Union–Council of Europe youth partnership, are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of either of the partner institutions, their member states or the organisations co-operating with them.

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ACRONYMS

CSO	civil society organisation
EC	European Commission
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
NFE	non-formal education

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Introduction

Political participation of young people has been an important topic on the institutional agenda of the Council of Europe and European Union, but also for civil society organisations and the general public, particularly during the last 30 years. The type and level of young people's political participation has been changing, together with the changing political context. Today in Europe, young people witness different phenomena, such as a shrinking space for civil society, the rise of populism and illiberal regimes, a changing role of media and diffusion of fake news, a lack of access to rights, and the rapid development of digital technologies (EU-Council of Europe youth partnership 2019a).

Within this context, the discussions about the quality and young people's understanding of conventional political participation have accelerated as a result of low election turnouts, political apathy among citizens, inadequate representation and disengagement from institutions and political processes (Curtice and Seyd 2003; Norris 2003; Hay 2007; Farthing 2010; Furlong and Cartmel 2012; Henn and Foard 2012). If political participation is conceptualised with reference to conventional political participation, young people seem to engage less as voters and members of political parties than through other means of participation (Mycock and Tonge 2012).

According to Eurobarometer, in the 2019 European Parliament elections, 51% of young people cast their votes, an increase of 8% from the 2014 elections. The same data indicates that 72% of young respondents have at some point in their lives voted in local, national or European elections. Although the percentage seems rather high, this also indicates that 28% of young people, more than one in four, never made it to the ballot box. Only 15% of young respondents have participated in political movements, parties and/or unions. Young people are also under-represented as decision makers in the conventional political processes. In the 2019 European Parliament elections, the average age of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) was 50 years (Eurobarometer 2019).

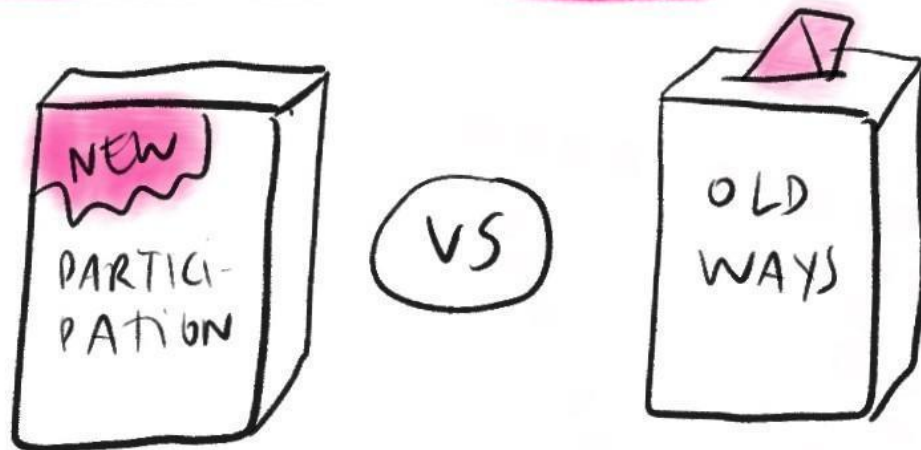


WHO SHOULD
REPRESENT YOUNG
PEOPLE?
SHOULD WE CHANGE THE
RULES?

Simultaneously, the meaning and content of political participation have grown beyond the limits of the voting and elections. Analytical (theoretical) discussions and civic processes helped to consider the concept beyond these conventional limits and to assess participation as a changing concept itself (Forbig 2005). Political participation surpasses the formal act of voting and covers a diverse range of activities with the intent of influencing institutions and society such as membership of organisations, participating in cultural activities, signing petitions, contacting politicians and protesting (Bourne 2010; EU-Council of Europe youth partnership 2019).

Political participation can be defined as any lawful activity undertaken by citizens that aims to influence, change or affect the government, public policies, or how institutions are run (Verba and Ni 1972; Van Deth 2001; Kitanova 2019; Teorell, Torcal and Montero 2007). In other words, political participation includes all citizens' actions which aim to influence the decisions regarding their lives and their communities. With the changing definition of political participation, some of the recent studies argue that young people are not apathetic and disengaged from political processes. Rather, they prefer alternative forms of political engagements such as protesting, demonstrating, being part of organisations, signing petitions, volunteering, and engaging online (Norris 2003; Spannring, Ogris and Gaiser 2008; Sloam 2016).

According to 2019 Eurobarometer data, 58% of young respondents engage with civil society organisations, whether as members or as participants through volunteering activities or local community projects. Also, 41% of young respondents have participated in student or youth organisations. Apart from that, online activism and social movements have become increasingly attractive for young people. 35% of young people have participated in campaigns, strikes or street protests, and 38% use social media for posting opinions and discussing current issues (Eurobarometer 2019).



However, even when young people participate in politics, they still have limited influence in the decision-making processes. In order for young people to become full members (citizens) of their communities and overcome the political, social, economic and institutional obstacles they face, they need to have an enabling environment which facilitates their participation.¹

Institutional background

Political participation of young people in the decision-making processes has been one of the key topics for the Council of Europe and the European Union and other stakeholders in the youth field since the late 1990s. For the European Commission, 2019 was a transition year with the launching of the new [EU Youth Strategy](#) (encompassing the Connect, Engage and Empower priorities). For the Council of Europe, youth participation has been one of the long-standing priorities which was supported by the activities such as the conclusions of the World Forum for Democracy 2017, the 2018 consultative meeting on the shrinking space for civil society, on the current discussions for a youth sector biennial priorities 2020-2021 and

1. Full and equal membership of the citizens was discussed in detail due to the constraints which citizens face when they try to exercise their civil and political rights (Kymlicka and Norman 1994). While few citizens have access and opportunities to influence decision-making processes, the participation of the majority of the citizens is reduced to the voting process and election, which blocks their voices and hinders their participation and contribution. Young people are largely among those citizens who have fewer opportunities and/or limited access to participation in the decision-making process.

its [2030 youth strategy](#) (EU-Council of Europe youth partnership 2019c). For the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership, which is a joint effort of both institutions, young people's political participation is one of the core objectives of the 2019 and 2020 work plan (EU-Council of Europe youth partnership 2019z).

Council of Europe

When it comes to the policy instruments, the [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers on youth participation and the future of civil society](#) was one of the primary (initial) documents that emphasised the influence of young people in the decision-making processes (Council of Europe 1997),² followed by the [Recommendation on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18](#) (Council of Europe 2012). Furthermore, the [Congress of Local and Regional Authorities' Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life](#) recommends the member states to create an enabling environment for young people to participate and influence decisions (Council of Europe 2003).

Around the mid-2000s, the documents emphasised the importance of permanent structures and encouraged the decision makers to involve young people in the policy-making processes through bodies such as youth councils and/or youth parliaments. Youth organisations are also considered as bridges to form a dialogue and to provide a voice for young people with the governing bodies (Council of Europe 2004). As a supporting declaration, "[The future of the Council of Europe youth policy: AGENDA 2020](#)" prioritised "young people's active participation in democratic processes and structures and equal opportunities for the participation of all young people in all aspects of their everyday lives" (Council of Europe 2008). "[Youth Sector Strategy 2030: Engaging young people with the Council of Europe's values](#)", which was adopted in January 2020, continues to emphasise the importance of youth participation in the democratic processes. The new strategy also emphasises the respect for diversity and the need for action to live together in an inclusive society. In the new strategy, youth work is emphasised as an important mechanism for empowering young people, enabling their autonomy and political participation (Council of Europe 2020). Besides the structured participatory mechanisms, the documents also recognise the

2. For a detailed review of the European policy framework for youth participation see Crowley and Moxon (2017).

alternative methods of youth participation, from social media to the protests (Council of Europe 2012; Council of Europe 2009).

In parallel to this priority, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Committee of Ministers recommend using new tools and methods to enter into dialogue with young people and to reach out to more and diverse groups of young people (Council of Europe 2011). The 29th Session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities discussed the barriers to youth participation, as well as the current and innovative forms of participation, in order to include the young voices (Council of Europe 2011).

European Union (EU)

In 2010, youth participation was also recognised as a priority within the European Union Youth Strategy (2010-2018) (European Commission 2009), and reaffirmed in the new European Union Youth Strategy for 2019-2027. [The EU Youth Strategy for 2019-2027](#) aims to strengthen the participation of young people through its connect, engage and empower approach. With “connect”, the EU aims to build relations and bring young people together through mobility programmes, youth exchanges and co-operation between youth organisations, to foster volunteerism and exchange of experiences. Under “engage”, the EU intends to foster young people’s participation in civic and democratic life, focusing on more diverse groups of young people (e.g. youth with fewer opportunities) and exceeding the limits of youth organisations (European Commission 2018). One of the ways to foster this engagement is through the [EU Youth Dialogue](#) process, which serves as a tool for consultation between young people, youth organisations and policy makers on youth

priorities. The third aspect of the strategy, “empower”, encourages young people to take charge of their own lives, by supporting the development of youth work. Finally, the EU’s Erasmus+ programme also contributes to all three areas of the EU Youth Strategy, with the aim of “encouraging young people to take part in European democracy” (European Commission 2019b).

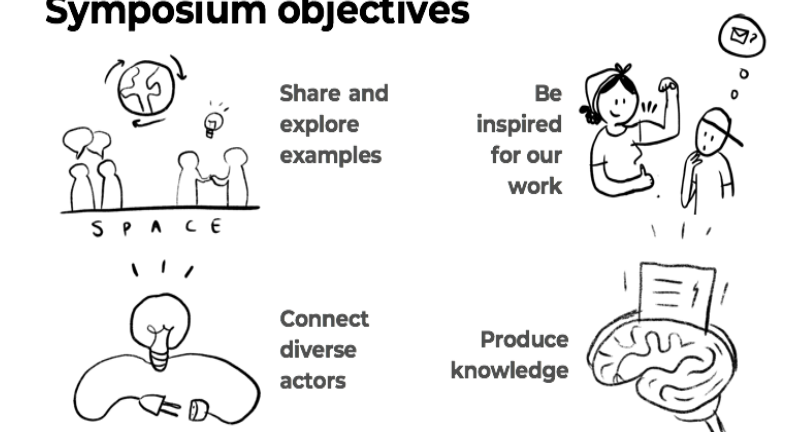


The symposium “The future of young people’s political participation: questions, challenges and opportunities”

Reflecting the priorities of the partner institutions and the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership, the symposium “The Future of young people’s political participation” was organised in Strasbourg in September 2019, bringing together 120 participants from diverse backgrounds, organisations and networks. The symposium aimed to:

- offer space and possibilities for participants to share and explore examples of young people’s political participation in a changing world;
- empower participants from different fields and levels to address this theme in their work on supporting young people’s democratic values and political engagement;
- connect different actors working on these themes, from within and beyond the youth sector, to continue, develop or innovate in relation to that work;
- produce knowledge relating to the trends of youth political participation, their reasons and implications.


Symposium objectives



The symposium also aimed to bring the following **outcomes**:

- mutual learning, inspiration and motivation for future actions for the participants;
- a compendium of good practices and stories of success highlighting the actions to be taken for supporting youth political participation, and analytical papers on young people's political participation in a changing world;
- practical conclusions on how diverse actors can support young people's democratic values and political engagement (EU-Council of Europe youth partnership 2019y).

In order to reach these goals, the symposium consisted of plenary discussions and thematic workshops in which participants shared inspiring examples of youth political participation and raised questions about the ways of empowering young people in the political processes.



Stand up
and Change
the world

PART A: LEARNING FROM PRACTICES

This compendium is an outcome of the symposium which presents various ways of young people's engagement in political processes and decision making and how different stakeholders can contribute to encouraging, empowering and enabling young people's participation.

The objectives of the Compendium are to:

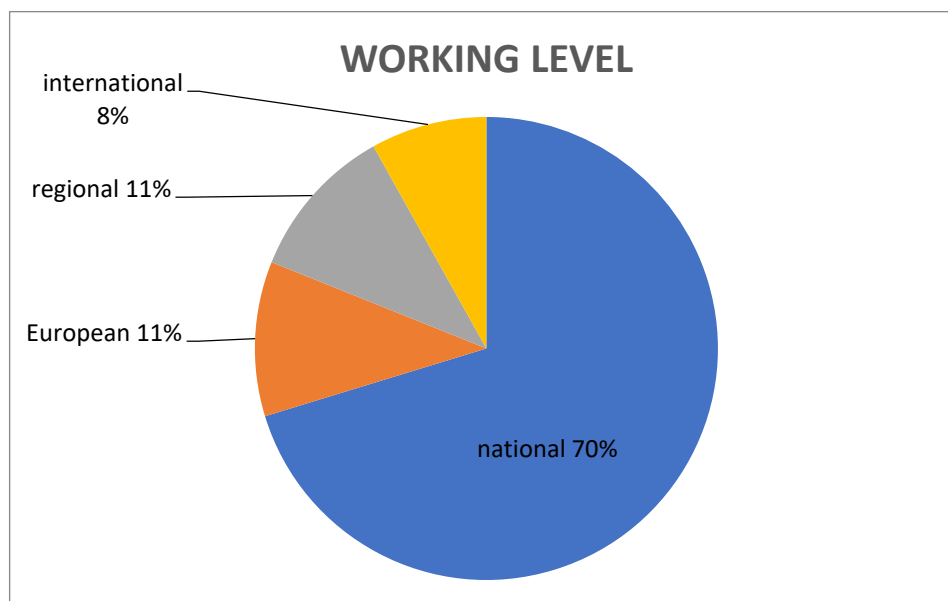
- map and highlight inspiring examples of young people's political participation;
- share the discussions and perceptions of youth stakeholders on this topic;
- examine challenges, opportunities and alternatives of youth political participation;
- explore the competences young people need to participate in politics.

The first part of this compendium consists of an analysis of perspectives on political participation of young people, while the second part presents a selection of practices, examples, projects, initiatives and campaigns.

Methodology – Data collection and analysis

In order to gather the examples of young people's political participation, a call was launched among the participants of symposium, but also on the European level, to submit examples of practice via an online questionnaire (see Annex I). Following the responses from 38 organisations, a second round of questionnaires was distributed, with 26 received responses (see Annex II). Four additional practices were included from the [Compendium of practices: Connecting the dots: young people, social inclusion and digitalisation](#), due to their relevance to the topic of digitalisation (EU-Council of Europe youth partnership 2018).

The compendium comprises responses from various levels. Of 38 organisations included in the data analysis, four are working on the European level, three on the international, 26 on the national and four on the regional level.



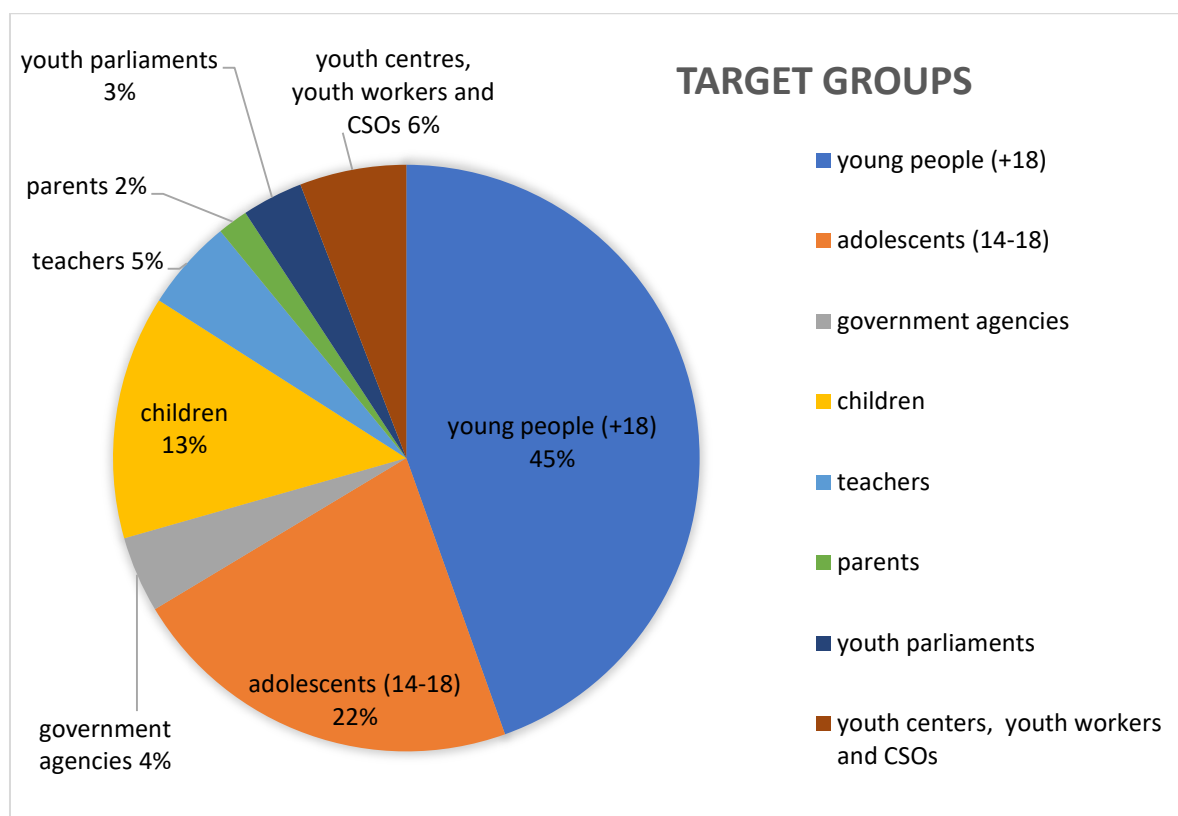
Graph 1: Working level of the organisations

The practices come from organisations or movements in 47 countries including the European Union and the Council of Europe countries and the Middle East.³

The target group of those working on political participation of young people varies from young people to governmental institutions. While some organisations work with a single target group such as young people in vulnerable situations, others work with several target groups such as teachers and parents simultaneously. Based on the responses received, 27 of the organisations are working with young people who are above 18 years old, coming from different backgrounds and with different needs, while 13 are working with young people between 14 and 18 years old.

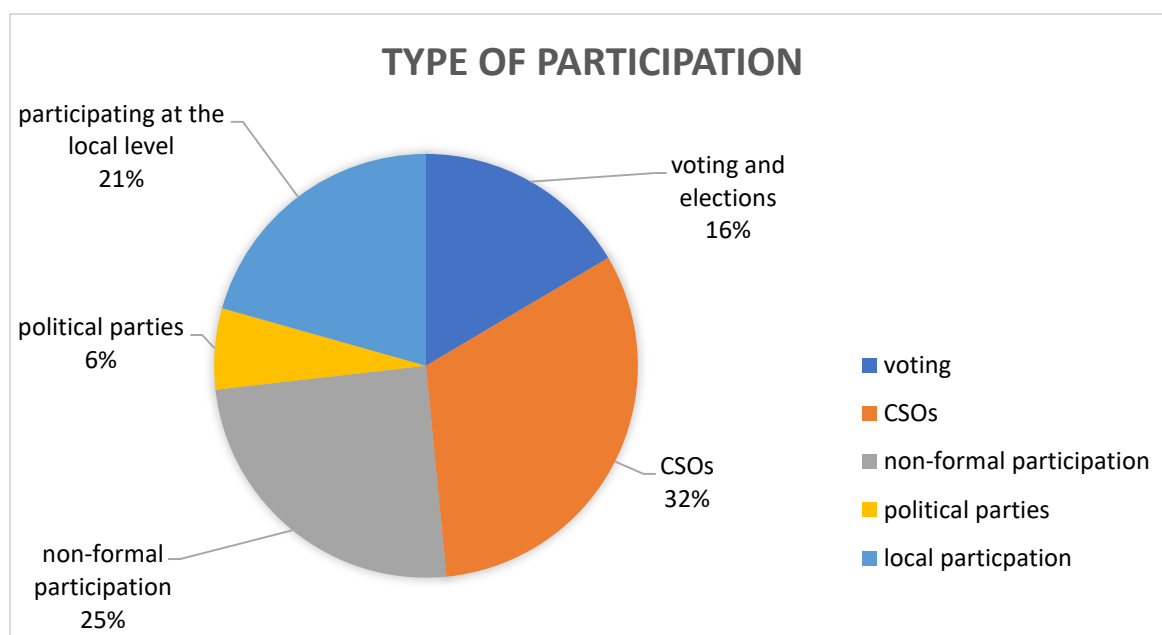
3. Practices came from the following countries: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Kosovo*, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, Moldova, Montenegro, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the UK (Scotland, England, Northern Ireland) and Ukraine.

*All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.



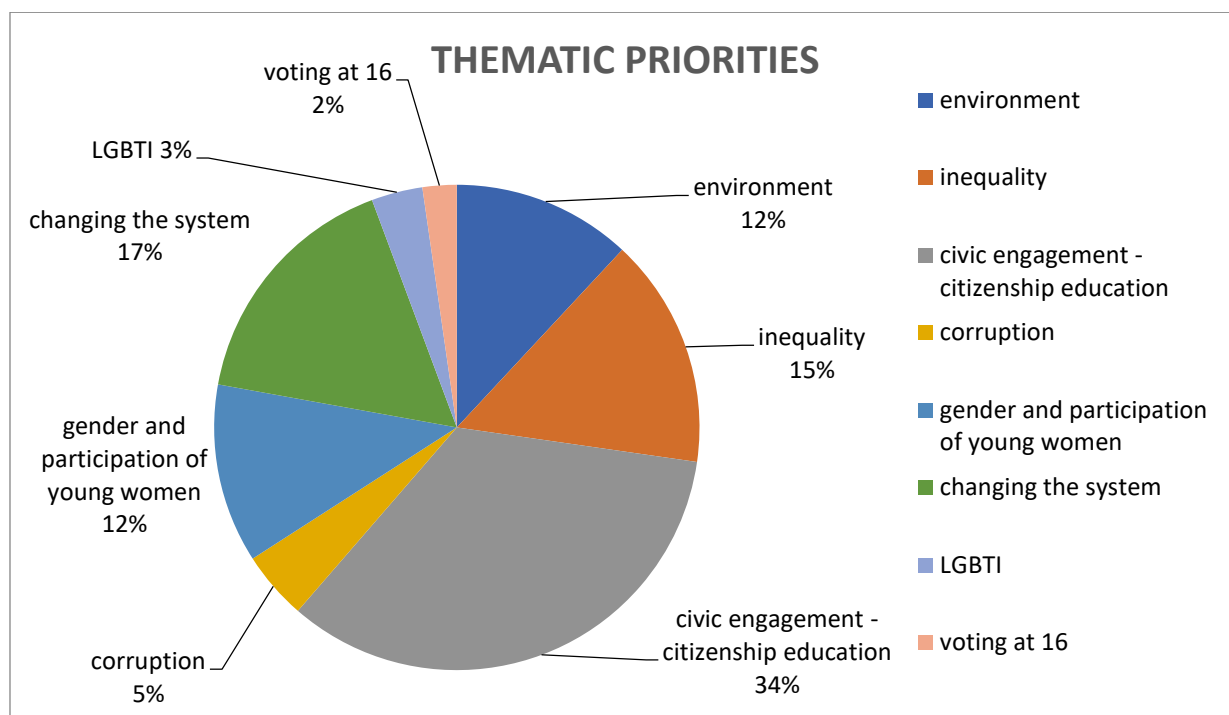
Graph 2: Target groups

Those working in the area of youth political participation support various types of youth engagement: engaging young people through the representative democratic mechanisms, or building citizenship competences of young people within formal and/or non-formal education. Sixteen of the respondents state that they are working on promoting the participation of young people in the election processes, 31 are working on engaging young people in the political processes through youth and/or civil society organisations, 24 are providing opportunities to young people for activism and/or other forms of non-conventional participation, six are engaging young people through political parties, while 20 are working on engaging young people in local decision-making processes, such as municipal youth councils.



Graph 3: Type of participation

The thematic priorities around which the organisations and movements mobilise vary from environment/ecology to gender equality and participation, civic engagement and citizenship education and “changing the system”.



Graph 4: Thematic priorities

Conceptual discussions arising from the practices

The concept of participation and the challenges and the opportunities for political participation of young people have been discussed thoroughly in the literature, particularly during the last 15 years.⁴ Political participation as a concept and as a process has been discussed from different perspectives by the academics/scholars, civil society, members of the governing bodies, decision makers and young people themselves. Moreover, the understanding of the concept is constantly changing due to the changing economic conditions, political environment, and social developments.

This chapter reflects the discussions and understandings of the concept of political participation from the perspective of the individuals and organisations who contributed to this compendium. In this way, we will attempt to illustrate the framework of political participation within which they operate, based on the following open-ended questions:

- How do you define political participation of young people (e.g. participation in which decision-making processes, at which levels, influencing which decisions)?
- Why is the “participation of young people” important for your organisation?
- What opportunities do you see within your own context for young people to participate politically (e.g. through elections, youth councils, movements, political parties, informal groups)?
- What are the main obstacles for young people’s political participation in your context (e.g. the influence of political and cultural environment on the participation of young people, institutional barriers to participation, a rise of populism)?
- Can you observe in your work and within your context, any new developments/trends related to the political participation of young people? Please describe them.
- What competences (skills, knowledge, attitudes, values or training) do young people need to have in order to engage in politics? Do you support, and how, the development and building of these capacities of young people through your work?

4. For example, see Gretscherl, Levamo, Kiilakoski, Laine, Mäntylä, Pleyers and Raisio (2014).

How do we define political participation?

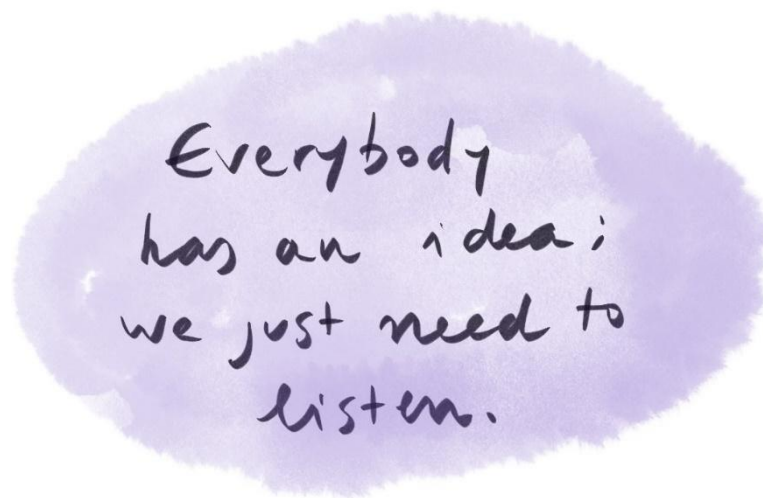
The understanding of the concept of political participation of young people in this compendium goes beyond conventional forms of participation and representative democracy (EU-Council of Europe youth partnership 2014; Gretschel, Levamo, Kiilakoski, Laine, Mäntylä, Pleyers and Raisio 2014). The responses submitted via the questionnaires show that young people may prefer and, even, see an opportunity to have a say through civil society and/or alternative avenues of participation. Almost all of the responses define political participation of young people as **taking part in the decision-making processes**. Young people can influence the decision-making processes or participate as political agents on different (and all) levels starting from local to regional, national, European and/or international level (Intercultural Institute Timisoara). One of the key ways to enable youth participation is “creating an enabling environment for young people to co-create policies” (GOOD Initiative).



Some of the participants define political **participation as a right** to have a say in the decision-making processes, emphasising participation in the institutions (National Youth Council of Moldova; Hessian Union of Children's- and Youth Parliaments). Defining participation as a right also gives recognition to young people as the political agents who have a say throughout their lives within their society. Additionally, while they define participation as a right, they also emphasise the three characteristics of human rights: inalienable; indivisible, interdependent and interrelated; and universal (Compass 2012). Relatedly, this understanding considers that the participation of young people is neither a favour nor a privilege. Rather, it is a right that is linked to the very fact of human existence that needs to be upheld without “distinction of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or another opinion, national or social origin, birth or another status”. Last but not least, young people need to participate to practise their other rights, due to the characteristic of interrelatedness. Their voice (ideas, needs and demands) will not be heard without their participation.

Political participation of young people is defined as **influencing “any forms of governance that affect young people’s lives”** (World Organization of the Scout Movement – European Region). It underlines the importance of enabling and supporting young people to understand their political influence through their everyday practices (Volt Europa). The discussions and dialogue activities which shape public opinion are situated under political participation along with expressing an individual opinion to influence these discussions, which does not necessarily need to happen in an institutionalised form (HCLU – Hungarian Civil Liberties Union).

Political participation is also understood as having **a space to voice their own needs, demands and ideas** (Union of Refugees in Portugal – UREP). Taking young people into consideration does not begin or end with subjects which, conventionally, are thought to be youth-related. Contrary, they need to be involved in all decisions which affect the society that they are living in (European Educational Exchange – Youth for Understanding (EEE-YFU); Intercultural Institute Timisoara).



Young people could be involved in consultation processes and in defining strategies and priorities of the local and national institutions regarding global and local issues (International Co-operation Centre; Balkan Network for Local Democracy). Although all levels – European, national, regional and local – are considered important, **the local level** is seen as a platform where young people have the greatest opportunity to influence policies, so that these could be designed and delivered with a tailor-based approach and with a particular focus on the needs of young people (Volt Europa).

Apart from the formal ways of political participation, **civil society organisations** (CSOs) are selected as important structures to influence the decisions and policy-making processes. They can be a stepping stone for young people to take part in the advocacy processes, monitoring elections, presenting their ideas, needs and demands to the decision makers and consulting the governing bodies. Young people can participate in the advocacy activities of the CSOs in various ways including contributing to the development of the policies, to organising civil campaigns (NGO “Terra-1530”; Funky Citizens; World Organization of the Scout Movement – European Region; Green Armenia NGO; Youth Peace Ambassadors Network).

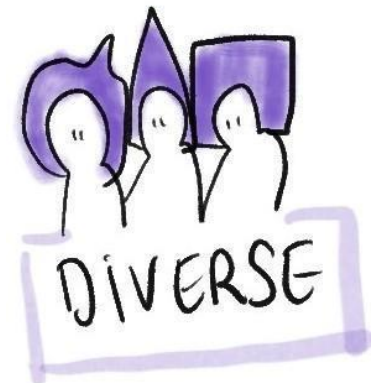
Although political participation of young people is a widely accepted and articulated issue in the political sphere, the obstacles which they face are more severe due to their economic and social circumstances, political structure and cultural norms. Hence there is a need to promote equal opportunities for and among young people as a means of their empowerment (Injuve).

According to the questionnaire (KEDITH – Community Enterprise of Thessaloniki Municipality and Team of Young Facilitators; Volt; Youth Act for Transparency; Amnesty International's Regional Office for the Americas; Young Citizens; Albanian EuroSocialist Youth Forum), youth work and citizenship education can support the empowerment and participation of young people through:

- raising awareness among young people about their rights and potential to influence the policies;
- providing information about the mechanisms, processes and tools of decision-making processes;
- developing necessary skills, knowledge, experience and confidence to exercise their rights and to influence decisions and processes;
- providing information about legislation and legislative processes, democratic processes, concepts such as human rights, diversity, equality and sustainable development;
- creating structure such as youth councils which will serve as connecting points between decision makers/governing bodies and young people;

- developing competences and skills including critical thinking, analysing information, expressing and articulating opinions, taking part in discussions and debates, negotiating and conflict resolution.

Social inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities is emphasised in the questionnaire, due to their limited access to the decision-making processes. This can be promoted through the development of supporting mechanisms, such as enabling structures and/or empowering learning settings, to enable young people with fewer opportunities to participate in politics (EU-Council of Europe youth partnership 2014).



To conclude, political participation of young people is an act of engagement that can occur through different mechanisms such as formal processes or informal groups. There is also a need to have additional support mechanisms and enabling environment, and empower young people by helping them to develop their competences.

Why is participation of young people important for our organisation?

The responses to the question on importance of political participation can be classified under two sub-sections: empowerment of young people and improving democracy, through young people's contribution to society. The first group considers that the involvement of young people provides **an opportunity for their empowerment**. Empowerment of young people as a concept covers a variety of subjects, from providing opportunities for young people to gain new skills and develop competences, to including young people in the decision-making processes in the organisation and/or in society. The competences are emphasised in association with being a full member (citizen) of the community.

One of the ways to develop active citizenship competences of young people and help them to increase their confidence and become *informed* citizens is by including them in organisations and public formal decision-making bodies, advisory structures, political entities, civil initiatives, CSOs and social movements. According to Intercultural Institute

Timisoara, by including young people in the organisations, young people are given an opportunity to exercise their citizens' rights and to engage in building the society that they need (Intercultural Institute Timisoara). Participating in the organisations was considered as one of the prominent steps to take part in the decision-making and to contribute to the democratic processes.

Democracies need active, informed and responsible citizens – citizens who are willing and able to take responsibility for themselves and their communities and contribute to the political process. (Young Citizens)

Young people as informed citizens can evaluate suggested and/or applied policies, national budgets and practices of the political parties and/or the governing bodies (Youth Act for Transparency). They can also develop a critical perspective towards the practices of the governing bodies. Moreover, they can contribute to the development of the policies which determine how to live together. Therefore, including young people in the decision making is also considered as a way of empowerment, by giving them space to raise their voice (National Youth Council of Moldova).

The participation of young people in the organisations is considered one of the steps to voice their own needs and demands. While there is a high level of distrust in institutions, organisations present the best forum for young people's conventional political participation (International Co-operation Centre). **The political agency** of young people (*young people as political actors*) is recognised, fundamentally, by bringing young people into the decision-making mechanisms in the organisations.

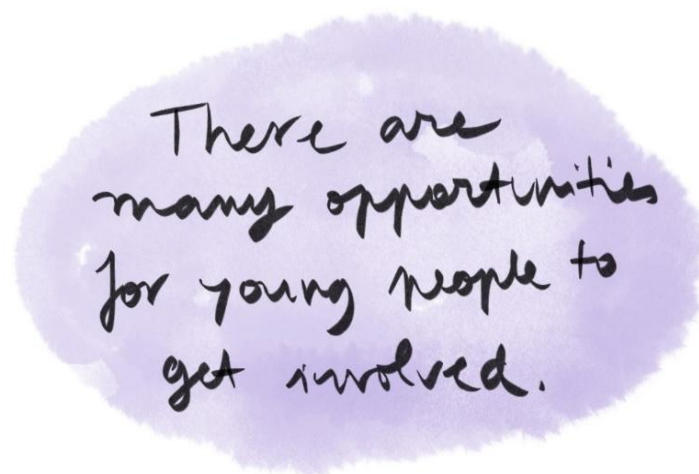
The second group of responses is related to the participation of young people **for improving democracy and the future**. The involvement of young people in the democratic processes is considered to be one of the ways of achieving better, healthy and sustainable democracies and societies, while the participants clearly emphasised that lack of young people's participation negatively affects their lives now and in the future. Our Future, Our Choice lists Brexit as an example of a negative effect of young people's exclusion from decision-making processes. Similarly, the need to involve young people is linked with their association to the

future of society, which may refer to a particular region such as the Arctic, economic issues in a particular country and/or global climate change (Barents Regional Youth Council; KEDITH – Community Enterprise of Thessaloniki Municipality and Team of Young Facilitators; Green Armenia NGO).

Young people are considered both literally and symbolically as the present and the future of society and as the agents of change.⁵ Therefore, including young people in the organisations and institutions is considered crucial in relation to their participation in democratic processes and decision making.

What opportunities do we see within our own context for young people to participate politically?

The perception of potential and existing opportunities for young people to participate within their context varies according to the level of the youth participation (such as local, regional, national and/or European level), target groups and participatory mechanisms. Out of the 38 responses to the survey, 23 responses mention a formal and/or structured mechanism as a way of political participation for young people. This indicates that more than 50% consider the involvement of young people in formal decision-making structures including school bodies, local, national and/or European authorities, advisory boards and local governance, as one of the key opportunities for participation.

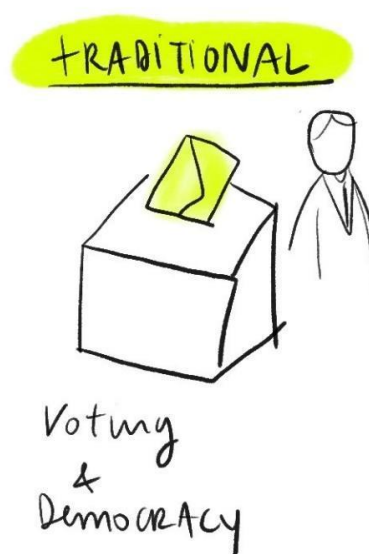


5. In the responses, young people are considered as agents for a positive future and change. This narrative needs to be elaborated in a separate discussion.

When it comes to formal and structured ways of participation, **taking part in the elections** on the European, national and local level has been the most common type of participation (Funky Citizens; HCLU — Hungarian Civil Liberties Union; Intercultural Institute Timisoara; Volt; Volt Europe; Youth Peace Ambassadors Network; Green Armenia; European Educational Exchange – Youth for Understanding (EEE-YFU). Increasing youth voter turnout in the elections is a key opportunity for young people to participate in a conventional way (World Organization of the Scout Movement – European Region). The European Parliament and national elections are opportunities for young people to be both representatives (to-be-elected) and voters, but they can also use the elections to motivate other young people to become engaged. The organisations also consider the increasing number of young politicians in the European and national parliaments to be a great example for the political participation opportunities of young people.

Apart from the European and/or national elections, **political parties** are also considered as one of the avenues for participation (Albanian EuroSocialist Youth Forum; Union of Refugees in Portugal – UREP; Funky Citizens; HCLU – Hungarian Civil Liberties Union; Steps for Youth; Intercultural Institute Timisoara). However, at the same time, there is also a concern regarding the distrust among young people towards the traditional political system as a challenge which can cause disengagement from formal mechanisms (World Organization of the Scout Movement – European Region; National Youth Council of Moldova).

Youth Parliament and/or youth councils are also means of young people's participation and influence on the decision makers (some of the responses from HCLU – Hungarian Civil Liberties Union; Steps for Youth; Intercultural Institute Timisoara; NGO "Terra-1530"; Hessian Union of Children's and Youth Parliaments; Youth Act for Transparency; Albanian EuroSocialist Youth Forum; Funky Citizens). These may be both nationwide bodies or representative bodies (World Organization of the Scout Movement – European



Region). Surveys indicate that local and/or regional participatory mechanisms are considered more welcoming and inclusive for youth political participation – regional and/or local youth councils are in particular highlighted as an advisory mechanism that provide information, consultation and/or feedback about the youth policies to the decision makers (GOOD Initiative; Barents Regional Youth Council). Youth councils are seen as the mediators to transfer the needs and demands of young people to the local decision makers (Rights to Decide Project Central Remedial Clinic).

Other mechanisms of youth involvement in decision-making processes include **student councils, school and university unions** (Intercultural Institute Timisoara; Lifelong Learning Platform “Learning Democracy” campaign).

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are some of the most important spaces for youth participation. They can either act as advisory bodies or take part in advocacy campaigns (Funky Citizens NGO “Terra-1530”; Youth councils: Regional Youth Council; Association for Youth Promotion “XXI Century”; GOOD Initiative). CSOs are mentioned, on the one hand, as part of an evidence-based advocacy network and as the platforms for the bottom-up demands for policy changes from young people. On the other hand, CSOs are seen as proper platforms for “practising active citizenship” (Balkan Network for Local Democracy).



Social movements and informal groups are also important means for young people to participate in the political processes (Youth Express Network). Both informal groups and social movements are considered as formations that can influence, contribute, shape and design policies (Funky Citizens; HCLU – Hungarian Civil Liberties Union – demonstrations and

informal groups; Steps for Youth; Volt). They are considered to be the alternative platforms through which young people contribute to policy making. They can include activism, advocacy campaigns (Funky Citizens; HCLU – Hungarian Civil Liberties Union; Volt Europe; Youth Peace Ambassadors Network; European Educational Exchange – Youth for Understanding (EEE-YFU)) and informal advocacy groups (Intercultural Institute Timisoara; Youth Peace Ambassadors Network) such as climate movements, organising protests and marches (World Organization of the Scout Movement – European Region).

Young people today also use a variety of **digital tools** to participate in the political processes. On the one hand, digital tools are considered as a channel to voice the needs and demands of young people. As IJAB points out: “e-Participation is a format that potentially allows all young people to feed their opinions, ideas, and demands into the political system”. (IJAB)

On the other hand, they are an instrument for reaching a variety of young people, connecting and creating networks through digital tools (Injuve). Online movements, a part of social movements, are a combination of activism and usage of digital tools (HCLU – Hungarian Civil Liberties Union; National Youth Council of Moldova).

Potential opportunities for young people’s political participation are not only linked with direct interference in the decision-making processes, but also with the effects participation has on the **empowerment of young people** and their civic competences. One of the key support mechanisms that increase young people’s opportunities and help them develop their skills is **youth work** (KEDITH – Community Enterprise of Thessaloniki Municipality and Team of Young Facilitators). There is also a variety of formal and informal learning platforms which facilitate young people’s learning and development of skills and help them to participate in the decision-making processes. These may include learning about human rights and citizenship rights, legal procedures (Young Citizens) and particular methods such as debating action (wienXtra-ferienspiel). Apart from structured education spaces, public **debates** can also empower young people in public speaking, structuring their arguments and developing their critical thinking (International Co-operation Centre).

European bodies such as European Youth Forum (European Educational Exchange – Youth for Understanding (EEE-YFU)), European programmes such as Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps, and policies such as New EU Youth Strategy are mentioned as exemplary supportive tools for enabling young people in political participation processes (KEDITH – Community Enterprise of Thessaloniki Municipality and Team of Young Facilitators).

Overall, young people consider the existing support mechanisms to be key avenues for engaging politically and voicing their priorities (Education Centre Kurt Löwenstein). Youth organisations are also aware that political participation requires a wide range of methods, including participation through elections, youth councils, movements, political parties and informal groups (Union of Refugees in Portugal – UREP). They emphasise that youth should be mainstreamed within the political discourse (and action) and young people as actors in the decision-making processes.

Finally, young people are not concerned only with the methods, but also the content of political participation. They see political participation beyond the limits of representative processes. Hence, the organisations included in this compendium aim to create opportunities for young people to participate in politics, beyond voting and elections (Intercultural Institute Timisoara).

What are the main obstacles for young people's political participation in our context?

Some of the obstacles which young people face are related to **socio-economic problems** and **current political conjuncture**. The socio-economic obstacles in some cases may be a result of one's socio-economic background or experiencing poverty (Lifelong Learning Platform "Learning Democracy" campaign; Amnesty International's Regional Office for the Americas). According to this perspective, the socio-economic conditions, or structural inequalities, are rooted in history and are, most probably, transferred from the former generation. In other cases, the **current economic conditions**: unemployment rates, low wages, insecure working conditions, need to earn a living instead of engaging in political action and/or lack of education, which does not correspond to the needs and/or requirements of the market make it difficult for young people to participate as active members of the society (Youth Act for Transparency; Steps for Youth and Green Armenia NGO). Although these two causes

have different roots, they both indicate that in order for young people to exercise their political rights, there is a need to also secure their social rights and autonomy.

Another obstacle to young people's political participation is related to their lack of access due to the **spatial difficulties**. These may refer to the physical distance from the centre of political life (Barents Regional Youth Council) or difficulties with access to participation spaces for young people with disabilities due to physical barriers (Rights to Decide Project Central Remedial Clinic). In both cases, lack of mobility opportunities for young people is an obstacle to participation.

The **current political situation**, including the narratives used in the political communication or institutional barriers, also restrain the political participation of young people. For example, the narrative of violating human rights and attacking democratic values⁶ is associated with the **rise of populism** (Funky Citizens). The populists efficiently use modern communication channels to deliver their messages (Volt Europa) which are loaded with negative, polarised and even violent values, ideas and arguments. These verbal attacks are contrary to the human rights and democratic values, and they also shrink or close down the physical, virtual and symbolic public spaces where public discussion/dialogue and critical thinking may occur.

The deterioration of liberal values significantly affects participation, which is only possible in open and free spaces (Education Centre Kurt Löwenstein). The rising threats against the fundamental human rights and liberal values such as freedom of speech and freedom of association create a crucial obstacle for the participation of young people (Injuve). In some cases, **young defenders** (working particularly on rights-based issues such as human rights and/or environmental rights) face **considerable risk** of criminalisation, threats, stigmatisation and violence by both state and non-state actors. Moreover, women defenders face further stigmatisation by challenging stereotypes and traditional roles for women:

6. In [*Youth work against violent radicalisation: Theory, concepts and primary prevention in practice*](#), violence is defined as "any physical, verbal, emotional, or psychological manipulation, domination or abuse aimed at imposing certain values, beliefs of actions upon the other, causing harm or damage" (Lopez and Pasic 2018).

Women activists are at greater risk than their male counterparts of experiencing sexual and other forms of gender-based violence. (Amnesty International's Regional Office for the Americas)

Even if young people wanted to participate in the decision-making processes in a formal structure, **institutional barriers** prevent them from being heard and voicing their priorities (Steps for Youth). These barriers sometimes appear as absence and/or lack of necessary structures for citizens, and particularly, for young people to contribute (Intercultural Institute Timisoara; Funky Citizens; Hessian Union of Children's and Youth Parliaments). For example, the absence of established local youth councils and local youth strategies prevents youth participation (KEDITH – Community Enterprise of Thessaloniki Municipality and Team of Young Facilitators). In some cases, although the institutions may develop avenues for citizenship participation, **low responsiveness of the decision makers** continues to present a challenge for youth participation (Intercultural Institute Timisoara; Balkan Network for Local Democracy). Moreover, young people and/or youth-led organisations are often not invited to contribute on anything except “youth issues”, which is a result of overlooking the right of young people to decide on current and future priorities, such as climate change (Youth Climate Council to the Climate Minister). The disconnect between educational institutions (such as schools) and civil society is considered to be another institutional barrier since formal schooling neither prepares nor supports young people to associate or organise for political participation (European Educational Exchange – Youth for Understanding (EEE-YFU)).

Young people's **distrust in politics**, in general, institutions and politicians are listed as another reason for lack of political participation (Steps for Youth). In some cases, young people are not interested in politics at all since they believe that their voice is not heard and/or respected by the decision makers, which is interpreted as political apathy (GOOD Initiative). In other cases, they think that they are not powerful and/or influential enough to change the decisions in the political processes which causes “a sense of disenfranchisement and distrust in our ‘democratic’ system” (Our Future, Our Choice). In some countries, young people may be co-opted by political parties and government and be used as tokens, without having an opportunity to meaningfully participate in decision-making processes. In all cases,

young people experience a loss of agency in the political processes. Since they are invisible in the formal political processes, they do not attempt to influence the system from the inside. Rather, they prefer to organise and change the policies in alternative ways. Interestingly, while young people are sceptical of the formal (traditional) political system, the established actors are also quite critical of the **new forms of civic participation** (Youth Peace Ambassadors Network).

Apart from the structured institutional barriers, **youth** as a period is perceived **as an incomplete process** that will end with adulthood. This understanding builds a dichotomy between adulthood and youth. “Youth” is loaded with values such as unstable, irrational, idealistic and inexperienced, whereas the values rational, stable, realistic and mature are linked with adulthood (Pateman 1989).⁷ In other words, adults are associated with the traits which allow them to participate in the “rational” political sphere. Young people, on the other hand, are situated on the opposite side as irresponsible, limited, lacking knowledge and skills to contribute and not aware of the “real politics”, which causes them to lose their right to decide for themselves (Amnesty International’s Regional Office for the Americas). Within this framework, young people are seen as not competent and/or not suitable enough to take part in the decision-making processes and to have a say (International Co-operation Centre; Intercultural Institute Timisoara). In some cases, young people are considered not knowledgeable and/or experienced enough to be taken into consideration, both within formal participation structures, but also civil society organisations (National Youth Council of Moldova). Even if young people are asked to contribute their ideas and/or suggestions, they may often be deprived of a dialogue (IJAB) or used as tokens in the decision-making processes (Education Centre Kurt Löwenstein).

Lack of information on political issues such as climate change and institutional processes is another one of the key obstacles to participation. Young people might not be able to access necessary information to argue their point or they do not have the necessary skills to engage, which results in their withdrawal from formal political processes (National Youth Council of Moldova; NGO “Terra-1530”; Youth Climate Council to the Climate Minister; Steps for Youth; Albanian EuroSocialist Youth Forum; Volt).

7. See Pateman (1989) *The disorder of women: Democracy, Feminism and Political Theory*, for an inspiring framework to question and analyse dichotomies which are built around the concepts.



Citizenship education and youth work are considered two supportive and complementary mechanisms that enable and empower young people to be active citizens. Both practices prepare young people to take part in the political processes while enriching and stimulating their attitude, providing knowledge and developing their skills (European Educational Exchange – Youth for Understanding (EEE-YFU)). However, their delivery is jeopardised, due to their content, methods and/or lack of financial and human resources. Citizenship education is not prioritised in the curriculum (neither in the primary school or secondary school) or in the national education policy. While the school performances focus more on market-related issues (such as university entrance level and employability), the resources and time allocated to citizenship education are decreasing (Young Citizens; Lifelong Learning Platform “Learning Democracy” campaign).

Youth work is considered as a space of empowerment where young people can implement the change and experience their power to make a difference (World Organisation of the Scout Movement – European Region). Yet the changing content of youth work means that the practice is losing its political perspective, which affects youth participation (KEDITH – Community Enterprise of Thessaloniki Municipality and Team of Young Facilitators).

Besides the challenges faced by all young people such as economic, political and/or institutional, some young people experience **multidimensional disadvantages** due to their gender, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation (Intercultural Institute Timisoara). While being a young person comes with its own structural and systematic obstacles, as the intersectionality framework emphasises, the social identity of the young person increases the effect and complexity of the obstacle which she/he faces (Williams 1994). Young women for example have difficulties in participating in the political decision-making processes due to the assigned gender roles and responsibilities, such as taking care of the household and/or family (National Youth Council of Moldova).



The responses regarding the obstacles vary from generic problems such as current political conjuncture to the inadequacy of the education system. Although the obstacles which young people face differ in both content and scale (from school-related to national and/or European problems), the shared characteristic is their systematic and structural nature.

Can we observe in our work and within our context, any new developments/trends related to political participation of young people?

There are various new developments and trends regarding the political participation of young people. First, there is an increasing “**will to change**” of young people when it comes to their engagement in politics. Young people are willing and influential agents to claim their seat in the decision-making and policy-making processes, in order to have a say about their lives and their future. Young people are aiming to change the status quo in politics and political parties (Hessian Union of Children’s and Youth Parliaments; Amnesty International’s Regional Office for the Americas). Also, the number of young people who are running for parliament has been increasing gradually over the last few years (Green Armenia NGO). In summary, participants emphasise that there has been an increase in involvement of young people both in the formal political structures and through alternative ways of engagement (HCLU – Hungarian Civil Liberties Union).

Second, young people have a tendency to take part in **local governing structures**. Young people are giving more attention to local elections, local youth councils and local governing bodies (Youth Peace Ambassadors Network). Yet, young people are facing serious challenges

in participating even in the local decision-making processes (Balkan Network for Local Democracy).

Third, in parallel to the recent increase in involvement of young people in the formal political structures, young people are participating in **social movements and informal groups** (Eurobarometer 2019). Activism among young people, both on digital and physical platforms, has become more widespread in the last few years particularly when it comes to environmental activism. There is a “new culture of protest” among young people (Funky Citizens). We are also witnessing a stronger politicisation of young people in demonstrations such as pride marches, climate marches and marches against extreme right movements (World Organization of the Scout Movement – European Region). Moreover, young people are more involved in the advocacy processes whether through the CSOs or social movements, in an attempt to influence policy processes (Union of Refugees in Portugal – UREP). One of the key aspects of the social movements, which is different from the formal participatory processes, is their loose structure in which young people can find a space for themselves (Education Centre Kurt Löwenstein).



Fourth, apart from activism in the embodied form (analogue format), young people use social media and other digital platforms to raise their voice (IJAB – International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany). Young people are using social media and digital platforms to:

- spread information about political actions and build networks (Barents Regional Youth Council);
- share their ideas, comments and proposals with the general public;
- monitor the governing bodies for accountability and transparency (KEDITH – Community Enterprise of Thessaloniki Municipality and Team of Young Facilitators);
- interact with politicians (including the decision makers and opposing parties) (Intercultural Institute Timisoara);
- organise campaigns to influence policies (National Youth Council of Moldova).

Competences and skills for youth participation

When looking at the competences young people need to have in order to engage in politics, movements and organisations share a very close image of politically engaged youth, while using different approaches to develop these competences.

A young person engaged in politics

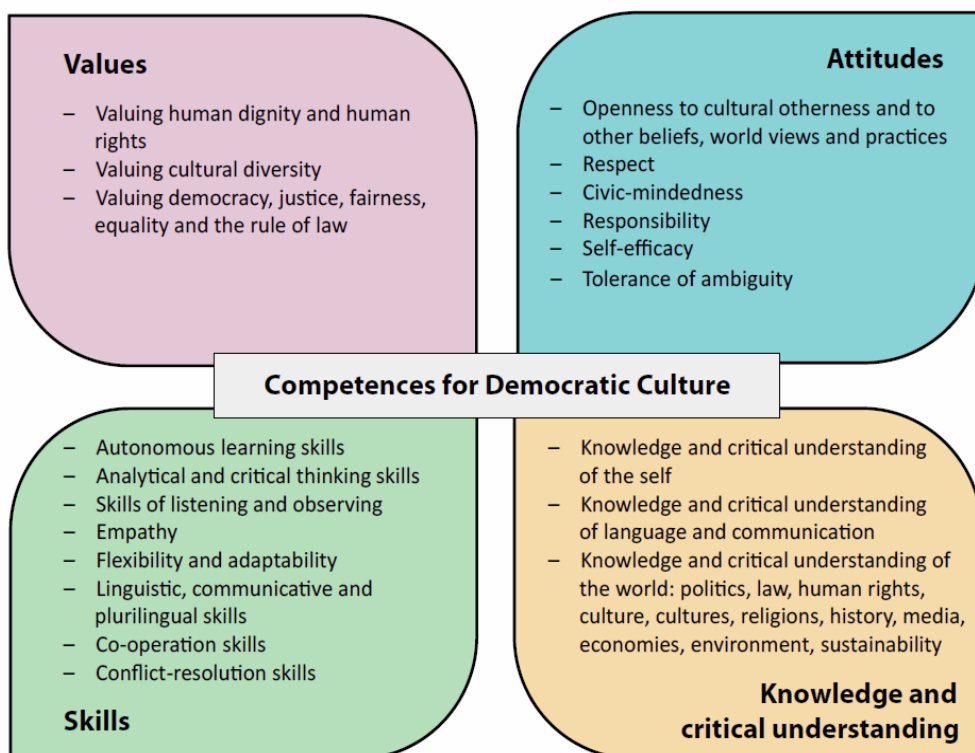
Picturing an image of the young person engaged in politics may make us think of different types of participation or different competences they have. The competences may not necessarily be obtained at a specific point in life but are rather acquired through lifelong learning. The organisations note that young people “need to improve competences, learn new tools and stay informed about the development in the organisation’s context” (Terra 1530), to continuously learn in the diversity of projects and roles. It is common in the organisations to provide young people with diversity of tasks and possibilities to work on projects tackling different social problems, learning a broad variety of competences in the process.

At the same time, young people engaged in politics are seen as change makers, curious, self-motivated, enthusiastic, anti-conformist and having high levels of initiative to lead the change they aim for. This image of the young person is positive and optimistic while creating high expectations on their qualities, performance and personality traits. Youth are considered to have “a high commitment to society and their communities. Hard working and entrepreneurial to achieve their objectives and demands, [with] high self-esteem [and] motivated by the impact they can make if they get more involved” (International Co-operation Centre).

Diverse approaches to competences

There are two different approaches to the concept of competences. On the one hand, competence is defined as the sum of skills, knowledge, attitude and values and on the other hand, there is a distinction between skills, knowledge, attitude and values. This second approach was mainly connected to the organisations working closer to the Reference

Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC), where competences were divided in these four clusters:



Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture

Life skills

There is a variety of life skills that young people need, or can gain, through political participation. One of the key competences identified by the youth organisation is **critical thinking**. Critical thinking is “the ability to critically assess, compare and accept different perspectives, especially when it comes to controversial issues” (Lifelong Learning Platform). Critical thinking is an important competence for **problem solving**, studying different possible scenarios and understanding their impact (World Organization of the Scout Movement) and looking at processes from different perspectives in order to have a more complete picture.

Critical thinking is particularly crucial within the context of growing digitalisation, increasing use of AI-powered tools and related concerns for sharing personal data and **privacy and security** in the digital world (BoostCamps for More Democracy). Furthermore, the rise of post-truth or alternative facts, **media literacy** and the ability to fact-check is crucial for navigating and using the available information (GOOD Initiative).

Politically engaged youth are active in diverse social media platforms, they follow news and engage in online debates, having an active network of influence. This also requires them to

have relevant **competences for digital communication**, use social media for interaction and dissemination and use and create the memes, infographics, videos and other visual material (INJUVE).

Young political activists are often perceived as confident, using a clear and vivid language, and having an ability to structure their messages and support them with corresponding non-verbal communication. Youth Act for Transparency lists excellent written and speaking skills, debating, negotiation and active listening as key competences young people need to have to engage in politics. Within this context, **public speaking** is considered a critical skill, strongly connected to assertive and non-violent communication, which helps young people to shape their ideas and opinions in a clear and respectful manner, expressing disagreement constructively and engaging in a dialogue with authorities (Steps for Youth; Youth Peace Ambassadors Network).

Because of the transnational dimension of many of the initiatives, the globalisation of networks and the available resources, **English language** and **intercultural competence** are considered important for young people's political participation.

Team work and leadership

Young people can't achieve their goals alone. They have a need to work together and distribute their responsibilities in a way that allows them to reach their objectives, learn and enjoy the process. For this, they need **teamwork and leadership skills**. Teamwork is considered to be more important and relevant than leadership, as a way for young people to work together, shape horizontal processes, share decision making, have transparent information and support each other. **Mentoring** is also important within teamwork, as it supports teams to set goals and follow through the implementation (Terra 1530). Young people prefer responsibility-focused, democratic leadership. Few participants also innovate through alternative processes and with less established forms of **leadership**, such as "diffused, linear, holacracy or sociocracy" (Volt Europe).

When bringing together teamwork and leadership, **trust** and ability to **delegate** are very important. Most ambitious practices in youth political participation require many years to reach their goals or have evolving goals through time. Too much control from the practice co-ordinators or initiative founders was identified as a challenge, not giving youth latitude to make decisions in their own sphere of work:

Leaders need to offer support for implementing others' ideas and proposals, express confidence in the ability of others to be successful and share responsibility and work. (Steps for Youth)

The ability to manage a **long-term project** also involves resilience, or the ability to deal with

challenges and overcome barriers (Young Citizens). As young people are in a state of transition, the teams that start a project are often different from those finishing them. Because of this, good **knowledge management and transfer** of skills are required. Lack of these competences was identified as a possible reason for projects ending without reaching their goals, losing focus or repeating activities.

In line with the communication competences and challenges in leadership, initiative co-ordinators need to be open with other team members about their concerns and support dialogue inside the project team. This is supported by strong **facilitation, proactive and positive** approach and acknowledging the contribution of other members (Steps for Youth).

From human rights to personal/youth rights

Political literacy is crucial for quality political participation. It connects **legal knowledge of human and civil rights** with a **know-your-rights** practical approach. Young people need to be aware of the different dimensions of their initiatives, their personal rights to achieve their goals, and specific legislation of their country in order to be safe and well prepared (Hungarian Civil Liberties Union). This includes:

Knowledge of the democratic system and its processes – not just the elected institutions, but also the other institutions of democracy such as the legal system, the media, political parties, and trades unions. (Young Citizens)

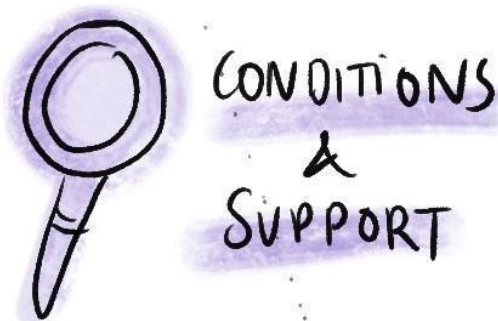
Political activists should have an **understanding** of the tools and processes that as citizens they can use to get involved and make an impact. This includes knowing the structures, models of participation, forms of dialogue processes, process of policy development, and current social trends and political discourse (GOOD Initiative; Hessian Union of Children's and Youth Parliaments). This understanding and involvement in the process help young people to develop trust in institutions and in democratic and legal processes in line with the realistic understanding of the constraints and compromises inherent in democracy.

Understanding our rights and responsibilities as citizens – both those that are enshrined in laws, and those governed by personal and societal values and ethics, understand how society works and what Europe does for us. (Funky Citizens)

The involvement in political participation processes is consistently defined through **policy advocacy, lobbying and campaigning**, both online and offline. These include influencing decision makers and authorities on a specific issue or campaigning against certain narratives (Amnesty International).

Supporting learning

Movements and organisations support development of young people's competences by sharing good practices and educational aspects of youth work. Most organisations also lead programmes and projects that complement development of competences, providing training and mentoring programmes and creating a diversity of toolkits, manuals and guidelines to support political participation in its various forms, as is the case of Amnesty International toolkits that can be replicated across the movement on a range of different topics, the resources and publications edited by Lifelong Learning Platform, or the e-learning modules on advocacy created by the International Co-operation Centre and the Barents Regional Youth Council consultancy services provided to youth organisations.



When it comes to education there is a clear support to experiential learning and non-formal education in formal and non-formal settings in schools, universities, summer camps, training courses and youth exchanges. Organisations are aware and actively contribute to the recognition of non-formal education in formal settings. Many learning opportunities at local level are supported through public funding or volunteering, while international education processes are mainly project-based and funded through international schemes, such as Erasmus+ and Council of Europe Youth Department:

Young people can acquire all of these competences through formal education as well as non-formal and informal learning activities which, depending on the context and individual, may be more flexible in adapting to their needs and capacities. The Lifelong Learning Platform advocates for the designation of equal value to all learning no matter where it takes place – this should be the core of 21st-century learning environments. (Lifelong Learning Platform)

Non-formal learning opportunities in schools serve as an effective way to bring non-formal education and a competence-based learning approach to formal education, and to reach wider and more diverse groups of youth. Most of these learning opportunities highlight the

support and representation of youth with disabilities, geographical and gender minorities, refugees and asylum communities – this is the first step for self-organisation and long-term political participation. Specific projects focusing on minorities tend to emphasise providing opportunities for their participation, by developing mechanisms for their representation and bringing their perspectives on topics affecting their community:

The competences young people with disabilities need to engage in politics are the same as every other young person. People with disabilities may need more support and accessible information in formats they understand. (Central Remedial Clinic)

Various movements and organisations have learning opportunities and programmes for youth workers, educators, activists and mentors to develop competences. These processes include mentoring programmes, once again reinforcing the continuous learning approach in the field. Learning opportunities for youth workers and educators tend to focus on the competences required to support youth groups in their political participation, literacy and engagement. For those working with youth activists, competences are more targeted and include also support mechanisms, peer mentoring and training on emotional well-being:

Emotional impact of activism should be considered and psychosocial support provided to counter burn-out, depression, and other health implications of activism. (Amnesty International)

Organisations and movements share the added value of the adaptability of their programmes. Projects are often reactive, responding to rapidly changing contexts and the socio-political situation of the young people. Participants can start the programmes quickly and also adapt to changes and challenges as they occur:

We have a faster response time to new challenges in the neighbourhood and Internet than schools, being able to bring to their curriculum updated and current topics. (Education Centre Kurt Löwenstein)

This continuous creation and adaptation of training processes, content and competences requires a complementary set of monitoring and evaluating skills for educational project management in the organisations working through non-formal education in schools and outside of the school environment.

Enabling environment

Youth involved in political participation need more than competences. When inquiring about the competences needed for youth political participation, movements and organisations often remark that the competences are not the main requirement for youth participation:

*Young people should just be taken in consideration for who and what they are:
young! (Youth Express Network)*



They stress that besides young people's level of competence, the emphasis should also be on the participation system and the opportunities young people have. This may include:

Providing easy access to decision-makers, a concrete channel of interaction between youth and municipal stakeholders and a funding channel in the Municipality in order to implement youth led initiatives and contribute to decision making. (KEDITH Thessaloniki)

Priorities differ by country and there is a risk in the tendency to connect political participation of young people with competences development:

Access to education, freedom to organise and funding for our organisations are as necessary as access to formal channels in the political system. (Youth Climate Council to the Climate Minister)

This focus on education also influences funding opportunities, with organisations often having more opportunities to acquire funding for short-term educational projects than for ongoing participatory processes.

Competences of other actors engaged with youth

When looking back at the competences necessary for political participation, it is also important to note that political participation does not depend only on young people. Youth political participation is a process between a series of actors, with a focus on youth, decision makers, organisations and institutions, and this process requires the active involvement of young people in decision-making processes (Youth Peace Ambassadors Network; Youth Climate Council to the Climate Minister). Decision makers and public authorities involved in dialogue with young people also need to learn the skills needed for allowing and supporting meaningful forms of youth political participation.

Concluding remarks

The compendium and the selected practices highlight the diversity of understandings of political participation of young people, which are shaped by the context, culture and historical influences. Yet, there are some common conclusions which can be drawn from the analysis:

- The practices expand the concept of political participation beyond the conventional forms (representative democracy), including participation through civil society organisations and development of the citizenship competences.
- The practices recognise young people as political agents. Although the formal and structured political processes are loaded with obstacles for youth political participation, the 2019 Eurobarometer data and the examples of practice show that there is an increase in young people's interest in politics, both through the formal processes (such as elections, parliament) and through the social movements and/or informal groups on the European, national and local level.
- They underline the will of young people and the necessity to involve them in decision making, not only in youth-related issues, but in all societal decisions.
- There is an emphasis on the importance of involving young people in the discussions in the policy-making processes and providing them with opportunities to vocalise their ideas.
- The majority of the participants mention the importance of local governance and local participatory mechanisms for young people's political participation, although some add that the obstacles for participation in the formal structures also exist at the local level.
- Young people with fewer opportunities and/or coming from disadvantaged backgrounds face multiple obstacles for their participation in political processes. Furthermore, different young people need different supporting mechanisms to facilitate their political participation. Hence, for an efficient promotion of youth political participation, there is a need to diversify supporting mechanisms to overcome various challenges.

PART B:

Selection of practices on political participation of young people

The practices presented in this compendium aim to demonstrate a variety of young people's political engagement across Europe. The responses reflect the diversity of actors: organisations and movements, thematic coverage and types of young people's engagement. The practices are categorised under four groups based on their primary working areas:

1. **Youth participation in representative democracy and in decision-making processes**

Activities (institutional structures, processes, programmes and/or projects) which promote and/or enable young people to take part in the decision-making processes and their involvement in representative democracy through elections, polls, campaigns and training activities which aim to promote voting as a means of participation and to increase the youth turnout in the elections.

These practices include organisations which are led by young people or which aim to promote young people as political agents in the governing bodies. Youth councils at regional, national and/or local level present some of the structures which enable young people to participate in the decision making directly and/or indirectly. It is important to note that young people prefer to participate, in particular, in local decision-making processes.

2. **Citizenship education** as a means of empowering young people and strengthening their citizenship competences

This item consists of two different types of learning setting. The first type is the training related to the competences which are provided by civil society organisations and/or civil initiatives and actualised in non-formal settings, including short-term activities and longer programmes and/or projects which serve to empower young people by inviting them to their activities as active “doers” and/or participants. The second type of citizenship

education is actualised in formal settings such as schools within the formal education curriculum.

3. Advocacy and campaigning

Advocacy and campaigning are considered as connected activities which aim to change legislation, policy and/or culture regarding a particular subject. Therefore, two types of practices are collected under the advocacy and campaigning title. The first group is the awareness-raising practices, which aim to promote public discussion (debate) among young people about a specific issue. The second group entails campaigns and/or advocacy activities which aim to change the legislation, policy and/or institutional structure.

4. Digitalisation⁸

The fourth part is related to supporting young people for political participation through digital tools. The practices vary from awareness-raising campaigns to informing young people about political issues.

8. The practices on digitalisation are a selection of both, practices received through the questionnaire and practices from the compendium *Connecting the dots: young people, social inclusion and digitalisation* (EU-Council of Europe youth partnership 2018), available at <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47262517/FINAL+compendium.pdf/b25a3fd4-a377-29c0-80b8-45ac21108ad2>.

List of practices

Practice	Organisation/ movement	Representative democracy decision making	Citizenship education	Advocacy and campaigning	Digitalisation
80east	Funky Citizens		x		
Active Citizens Living European Values	EEE-YFU	x	x		
Active for Youth	Steps for Youth		x		
BRIGHTS	All Digital				x
BRYC	Barents Regional Youth Council	x			
Defending the Defenders	Amnesty International's Regional Office for the Americas		x	Advocacy	
Democracy in Schools	Young Citizens		At school		
Education for Women and Young Refugees	Union of Refugees in Portugal		x		
Fotomovimiento – Testimony and dissemination of social reality through the image	Fotomovimiento			Advocacy	x
Free permanent legal aid system	Hungarian Civil Liberties Union			Advocacy	
Hessian Union Children's and Youth Parliaments	Hessian Union for the Strengthening of Children's and Youth Interests	x			
Learning Democracy	Lifelong Learning Platform			Campaigning	
Local Action – Global Impact	Terra-1530	x			
My Europe, My Say!	World Organization of the Scout Movement – European Region		x	Campaigning	
No Hate Speech movement	Council of Europe			Campaigning	x
Non-formal education for Active Citizenship	GOOD Initiative		At school		

#OPIN – Youth shape their future	Nexus				x
Our Future, Our Choice	Our Future, Our Choice	x		Campaigning	
Project Citizen	Intercultural Institute Timisoara		At school		
#redsijODS Digital campaign for Youth Information Day	Injuve			Campaigning	
Rights to Decide	Central Remedial Clinic	x			
Thessaloniki Local Plan of “Activities for the City and the Youths 2018-2019”	KEDITH – Community Enterprise of Thessaloniki Municipality and Team of Young Facilitators	x			
Training for school students’ unions / representatives	Education Centre Kurt Löwenstein		At school		
U-Report Moldova	National Youth Council of Moldova			Campaigning	
WebDays	IJAB – International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany			Campaigning	x
Youpa	Dachverband Scheizer Jugendparlamente	x			
Youth Climate Council	Ministry for Climate, Energy and Utilities, Denmark	x			
Youth Engagement in Society	TERRAM PACIS				x
Youth: new storytellers and actors for development aid	International Co-operation Centre		x		

Representative democracy and decision-making processes





Information about NGO/movement	
Name	Barents Regional Youth Council – BRYC
Short description	The four countries in the Barents Region, Finland, Norway, Russia and Sweden, have many common challenges when it comes to youth issues, which has led to increased co-operation in the youth field. Youth organisations strongly signalled that young people want to participate more actively in the Barents Cooperation and the Barents Regional Youth Council was created in 2004, after the international youth seminar in Murmansk.

Information about the practice	
Target group	Youth from the Barents region aged 16-30
Location	Norway, Russia, Sweden, Finland
Timeframe	2004 – ongoing
Useful links	https://www.barentscooperation.org/en http://www.barentsyouth.org/ https://www.instagram.com/barentsyouth/ https://www.facebook.com/barentsyouth/

Practice description

The main goal of BRYC is to promote the idea of living in the high north as a unique opportunity for young people to express themselves through a high level of political and non-political participation. BRYC enhances co-operation through unique Arctic-oriented and North-oriented projects and work on creative industries, ecology and environment, small and medium enterprises (SME) and gender equality.

How is it done?

BRYC assists young people from the North, by providing them with opportunities to establish their network and gain experience in project management and other methods of people-to-people co-operation. It informs youth authorities in the regions about possibilities for youth co-operation and youth projects, supports the existing co-operation between the regional youth authorities, encourages youth authorities in the other regions to co-operate, visits all regions frequently and maintains relations with all actors. BRYC also develops projects and acts as an international platform for discussions, research and individual consultations for the youth groups and organisations on various topics.

How is it connected with political participation?

BRYC activities help young people to participate in important meetings and conferences held in the Barents and in the Arctic where youth can express their opinions at the same level with top-class policy makers and be actively involved in decision making. Young people bring the outcomes of these meetings to their local level, and work with local authorities to improve the living conditions in rural areas and local communities in the High North, breaking stereotypes and merging the borders between countries with different political systems, states of economy and mentality. In this way they work on promoting the well-being and bringing peace to the Barents and the Arctic.

What makes this practice special?

The Arctic is a new axis of cultural, social and economic interaction, where until now the rules of interaction and relations have not been fully established. BRYC is a unique non-political organisation which contributes to the shaping of the modern political world in the Barents and the Arctic through the involvement of young people in the peace-building strategy and innovation practices.

Why is it done?

BRYC works with the aim to strengthen youth co-operation in the Barents Region and empower the younger generation to participate more actively in the Barents regional development and development of the Arctic.



Information about NGO/movement	
Name	Hessian Union for the Strengthening of Children's and Youth Interests
Short description	Hessian Union is a body which represents the youth of Hesse at the state level, passing resolutions and co-operating with ministries.

Information about the practice	
Target group	Youth parliamentarians in Hesse and politically interested youth all over Germany
Location	Hesse region and Germany
Timeframe	June 2017 – ongoing
Useful links	www.huskj.de instagram.com/ huskj_ wiesbaden.de/guiapplications/newsdesk/publications/Landeshauptstadt_Wiesbaden/141010100000296394.php

Practice description

The union's goal is to include a Hessian state youth parliament into state legislation, by negotiating terms for youth participation with the political parties represented in parliament. Additionally, the union ensures dialogue between youth institutions and organisations in the region.

How is it done?

HUSKJ is already democratically legitimised by the elections within its member municipalities. The youth parliaments of the municipalities then send their delegates to

HUSKJ. The union is in the process of institutionalisation – it has different agreements on how to work together, an elected chair, group leaders and procedural rules. Additionally, there are regular meetings to ensure that the youth parliament discusses and promotes the topics that concern the youth of the Hessian region.

What makes this practice special?

The initiative was launched at grass-roots level by young people with the aim of enriching the Hessian democratic system. It is unmatched in Germany and it is the first attempt of a youth-led group to institutionalise youth participation at state level.

Why is it done?

Considering the current state of democracy in Germany, HUSKJ believes that the country's political system needs improvement. Foundations for a democratic society are laid by including youth in political processes at an early stage. Thus, HUSKJ serves as the foundation for implementation of a state youth parliament into state law.



Information about NGO/movement	
Name	Terra-1530
Short description	NGO “Terra-1530” is an umbrella organisation for 18 organisations in Moldova and Romania, with a mission to strengthen the capacity of rural communities for sustainable development and addressing the lack of citizens’ involvement in decision making at the community level. The organisation works in economically and socially disadvantaged regions, focusing mainly on teenagers, although including all members of the community in certain projects. It delivers training sessions in organising public meetings and local youth forums.

Information about the practice – Local Action – Global Impact	
Target group	5 000 inhabitants of Vorniceni village
Location	Vorniceni Village Council, Moldova
Timeframe	2013 – ongoing
Useful links	terra1530.md www.facebook.com/groups/410323769049392/

Practice description

On 14 December 2012, the Vorniceni Village Council, Republic of Moldova, approved a decision (no. 8/16) concerning changing the destination of a land area for the purpose of arranging a square as part of the Socio-Economic Development Strategy of Vorniceni village. Part of this land was planted with trees some 40 years ago but there has been a lack of appropriate care. The goal of the project was to reconstruct the square as a green area with international importance, which would serve as an example for the other counties on how to create green and sustainable places of rest and provide new jobs.

How is it done?

Village members are directly involved in all parts of the project, including decision making, design and implementation. Terra 1530 supports this process by helping with facilitation and organising training for volunteers on participatory processes, decision making and entrepreneurial activity. These trainings are useful for youth to develop trust in representative democracy and their ability to influence decision making, find better paying jobs and have a better future in the country.

How is it connected with political participation?

The Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Moldova, Academy of Science of the Republic of Moldova, Institute of Forest Researches and Arrangements, and State Ecological Inspection are involved with citizens in the planning and implementation processes. Citizens are working directly with administration to obtain the necessary authorisation and permits from the Environmental Commission of Experts, in order to implement the works in line with existing legal requirements.

What makes this practice special?

The project started in autumn 2013 and since then it has involved most people from the village in several steps: deciding on the outcomes, working on the roads, building a fence, creating small architectural forms and planting and creating flowerbeds. In order to complete the project, both financial and human resources from the village are needed for lobbying and reaching out to more national and international partners. An indirect benefit of the project is to change the mentality of young people and make them more interested and motivated in being active members of their communities.

Why is it done?

There are increasing discussions about ecological education in Moldova, while there is a stringent lack of a real model of environmental projects in practice. The square project arranged in Vorniceni with the participation of international experts may become a best practice for local public administration and serve as a model for other communities on how to involve citizens and work together on environmental projects. Furthermore, the new green space can be used by a nearby high school to hold outdoor activities.



Information about NGO/movement	
Name	Central Remedial Clinic
Short description	Central Remedial Clinic is an organisation that supports people with physical, sensory and intellectual disabilities. Established in 1951, the CRC is a voluntary organisation and national charity operating in Dublin from five different locations working with children and adults with disabilities. Youth services of the clinic consist of two main divisions: the provision of regional general disability services in Dublin City and County and the provision of specialist multidisciplinary services to children with physical disabilities.

Information about the practice – The Rights to Decide	
Target group	Young people with disabilities
Location	Dublin, Ireland
Timeframe	June 2018 – September 2019
Useful links	www.crc.ie

Practice description

The Rights to Decide is a 15-month structured dialogue project to empower young people with disabilities through local campaigns, awareness raising, training and education around human rights and advocacy. The project also offers a voice to people with disabilities to speak to local decision makers within their local and national communities.

The Rights to Decide gives an inclusive and comprehensive overview of human rights, advocacy, safeguarding rights, policy and how they affect youth with disabilities. The project is implemented in partnership with the National Youth Council, IHREC, Irish Advocacy Service and Fighting Words.

How is it done?

The Rights to Decide is a combination of monthly workshops and structured dialogue activities funded by Erasmus+ Key Action 3 Support for Policy Reform.

The project gives an opportunity for young people with and without disabilities to engage in a dialogue around rights and their ability to effect change locally. The workshops in Human Rights and Advocacy give a chance to participants to represent themselves and speak out about the needs of young people with disabilities. Understanding human rights and the rights of people with disabilities gives them a basis for youth advocacy work, allowing them to influence the IHREC and National Safeguarding Office of Ireland.

How is it connected with political participation?

Participants get an avenue to meet face to face with local and national policy makers. This is done through a series of meetings with the young people with disabilities to discuss their needs and wants. Participants are involved in political campaigns advocating to local councillors for changes such as homecare packages, accessibility changes of their neighbourhoods or more hours with a personal assistant. As part of this project, participants have met with senators and members of the Irish parliament to voice their ideas.

What makes this practice special?

The Rights to Decide gives young people with disability an opportunity to become informed about their rights and supports them in voicing their needs and demands to the decision makers.

Why is it done?

The Rights to Decide exists as a process to empower young people with disabilities to become educated and engaged citizens with the same rights and opportunities as other youth. Its goal is to support people with disabilities to live ordinary lives in ordinary places.



Information about NGO/movement	
Name	KEDITH – Community Enterprise of Thessaloniki Municipality and Team of Youth Facilitators
Short description	Common Benefit Enterprise of Thessaloniki Municipality (KEDITH) was established with the goal of planning, organisation and implementation of youth actions, projects and events, the promotion of European youth policy at local and national level, the dialogue within Europe's youth, the generation of structures and actions for children and young people and the creation of youth centres. KEDITH operates with an 11-member council appointed by decision of the Municipal Council of the Municipality of Thessaloniki.

Information about the practice – Thessaloniki Local Plan of Activities for the City and the Youth 2018-2019	
Target group	High school students and young citizens aged 15-30
Location	Urban area of the Thessaloniki Municipality, Greece
Timeframe	June 2018 – September 2019
Useful links	http://www.kedith.gr/en/youth/ https://www.iap2.org/page/pillars

Practice description

The local youth plan of Thessaloniki 2018-2019 to reinforce political participation of young people in the urban area of Thessaloniki and to fill the gaps in existing youth programmes was adopted since the successful implementation of a local youth strategy during 2014 Thessaloniki European Youth Capital.

The Thessaloniki Youth Plan was a municipality-led project to increase civic and political participation of young people in the city, especially non-organised youth, by providing them with concrete communication, funding and co-deciding channels in the Municipality of Thessaloniki in order to implement their projects and youth policy actions.

How is it done?

The Youth Plan was carried out through three major activities:

- 1) Participatory Budgeting for Youth, which was a mechanism for distributing municipal funding for youth projects and initiatives based on a digital voting system and the co-operation of the youth sector and the civil society.
- 2) The Municipal Youth Council, an advisory body to the Municipal Council, consisting of 49 young people.
- 3) A series of structured dialogue meetings between the municipality, other local stakeholders and the youth sector, including high school students, for setting up the general framework for the creation of the Thessaloniki Youth Centre.

Why is it done?

This youth-led local youth plan was created to provide a trust-based participatory urban environment for young people to contribute to civil society and to lead the decision-making process on topics which are important to young people.



Information about NGO/movement	
Name	Dachverband Scheizer Jugendparlamente / Fédération Suisse des parlements des Jeunes
Short description	The Federation of Swiss Youth Parliaments is the politically neutral competence centre for political participation and civic education of young people. It is the umbrella organisation of over 50 youth parliaments across Switzerland.

Information about the practice – Youpa	
Target group	Young people interested in politics aged 14-25
Location	Switzerland
Timeframe	Ongoing
Useful links	Youpa.ch (DE/FR) DSJ.ch (DE/FR)

Practice description

Youpa is a process for empowering young people through support measures, capacity building, networking activities, communication campaigns, a leadership development programme and co-operation with government and administration, in order to create youth participation bodies in local and regional politics.

Youpa supports youth in various areas such as leading the structures, improving communications, project management, lobbying and providing support for individual needs. The project includes a campaign “Rejuvenate Swiss politics” to raise awareness about youth participation across Switzerland.

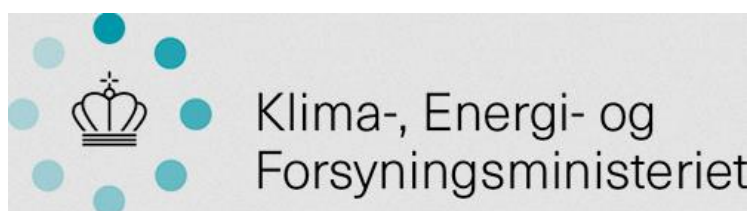
The core of their work is “from youth for youth”, ensuring that initiatives of young people can be accelerated and brought into useful channels so young people have the possibility to become part of the decision-making processes.

What makes this practice special?

All the activities in Youpa always start with the needs of young people, empowering them to create their structures in co-operation with government and administration. In this way, young people can advocate their causes to public authorities, with the support of Youpa.

Why is it done?

While young people have the right to access decision-making processes as full citizens, they are excluded from political processes such as voting or standing for elections, based on age restrictions. Youpa creates spaces and builds capacity for young people to participate within the existing political structures.



Information about NGO/movement	
Name	Youth Climate Council to the Ministry for Climate, Energy and Utilities, Denmark
Short description	The Youth Climate Council is a formal channel for young people to give input on climate policy to the climate minister, bringing new thinking into Danish climate policy and providing input to the minister on future climate solutions. The members of the Youth Climate Council are appointed for a one-year term, and they come from all parts of the country, from different educational directions, and represent different angles to the climate challenge.

Information about the practice	
Target group	Danish citizens under the age of 30
Location	Denmark
Timeframe	2015 – ongoing
Useful links	kefm.dk/klima-og-vejr/ungeklimaraadet/

Practice description

The Youth Climate Council is a standing committee under the Ministry for Climate, Energy and Utilities, Denmark. The Council writes recommendations for climate policy, gathers input from young people, and contributes to the public debate to enhance climate action.

How is it done?

A Council consists of 13 young people who gather input from other young people and write policy recommendations for the climate minister. Council members bring the ideas of young

people to the table where decisions are made, contribute to the public debate and increase public pressure for climate action.

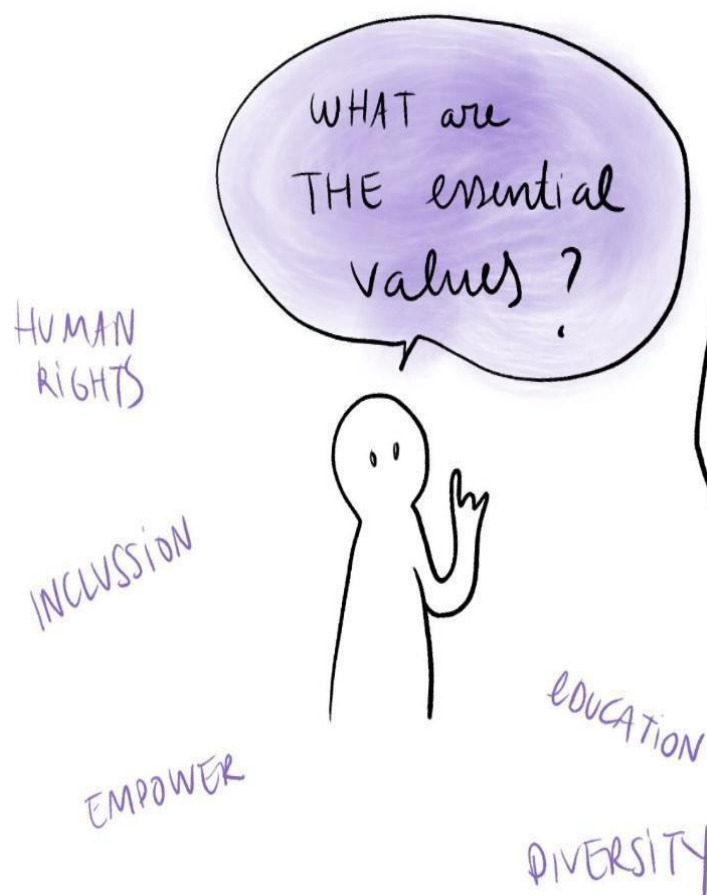
What makes this practice special?

Giving youth a formal channel to give advice directly to the climate minister is an example of youth political participation in which young people are taken seriously as members of society with meaningful input.

Why is it done?

Young people have a right to be represented on the climate agenda and to be consulted in a meaningful way. The Council's aim is to achieve better climate policy by involving youth as a group that will deal with the consequences of today's decisions.

Citizenship Education





Information about NGO/movement	
Name	Funky Citizens
Short description	FUNKY CITIZENS builds research-based, data-driven online advocacy tools. Their tools aim to be educational and actionable, encouraging young citizens to engage in accountability and government initiatives in which they can see an impact. By aggregating and educating youth around a series of tools, Funky Citizens believe they can build the understanding and human capital necessary to influence more participatory, responsible and transparent democracy in Romania. Ultimately, their user base should empower citizens to influence public sector reform.

Information about the practice – 80east	
Target group	Young people aged 12-18
Location	Bucharest, Romania
Timeframe	February 2019 – ongoing
Useful links	https://80east.ro/ https://www.facebook.com/optzecist/ https://www.rri.ro/en_gb/reenacting_the_1980s-2594683

Practice description

80east is a “museum of daily life in communism” and, at the same time, a physical space in which young people come to learn through direct experience and interactive means about the recent history and the values of democracy.

Romania is the only post-communist country in Europe that lacks a recent history museum. Without tools to explain the past, it is easy to repeat the same mistakes. 80East was created to explain the past to the young generation not only through history books but through hands-on experiences that can transform abstract concepts like “lack of freedom”, “authoritarian regime” or “nationalisation” into relatable everyday life examples. Moreover, there is a need to do so in a creative fashion that permits young people to fully understand the extent to which an autocratic regime can impact the life of every citizen. Therefore, 80east deals with these needs by offering young people who have not experienced life under dictatorship an immersive experience, helping them sharpen their knowledge about Romania’s recent past and change their attitude towards civic engagement and what democracy requires from each individual nowadays.

What makes this practice special?

In Eastern European countries there are very few initiatives that combine education about recent history, civic education, non-formal education and museal education. Moreover, the project has proved to be an excellent bridge between schools and organisations from civil society that work with young people and do civic education.

Why is it done?

80east exists to cope with the narrative “During communism life was better” which, according to studies, young people also seem to assimilate. The experiential process aims to connect with youth who experience life in dictatorship and the results of human rights infringement on their daily life. In this way, young people are becoming a generation aware of the importance of valuing and protecting democracy and human rights.

Information about NGO/movement	
Name	European Educational Exchange – Youth for Understanding (EEE-YFU)
Short description	<p>In 1985 EEE-YFU was founded as an umbrella organisation for national YFU organisations based in Europe. Youth for Understanding is a non-profit youth exchange organisation, providing exchange programmes for 15- to 18-year-old students in more than 50 countries worldwide. The exchanges are based on homestay programmes throughout the world.</p> <p>The purpose of EEE-YFU is to advance and support the mission of Youth For Understanding (YFU) in Europe, which is to advance intercultural understanding, life-long learning, global competencies, mutual respect and social responsibility through transformational educational exchanges for generations of youth, families and communities, supported by dedicated volunteers and professional staff.</p>

Information about the practice – Active Citizens Living European Values (ACLEV)	
Target group	Volunteers, youth workers, young people (18-25), general public, policy makers
Location	Europe-wide
Timeframe	October 2018 to December 2019
Useful links	https://education.yfu.org/active-citizens-living-european-values https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLmlj2-s8nFjUtxWm5NNnwFUU0xBlaKuXk

Practice description

ACLEV aims to raise awareness, encourage critical thinking and inspire enthusiasm about European values and the European project, create a sense of belonging to a unified Europe, inspire concrete forms of active citizenship in Europe and advance the creation of transnational networks for mutual learning and development.

How is it done?

ACLEV was a year-long E+ co-funded project under KA3 European Youth Together. It included four training courses for Coloured Glasses facilitators (18-25), more than 225 Coloured Glasses workshops in 14 countries, the celebration of 9 May with local activities across eight countries (aimed at the general public), a campaign under the topic of “Breaking Through Walls”, three youth exchanges in Brussels and the Young Europeans’ Seminar (YES) bringing together 521 young people from all over Europe and the world. The majority of participants were between the ages of 18 and 25, excluding the YES, where almost 400 of the participants were secondary education students around 15-18 years old.

Towards the end of the project, ESN and EEE-YFU implemented a training course for Youth Leaders focusing on advocacy and development of policy recommendations. The aim of the training was to build on the everyday experiences of the youth leaders and present the learnings from the project through a set of recommendations for practical action by the European Union and its Member States to a) better foster active citizenship, b) promote European values and c) promote and develop a stronger European project through a “sense of unity”.

How is it connected with political participation?

By addressing active citizenship, a core aspect of the process is fostering understanding of the importance of participation and political participation. Using non-formal education, participants engaged in a dialogue on why it is vital to speak up, but also act to share your ideas and protect your rights.

What makes this practice special?

The project consists of various components and can be adapted to different audiences. The main target group in this case was young people aged 18-25; however, Coloured Glasses workshops can adapt to engage school students and teachers. Learning happens both locally and cross-border using the exchanges and “flying facilitators”, where experienced volunteers run projects in other countries, empowering new facilitators and bringing a European perspective to the discussions.

Why is it done?

The main goal of the project was to empower young people across Europe to become active citizens, to give them an opportunity to question the status quo and redefine the Europe they want to be part of, to build the capacity of experienced volunteers through trainings and engage young people to become more active. The project helps young people to understand Europe and its common values better and work together on preparing a set of recommendations for policy makers and other stakeholders (European Conference).



Steps for Youth

Information about NGO/movement	
Name	Steps for Youth
Short description	Steps for Youth is a non-governmental and non-profit organisation based in Cyprus. The aim of the organisation is to promote active citizenship, volunteerism and European values among young people, raising awareness and empowering young people on environmental issues and social inclusion.

Information about the practice – Active for Youth	
Target group	Youth aged 18-30
Location	Europe-wide
Timeframe	Ongoing

Practice description

Active for Youth is a method of empowering young people to be active citizens in their local and European community. This method is based on World Cafe and it is used during workshops, trainings and youth exchanges. Young people are actively involved in the process. The aim of the activity is to develop communication and presentation skills of young people, to increase their critical thinking and self-esteem, so that they understand political processes and can participate as active citizens.

How is it done?

Active for Youth is a structured conversational process for knowledge sharing in which groups of people discuss a topic through an opening question, different in each group,

providing solutions and future practical ideas. The process happens in small groups at several tables, with individuals switching tables periodically and a “table host” staying to introduce the previous discussion to the new group. Discussion results are noted down to support this facilitation between groups. Finally, results of all groups are reflected on in a common plenary session and strategies for further actions and opportunities for further co-operation of participants are identified.

What makes this practice special?

Young people have the opportunity to participate in the entire process and present their ideas to the whole group. Youth feel connected to the result because they participated in their development.

Why is it done?

Active for Youth was initiated to give inspiration and opportunity to all participants in Steps for Youth projects to express their ideas and opinions on the topic. It’s a method that allows sharing and disagreements. The main question addressed during the process aims to understand and realise the obstacles of non-active participation of young people and to find solutions in order to motivate youth to be more active.



Information about NGO/movement	
Name	Union of Refugees in Portugal – UREP
Short description	UREP aims to support refugees in exercising their citizenship through intercultural mediation, in order to ensure their full integration into society. The Union helps to provide access to means of social inclusion and dignity, believing in unity and interdisciplinary work as a response to challenges, which require direct monitoring to solve various social problems and daily obstacles.

Information about the practice – Education for Women and Young Refugees	
Target group	Women and Young Refugees aged 15-30
Location	Portugal
Timeframe	2017 – ongoing
Useful links	www.urep.pt

Practice description

Education protects refugee children and youth from forced recruitment into armed groups, child labour, sexual exploitation and child marriage. Education also strengthens community resilience. This project is focused on innovation in terms of education in the lives of women and young refugees. It takes into consideration the situation and political developments in the main origin countries of refugees in Europe, i.e. Syria, Afghanistan, Eritrea and Iraq and its impact on their lives as immigrants in Portugal, Northern and Western European countries.

How is it done?

The project works directly with children and youth providing educational material and implementing group workshops continuously throughout the year. UREP also provide vocational training to the mothers of refugee children and provides Portuguese language classes in order to support their integration.

Moreover, the project also builds the capacity of teachers to work within their new intercultural settings, taking special measures to retain the refugee children in their schools, both public and private.

What makes this practice special?

In order to implement these educational activities and reach out to families for long-term learning projects, work is done in collaboration with the local authorities, government and educational institutions. This dialogue with authorities ensures that more social measures can be implemented to support the life and inclusion of refugee families.

Why is it done?

This project exists to make sure every child, young person and human being have their right to quality education, because education is the key to successful life.



Information about NGO/movement	
Name	International Co-operation Centre
Short description	The International Co-operation Centre (ICC) is a non-profit and independent organisation working on global issues, European affairs, global citizenship education, human rights, development aid, sustainability and civic participation. It is based in Trento, Italy. ICC works in co-operation with relevant stakeholders at local, national and international level and produces analysis, training activities, research, information, policy advice, and awareness-raising actions.

Information about the practice – Youth: new storytellers and actors for development aid	
Target group	Students and young people aged 13-26, with interest in migration and development co-operation issues
Location	Trentino region, Italy, and all Italian regions
Timeframe	June 2018 – ongoing
Useful links	https://www.oxfamitalia.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Comprendere-il-presente.pdf https://www.cci.tn.it/CCI/Formazione/Corsi-Lezioni/Giochi-di-ruolo-per-le-competenze-trasversali https://www.ufficiostampa.provincia.tn.it/Comunicati/Tonina-sull-ambiente-Dai-giovani-arrivano-istanze-a-cui-la-politica-deve-rispondere?fbclid=IwAR1rqlpGHsd0wxNPskkxscmJG-eb6cXGLWv1ACrQAZG6y064cPzJFmwueWQ http://www.tg3.rai.it/dl/RaiTV/programmi/media/ContentItem-c1386569-b5d5-465e-89b4-b5dd957aa8bc-tg3.html#p= (min. 16,40)

Practice description

The project Giovani (Youth) fostered the active engagement of young people across Italy, supporting their awareness and actions in connection with the potentials of international

development co-operation for tackling global challenges – particularly those connected to the root causes of human migration and sustainability issues.

Giovani supports the transformative dimension of education, connecting formal and non-formal education through school and extra-curricular activities, developing over time a consistent pathway between learning processes, critical thinking practice, and civic/political participation. Moreover, based on the principles and practices of Global Citizenship Education, the Giovani project worked with young people first locally and then nationally, discussing and supporting active citizenship as a necessary condition for living in complex societies, facing global challenges.

How is it done?

In the formal education sector, this objective was pursued through the development of training kits, and the realisation of training courses for teachers as well as students. In the non-formal education sector, the action focused on active citizenship's workshops, the organisation of territorial awareness-raising campaigns, events, video installations, exhibitions, flash mobs, all designed, promoted and realised by youth groups.

Beyond single public and training initiatives, the project promoted a structured dialogue between the youth and representatives of local authorities in each local community. One national and 20 regional platforms were established allowing an interchange between youth activists and institutions. This resulted in the drafting of policy recommendations addressed to local and national authorities with concrete measures aimed at fostering youth engagement, sustainability policies and civic participation. Youth activists could then present their recommendations in public, discuss them with policy makers, and have a first-hand experience of a political dialogue, advocating in favour of youth civic participation.

What makes this practice special?

Often confined at the margins of the decision-making processes, the project placed young people at centre stage and reflected on their role as citizens. To some extent, the whole process aimed to comply with the 1989 UN International Convention on the Rights of the Child, when it mentions the right of children to be heard in all decision-making processes

that concern them, and the corresponding duty, for adults, to take their opinions into due consideration.

Moreover, the action followed a bottom-up approach moving from the peripheral to the central/national level. It started from issues relating to the local communities, where it asked students and young activists to gather in-depth knowledge of specific problems, think of possible solutions, and present them to local decision makers in the form of policy recommendations. Later, the project offered the national framework where knowledge-sharing, good practice exchange, and the negotiation of policy recommendations could take place, and exposed young people to different perspectives and priorities.

Currently follow-up activities are being designed by ICC and other partners across Italy, where students can continue a structured dialogue with their peers and with decision makers in respective communities, in connection with climate change-related issues as well as with the global dimension of citizenship.

Why is it done?

The educational approach adopted by the ICC is grounded on global citizenship education, therefore based on the progression knowledge-values-action. The coherence between training action and the development of citizenship skills aims to enable young people to influence national and international economic, social and environmental policies, so that they are more just and sustainable and based on respect for human rights.

Citizenship Education within formal education





Information about NGO/movement	
Name	Young Citizens
Short description	Young Citizens helps young people become active, engaged and motivated citizens, able to contribute positively to their communities – at local, national or global level.

Information about the practice – Democracy in Schools	
Target group	Year 9-10 students, aged 13-15
Location	UK nationwide, collaboration between universities and secondary schools in their local community
Timeframe	Ongoing, six weeks during the school year
Useful links	https://www.youngcitizens.org/democracy-in-schools https://vimeo.com/302454037

Practice description

Democracy in Schools is an innovative programme designed to improve young people's political literacy and promote democratic engagement. The programme links universities with local secondary schools providing undergraduates with the opportunity to volunteer in the classroom and to deliver a range of civic education sessions. They involve fellow young people as knowledgeable peer influencers to introduce the topic of democracy and politics.

After a successful pilot with Essex University, the programme has been adopted by the University of Sheffield, with further higher education institutions to follow as part of a wider promotional campaign.

How is it done?

Democracy in Schools is a six-week programme conceived and developed by Young Citizens in partnership with the University of Essex. Consisting of six one-hour sessions, undergraduates work in small groups using specially created resources. Trained undergraduates facilitate conversation and debate on topical subjects such as International Relations, Human Rights and the UK Parliament and Government.

Democracy in Schools has a triple benefit:

- i) for universities it creates positive links with the local community, raising aspirations and boosting social mobility;
- ii) undergraduates have the opportunity to cement their course learnings as well as gain key employability skills;
- iii) local secondary school children benefit from engaging and interactive sessions on the UK's political and democratic systems – empowering them with the knowledge, skills and confidence to get involved in politics.

How is it connected with political participation?

Following the EU Referendum in 2016, Young Citizens held a series of focus groups with young people who were too young to vote. They were asked the priorities that they wished to have been put forward during the Brexit negotiations. Sessions were held in London, Cardiff and Belfast and attracted 200 attendees. Key themes that came out of the discussions included a lack of basic knowledge of the democratic systems from home or in school, a lack of representation of young people's priorities on the agenda, and a lack of politicians who they thought they could trust.

Democracy in Schools sought to redress the imbalance, by providing formative experiences in schools where teenagers could access information through engaging activities delivered by knowledgeable and enthusiastic trained undergraduates.

Through participation young people have gained greater insights and knowledge about how society functions and how change can be achieved. With increased understanding of the

relevance of political participation, young people have greater confidence to engage in matters important to them on a local level.

What makes this practice special?

The educational resources are carefully prepared and updated on an annual basis, including contemporary examples, young inspirational figures and discussion points to make the sessions relevant to current developments.

Why is it done?

Education policy in England has been steadily narrowing in recent times with a greater focus on a smaller number of “core” subjects, while subjects like Art, Music and Citizenship education have been sidelined. Young Citizens believe that as well as being able to get a job, every citizen must also know how society works and how they can help society to function effectively. Alongside the reduction in curriculum time, there has also been a loss of specialist citizenship practitioners in schools, with fewer training courses being offered due to a lack of citizenship jobs being made available in schools.

As a result, Democracy in Schools redresses the issue of a lack of specialist education content and teachers, by providing these resources to schools for free, giving a greater number of secondary school pupils the confidence to engage in political participation and influence their peers to take greater ownership of the world around them.



Information about NGO/movement	
Name	GOOD Initiative
Short description	The GOOD initiative is a conglomerate of civil society organisations which aim to advocate for the introduction of quality civic education in the Croatian formal education system, as well as broader, systemic reform in the education system, in order to contribute to its inclusiveness and democratic potential. Together with advocacy activities, the GOOD initiative provides civic education seminars, training and workshops for teachers, pupils, parents and experts.

Information about the practice – Non-formal education for Active Citizenship	
Target group	Elementary and high-school students, teachers and parents
Location	Croatia
Timeframe	2008 – ongoing
Useful links	http://goo.hr/ – the GOOD Initiative website http://edu.goo.hr/good-inicijativa/ – education materials https://hrvatskamozebolje.org/ – Croatia can do better! protests

Practice description

The GOOD Initiative has conducted a number of activities focusing on introducing and improving standards of civic education in schools and on supporting the reform of national educational policies, through education, action and advocacy.

How is it done?

The various projects conducted by the GOOD Initiative include educational and informative components (non-formal training, applied analytical activities). Over the years, the Initiative has built up a strong coalition of stakeholders interested in seeing the educational standards

in Croatia improved in various ways, especially concerning the implementation of various aspects of civic education. The main clusters of the initiative's activities include mobilisation of interested stakeholders (teachers, youth, parents, CSOs, trade unions) for improvements in education, encouraging the democratisation of schools and conducting critical monitoring and reporting on educational policies and practices and warning about bad practice and systemic weaknesses.

How is it connected with political participation?

Advocating for the initiative's goals in the Croatian context has repeatedly shown the necessity of networking and working together across sectors to achieve social impact and social change. These efforts have included the further development of stakeholder networks, especially with trade unions in science and education. This collaboration has proved that numerous people can be included and mobilised, enabling the Coalition to organise two major protests under the "Croatia can do better!" moniker, which have brought together more than 50 000 people (2016) and another 30 000 (2017) in mass action around the country. The GOOD Initiative has organised three large-scale protests across Croatia, in support of education reform, and has continued to build on this support through conferences, exhibitions, media statements, campaigns and more. This leading by example serves to encourage citizens who support better education policies to become more aware and active themselves.

What makes this practice special?

The number and territorial distribution of member organisations strengthens the initiative. The GOOD Initiative acts as a concerted effort by organisations of various profiles in the field of non-formal education, dealing with various topics, unified by the goal of pursuing a space for civic education in the Croatian system.

Why is it done?

The GOOD initiative campaigns for the implementation of quality civic education in the Croatian educational system and it serves as a watchdog for quality standards. Among others, its goals include the recognition of education as a public and common good, affirmation of the right to education that includes civic education as a key resource of democratically oriented social change, and advocacy of pluralism and inclusion in education as a reflection of democratic endeavours.



Information about NGO/movement	
Name	Intercultural Institute Timișoara
Short description	The Intercultural Institute Timisoara is a non-governmental organisation based in Romania which promotes the values of the Council of Europe through educational projects and programmes.

Information about the practice – Project Citizen	
Target group	7th grade students, 13-14 years old
Location	Romania
Timeframe	Ongoing
Useful links	https://www.civiced.org/pc-program www.cetateanul.intercultural.ro (Romanian)

Practice description

Project Citizen is an educational programme which aims to develop competences for democratic culture among students through project-based learning. Students analyse a local community problem and propose a public policy solution which they send to the local authorities. This takes place during school hours, in classes on education for democratic citizenship, following a dynamic and interactive method structured in eight steps.

How is it done?

The programme consists of training and support for teachers who teach Education for Democratic Citizenship in the 7th grade. The training lasts for five non-consecutive days during a period of approximately five months and the teachers apply the “Project Citizen” method with their students in between the training sessions. After attending the training course, teachers continue applying the method with the 7th grade students every year.

The Intercultural Institute Timisoara supports teachers in this process with educational resources, printed guidelines for students, support for peer groups and constant updates

and facilitation of communication among all teachers from Romania who are part of the programme. The method was developed by the Centre for Civic Education in the USA and was adapted to the educational context in Romania by the Intercultural Institute of Timisoara.

How is it connected with political participation?

The method promoted in the “Project Citizen” programme develops among 7th grade students competences related to political participation: values (valuing human dignity and human rights; valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law), attitudes (respect, civic-mindedness, responsibility, self-efficacy, tolerance of ambiguity), skills (autonomous learning skills; analytical and critical thinking skills; skills of listening and observing; empathy; flexibility and adaptability; communicative and plurilingual skills; co-operation skills; conflict resolution skills), knowledge and critical thinking (regarding themselves, regarding language and communication, regarding the democratic society).

The students learn that voting is not the only kind of political participation available and that they can participate in meaningful ways, even before turning 18, by informing themselves about the role of local public authorities in society and by proposing public policy solutions to the problems in their community. By exercising their civic involvement during school hours, they become better prepared to engage in society for the rest of their life.

Why is it done?

One cannot expect to have active citizens when people turn 18 if they do not have the proper foundation. The “Project Citizen” method teaches students that they have a voice, to understand that they should inform themselves thoroughly and think critically, to hold the institutions accountable towards the citizens and gives them the tools to take action. At the end of the project, students have more faith in their power as citizens.

Information about NGO/movement	
Name	Education Centre Kurt Löwenstein
Short description	<p>Kurt Löwenstein, located in Berlin (Germany) and founded in 1975, has a long-standing 40-year expertise in developing and implementing educational activities such as seminars, trainings and encounters in the field of EDC/HRE.</p> <p>The education centre employs five education officers and hosts 120 beds and a large outdoor area. The team runs educational activities for young people and multipliers in the field of youth work, reaches out to schools in the region, works with vocational schools as well as youth clubs and runs international seminars and encounters with youth organisations from all over Europe and the Middle East.</p>

Information about the practice – Training for school students’ unions and representatives	
Target group	Young people aged 10-25
Location	Werftpfuhl, Germany. Activities take place in the youth centre and at schools
Timeframe	Ongoing – week-long seminar in September-November, as school students’ representatives are elected and take over office
Useful links	http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/dialog/14102.pdf Handbook in German

Practice description

Kurt Löwenstein offers five-day trainings for school representatives (class speakers, school students’ union members etc.) on their tasks and rights in the framework of decision-making procedures and bodies in school. Youth representatives are educated on their rights and tasks in the framework of schools. During the seminars participants gain the competence to develop concrete projects and to draft project implementation plans which they will

implement back in school and in the school neighbourhoods after the seminar. At the end of the seminar, school principals and other members of the school decision-making bodies are invited for an interactive panel debate to present and discuss the drafted projects with the students and to agree on concrete implementation steps. Students are also trained in communication skills and public speaking, learning how to take an active part in discussions and to negotiate.

Kurt Löwenstein created a network with other non-formal educational institutions from Berlin, which also work with school students' representatives. The network runs regular meetings to exchange seminar practice and engages in lobbying towards schools, political decision makers and administration, in order to improve the work of school students' unions and to promote their rights. Kurt Löwenstein also published a handbook for school students' representatives to support them in their daily work.

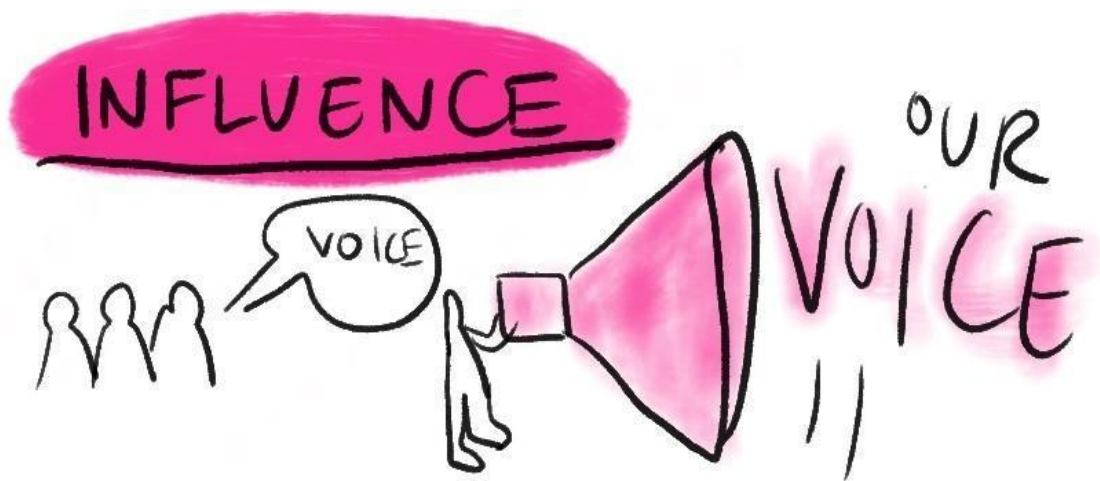
What makes this practice special?

It is a unique and empowering experience for participants to work for a week with school students' representatives on their rights and tasks and to develop on this base concrete projects to be implemented in school. Having a residential approach, with seminars taking place during the day and after-hours social activities, the process also works on team-building in practice, helping participants to strengthen their union in school and the feeling of belonging together and sharing solidarity.

Why is it done?

Schools are important institutions for young people's development, as they spend a lot of time there. By law, school students have many possibilities of participation in school, but in reality these rights are often not known, or are sometimes even neglected. These training opportunities aim to empower school students' representatives to stand up for their guaranteed rights and actively get involved in school governing bodies, in which by law they should have one third of the representatives. By implementing the projects which they developed in the seminars, they experience self-efficacy and in this way they get empowered to become more active and contribute to democratic processes in society.

Advocacy and Campaigning





Information about NGO/movement	
Name	Amnesty International's Regional Office for the Americas
Short description	Amnesty International is a global movement of more than 7 million people in over 150 countries and territories who campaign to end human rights abuses.

Information about the practice – Defending the Defenders	
Target group	Young environmental, land and territory defenders
Location	Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and Brazil
Timeframe	September 2017 to September 2019
Useful links	<p>Project video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K0aO16POBI8</p> <p>Campaign video on women human rights defenders (Spanish): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qks4tG5gzVo&t=1s</p> <p>Security toolkit: https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ACT10/1223/2018/en/</p> <p>Campaigning guide for young defenders: https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ACT10/1222/2018/en/</p>

Practice description

The Defending the Defenders project has been a critical pilot in strengthening the capacity of young environmental, land and territory defenders and local organisations across Honduras, Guatemala and Brazil to defend themselves both from physical and digital threats, and from practices that seek to criminalise and delegitimise their work.

Over the course of the initiative, Amnesty International, We Effect and Greenpeace worked together and alongside local organisations to innovate, test, train, learn and build. This

project delivered diverse, tailored trainings to 14- to 30-year-old activists across Guatemala, Honduras and Brazil, using participatory education approaches and with a strong emphasis on the need for holistic and integrated security practices to mitigate and manage risk.

The initiative equipped defenders with key knowledge, skills, and tools to drive social change by building their capacity to utilise community radio, media and social media, and to effectively plan campaigns, mobilise supporters and engage in advocacy. Efforts were multiplied through replication workshops, youth-led campaigns, and mobilisations organised by activists themselves. The project also developed national, regional and international support networks through online and offline community building. These networks provide opportunities to exchange critical resources and information and build global capacity.

How is it connected with political participation?

Defending the Defenders sought to increase the frequency and the quality of youth participation in organisations and communities across Guatemala, Honduras and Brazil in the areas of environmental, land and territory defence, as well as LGBTIQ+ rights and, more broadly, human rights. The project approached this, in part, by focusing on the barriers to political participation for youth activists: namely, concerns about security, stigmatisation, lack of skills and training, and lack of respect and space for young activists. This was tackled with practical, holistic security training and tools, leadership and media training, and the creation of youth groups at a community, national and regional level.

It also sought to promote participation positively, by creating spaces and resources for youth to develop projects in their communities. These youth-led projects included mobilisations, campaigns, advocacy efforts, trainings and artistic initiatives.

What makes this practice special?

This practice was special due to its experimental nature and the fact that it put young people at the centre of its design and implementation. Some highlights are the following:

- The project was youth-led in almost all stages of development and implementation.

Participatory research sessions allowed young people to identify the areas and skills they wanted the project to focus on. With project support, young defenders engaged in online

and offline campaigns, including an Amnesty International digital campaign. A toolkit was created in close consultation with young activists who provided input on the content, design and strategy.

- Defending the Defenders was experimental in its use of technology, particularly in rural communities with limited access to the internet. Online radio trainings were delivered using Raspberry Pi technology, WhatsApp was used to communicate in areas of low connectivity, and digital security practices that were tailored to an indigenous, rural context were promoted.

- The practice was effective in its focus on security for youth activists. This is an area of high importance for youth environmental and land defenders but it is also relevant for all activists in diverse contexts. The security methodology employed placed an emphasis on a holistic approach to security, with well-being and communal support and cohesion at its core. It is also a methodology that placed context at the forefront, allowing activists to adjust their security analyses based on their own unique risks and environments.

Why is it done?

Guatemala, Honduras and Brazil are among the most dangerous countries in the world for environmental defenders. Amidst shrinking space for civil society, high rates of killings of HRDs, and the criminalisation of their legitimate work, this project sought to provide relief to activists in these countries by providing practical knowledge and tools for self-protection.

The project worked to increase young activists' capacity to effectively achieve change and connect with other activists locally, nationally and regionally, both to increase their visibility and security and to ensure a more effective, collaborative work. The project worked to improve the participation of young people in communities and organisations across Central America and Brazil.

Finally, as a pilot initiative, Defending the Defenders sought to experiment with diverse approaches to youth empowerment and participation, particularly in rural communities, that can be used to build on in future projects and shared with a wider audience.

Information about NGO/movement	
Name	Fotomovimiento
Short description	<p>Fotomovimiento was born during the 2011 Indignados movement in Barcelona. Photography is what united a group of people in Plaça Catalunya who tried to document and disseminate through their own social networks what they considered a historic moment. Today, consolidated as an association, Fotomovimiento is an alternative means of reference for many people, which testifies and disseminates social reality through the image, with special emphasis on the most disadvantaged social sectors and communities.</p> <p>The collective's work was rewarded with the Prize for the medium most involved in human rights, granted by the IDHC, Institut de Drets Humans de Catalunya, in 2016.</p>

Information about the practice – Testimony and dissemination of social reality through the image	
Target group	General public in society and media
Location	Online
Timeframe	2011 – ongoing
Useful links	http://fotomovimiento.org https://www.flickr.com/photos/acampadabcnfoto/ Photo repository

Practice description

Fotomovimiento serves as a collective for independent photographers to capture different movements or struggles of activists. With a repository of over 20 000 pictures, it empowers activists to show through their cameras (phone, SLR or compact) an alternative vision of society, telling the collective human stories that do not appear in the media.

How is it connected with political participation?

Mainstream media remain largely silent when it comes to social struggles. Fotomovimiento brings another perspective to political discourse by amplifying this alternative vision of society, thus making participation more diverse.

What makes this practice special?

The practice supports giving voice to less represented communities and usual suspects. It creates personal relationships, of affection, with the people involved in these struggles, showcasing their stories, and it thus becomes a personal form of journalism.

Why is it done?

Fotomovimiento was created to give voice to local communities. This represents a mirage of democracy, because few people really use their freedom. Each snapshot reflects a call, a demand, a moment of indignation and power. Fotomovimiento aims to bring back this freedom and voice to society.



Information about NGO/movement	
Name	HCLU – Hungarian Civil Liberties Union
Short description	HCLU is a human rights NGO for the protection of specific fundamental rights. HCLU has three project groups: Political Freedoms Project, dealing with the freedom of assembly, freedom of association, freedom of speech, freedom of information, election monitoring and legal training concerning the elections; Equality Project, protecting the rights of Roma people and people living with disabilities; and the Privacy Project, protecting the private life of citizens.

Information about the practice – Free permanent legal aid system	
Target group	Activists, journalists and broader citizens
Location	Hungary
Timeframe	Ongoing
Useful links	www.tasz.hu www.valasztasz.tasz.hu

Practice description

HCLU provides free legal aid via e-mail, telephone and two specific hotlines on freedom of assembly and elections. Attorneys working pro bono provide direct legal representation to activists, journalists and citizens.

HCLU also organises training courses countrywide to raise legal awareness among diverse stakeholders, such as local activists or student groups at schools. HCLU has created FAQs, applications, web pages and brochures on various topics, which are disseminated mostly in social media.

How is it done?

The legal aid service is reachable via e-mail at all times and via telephone twice a week, with specific hotlines switched on whenever needed as in the case of election periods and for every major demonstration. Hotlines are reachable from 8 am to 8 pm, but in crisis situations, such as extraordinary demonstrations, the freedom of assembly hotline is in operation 24 hours a day. The HCLU election hotline works non-stop on election day, in order to give every citizen the opportunity to report misuses and ask for help.

Why is it done?

The project aim is to encourage people's participation in public debates and issues and in public life in general, to avoid the "chilling effect", and to raise awareness about their rights and to protect them against the overpower of the state. People tend to express their opinions more often and in a courageous way if they know their rights, the legal risks of their activity, and if there are legal experts supporting them. HCLU aims to see a society comprising active citizens: people who are interested in public life and who have the courage and tools to use the democratic institutions.



Information about NGO/movement	
Name	Lifelong Learning Platform
Short description	The Lifelong Learning Platform is an umbrella network that brings together 42 European organisations active in the field of education, training and youth. Currently these networks represent more than 50 000 educational institutions and associations covering all sectors of formal, non-formal and informal learning. Their members reach out to several millions of beneficiaries.

Information about the practice – Learning Democracy	
Target group	General learners
Location	Europe wide
Timeframe	January to December 2019
Useful links	http://llplatform.eu/ https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=%23myEUstory

Practice description

The Learning Democracy campaign, initiated by the Lifelong Learning Platform: European Civil Society for Education in co-operation with the European Citizen Action Service (ECAS), seeks to raise awareness about the importance of education and lifelong learning in fostering democratic values. It revolves around a series of online videos titled #myEUstory, where Europeans (and others) tell their personal story in an attempt to share reasons to develop the learning dimension of our democracies.

How is it done?

The campaign created the series of online videos titled #myEUstory on the topic of civic engagement, democracy and transparency; fake news and disinformation; civic participation; populism; activism and learning mobility.

Why is it done?

The campaign aimed to raise awareness about the need to go back to the foundations of our societies, and at the same time increase the role and value of education in our lives.



Information about NGO/movement	
Name	World Organization of the Scout Movement – European Region
Short description	<p>Scouting provides young people with opportunities to participate in educational activities that contribute to their growth as active citizens. Through these initiatives, young people become agents of positive change who inspire others to take action.</p> <p>Scouting is a global movement with over 50 million members worldwide, all part of National Scout Organizations (NSOs). There are 44 NSOs in Europe bringing together almost 2 million scouts within the European Region.</p>

Information about the practice – My Europe My Say! Youth Voice for the Future of Europe	
Target group	Young people aged 18-25 with a special focus on first-time voters
Location	Europe-wide
Timeframe	<p>October 2018 to December 2019</p> <p>Highest engagement during February-March-April 2019</p>
Useful links	<p>https://myeuropemysay.eu/</p> <p>https://www.instagram.com/myeuropemysay/</p> <p>https://www.facebook.com/ScoutinginEurope/</p> <p>#MyEuropeMySay hashtag on Twitter and Facebook</p>

Practice description

Led by the European Region of the World Organization of the Scout Movement in partnership with AEGEE/European Students' Forum and co-funded by the European Youth Together/Erasmus+ programme of the European Union, the project aimed to engage and empower young people to be active citizens by promoting youth participation in decision-making processes and the 2019 European elections.

How is it done?

Scouts and AEGEE volunteers organised grass-roots activities across Europe such as meetings with politicians from local authorities and Members of the European Parliament, large-scale youth exchanges, thematic conventions, multiplier trainings, action days involving the general public, workshops and Scout camps. The project included study trips to European Institutions in Brussels, including participating in the European Youth Week organised by the European Commission and the European Parliament.

My Europe My Say! also developed a voting guide for the 2019 European elections and educational materials for local level volunteer activities. #MyEuropeMySay, a social media campaign, connected the project digitally, providing information about what the EU does for citizens and calling for actions relating to participation and elections.

How is it connected with political participation?

My Europe My Say! brings together two big European youth networks, mobilising hundreds of volunteers, reaching thousands of young people across Europe and recognising the 2019 European elections as an important highlight for Europe.

Why is it done?

The project aimed to:

- enhance youth turnout in the European elections – as has been the priority focus for many European participation projects during the spring of 2019;
- to encourage young people to run for political mandates – besides promoting active citizenship by voting, a project put an important focus on promoting young people to engage as decision makers of the present and the future;
- to provide youth with a better understanding of how the European Institutions work and affect the life of young people, realising that European citizens need to be better informed and continuously engaged in the development of the European project in order to foster a positive European narrative for the future.



Information about NGO/movement	
Name	Our Future, Our Choice
Short description	Our Future, Our Choice is a UK-wide, youth-led, pro-European Union movement campaigning for a People's Vote on Brexit.

Information about the practice	
Target group	Young people aged 18-25, with a focus on students
Location	UK
Timeframe	October 2017 – ongoing
Useful links	https://www.ofoc.co.uk/ https://twitter.com/Femi_Sorry?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwc&amp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor https://www.instagram.com/ofoc_glasgow/ https://www.facebook.com/OFOCGlasgow/ https://twitter.com/OFOC_GLASGOW

Practice description

OFOC is a UK-wide campaign with regional groups across England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. OFOC organises meetings with MPs, takes part in rallies and marches and encourages young people to register to vote and engage in politics.

Over the second half of 2019 it focused on encouraging young people to register to vote, spreading the message about pro-EU tactical voting during the General Election in the same way as it did during a referendum.

How is it done?

The campaign includes meetings with MPs asking them to sign a pledge to commit to campaigning for a People's Vote and keep the interests of young people at the centre of

their work. In addition, there is collaboration with other pro-EU groups such as GlasgowLovesEU creating leaflets and holding rallies. OFOC organises panel discussions with politicians and trips to London to take part in marches where over one million people came together to demand a final say on Brexit.

How is it connected with political participation?

Many young people in the UK are feeling disconnected and disillusioned with the country's current government and political system. As a consequence, they are not interested in politics and choose to ignore what was happening with Brexit since it felt too complicated and convoluted. Our Future, Our Choice and its branches across the UK promote the importance of young people's engagement in politics. Youth make up a large part of the voting demographic, with power to affect change, and this campaign gives them an active voice beyond voting.

What makes this practice special?

This practice is special because it was set up by young people and is run by young people to promote the interests of young people. Founding members have abandoned their jobs and studies in other countries, in order to start the campaign.

There was a lack of a youth voice in the Brexit discussions and Our Future, Our Choice was able to get young people interested in what is happening and what is at stake for their future.

Why is it done?

OFOC aims to engage with politicians and make young people's voices heard within political institutions, showing that Brexit is not something that young people want or that they had an opportunity to vote on.



Information about NGO/movement	
Name	INJUVE – Spanish Institute of Youth
Short description	<p>The Institute of Youth (INJUVE) is an agency of the Government of Spain responsible for promoting youth associations and their collaboration; the development and co-ordination of an information and communication system for youth; the promotion of relations and international co-operation in youth affairs; as well as the cultural promotion of youth and knowledge of other cultural realities.</p> <p>Redsij is the network of more than 335 Youth information centres and services in Spain, which reaches more than 145 000 young people.</p>

Information about the practice – #redsijODS – Digital campaign for Youth Information Day	
Target group	General youth
Location	Online
Timeframe	17 April 2019, activities during the complete month
Useful links	injuve.es/prensa/agenda/dia-europeo-de-la-informacion-juvenil-2019 https://www.instagram.com/injuvespain/ https://twitter.com/InjuveSpain https://www.facebook.com/InjuveSpain/

Practice description

On 17 April, all of Europe celebrates European Youth Information Day. For Injuve and the Youth Information Services network, this date offers the opportunity to strengthen ties, share information and publicise the diversity of ongoing initiatives: competitions, workshops, talks on topics of interest, leisure and free-time activities. Since 2015, the motto

of European Youth Information Day has been “Youth Information with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)”.

How is it done?

Injuve launched the #redsijODS initiative in April 2019 to connect SDGs with the Spanish Youth Information Services network. Hundreds of photos were shared with Injuve social media profiles demonstrating the solidarity of youth in Spain.

What makes this practice special?

The project is done through a social media campaign because it is the easiest channel to reach young people. This approach has worked well, and every year the number of active young people engaged in the campaign is increasing.

Why is it done?

On 25 September 2015, world leaders within the UN adopted the Sustainable Development Goals as a set of global objectives to eradicate poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all as part of a new sustainable development agenda. Each objective has specific goals, to be achieved by 2030, with the engagement of government, private sector and civil society. Youth Information Services are committed to inform young people how they can incorporate these goals in their daily lives.

Information about NGO/movement	
Name	National Youth Council of Moldova
Short description	<p>The National Youth Council of Moldova (CNTM) has been the representation forum of the youth associations of the Republic of Moldova since 1999, representing youth in the various forums with government, national and international institutions.</p> <p>CNTM promotes the interests of associated and non-associated young people from the Republic of Moldova and develops youth associative structures through the implementation of programme activities, training, information, lobbying and consulting services.</p>

Information about the practice – U-Report Moldova	
Target group	Youth aged 14-35
Location	Moldova
Timeframe	Ongoing since 2017
Useful links	www.cntm.md ureport.in/v2/

Practice description

U-Report Moldova is a tool developed by UNICEF and implemented in Moldova by CNTM since 2017. U-Report is a secure messaging system that encourages young people to talk about issues and the problems that really matter to them, staying informed and bringing positive change to the world. The programme currently has 8 million participants in 60 countries around the world.

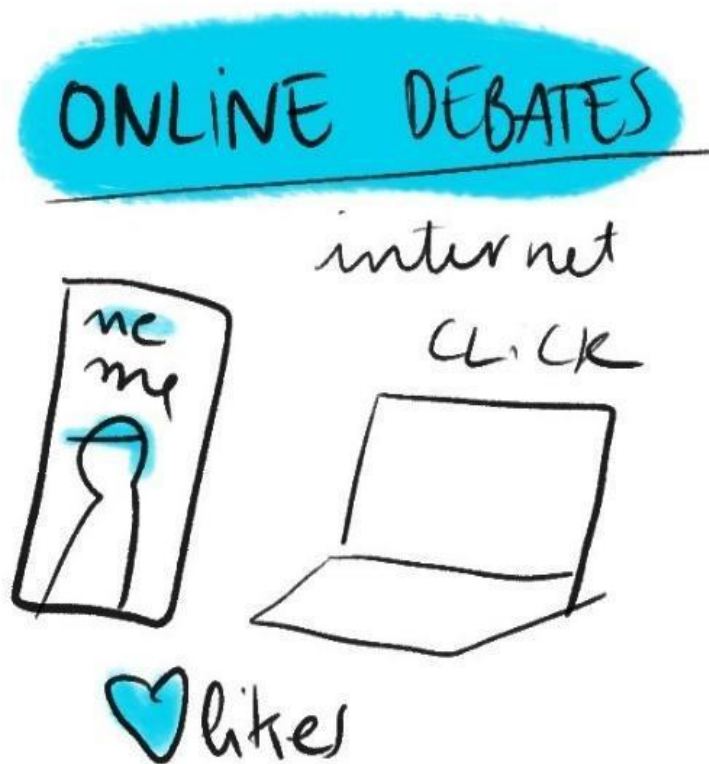
How is it done?

The U-Report programme sends SMS polls and alerts to its participants, collecting real-time responses, and subsequently publishing gathered data. Issues on which young people take part in the polls go further than political participation, including health, education, water, sanitation and hygiene, youth unemployment, HIV/AIDS and disease outbreaks.

Why is it done?

The aim of U-Report is to amplify the voices and views of young people regarding the issues which affect their lives. The results of the polls indicate to decision makers which issues and priorities feature highly on young people's agendas, and they can be used to improve national and local policies to reflect the needs of young people.

Digitalisation





Information about NGO/movement	
Name	ALL DIGITAL
Short description	<p>ALL DIGITAL (formerly Telentre-Europe) is a European NGO and a member-based association with a central office in Brussels, Belgium. It represents publicly funded telecentre networks, ICT learning centres, adult education centres and libraries across Europe where children and adults can access the internet, learn the latest digital skills and keep up to date with technology and community developments.</p> <p>ALL DIGITAL co-ordinates projects, programmes and campaigns that empower people through ICT by finding new paths to employment, community life, relevant information and staying in touch with friends and family in order to combat social exclusion and poverty.</p>

Information about the practice – BRIGHTS – Boosting global citizenship education using digital storytelling	
Target group	13- to 19-year-old young people, youth workers, secondary school teachers
Location	Online
Timeframe	2017-2019
Useful links	www.brights-project.eu www.all-digital.org

Practice description

The purpose of BRIGHTS is to promote Global Citizenship Education (GCE) in formal and non-formal educational contexts in Europe, with the help of digital storytelling techniques. It aims to empower young people with the skills, literacies and competences to foster social cohesion and promote intercultural dialogue and democratic values in Europe.

How is it done?

BRIGHT trains secondary school teachers and trainers working with young people (including youth workers, e-facilitators and cultural mediators) on the principles of GCE and its application through digital storytelling. It consists of a blended training course, which includes a MOOC and face-to-face workshops. As a part of the training, selected teachers and trainers test the methodology with young people aged 13-19 in schools and in non-formal educational contexts. Youth produce interesting and reflective digital stories on global challenges and subjects including human rights, peace and democratic values, intercultural dialogue and active citizenship.

The BRIGHTS project is co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union under the KA3 Social Inclusion through education, training and youth programme.

Why is it done?

The aim of the project was to show the relevance of general and specific topics of GCE, the benefits that such an educational practice can bring to different educational systems and the overall European society, as well as the added value of using digital storytelling with students.



Information about NGO/movement	
Name	Council of Europe
Short description	The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It includes 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union.

Information about the practice – No Hate Speech movement	
Target group	Young people, volunteers
Location	Online
Timeframe	2013-2018
Useful links	www.coe.int/en/web/no-hate-campaign

Practice description

The No Hate Speech Movement is a youth campaign led by the Council of Europe Youth Department seeking to mobilise young people to combat hate speech and promote human rights online.

How is it done?

The campaign drew on a range of social media tools which aimed to:

- promote the campaign including its European Action Days;
- provide information and education about hate speech; and
- engage youth through blogs, social networking sites, video webinars and hate speech reporting tools and resources.

Anyone could become part of the “online activist” community. Online activists moderated and managed content on the No Hate Speech Movement platform, Facebook pages and

Twitter accounts. They also helped with the preparation and implementation of European Action Days, as well as supported the work of national campaign committees.

What makes this practice special?

As the flagship project of the Council of Europe, launched in 2013, No Hate Speech Movement spread from the international level to national and local teams who led campaigns in 45 countries. The movement remains active beyond the project's official closure in 2017 through the work of various national campaigns, online activists and partners.

Why is it done?

Hate speech online is a phenomenon of special concern. The internet has created new spaces of communication and interaction but with fewer constraints: users can hide behind anonymity and distance to express hate to others. Moreover, hate can be spread and shared easily, for example, via comments or re-posts, taking a life of their own beyond the original post. The effects can be devastating on the intended target of hate speech but also affect society as a whole. The campaign serves as a tool to create new healthy narratives.



Information about NGO/movement	
Name	Nexus Institute for Co-operation Management and Interdisciplinary Research, Germany
Short description	<p>The project was implemented by a consortium of organisations and supported by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme. The Nexus Institute for Co-operation Management and Interdisciplinary Research, Germany co-ordinated the project with partners from France, Belgium, Germany, Slovenia, Luxembourg, Italy, Sweden and Denmark.</p> <p>The Nexus Institute for Co-operation Management and Interdisciplinary Research designs and moderates participative decision-making processes, focusing on transparent communication, active co-operation and sustainable consensus. Nexus investigates how active citizenship and the participation of different actors can change social development as well as advising actors from politics and administration for meaningful participation.</p>

Information about the practice – Youth shape their future through digital tools – #OPIN	
Target group	Youth workers, young people
Location	Online
Timeframe	2015-2018
Useful links	https://opin.me/en/ www.euthproject.eu/

Practice description

OPIN is an all-in-one digital and mobile platform and participation toolbox, for youth organisations or public administrations, developed within the project “EUth – Tools and Tips for Mobile and Digital Youth Participation in and across Europe”. The toolbox can easily be incorporated into the online platforms and activities of youth organisations and public administration.

How is it done?

The OPIN e-Participation toolbox has been developed as part of a three-year HORIZON 2020 European project involving partners across Europe to function as a platform for youth political participation. It includes guidelines on e-participation which enable youth workers to start digital participation with young people, and it also features a decision support tool that allows users to choose which of the templates for e-participation best suits their scenario.

How is it connected with political participation?

OPIN is available for public administration institutions and youth organisations of all types and sizes. Among other things OPIN gives authorities, youth organisations, educational institutions and youth clubs the possibility to start their own participation processes on the platform and thus to involve young people actively in decision making.

OPIN provides participation projects with a digital home. All stages of the project are transparent and supported by OPIN’s software. During the process, five pilot programmes were developed in the City of Paris, France, Italy and Slovenia to support the participation of youth organisations in public administrations. The platform currently hosts over 40 projects across Europe.

Why is it done?

Getting young people interested and involved in political participation, including the ease and effort with which they can do so, has been a challenge in Europe, particularly for those who are socially excluded. The project EUth – Tools and Tips for Mobile and Digital Youth Participation in and across Europe, within which the OPIN was developed, aims to build young people’s trust in political institutions and decision-making processes using technology.



Information about NGO/movement	
Name	IJAB – International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany
Short description	IJAB works on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, as a central specialist agency for international youth work. Its task is to strengthen and further develop international youth work and co-operation in the field of youth policy with countries in Europe as well as worldwide.

Information about the practice – WebDays	
Target group	German-speaking youth aged 16-21 interested in internet policy and digitalisation
Location	Germany
Timeframe	March 2017 to April 2020
Useful links	https://webdays.net/ www.youtube.com/watch?v=vp0YdVoihhY www.youtube.com/watch?v=MpA1mxN6l9E www.oncampus.de/weiterbildung/moocs/webdaysmooc www.oncampus.de/webdaysmoockI

Practice description

WebDays consists of an annual youth conference and an online course (MOOC: Massive Open Online Course).

How is it done?

During the three-day youth conference, participants learn about current topics and trends concerning internet policy and data protection through presentations and workshops. In five

discussion hubs participants and experts discuss internet issues, which lead to demands to policy makers.

The WebDays MOOC is set up by young people for young people. Online learning modules using videos, games or interviews help young people to learn what happens to their data.

How is it connected with political participation?

The annual youth conference closes with a panel discussion where the young participants have the possibility to discuss their demands and ideas with policy makers and experts. A resulting position paper prepared by the participants of the youth conference places concrete demands and is submitted to the Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection, BMJV. The ministry then responds to the position paper with a statement in writing.

What makes this practice special?

Young people exchange ideas with experts, discuss with politicians and derive demands from them which are directly incorporated into federal policy decisions in the field of internet policy. In addition, young people design their own online learning courses, which inform other young people about internet policy issues in the form of MOOCs.

Why is it done?

WebDays aim to increase awareness of internet policy issues and subjects that are of concern to young people. Its aim is to enable young people to tackle the issue critically and to prompt young people to express their views in order to introduce their ideas and political interests into the political debate.



Information about NGO/movement	
Name	TERRAM PACIS
Short description	Established in 2010, TERRAM PACIS is a human rights, independent, humanitarian and non-profit organisation, highly passionate about youth and adult education. TERRAM PACIS uses non-formal education for its transformative power and its ability to simplify the way youth learn and participate in society.

Information about the practice – Youth Engagement in Society – YES	
Target group	Young people
Location	Online
Timeframe	Ongoing
Useful links	yes-cards.dev-lg.de/ www.terrampacis.org/

Practice description

The Youth Engagement in Society – YES project develops multiplayer card games (YES-Cards) centered around a topic concerning the European Union and each card contains a convincing argument or counter-argument.

How is it done?

YES consists of a game-based tool in the form of an animated online card game. This game facilitates debates about politics and society amongst youth. Young people form teams that could, for example, consist of school classes or mixed international teams. A card-game mechanism enables teams to prepare their own deck of cards with different statements that are appropriate to strengthen or defend one's own position, creating cards with special

functions (such as argument and counter-argument). The topic can be selected by the youth workers, trainers and learners. The game goes through several steps from the preparation phase, discussion and game phase to the reflection stage.

What makes this practice special?

The YES Game is offered as a Deck Card Game which helps to enhance knowledge and attitudes about European topics and to come to better understanding of each other and European cultures, with all its similarities and differences. It can be played by youth groups from all over Europe and it promotes political or social debates and discussions among young learners.

Why is it done?

Due to current political events, including terrorist attacks, Brexit and increased migration, it is of particular importance that young people feel not just that they are citizens of Europe but that they become engaged, feel empowered and capable of having an influence on European issues that affect their lives.

ANNEX I – Online questionnaire to identify relevant practices for the compendium

Country or countries in which you are based:

What topics are you working on?

What types/forms of political participation do you promote:

Purpose of the organisation/movement/ initiative (1-2 sentences):

Name, duration and location of the project/tool/method/ initiative/campaign:

Target group (which young people are you working with?):

What do you aim to achieve with this project/tool/method/initiative?
(please also describe the project briefly here)

How do you define political participation of young people (e.g. participation in which decision-making processes, at which levels, influencing which decisions)?

Why is “participation of young people” important for your organisation?

What opportunities do you see within your own context for young people to participate politically (e.g. through elections, youth councils, movements, political parties, informal groups)?

What are the main obstacles for young people’s political participation in your context (e.g. the influence of political and cultural environment on the participation of young people, institutional barriers to participation, rise of populism)?

Can you observe in your work and within your context, any new developments/trends related to political participation of young people? Please describe them.

What competences (skills, knowledge, attitudes, values or training) do young people need to have in order to engage in politics?

Do you, and if so how, support the development and building of these capacities of young people through your work?

ANNEX II – Compendium template for further information from selected practices

1. Info of NGO/movement promoting the good practice

1.1. Name

1.2. Contact information

1.3. Short description

2. Good practice info

2.1. The good practice name (project/programme/initiative)

2.2. Who is the target (specific ages, youth groups, general)

2.3. Where is it happening (location, local level, universities in cities, youth centres)

2.4. Timeframe (ongoing, from x to y, months, this year...)

2.5. What are you doing? (250 words) (a training, campaign, project, empowerment)

2.6. How are you doing it?

Additional information:

2.7 How does it connect with political participation?

2.8 What makes this practice special?

2.9. Why are you doing it? (What do you want to achieve? What do you aim to change?)

3. Useful links for further information

ANNEX III – List of organisations and movements who contributed to the content of this compendium

80east – Funky Citizens
Active Citizens Living European Values – EEE-YFU
Active for Youth – Steps for Youth
Balkan Network for Local Democracy
BoostCamps for More Democracy – Helliwood media and education im fjs e. V.
BRIGHTS – All Digital
BRYC – Barents Regional Youth Council
Defending the Defenders – Amnesty International’s Regional Office for the Americas
Democracy in Schools – Young Citizens
Education for Women and Young Refugees – Union of Refugees in Portugal
Fotomovimiento – Testimony and dissemination of social reality through the image
Free permanent legal aid system – Hungarian Civil Liberties Union
Green Armenia NGO
Hessian Union Children and Youth Parliaments
Learning Democracy – Lifelong Learning Platform (two responses)
Local Action – Global Impact – Terra-1530
My Europe, My Say! – World Organization of the Scout Movement – European Region
No Hate Speech movement – Council of Europe
Non-formal education for Active Citizenship – GOOD Initiative
#OPIN – Youth shape their future – Nexus
Our Future, Our Choice
Political solutions to local/national problems – Albanian EuroSocialist Youth Forum
Project Citizen – Intercultural Institute Timisoara
#redsijODS Digital campaign for Youth Information Day – Injuve
Rein ins Rathaus! – wienXtra-ferienspiel
Rights to Decide – Central Remedial Clinic
Shake the Box: Alternative ways of participation – Youth Express Network
Thessaloniki Local Plan of “Activities for the City and the Youths 2018-2019” – KEDITH –
Community Enterprise of Thessaloniki Municipality and Team of Young Facilitators
Training for school students’ unions/representatives – Education Centre Kurt Löwenstein
U-Report Moldova – National Youth Council of Moldova
Volt Europe and Volt Italy (two responses)
WebDays – IJAB – International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany
Youpa and EasyVote – Dachverband Schweizer Jugendparlamente (two responses)
Youth Act for Transparency
Youth Climate Council – Ministry for Climate, Energy and Utilities, Denmark
Youth Engagement in Society – TERRAM PACIS
Youth: new storytellers and actors for development aid – International Co-operation Centre
Youth Peace Ambassadors Study Session – Youth Peace Ambassadors Network

Recommended reading

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