

Documentation

Online Short study Visit “Open space for youth”

World Café 14.06.2021

Table 2, Youth participation in local policy



■ Invited Experts

- Roland Kelm, Coordination youth participation, municipality of Stuttgart
- Frédéric Stephan, Deputy director, department for external relations, municipality of Stuttgart
- Nada Bejaoui, Local councillor in charge of youth, sports, leisure activities, municipality of Menzel Bourguiba
- Laurence Mauler, Mission head of participation and youth commitment, municipality of Strasbourg (excused)
- Julien Harmand, Mission head of participation and youth commitment, municipality of Strasbourg (excused)

■ Documentation: https://padlet.com/Stadtjugendring_Stuttgart/nov0fkrdwu2r38tw

“The purpose of youth policy is to create conditions for learning, opportunity and experience, which ensure and enable young people to develop knowledge, skills and competences. This is in order to allow young people to be actors of democracy; integrate into society; and, in particular, enable them to play an active role in both civil society and the labour market.” (Council of Europe, European Union/Youth partnership, <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/topics>)

Introduction

The European Youth Goals reflect the views of European Youth and represent the vision of those active ones in the EU Youth Dialogue in 2017/2018.

For our project we selected one goal to focus on:

The European youth goal **#9 Space and Participation for All**: Strengthen young people’s democratic participation and autonomy as well as provide dedicated youth spaces in all areas of society.

The EU Youth Strategy (2019-2027) aims to contribute to the realisation of this vision of young people by mobilising EU level policy instruments as well as actions on a national, regional and local levels conducted by all stakeholders.

During the next 6 years, we are in the position to work on how to apply the European Youth strategy on our collaboration between the partner cities: The **World Café** on **14.06.2021** was a first step to discuss these opportunities in depth. Beside the documentation, we suggested different options for further networking on a local and international level.

The Foreign European Policy as well as the German and French Foreign Policies implies the cooperation with neighbouring countries (e.g. Tunisia). A cooperation in the frame of the European Youth Strategy is supported and financed by the Erasmus+ , the European Solidarity Corps and the German French youth office. We are suggesting formats for future collaboration between twin cities in the field of youth available for European and neighbouring countries. We give as well insight into formats only available for European countries, which allows us to think about the vision we aspire to have by asking the following question:

How can we apply the European Youth strategy on our collaboration between twin cities in strengthening young people’s democratic participation and autonomy as well as provide dedicated youth spaces in all areas of society?

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I. What is needed to ensure an inclusive youth participation in local policy development and implementation? Any inspirational practices or learning points to share?

Similar perceptions in Stuttgart, Strasbourg and Menzel Bourguiba

The participants agreed that young people need support to have their interests and concerns heard in policy making process that directly affect their lives. In this context, competent, transparent and sufficient institutional and financial support is needed (e.g. youth council). Young people need to be familiarised with the administrative structures and bureaucracy to have the means to participate.

Possible inspirational practices/learning points

■ Stuttgart

Heterogeneous youth need different youth participation formats - ranging from formal participation formats (like the local youth council) to more life world oriented participation formats. The formats should be complementary.

■ Strasbourg

The visibility of possibilities regarding participation and participation itself are crucial. Local politics should be involved to be aware of what's happening and to know more about young people's situations.

■ Menzel Bourguiba

There is no real sector which is fully dedicated to youth participation/youth work on a municipal level. The municipality should provide a structured framework for youth participation in order to engage in the topic.

II. What are the obstacles that keep some or all young people outside of decision-making and programme/project implementation? How can we overcome them in our cities?

Similarities between Stuttgart, Menzel-Bourguiba and Strasbourg

Young people are very busy with, e.g.:

- The current educational system and its challenges.
- Looking for employment, accommodation, social relationships (especially young people with fewer opportunities, mentioned by mobile youth work Hallschlag/Stuttgart)

There's a lack of resources for participative topics. One question was, are young people with fewer opportunities, too busy with satisfying primal needs and therefore not being able to be concerned with political / participation topics? Participation and political issues are considered a 'privilege'. However, obstacles can also be seen as a motivator to enhance life conditions.

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Effects of the COVID-19-crisis

In Menzel-Bourguiba, where the health situation with COVID-19 is very challenging, there have been solidarity initiatives where notably youth took part in participative projects e.g. to raise awareness regarding health and hygienic issues. Mental health was a pending issue. These participative activities could help to overcome potential difficulties facing young people.

In Stuttgart and Strasbourg, participation projects and structures suffer due to COVID-19.

At Stuttgart, where young people couldn't find a way to meet anywhere during global lockdowns, as their frustration has not been taken into consideration, there have even been violent confrontations of youth with the police. An increasing number of young people with mental health issues increased notably as well in Stuttgart and Strasbourg.

Further differences concerning the obstacles

■ Menzel-Bourguiba

Gender equality: In 2021 women and girls still have difficulties to convince their families to take part in local activities, especially they forbid their girls to take part in activities if it's too far from home. It takes a lot of effort to convince the families.

Personal contact to young people and perhaps to their parents can help to overcome these problems.

Mobility: Getting from one place to another takes up a lot of time from young people.

III. Any ideas for potential collaboration between the twinned cities? Which next step will be taken to make collaboration possible?

■ Menzel-Bourguiba

The training of young trainers could move participative projects forward within a peer to peer approach. Thus, there is also the need to explore possibilities for financing the projects on a long-term.

■ Stuttgart

Partnerships between administration and civil society should be strengthened in order to align participation processes.

At Stuttgart, the so-called “Respect-ambassadors” project trains young volunteers (aged between 18 and 30 years old) in Mediation and Conflicts Resolution training. The project is the reaction to events in which young people became violent, even when it comes against the police. These volunteers go through the city, address young people in the streets and speak up for values to transmit within society. They also take care of the needs of young people and promote leisure and cultural activities.

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1. Suggestions for further cooperations at local and international level

1.1. Local level

- Further local networking between the players involved in youth work/youth participation projects and administration in order to align participation processes.
- Local training for young people to become peer to peer coaches aiming to stimulate different youth participation formats - ranging from formal participation formats (like the local Youth Council) to more life world oriented participation formats. Young people will be motivated to take part, and they will remain involved, if the process is interesting, engaging and impactful enough.
- Youth organisations could start a self-assessment about their internal youth participation opportunities including the analysis of the support to bring young people in contact with political decision makers to make their voices heard.
- Support of local youth participation within municipalities. The project www.democracy-reloading.eu offers a “map of competences for engaging youth in municipal-decision making” (see attachment) and an online Toolkit which “aims to support municipalities and local authorities in successfully engaging young people in decision-making..... The Toolkit will help youth policy-related municipality staff become empowered, competent and ready to encourage young people to become involved in decision-making, thereby improving active citizenship and democracy in local communities. The Toolkit is also in line with the European Youth Strategy 2019-27.”

1.2. International level

- International training for young volunteers - future peer to peer coaches: E.g. Reflect on one’s own understanding of youth participation and needed skills/attitudes, exchange about different youth participation methods to empower young people from different social and cultural backgrounds to engage and learn to participate in civic society.

Possible formats

- [Erasmus+ Key Action 1](#): Training [German-French Youth Office trilateral qualification](#): E.g. Workshops, use of digital supportive tools, creating a common campaign.
- Exchange about the structure and networking of the Youth Council/Child Council within the municipality and with other players in the field of youth. Thinking of a possible partnership between the departments or involved youth organisation (Menzel Bourguiba) coordinating the Youth Council/Children’s Council.

Possible formats

- [Erasmus+ Key Action 1](#): Training, Seminars, Job shadowing.
- [Erasmus+ Key Action 2](#): Cooperation partnerships, Working on a concept: E.g. How to create a supportive environment within the MUNICIPALITY to involve young people in local decision-making, reflection on needed key tasks and competences: Values and attitudes, knowledge, skills and organizational environment for engaging youth in political decision-making (www.democracy-reloading.eu : Toolkit),

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- Identifying local youth participation projects or best practice projects for an international exchange.
- Remote meetings of local youth councillors at least once per year. Exchange about the current topics and successes of their projects.

Possible formats

- **Erasmus+ Key Action 1:** Youth participation activities, e.g. Workshops, debates with decision makers about the current topics of the engaged young people in the twin cities, field visits, formulation of positions and recommendations at local level and international level. Working on the idea of a strategic partnership to strengthen youth participation within the municipalities.
- **Cooperation between Menzel Bourguiba and Stuttgart:** The program Teams up! of the African German Youth Office promotes youth exchanges and related accompanying projects which focus on at least one of the 17 SDGs. Five participants from each country can take part in the projects within a time span of two years. Accompanying projects aim to improve the quality of Teams up! and to strengthen project partners and structures.

Funding opportunities

Mobility for youth workers and young people

<https://www.erasmusplus-jugend.de>

<https://site.erasmusplus-jeunesse.fr/>

<https://www.ofaj.org/programmes-trilateraux-a-l-ofaj/programmes-trinationaux-avec-des-pays-du-pourtour-mediterraneen.html>

<https://www.deutsch-afrikanisches-jugendwerk.de/de/teams-up/programm/ueber-teams-up.html>

(only Tunisia/Germany)

<https://www.deutsch-afrikanisches-jugendwerk.de/fr/teams-up.html> (only Tunisia/Germany)