

GaYA'S YOUTH PARTICIPATION TOOLBOX

A Way to Bring Youth and Authorities Together

Young people tend to leave the Alpine space because they lack personal and professional fulfilment. Furthermore, a majority of decision-makers remain unaware of the benefits a young active population brings to society.

This toolbox was developed to inspire and guide decision- and policy-makers in designing new democratic methods of involving young people in decision-making processes at the local level.

In this toolbox you will find:

- posters to raise awareness among your colleagues
- case studies to be inspired and learn about good practices
- cards to find alternative approaches to common obstacles
- a brochure to learn about designing youth participation processes

More: www.alpine-space.eu/projects/gaya



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and **find out more.**
www.alpine-space.eu/gaya

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In co-operation with:



MLADINSKI
CENTER
IDRIJA



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GOVERNMENT OFFICE FOR DEVELOPMENT
AND EUROPEAN COHESION POLICY

With the support of:

GaYA's Youth Participation Toolbox

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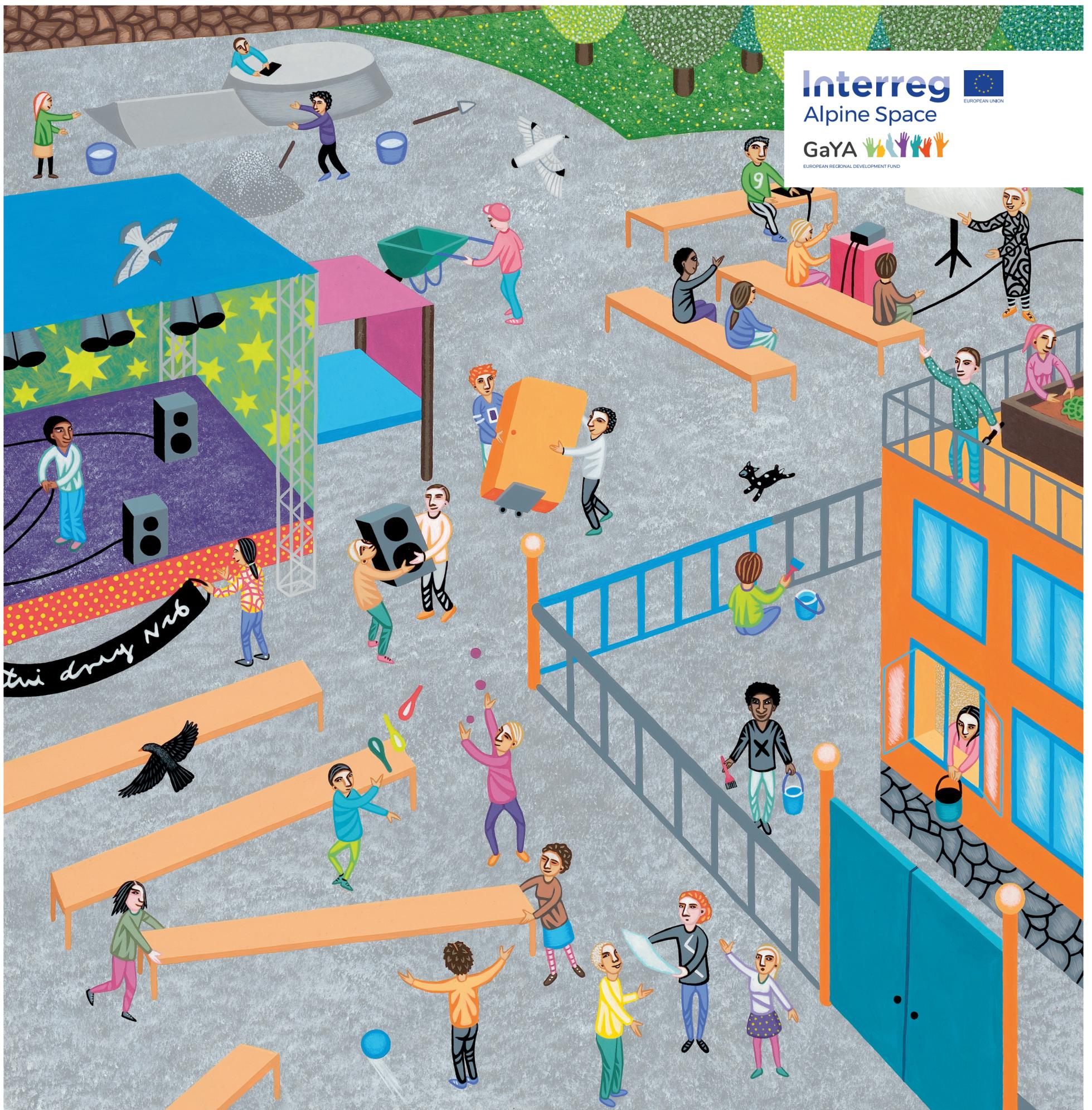
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**MANY LITTLE PEOPLE
DOING MANY LITTLE
THINGS IN MANY LITTLE
PLACES CAN CHANGE THE
FACE OF THE WORLD.**

- African proverb

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and find out more.



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**THE SECRET
OF CHANGE IS TO
FOCUS ALL OF YOUR
ENERGY, NOT ON
FIGHTING THE OLD,
BUT ON BUILDING
THE NEW.**

– Socrates

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and **find out more.**



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**IF YOUNG PEOPLE
ARE NOT ALWAYS
RIGHT, THE
SOCIETY THAT
IGNORES AND
KNOCKS THEM IS
ALWAYS WRONG.**

– Francois Mitterand

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and **find out more.**



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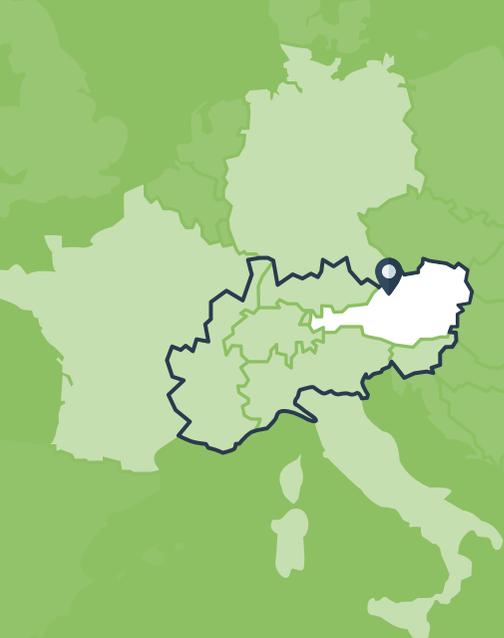
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YOUTH REGION – JUGEND IN DER TRAUNSTEINREGION

The Youth Region devotes its focus to groups of young people through networking projects. Active youth participation is made possible, and concrete ideas for implementation for young people are subsequently supervised. The municipalities of the Traunstein consortium established municipal youth councils on specific topics selected by the young people themselves. The councils operate according to the consensus-building method of 'dynamic facilitation'. The outputs are then publicly presented and discussed in youth cafés. A so-called resonance group accompanies the whole participatory process, offering professional and financial support to participating municipalities.

The high status of young people is visible in the region – according to the motto 'Young people are not the future, but the present of a society.'



PLACE, COUNTRY

Traunstein (Lower Austria, Austria)

NUMBER OF INHABITANTS

ca. 13,200 (2016)

POSITIVE EFFECTS

They are supporting co-creative processes (from ideation to implementation) in which power and responsibility for implementation is shared between young people, politicians and public administration.

LEVEL OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Level 3

WEBSITE

www.youthregion.at

METHODS

World Cafe / Open Space Conference / Consensus

THERE IS ALSO...

A similar method called 'Breakfast With the Mayor'. Young people and decision-makers get together, drink coffee and discuss relevant topics in the municipality. Those kinds of meeting take place every month. Their purpose is to share opinions between different actors in the local community.

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RENDERING TRENTOGIOVANI

Rendering Trentogiovani is the path of listening and participation through which the Municipality of Trento is redefining the programmatic lines of its policies for and with young people in the new 2017-25 Youth Policy Plan, which was presented to the City Council, and was approved by it. Trentogiovani also became a symbol and brand of the Youth Policies of the Municipality of Trento.

There were 4 phases of participation:

- in the opinion-sharing phase, young people could share their opinions, visions and needs for the future;
- the collected items were analysed and organised into four macro categories (jobs, culture, participation, and inclusion);
- focus groups, consisting of young people, administrative staff and associations prioritised the overall outputs;
- the resulting guidelines will undergo the process of



PLACE, COUNTRY

Trento (Trentino, Italy)

NUMBER OF INHABITANTS

ca. 117,300 (2016)

POSITIVE EFFECTS

The added value of participatory processes in policy development is the inclusion of those directly affected.

LEVEL OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Level 2-3

WEBSITE

www.trentogiovani.it

METHODS

Survey / Focus Groups

THERE IS ALSO...

another idea to include young people. In the Rendering Trentogiovani project, young people were also included in the production of short movies, which motivated others to participate by #PARTECIPA!

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YOUTH PARLIAMENT TO THE ALPINE CONVENTION

The YPAC was founded by Akademisches Gymnasium Innsbruck and the Alpine Convention. It brings together young people (up to the age of twenty-two) from different regions to discuss current topics regarding the Alpine region in a parliamentary simulation. It aims at giving insights into parliamentary structures as well as current topics that are of concern to the Alpine region. Moreover, it is a platform for cultural exchange and networking among young people. Members of the Youth Parliament organise events, meet with other youth representative bodies, make contacts with young people from other countries, and attend seminars.



PLACE, COUNTRY

The YPAC takes place once a year and is hosted by a different school every year – Sonthofen (Germany) – 2013, Chamonix (France) – 2014, Kamnik (Slovenia) – 2015, etc.

POSITIVE EFFECTS

The resolution is the most important document of the YPAC, because it summarises all the work that has been done during the week. The resolution explains why the issue needs to be addressed, and recommends measures that should be taken to resolve it.

LEVEL OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Level 2

WEBSITE

www.ypac.eu

METHODS

Youth Council

THERE IS ALSO...

more information about YPAC in the handbook available on:
www.ypac.eu/ypac-handbook

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YOUTH PARTICIPATION MODEL – JUGENDBETEILIGUNGS MODELL VORARLBERG

The model outlines the gradual establishment of youth participation in communities such as Dornbirn, Bregenz, Bludenz (Austria).

The model has 6 stages:

- Information (young people receive information about rights, possibilities, and offers);
- Survey (the proposals are gathered from young people);
- Council (the Council advises young people and helps them to identify what is important to them; initiatives can emerge);
- Participation day (young people are invited to develop projects with support from adults);
- Team (youth group is established and young people can realise their ideas in co-operation with the community);
- Forum (young people make up a formal panel with rights and duties to co-design the local community);

Each stage describes a type of proven participation process. The planning and successful implementation is based on the individual situation of each community adapted.



PLACE, COUNTRY

Vorarlberg (Austria)

NUMBER OF INHABITANTS

ca. 388,711 (2017)

POSITIVE EFFECTS

The planning and successful implementation is based on the individual situation of each community. In the model, they take into consideration the fact that every initiative has its own circumstances, depends on them, and must be judged in their given situation.

LEVEL OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Level 1-5

WEBSITE

jugendhaus.feldkirch.at/1001

METHODS

Information Day / Survey /
World Cafe / Hackathon /
Citizen Panel

THERE IS ALSO...

more information about the process on this website:
www.vorarlberg.at/zukunft

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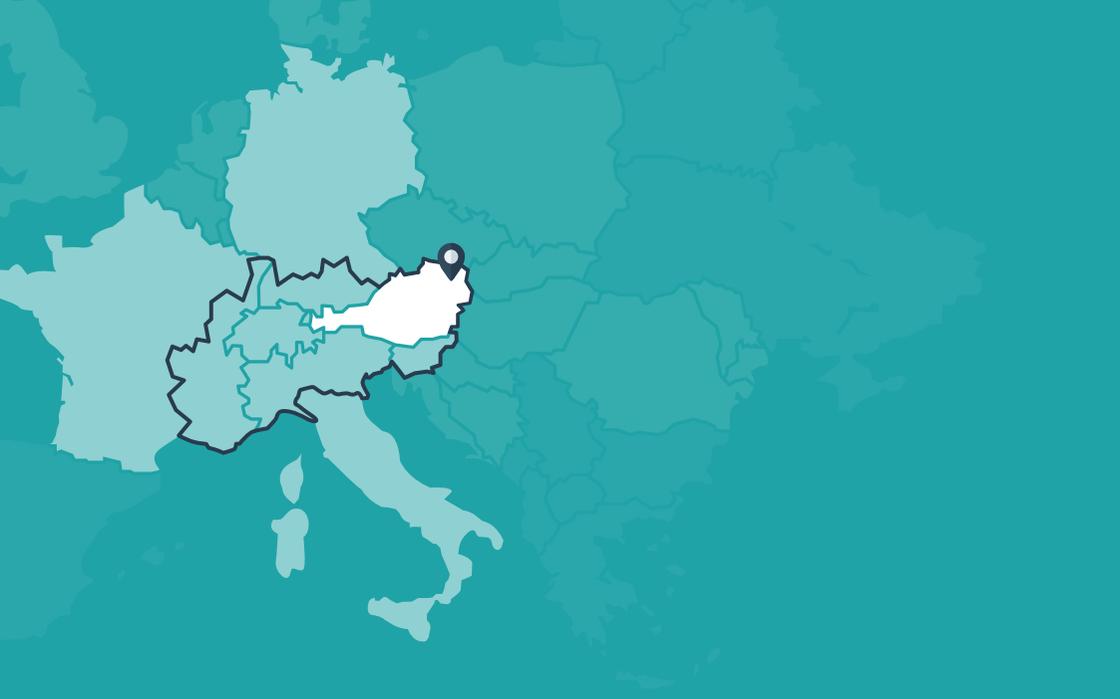


MY WO DO +24

My Wo Do +24 allows citizens to act as agents of change shaping their city according to their individual and collective needs. The goal was to involve young people in the planning of their municipality's spatial use.

Phases of the participatory path:

- participants, provided with a participatory starter kit, gathered their thoughts on spatial use through pictures and symbols;
- participants were then divided into smaller groups to further develop the results of the previous phase;
- a general discussion on the results of the youth participation process and on the elaboration of common actions concluded the process.



PLACE, COUNTRY

Wolkersdorf im Weinviertel
(Lower Austria, Austria)

NUMBER OF INHABITANTS

ca. 7,000 (2016)

POSITIVE EFFECTS

A conclusive
multigenerational
discussion is an effective
follow-up instrument.

LEVEL OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Level 4

METHODS

Planning for Real

THERE IS ALSO...

more information about the
organisation that led the
project on this website:
www.stadt-umland.at

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INLINE SKATE PARK

When the conflict between the adults living on the estate and the young inline skate group became acute, the employees at the local community centre got in touch with everyone involved. Subsequent mediation led to an agreement that young people would stop inline skating on the estate, and that the adults would help them to find an alternative site.



PLACE, COUNTRY

Am Schopfwerk
(Vienna, Austria)

POSITIVE EFFECTS

The young people were involved in how the new skating zone was arranged. 'I would recommend this to other young people: you just have to get together and negotiate. We really got somewhere.'

LEVEL OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Level 2-3

WEBSITE

www.partizipation.at/335.html

METHODS

Structured Discussions /
Mediation

THERE IS ALSO...

more information about the organisation that leads the project on this website:
www.bassena.at

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YOUTH STRATEGY OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF IDRIJA

The Municipality has adopted a youth strategy giving young people a strong say in how they want to see the future development of the city. In the first half of 2015, secondary data gathering, statistical analyses, document reviews, 15 half-structured interviews with representatives of all youth organisations and organisations for young people, and an online survey with almost 300 respondents were concluded in order to obtain a holistic insight into the position of young people of the Municipality of Idrija. After the in-depth analysis, three strategic challenges (employment, housing, participation) were identified and selected for this strategy.



PLACE, COUNTRY

Idrija (Slovenia)

NUMBER OF INHABITANTS

ca. 11,800 (2017)

POSITIVE EFFECTS

A youth strategy was created in cooperation with the municipality, youth workers, volunteers, and youth organisations. The whole process was led by a responsible person.

LEVEL OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Level 4

WEBSITE

www.idrija.si and
www.mcidrija.si

METHODS

Survey / Round Table /
Interviews

THERE IS ALSO...

Slovenian cities can receive a Youth-Friendly Municipality certificate, awarded by the Institute for Youth Policy. More about the certificate:
www.mladi-in-obcina.si/mla-dim-prijazne-obcine

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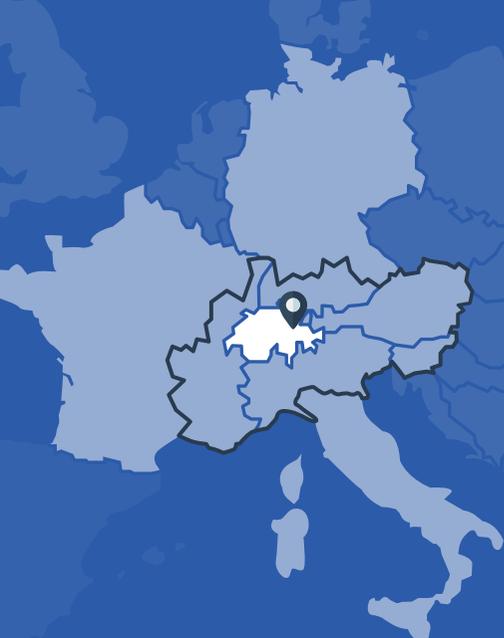
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JUGENDMOBIL

The majority of the professional youth development in the Canton of Graubünden takes place in the conurbation centres. Remote valleys or sparsely populated communities with young people lack dedicated facilities where they can spend their leisure time.

JugendMobil is a mobile, fully-equipped youth centre that is parked for a defined period of time in a community which has no specific youth facility and offers young people the opportunity to come together, play games, and get involved in creative activities.



PLACE, COUNTRY

Chur (Grisons, Switzerland)

NUMBER OF INHABITANTS

ca. 34,880 (2016)

POSITIVE EFFECTS

By bringing together young people, residents, and authorities in the JugendMobil, the aim is to initiate ideas in 20 communities and in the long term to develop a range of local youth facilities.

LEVEL OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Level 1

WEBSITE

www.jugend.gr/projekte/jugendmobil

and FB page:

www.facebook.com/jugendmobilgr

METHODS

Youth Work

THERE IS ALSO...

JugendMobil can be a starting point for the participation process. Youth work and youth participation are connected and often intertwined.

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BEING RADICALLY TRANSPARENT ABOUT THE BUDGET

Through platforms and other communication channels, decision-makers can communicate about budget administration. These tools also allow people to participate in decisions about money and enable them to see more transparent, honest, and clear pictures about the project. Participatory budgeting is an instrument of participatory democracy for the involvement of citizens in public choices.

The Municipality of Budoia (Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Italy) was the first, in 2015, to make the 'Digital Budget' transparent, understandable, and user-friendly. The Digital Report service is a service for communicating, both online and offline, and making all the most important data of a financial statement comprehensible. It is a tool for use by the public administration but intended to be accessible to all citizens, including younger ones (most are used to surfing the web on tablets and smart phones, but for tasks far from the management of public affairs). This tool was presented at the FORUM PA in 2015.



PLACE, COUNTRY

Budoia (Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Italy), but also other Alpine regions

POSITIVE EFFECTS

Being transparent shows people the limits of what can and cannot be influenced, and what can happen as a result.

LEVEL OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Level 2

WEBSITE

www.forumpa.it/pa-digitale/bilancio-digitale-a-forum-pa-2015

METHODS

Online Platform

THERE ARE ALSO...

La tua idea fuori al comune

It is an additional listening tool to promote citizen participation in local public policies as it allows citizens to present ideas and projects useful to the community until the end of the dedicated budget of €130,000.

More info:

www.ideefuoridalcomune.it

Vota!

Vota! is a platform through which citizens can apply for public resources in order to achieve shared and verified results. This initiative also has an enlarged budget for those who do not reside in, but 'use' the city.

More info:

comunita.comune.bologna.it

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ONLINE PLATFORMS

Online platforms promote/empower young people to connect with policy-makers and enable the intervention of young people in order to improve the (youth) policies in local, regional, and national authorities/levels. Anyone who wants to start or propose changes in their local town can use the platform and try to build up support from others, especially decision-makers.

Easy Vote from Liechtenstein is an electoral aid, an online platform that informs young people about elections in a politically neutral way. Although not able to vote yet, young people are helped to understand what is determined at the political level. Mature teenagers are encouraged to really use their opportunity to vote.



PLACE, COUNTRY

Liechtenstein

POSITIVE EFFECTS

Online platforms provide an easy way to participate (through online tools), but administrator must not forget to provide feedback to the proposals.

DURATION

Continuous

LEVEL OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Level 1-3

WEBSITE

www.easyvote.li/home

METHODS

Online Platform

THERE ARE ALSO...

Pobuda.si

an interactive online portal, which promotes youth participation, and enables young people to pass on their initiatives for improvement of their environment and situation. Young people can write their recommendation to the municipality, to the country, or to the EU.

Consider.it

creates civil, organised, and efficient on-line dialogue by visually summarising what community thinks and why.

Tbi.si

an interactive platform where citizens can rate and comment on the young people's proposals for the future of the town and propose their own projects in line with the youth vision.

Opin.me

all-in-one digital and mobile participation toolbox, easily embedded in the web presence of youth organisations or public administrations. Provide smart tips and guidelines on how to plan and manage your youth participation project.

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MANY SPACES FOR PARTICIPATION

Since 2014, the City of Villeurbanne proposes numerous forms of participation and dialogue between generations and between politicians and young citizens, such as sports events with young people and politicians, special days for the members of the school councils, a forum for civic engagement, and debates with young people. The city also offers access to locations such as the Open Laboratory for Villeurbanne citizens, a citizen hacklab where young people can develop projects and share their knowledge and know-how.

At the heart of the youth participation process, the Youth Council of Villeurbanne (CVJ) is one of these spaces for participation, open to young people between 12 and 20, going to school or living in Villeurbanne. The CVJ is a team of advisers who acts as spokesperson, gives its opinion on various topics, meets elected officials, builds and implements citizen projects, participates in municipal actions, and participates in juries to grant funding for youth initiatives.



PLACE, COUNTRY

Villeurbanne
(Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes,
France)

NUMBER OF INHABITANTS

ca. 148,543 (2014)

POSITIVE EFFECTS

The members of the CVJ fulfil their role as citizens, raise their voices and can implement their own ideas. Their participation enriches the reflection and the decisions of the elected representatives on projects concerning the city in general or more particularly related to the young people.

LEVEL OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Level 1-5

WEBSITE

www.jeunes.villeurbanne.fr

METHODS

Youth council / Information
Day / Hackaton

THERE IS ALSO...

Since 2011, Villeurbanne has been organizing a citizenship ceremony for young people who are entering the age of majority and obtaining the right to vote. During this ceremony, the CVJ, accompanied by elected officials and agents, gives young people their first voter card and a citizen's booklet.

TRY DIFFERENT CARDS

Alternative Approaches to
Common Obstacles



Scan the QR code
and **find out more.**
www.alpine-space.eu/gaya

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Policy- and decision-makers from throughout the Alpine space **often reach similar obstacles** when initiating youth participation. With Try Different Cards, we respond to the main obstacles and **propose alternative approaches to common issues.**



Obstacle



Try something different





THE YOUNG PEOPLE DO NOT REALLY LIVE HERE.



Engaging passive young people requires a long-term commitment from several stakeholders. Establish contacts from childhood (e.g. in schools), engage young people on weekends and during summer holidays, create online platforms that reinforce young people's attachment to home town/village or organise events in larger cities where young people study.

Mada in
wala itia
anj ih.





YOUNG PEOPLE DON'T CARE ABOUT PUBLIC MATTERS AT ALL.



Many European studies show they do care (see 'Young people and democratic life in Europe' study by Deželan and European Youth Forum). However, negative experiences often stop them from getting engaged. Make them trust you again by creating new engaging processes for participation that deliver results.





YOUNG PEOPLE DO NOT LIKE POLITICS AND INSTITUTIONS.



Show them not all politicians and institutions are the same! Start with small steps. Build trust and show that their voices matter and lead to results.





**YOUNG PEOPLE
NEVER EXPRESS
THEIR VIEWS IN
FRONT OF
POLITICIANS.**



Put them on the red carpet – make them feel valued. Dedicate a special time slot for their opinions in the programme.





**YOUNG PEOPLE
ONLY COMPLAIN,
BUT GIVE NO
CONCRETE
PROPOSALS.**



Establish a process in which your team will help young people to move from complaining to concrete and comprehensive proposals. Consult and involve experts and trained moderators.





YOUNG PEOPLE ARE IMPATIENT AND WANT RESULTS THE NEXT DAY.



Make sure your participatory process achieves some quick small results ('early wins') that will motivate the young people to remain engaged. Clarify the planned timeline at the beginning, so that the young people know when the results will arrive.



- Kony mending t
- Tau kobra w
- Mdim kobra l
- Ma. bi duna d
- Ame kobra d
- Domet d r tubu-



**YOUNG PEOPLE
OFTEN HAVE
UNREALISTIC
DEMANDS THAT
WE CANNOT
SATISFY; THEY
EXPECT
SOMETHING THAT
IS NOT POSSIBLE
WITHIN THE
CURRENT SYSTEM.**



Define the framework at the beginning of the discussions. Let them know what can be influenced and what cannot.

Also, use the participation process as a way of educating them on the political system and legal frameworks.





YOUNG PEOPLE NEVER COME TO THE MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS WE ORGANISE FOR THEM.



Don't wait for them to come. Go to the events they organise, meet them at their meeting places (bus stops, parks, parties, youth centres ...). Make it informal and enjoyable (with soft drinks, snacks, in an informal space). Involve 'cool allies' that will give you credibility.

Start with the handful that come. Any participant is better than none! They might give you more ideas how to involve their friends.





YOUTH PARTICIPATION IS ANOTHER DEPARTMENT'S JOB. I DO NOT HAVE TIME FOR ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES.



All departments deal with topics that are of interest and importance to young people. Involve young people in making good decisions and create an open and cooperative culture. Participation may indeed take more time at the beginning, but prevents problems and lowers the hurdles that might occur later in the process.





OUR YOUNG PEOPLE ARE ALREADY INVOLVED IN THE ACTIVITIES OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.



Participation is a never-ending process. Discuss with young people the possibilities of including them in planning activities, not solely in execution. Are there non-youth sectors (economy, housing, traffic ...) where young people's voices could improve decisions?

Unstructured exchanges of opinions are good, but should gradually grow into open, structured, institutionalised, repetitive, and transparent processes.

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GaYA's Youth
Participation Toolbox:

THOUGHTS, MODELS AND METHODS

What is special about
(youth) participation
processes?

An overview of
participation methods

The Magic Rules
of youth participation

Scan the QR code
and **find out more.**



www.alpine-space.eu/gaya

To be used by public administrators and policy-makers.

WHY YOUTH PARTICIPATION?

Democracy is in crisis. We all feel it. Lower percentages of eligible voters casting ballots in elections, decreasing activism in political organisations, and negligible percentages of youth activists in political parties. Distrust in the cornerstones of representative democracy – political elites, political parties, parliaments and governments – is on the rise. Populism, unargumentative public discourse, political showmanship are too often synonymous with ‘politics’. But does it have to be like this? We believe that involving young people in decision-making could revive democracy.

The active and continuous participation of citizens in political processes, called ‘participatory democracy’, is one of the ways of rethinking democracy. It stems from the thesis that the dissatisfaction, apathy and cynicism of voters should not make us believe that they actually do not care and are not interested in public matters.

Take a look at our young people. While they do not engage in party politics, they are (often politically) active on social media and in diverse cultural, sport and social organisations. Young people are often over-represented in more direct methods of political actions, such as protests, boycotts and e-petitions. Young people are very much interested in societal challenges and international matters. And they have access to the resources and often the skills to understand and analyse the challenges of our societies. Contrary to the conventional forms of politics, the preferences of young people for political engagement are more individualised and offer more opportunities and channels to express opinions.

Close contacts of local authorities with voters, public meetings and consultations are historically part of the local decision-makers repertoire. But with young people, a new approach should be developed - one that would engage the globalised, internet-native, creative younger generation that is too often overwhelmed by information and high expectations on it.

Developing youth participatory decision-making processes cannot be prescribed from above. To avoid bureaucratisation, new models need to be developed in local communities. You, the user of this toolbox, can contribute as well. This toolbox provides a few guiding cues, but the creative part should be done by you and your local young people.

Read more about the status of citizen participation in the Alps in the comparative report [Democratic Innovation and Participatory Democracy in the Alpine area](#) on www.alpine-space.eu/gaya.

ISN'T YOUTH WORK ACTUALLY YOUTH PARTICIPATION?

Youth work (youth centres, youth organisations) and youth participation are intrinsically connected and often intertwined. Youth participation often happens within the field of youth work or with the support of youth workers. However, youth work itself does not suffice for the inclusion of young people in broader regional/national decision-making processes, and youth workers themselves cannot run youth participation processes. In this regard, youth participation processes are much broader, demand different skill-sets, and require administrators and policy-makers to actively be engaged.

YOUTH WORK

Youth work primarily consists of youth organisations and organisations for young people (e.g. youth centres, faith-based organisations, street-based work, etc.). Its main aim is to achieve inclusion of young people and social cohesion by facilitating the formation of autonomous and active citizens - often through non-formal education. The environment it creates is usually conflict-free.

This provides a space for the participation of young people within organisations and thus raises motivation, capacity, and context for making a (broader) change.

EXTERNAL YOUTH PARTICIPATION

External youth participation happens outside of youth organisations and consists of young people and public actors (municipalities, regions, countries, etc.). The main aim of youth participation is the formation of new policies and public projects based on the needs and views of young people. By including young people, it is believed that local communities can be more inclusive, sustainable, and attractive to them. As with any political activity, it also includes conflicts and aims to resolve them through argumentative confrontation.

PATHWAYS TO PARTICIPATION

Youth participation is not an event, but a process. To develop youth participation requires long-term commitment that usually starts with the willingness of politicians and administrators to engage with such a commitment, leads to recurrent procedures that offer opportunities to young people and finally establishes a legislative basis and a standard for future procedures - on several levels. Shier's Pathway to Participation offers a set of questions to evaluate the current position of institutions in terms of youth participation.

SHIER'S PATHWAYS TO PARTICIPATION (2001)			
LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION	OPENINGS	OPPORTUNITIES	OBLIGATIONS
Level 1 Young people are listened to.	Are you ready to listen to young people?	Do you work in a way that enables you to listen to young people?	Is it a policy requirement that young people must be listened to?
Level 2 Young people are supported in expressing their views.	Are you ready to support young people in expressing their views?	Do you have a range of ideas and activities to help young people express their views?	Is it a policy requirement that young people must be supported in expressing their views?
Level 3 Young people's views are taken into account.	Are you ready to take young people's views into account?	Does your decision-making process enable you to take young people's views into account?	Is it a policy requirement that young people's views must be given weight in decision-making?
Shier states that Level 3 of his model is the minimum practice needed to meet the requirements of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.			
Level 4 Young people are involved in decision-making processes.	Are you ready to let young people join in your decision-making processes?	Is there a procedure that enables young people to join in decision-making processes?	Is it a policy requirement that young people must be involved in decision-making processes?
Level 5 Young people share power and responsibility in decision-making.	Are you ready to share some of your adult power with young people?	Is there a procedure that enables young people and adults to share power and responsibility for decision?	Is it a policy requirement that young people and adults share power and responsibility for decisions?

Adapted from Shier, H. (2001) Pathways to Participation: Openings, Opportunities and Obligations. Young People and Society, Vol 15. John Wiley and Sons Ltd. United States of America, pp. 107-117.

BUREAUCRACY VS. YOUTH

Most of the existing approaches to participation (interest groups, public consultations, etc.) do not accept the 'modus operandi' of the youth and try to force young people into the existing bureaucratised procedures. The aim of designing the participatory processes is thus to establish new ways of cooperation that suit both sides – by splitting the strategic and broad policy procedures needed by the administration and decision-makers into smaller consequential participative steps preferred by young people.

Existing participative procedures:

- Defining broad policy goals
- Requiring long-term commitment
- Favourising formal institutions
- In-person meetings and exhaustive written documents
- Rigid hierarchies
- Discourages personal involvement
- Aim at a few large actions

Young peoples preferences:

- Issues-based goals and cause-oriented activities
- Enable irregular engagement
- Focus on non-institutionalised young people
- Online and offline 'to the point' methods
- Horizontal structures
- Allow personal involvement
- Aim at many micro actions

Youth participation processes:

- Several issues-based activities, contributing to the broader strategic goals
- Long-term process with recurring chances for engagement and early wins
- Diverse participative methods – for formal and informal actors
- An integrated (online and offline) communication with digital access to additional resources
- Horizontal structures within existing hierarchies
- Allow personal involvement for the collective good
- Aim at several micro acts, supporting the few large ones

PARTICIPATION CANVAS

The Youth Participation Canvas, developed within Governance and Youth in the Alps (GaYA) project, provides a new and different approach to planning youth participation processes. It is a rather short yet structured way of planning and documenting a process. It stems from the understanding of the planning of youth participation processes as a design process in which different aspects need to be respected, yet leaves space for creativity in process planning.

The Youth Participation Canvas is a process management template for developing and documenting existing participation processes. Its aim is to provide a clear, focused and easy-to-read chart. By describing the participation process on a single page, it should lead to easier understanding and endorsing of the process. Moreover, the structure makes it easier to tweak and build on the model – the elements can be changed quickly and adapted to the changing needs and circumstances.

The Youth Participation Canvas can be printed out on a large surface so groups can jointly sketch and discuss youth participation elements with post-it notes or board markers, or it can be used individually, as a documentation method, or be completed with text editing software. It is a hands-on tool that fosters analysis, discussion, understanding and creativity – its aim is to make the design of participatory processes easier, better structured and focused on the needs of both the youth and administrators and decision-makers.

Explore Youth Participation Canvas and instructions attached in the Youth Participation Toolbox.

SPIRAL OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION

We believe youth participation processes should be spiral-shaped, never-ending and collaborative by design. Participatory processes might take longer, but their spill-over effects last longer as well.

While conventional approaches are quick to complement youth participation, more complex processes should be developed to truly address the modus operandi of young people.

Inspired by: Lang, R. (1986) Contingent Theory and Planning Practice. Paper presented to the ACSP Conference: NYC.

Inspired also by: The Open Book of Social Innovation - The Young Foundation.

YOUTH PARTICIPATORY PROCESS

1 Engagement of stakeholders

- Interaction with implementers and affected interests early on and throughout the planning process

2 Broad identification of needs and wishes

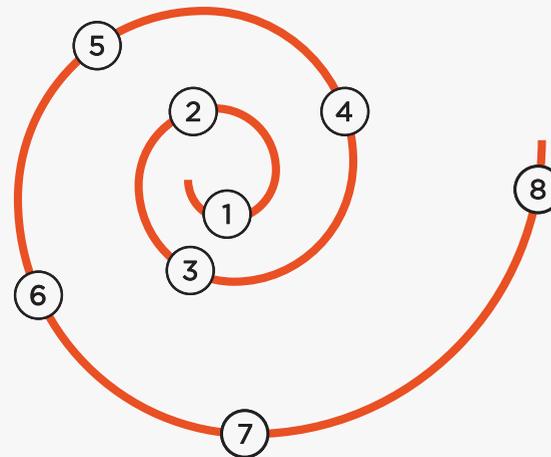
- Includes information/feedback, consultation and negotiation
- Provides stakeholders additional information on the topic
- Assumes that open participation leads to better decisions
- Focuses on mobilisation of support

3 Ideation in smaller groups

- Administrator as proactive advocate
- Plan = what we should do

4 Political confirmation

- Politicians respond, upgrade and confirm
- Could include a new round of ideation
- If rejected, iterated collaboratively and involving the initial set of stakeholders



5 Implementation

- Importance of early wins to show administration's commitment and reassure young people's motivation
- Prototyping mindset - improvement of solutions through constant participation

6 Monitoring

- Success measured by sufficient information, goals reached, transparency, efficiency, stakeholder support, and the use of appropriate methods

7 Scaling

- Identification of 'what works' and how can it be spread to other locations and youth groups

See Scaling Strategies at www.socialimpactexchange.org

8 Systemic Change

- Helping the seed of change to alter the system - by establishing a new 'modus operandi'

OVERVIEW OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION METHODS

Length

-  1 day
-  Up to 5 days
-  A few weeks
-  Months and years

Size group

-  Small groups (<25)
-  Medium groups (25-100)
-  Large groups
-  Any group size

Selection of participants

-  Self-selection
-  Random selection
-  Target selection

See case studies of methods on attached factsheets within the Youth Participation Toolbox.

LEVEL 1: LISTENING TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Information Day
Informing and gathering feedback



LEVEL 2: SUPPORTING EXPRESSIONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS

Mediation
Resolving conflicts



Community Platform
Exchanging information and ideas



LEVEL 3: TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE VIEWS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Scenario Workshop
Anticipating challenges



Open Space Conference / Unconference
Discussing relevant topics



Deliberative Polling
Predicting public opinion



Appreciative Inquiry
Engaging stakeholders in self-determined change



LEVEL 4: INVOLVEMENT IN MAKING DECISIONS

Planning for Real
Prioritizing urban planning topics



Design thinking method
Designing novel products and services with users



Hackathon
Hacking the system by creating new solutions



LEVEL 5: SHARING POWER AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Participative Budgeting
Proposing and selecting investments and budget



Living Lab
Creating collaborative innovation environment



Future Search
Catalysing change



MAGIC RULES OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION

After numerous hours of talking with the youth, discussions with administrators and practitioners from the Alps, browsing through literatures, we have come up with (for now) 14 magic rules of youth participation.



There is actually no such thing as 'the youth'.

Young people are not a homogenous group. As in any other age group, there are many differences, even conflicts among them. Take this into account when planning your activities.



Participation is contextual.

Participation is embedded in social developments and structures. The national, regional, or local social economic and environmental context as a backdrop affects the way participation can/could be done, as well as being the subject of change. Take into account that every initiative has its own circumstances, depends on them, and has to be judged in that given situation.



Assign a responsible person

The responsible person is 'the face of participation', should be easily reachable and in touch with the youth, and is accountable for the implementation of reached decisions. Assigning a responsible person is crucial for the success of participation.



Be clear about what can and cannot be influenced.

Be transparent, honest, and clear about the purpose, the limits of what can and cannot be influenced, and what can happen as a result. This will prevent 'long faces' if the outcomes are not as expected by the youth.



Participation is voluntary.

Effective participation requires participants to choose to be involved. Do not try to force youth to participate (e.g. as part of school activities). However, consider encouraging them to be involved.



Be ready to give away some power or link to power.

Participation should never be only about discussing and proposing ideas. Without access to the power and the possibility of changing anything, participation will be seen as a scam and hinder any future participative activities. Try to establish a co-creative process from ideation to implementation in which power and responsibility for implementation are shared among youth, politicians and public administration.



Trained participation professionals can facilitate the process.

Dialogue between young people and adults is indeed difficult. Accompany it with professional participation workers that understand both sides and can employ methods that allow cooperation and bridging the gaps.



Build upon existing structures and partnerships.

Do not reinvent the wheel. Engage existing youth workers, youth organisations, partnerships, and youth projects. This will give you better understanding of and access to the youth. But be careful - do not break youth's trust in your partners by being uncommitted and unprofessional.



Establish lasting legitimate activities.

Youth participation should not be a one-day event, but a long-term process that establishes lasting (ideally informal, horizontal and cause-oriented) activities (annual forums, continuous feedback, working groups, regular interval surveys, etc.).

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gaYA's Youth Participation Toolbox: Thoughts, Models and Methods

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PARTICIPATION CANVAS



Scan the QR code
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TITLE OF THE PROCESS:

Name your youth participatory process – make it catchy!

NO.

YOUTH



POLICY-/DECISION-MAKERS

Whose participation? Who will participate, and what are their characteristics?	What motivates them for participation? Why should they participate?	Desired Outcomes What is the goal of participation process?		What can be influenced? To what extent can the decision-making process be changed?	Which decision-making process? What are we deciding on? What is the current course of activities?
	What inhibits their participation? Why are they not participating already?	Preferred way to participate What would be the ideal, easiest, and most effective way of participation for the target group?	Preferred way of input What would be the ideal form of input to the decision-making process?		
Steps of Participatory Process What will the main elements and steps of participatory process?					
Resources Which resources can we count on?		Team Who is on our team? What are their skills?	What should not be influenced? What cannot and shall not be changed?		
Risks What could go wrong?					
Measures of Success How will we know if we are successful? How will we measure it?					

Step 1: Desired Outcome

What are your overarching goals? Why are you even interested in youth participation? Think broad, strategically and for the long-term. Think how youth participation could solve the challenges of your local environment.

Step 2: Which decision-making process?

In which decision-making process do you want to involve the youth? What are the decisions about and what is the current course of activities? The more specific you are at this step, the easier it is to devise a participatory process.

Describe the main steps of the current course of the decision-making process – try to include all the main milestones, and clarify the end result of such a process.

Steps 3 & 4: What can be influenced? What should not be influenced?

Which steps in the current decision-making process can and should not be influenced by the target group? Where do you allow for changes, and where are changes not possible, not wished for, or not allowed?

Only by clearly defining what is (not) possible to change, can participatory democracy be honest and successful. Never over-promise – this will lead to false hopes and final disappointment with the results, which would be a step backward.

Step 5: Whose participation?

Who do you actually want to participate? What are their characteristics? Of course, you want to involve youth, but what kind of youth? There are many sub-groups (based on age, ethnicity, interests, place of living, social status ...), and these characteristics define their understanding of the world around them and decision-making. Only by understanding your target group can you design successful and meaningful participatory processes.

Try creating a persona – a persona is a fictional, generalized representation of your ideal target group based on raw data and educated guesses. A persona is often described by age, gender, income, location, education, job, family, their life goals, their challenges and problems, their every-day routine and their values – and a name. A persona helps you imagine and understand the youth you want to involve – and it forces you to be more focused and specific. If you want to involve different groups of youth, create more personas.

Steps 6 & 7: What motivates them for participation? What inhibits participation?

What would be the reasons and motives for this target group to participate in decision-making? And on the other hand, what inhibits them from participation? Extrapolate your answers from the personas you have created and by understanding their wishes, fears, values and behavior. Compare personas with the current decision-making course and record the discrepancies. If young people value informal settings and the current decision-making process only takes place in formal settings, there is a discrepancy. Search for similar gaps.

Step 8: Preferred way of participating

What would be the ideal way or participating for the target group? Think about ideals – if anything were possible, how would the target group participate? This is the chance to dream and think big.

Step 9: Ways of input

What would be the ideal form of input to the decision-making process? How should the proposals be prepared? What form should they have? When should they be submitted and how?

Step 10: Steps of participatory process

Step 10 is the most crucial step. Here you have to synthesize the previous steps into a new participatory process. Now that you know what the overarching goal is, what the current course of decision-making is and who you want to include, you can envision new steps.

Define it in steps and milestones – think how the process will evolve, who will meet and when, who will do what and how, what will be the intermediate steps, how will you communicate about the process ...

IMPORTANT! Plan for an early win. The sooner you achieve a small success (an early win), the easier it will be to build momentum and continue with other, more long-term activities.

Step 11: Resources

Which resources can we count on (finances, venues, existing programmes, supporting organizations ...)? How can you include and engage existing activities for youth? Where can you meet and reach the target group? Which organizations can help in engaging young people? What financial resources do you have for promotion, work, web platforms, printed materials ...?

Step 12: Team

Who will be part of the team? What skills do you have, and how can these skills be combined to achieve the envisioned result? Which skills are missing, and what kind of profiles do you still need to include? How will you structure your work, and what are members' responsibilities?

Step 13: Risks

What are the risks? What could go wrong? Where could you fail to achieve the expected results? List all the risks and think about ways to mediate them. The more risks listed, the more well thought through the process is and the more you are prepared for it.

Step 14: Measures of Success

Finally, how will you know the process was successful? Define SMART goals – specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound measures of success.