



The use of social media
for democratic participation (SOCMED)

Youth active democratic participation

by

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The use of Social Media for Democratic Participation – Youth active democratic participation

Brief description

This training unit is focusing on democratic participation. At first, the training unit will get the theoretical and practical framework concerning participation opportunities in local government system. After that joint activities within training unit will be undertaken to strengthen the cooperation and create a very good contact inside the unit. The idea is to make a constant working local youth council, with developed democratic values, social and cooperation skills which represent all or most of the “youth” groups and through social media is in constant contact with own electorate.

Expected outcomes

- ✓ Learners will recall and develop democratic values
- ✓ Learners will develop and implement social skills
- ✓ Learners will develop team work and cooperation skills
- ✓ Learners will understand use of social media for democratic participation
- ✓ Learners will get readiness to adopt the values of human rights, and democratic citizenship as the foundations of living and acting together (A_HR_2)
- ✓ Learners will acquire aptitude to evaluate situations and issues to look for solutions with all parties involved (S_COOP_3)
- ✓ Aptitude to search for information through different channels and from diverse sources (S_EPST_2)

Activities

	Duration	Methods used
Activity 1 General overview	120 minutes	Face to face meetings
Activity 2 Developing collaborative process	600 minutes	Peer collaboration
Activity 3 Debriefing	120 minutes	Group work

Background and context

The present Training Unit was developed by Dmitri Vergun with colleagues dealing with youth issues and undertaken joint activities were made mostly in 2012/2013 years with previous youth council members (consists of 31 members). Undertaken joint actions were organized mostly through a face to face process. Youth council is a developed organization, which activities are very efficient for local life in spite of its members elections every second year. For instance nowadays many stakeholders like local council, politicians, partner institutions and organizations and others consider it very important and useful to take part regularly in joint activities with youth council and attract them to different own and general actions, as it really contributes to local life development. This Training Unit provides the process that is useful in development of participation, social skills, involvement and joint actions.

Activity 1: General meeting (*with youth council)

Duration: 120 min

<p>Expected outcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To promote general idea – to make local youth council broadly representative body of youth interests for consulting local power (local council and government) ✓ To get acquainted and create contact ✓ To create mutual interest ✓ To promote general democracy terms
<p>Methods/ techniques used</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Face to face meetings; conversations
<p>Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure enough time so that you are not interrupted ✓ Rooms ✓ Human resources ✓ Experience
<p>Practical arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Usual necessary practical things – time, room etc.
<p>Procedure</p> <p>Step 1 (15 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Introducing general view about future actions of youth council. It is an overview of expected activities (meetings, proposals preparation and implementation) for joint cooperation. <p>Step 2 (15 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Getting in contact with young people. Practically it is important to stress value of young people and their importance and necessity for democratic processes in municipality and demonstrate own wish for making joint activities. <p>Step 3 (15 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Promoting the general idea to make local youth council broadly representative body of youth interests for consulting local power and meet expectations.

Step 4 (30 min)

- ✓ Creating general view of democracy or telling what possibilities exist for people to take part in the democratic processes in municipality and how local power operates reacting to people's demands.

Step 5 (15 min)

- ✓ Mapping the existing practice of democratic participation in local government settings. What is the local government doing? How is the work and responsibility of LG regulated? What is the division between different LG organs? What are practical issues there? What is the LG role and how can young people make their own suggestions and proposals and influence local life?

Step 6 - with debriefing (60 min)

- ✓ Answering the questions and preparing proposals and ideas.
- ✓ General positive reaction from youth council and wish to cooperate. Unit should be positively tuned.

Tips for trainers

- ✓ Mutual interest is very important for creating interest among youngsters.
- ✓ Group should be involved in the cooperative process.

Activity 2: Developing collaborative process

<p>Expected outcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Learners will make a system with a constant representative body using social media tool for promoting Democratic participation. It supposes the mutual interest from young people to feel their own importance to be able to hear and react to demands from all youngsters or their own voters who delegated them to the youth council. ✓ Learners will make joint activities with youth council-organizing common events, public events, helping other organizations (schools, sports and culture clubs) in organizing events. ✓ Possibility to contribute making local councillors and colleagues connected with this process to be open for democratic processes, including activities with the electorate. ✓ Learners will find, discuss and start using social media for broad participation and information sharing as widely as possible. It should be done in cooperation with young people taking into account their practice of information sharing. This tool and its functioning (most probably Facebook or another platform – it must be generally accepted otherwise it will not work properly) should be regularly administrated whether by youth council, getting information, analysing information and transforming proposals to local government in youth sphere. Through public events and using existing resources it is very simple to advertise.
<p>Methods/ techniques used</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Face to face meetings with youth council
<p>Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Time ✓ Rooms for meetings ✓ Eventual financial and administrative resources
<p>Practical arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Appointed time in a proper way and other necessary practical issues.
<p>Procedure</p> <p>Step 1 (60 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Elaborating and accepting (discussing and revising) the plan of joint actions (learning by doing) within unit. The plan suggests the system of proposals and constant internal cooperation.

Step 2 (120 min)

- ✓ Organizing joint events according to your possibilities.

Step 3 (120 min)

- ✓ Conducting regular meetings over practical issues.

Step 4 (60 min)

- ✓ Discussing and choosing social media tool.

Step 5 (120 min)

- ✓ Practical use of social media tool for getting proposals and opinions of young people.

Step 6 (120 min)

- ✓ Discussing proposals and choosing the subjects for implementation.

Step 7 - Debriefing

- ✓ Implementation of proposals
- ✓ The result should be that the system of joint actions is under way. There is a strong mutual interest and indicators that council covers most of the potential electorate and in contact with many youth people and groups also using social media. People taking part in the process should feel own involvement. We can access it with meetings on regular bases according project length.

Tips for trainers

- ✓ Common respect is necessary - only by common actions is it possible to create strong active council.
- ✓ Common goal setting / it should be accepted from youth people that they will bring the important role of representing all the young people from the municipality and be ready for that responsibility.
- ✓ Common actions to make cooperation stronger (organizing events, sharing opinions). It should be done using existing resources of municipality (rooms, time, financial and administrative resources).
- ✓ Using social media to contribute local youth council broadly representative body of youth interests for consulting local power. Social media creates the possibility to take into the democratic process a maximum number of young people making their own proposals and ideas to the local youth council.
- ✓ Difficult to predict all the actions from stakeholders connected with proposed issues, but the general goal is a very good reason for everybody. Youngsters sometimes tend to be unpredictable in their expectations, but practice will give the final answer.

Duration: 600 min

Evaluation

<p>Expected outcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Learners will measure what is done and what is really working in terms of democratic participation ✓ Learners will be ready to restart in case of difficulties and apply what is needed
<p>Methods/ techniques used</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Face to face meetings, discussions
<p>Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Time, rooms/space, financial, administrative and other necessary backup someone might need
<p>Practical arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Appointed time and necessary preparatory things should be done before you start with evaluation process
<p>Procedure</p> <p>Step 1 (80 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Commons discussions with youth council members. <p>Step 2 (40 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Conclusions about achieved goals (but only within the certain period, as the process should not stop by a certain time), problems and future actions planning. The criteria could be the number proposals from youth people to council, the frequency of using social media tool and the number of implementing proposals and ideas by local power. <p>Debriefing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Strictly defined issues – what is working?, what is not?, why not? and what are the next steps? It should be by common understanding or decisions made by the most people involved in the training unit taking into account the positions of all the stakeholders as it is the matter of general interest.
<p>Tips for trainers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Time is a very important factor to measure real impact of cooperation and involvement of most of the young groups into the democratic process. Much more time is needed and if it seems to be a longer project then by the proposed time, just some steps can be measured. If something goes wrong in any case other option can be used if there is a real good contact inside training unit and the general goal is accepted by most involved people.

Duration: 120 min