

## **“TRANSFERRING POSITIVE PRACTICES OF DEMOCRATIC YOUTH PARTICIPATION MODELS FROM THE EUROPEAN TO THE LOCAL LEVEL”**



Report of the study session held by  
DYPALL Network  
in co-operation with the  
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This report gives an account of various aspects of the study session. It has been produced by and is the responsibility of the educational team of the study session. It does not represent the official point of view of the Council of Europe.

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# DYPALL Network

**“Youth participation is not an end in itself, but a mean of achieving positive changes in young people’s lives and of building a better society”<sup>1</sup>**

## ABOUT THE DYPALL NETWORK

Since 2011, a group of international partners dedicated efforts in **fostering the potential of young people to be active citizens and actors of real social change in their local communities** as well as in their regional and international realities. Our experience strengthened also our belief that involving young people in decision making is an intrinsic way to empower them and to increase their sense of belonging and active citizenship. This involvement should include not only the support by local authorities to activities aimed for young people, but also a broader dimension where youth has an active voice and is a fundamental actor of the development of their local communities.

Youth participation becomes more important as an issue on the agenda: institutionally, it was first promoted in 1992 in the “European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life”, adopted by Council of Europe. The Charter was revised in 2003 in order to address the fast changing European reality and the specific issues experienced by young people<sup>2</sup>. It is a powerful instrument that supports participation of young people on local and regional level, inclusion of disadvantaged young people and youth dimension in all relevant policies. Complementary, the European Commission also underlined the importance of youth participation in its’ White Paper on Youth (2003)<sup>3</sup> and it involved young people in the follow-up of the White Paper, as well in the debate on the future of Europe and the future Constitution – the Treaty of the European Union.

The DYPALL partners based their cooperation line with the **Council of Europe** as well as the **EU founding principles**<sup>4</sup> of encouraging the participation of young people in democratic life, and following the latest development of youth work in Europe, like the 2015 **Declaration of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Youth Work Convention**<sup>5</sup> that calls upon enhancing local and regional level action in youth work. The partners set as objective the support for effective and sustainable involvement of youth in decision-making with and in cooperation with local authorities’ demands, willingness and commitment from both parts. Also the partners focus on the development of knowledge, sharing of experience and tools to create and to develop further these spaces of shared decision-making. This demands the development of strategies, building structures and relations of trust and cooperation between actors. This necessity and the similar experiences of several partners, made visible the

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<sup>1</sup> “Have your say!” Manual on the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life

<sup>2</sup> The complete Charter is available online:

[http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/IG\\_Coop/Documents/CM\\_Rec\\_04\\_youth\\_participation\\_local\\_life\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/IG_Coop/Documents/CM_Rec_04_youth_participation_local_life_en.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=URISERV%3Ac11055>

<sup>4</sup> TEU, art 2 and 165 <http://www.yomag.eu/the-treaty-of-lisbon-and-youth/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/8529155/EYWC2015+Final+report+booklet.pdf/9acd00c0-0c25-4e44-a96d-e7ee324c84ed>

common need to **establish a network that could work in a stable and systematic way on themes of common interest and strengthen the cooperation among local authorities (LA), civil society organizations (CSO) and young people, where the creation of mutual understanding and learning spaces are the main goals.**

From these foundations and common ground, DYPALL came to be as a Network. Among a wide range of diverse but complementary activities implemented by and with its members, DYPALL Network has involved and strengthened the cooperation among municipalities and organisations working in the field of youth at local level. These initiatives and all the different local, national and European experiences strengthened our belief that it is crucial to develop a new culture of youth participation, especially regarding the decision-making processes on issues of direct concern and interest of youth. It is essential to look at youth as a forceful and creative source of solutions for our societies that can largely contribute for their sustainable development.

## The Study Session

In October 2016, DYPALL Network held its first Study Session at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg. In cooperation with the Youth Department of Council of Europe, and the Steering Group Members (CID, ECOS, AGU Youth Factory, Active Society and ADYNE Netherlands), DYPALL Network organized a week-long session for young people and youth workers working in the field of youth participation in decision-making processes at local level.

The Study Session **“Transferring positive practices of Democratic Youth Participation Models from the European to the Local Level”** gathered 32 participants from 17 countries to discuss about their understanding of youth participation and how this is done in their local realities. Participants had the opportunity:

- To share practices of youth participation in civil and political life on the local, national and European levels;
- To strengthen cooperation and the feeling of belonging among the participants and in relation to the DYPALL network;
- To promote a common understanding on youth participation and its main values and approaches;
- To support participants’ involvement in the current and future initiatives of the DYPALL network and of the Council of Europe;
- To understand and analyse various realities of youth participation at local level (challenges, opportunities, solutions);
- To explore inclusive approaches to foster the participation of young people facing social exclusion (Roma, NEETs, migrants, people with disabilities, refugees and other minority groups);
- To support the development of initiatives that promote youth participation with a focus on young people experiencing social exclusion.

The study session has served as a platform for developing strategies and structures for cooperation, and has allowed youth organisations and municipalities to share best practices of cooperation between local authorities and the civil society organisations. During the study session the participants discussed on the topic of youth participation and explored different concepts of youth participation. During the study session the participants developed new partnerships within the network as well as among other policy and decision makers and civil society organisations.

## It starts in my local reality: introduction to youth participation

### One definition?

The definition of youth participation provides often debates and discussions. Just like youth work has different understanding in the different countries; youth participation is also interpreted differently. Participants had the opportunity to present the various projects and activities they are running in their organization: examples ranged from youth councils and youth fora to structured youth policies, to project budget assigned to youth organizations to implement their activities and peer-mentoring. Some key words mentioned were:

- Inclusion of young people in different areas
- Sharing different skills
- When young people have their say in their local communities
- Youth councils
- School parliament
- Opportunity for young people to be the leaders of their projects and initiatives

"Youth participation is to hear the voice of young people" - Afrodhiti

"Youth participation is about young people to be active and have confidence" - Iskra

"Way of living of young people to have their say in their community" - Sebastian



It is hard to find one definition that conciliate the different understandings of youth participation, at the same time, not having one can make it harder to take a stand or make a choice about the issues we struggle with.

**"Participation in the democratic life of any community is about more than voting or standing for election, although these are important elements. Participation and active citizenship is about having the right, the means, the space and the opportunity and where necessary the support to participate in and influence decisions and engaging in actions and activities so as to contribute to building a better society"** from Have your say!" Manual on the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life

While there is no univocal definition of youth participation, the explanatory sentence provided by the Council of Europe in the framework of the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life goes beyond a narrow understanding of youth participation solely as political involvement and that to participate means having influence on and responsibility for decisions and actions that affect the lives of young people themselves or that are important to them. The diversity of definitions is coming from the fact that they are all deeply rooted to the local reality in which they are applied, seeing what works in different countries and social and historical contexts.

## Many challenges!

Stating a definition that aims to be comprehensive often raises more questions than it answers. In particular, "better society" is the most controversial point presented in the Council of Europe's definition because it would make the definition susceptible to the political-social-economic view of the actor implementing the definition. For example "better society" for a representative of an extreme right party would be a society without foreign nationals, Roma, immigrants or refugees which would not match the definition of "better society" of these minority groups. This discussion lead to the dilemmas explored during the Study Session:

"Does all participation processes have to be political? What is the aim of having young people participating? Would young people participating in extreme right movements or other extremism be considered as youth participation? Are we really inclusive as we say we are?"

Being in the Council of Europe, we managed to understand better the connection between the aspect of participation of young people in a pluralist democracy, and to link this aspect with the other values of the institution – Human Rights and the Rule of Law. Once these dimensions are taken into account, it makes it very easy to conclude that in our line of work, youth participation in pluralist democracies must also respect Human Rights and the rule of law.

The inclusion of the Human Rights dimension in the concept of youth participation has supported us in switching the approach from need-based to right-based approach. In this way youth participation becomes a Human Right for the young people.

Even beyond finding a definition, there are several challenges that hinder youth participation including:

- a) different ways of communication and different "language" used by involved parties and stakeholders
- b) funding availability, both for fixed costs like human resources, as well as for long term sustainability of initiatives
- c) youth should become the subject not the object: young people themselves face challenges in taking decisions for themselves so youth participation should be a practice for all aspects of their lives
- d) involvement and connection among the different stakeholders
- e) hierarchy for approval of initiatives
- f) time management
- g) motivation of young people
- h) Political visions and youth branches of political parties can easily prevail in the youth participation conversation, distancing other young people

"Participation is not starting in society but in our family"  
Eugenia

These dilemmas are not something that can be solved at the table but are daily reality that we need to learn to work with and tackle them throughout our activities and actions.

Crucial points within the concept of youth participation are:

- accountability and responsibility of what is done
- participating in the process leading to individual and group change and growth

The question of what is a better society may be impossible to answer so youth participation should contribute to build trust and understanding among society actors so that this abstract definition can become a jointly agreed understanding of the type of society in which we all can live.

Participation can also be seen as more than just "taking decision" but as a pedagogical methodology of learning and having all the pre-conditions to take decisions. Youth work is thus seen as a

"Cuts in youth work are worrying because it cuts spaces for youth to explore their local, national and international reality" a participant

practice firmly linked with youth participation, preparing young people to participate in the society, becoming a space for youth participation where young people can explore, make mistakes and grow, understanding that is if fine to fail and to holistically develop.

## Forms of participation

To increase youth participation as well as to include all young people in decision-making it is useful to better understand what participation means in each local context and what drives young people and authorities to foster it.

The following models can be used as guides to support this analysis.

### RMSOS framework – Rights Means Spaces Opportunity Support

This approach is the basis of the Charter for Youth Participation and it is based on the five keywords mentioned in its title: rights, means, space, opportunity and support. It concentrates on the conditions that need to be created for meaningful youth participation as well as the involvement and responsibility of all the actors.

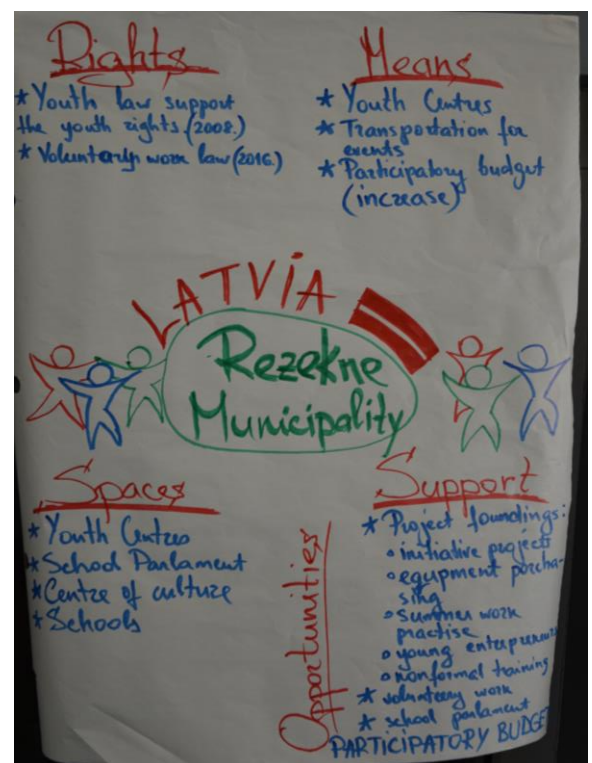
*Rights:* do young people have the right to participate in your local reality? Which documents support this? What rights do you promote in your work with/for young people?

*Means:* what are the needs of young people in your local reality? How do you know them? How do you address these needs?

*Support:* in what way is your local community supporting youth participation? What kind of support is your CSO/entity providing and/or receiving to support youth participation?

*Opportunity:* what are the opportunities for young people to participate in your local reality? How are you promoting these opportunities in your work with/for young people?

*Space:* what space is available for young people in your community (physical virtual, institutional)? Is it sufficient?



Each word of the acronym focuses on a different support measure: they are closely interrelated, and they all have to be fulfilled in order for young people to be able to participate fully in the activities or decisions that interest them.

### Ladder of participation

Another commonly known model is Roger Hart's definition of youth involvement, through the metaphor of eight rungs of a ladder:

*Rung 8:* Shared decision-making

Many models have been elaborated to represent and analyse youth participation: read this [collection of models](#). Find the one who suits you best



*Rung 7:* Young people led and initiated  
*Rung 6:* Adult-initiated, shared decision making  
*Rung 5:* Young people consulted and informed  
*Rung 4:* Young people assigned and informed  
*Rung 3:* Young people tokenised (tokenism)  
*Rung 2:* Young people as decoration  
*Rung 1:* Young people manipulated

The ladder of youth participation is not meant to suggest a hierarchy of degrees of youth participation and it is important to take into consideration that the degree to which young people participate depends on the local situation and on what needs to be achieved. The degree of involvement can also change over time.

The [Manual "Have your say!"](#) presents these topics and provides practical exercises to understand them and analyse our realities. These models help understanding the reality and to critically see our experiences beyond the surface. Participants mentioned the fact that youth policies are very different from country to country and also within the same country realities can be very diverse (e.g. capital vs. rural areas). Working through this analysis participants agreed on the fact that it is important to do a self-analysis and reflect on what we do, as well as to put what we into the broader system with other stakeholders.

#### **Youth participation: a right?**

There is a body of evidence supporting youth participation in various documents at European and International charters.

Starting from the Convention on the Rights of the Child approved in 1989 by the General Assembly of the United Nations and the Council of Europe's Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life, (May 2003), there is a broad body of international documents supporting youth participation. Read more [here](#)

Are there documents supporting youth participation in your country?

## **Promoting youth participation at local and regional level**

In line with the belief that youth participation at local level **cannot be copy-pasted** with pre-conceived model from one place to another, it is very crucial to review implemented practices and see how to **adopt and transfer them** to each local reality.

In the following section we will provide an overview of projects, activities and practices from local and regional level which can be used as good practices. They can serve as inspiration and also give possible directions to support the development of local and regional youth participation in different countries where the DYPALL Network is active.

## Local Youth Councils (“the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

The establishment of local youth councils can be a very effective way to create a space for youth within the decision-making process, by bringing them directly in the system. Milosh Ristovski, the executive director of Centre for Intercultural Dialogue (CID) shared their experience in creating a Local Youth Council in Kumanovo and other local youth councils in the country.

Over the past years, CID contributed to create local structures for youth participation and to better work with young people. The prerequisite to start working in a structured way on local youth participation was to actually create the youth councils themselves, which first required capacity building on both sides (youth organisations and municipalities). In 2012, the youth organisations working in Kumanovo gathered together and signed the agreement for the establishment of the local youth council. In total 18 organisations signed the agreement and several others applied to join. It was a process of negotiations of several months and at the same time a historical moment, when young people in Kumanovo gathered for the youth interests, despite their political, ethnic and organisational background. The next steps were the creation of the board and action plan.

**Centre for Intercultural Dialogue (CID)** is a civil society organization working to promote intercultural acceptance and active citizenship through capacity building processes, education and youth work.

CID was created 10 years ago, from a group of young people who wanted to put youth in the core of decision-making and to change the culture of youth participation based on “sit there and do what they are told” principles.

The reason of success for the establishment of the local youth council and the creation of a Youth strategy for Kumanovo (2014 – 2019) was the capacity building model that brought together the local youth organizations and municipality representatives. All the actors were in the process from the beginning and both sides were prepared to meet each at the same table to discuss. When the youth strategy was proposed to be voted, everybody in the municipal council voted in favour of the document, because they were already informed and engaged from the beginning.

To address the question of sustainability, CID focused on:

- Gaining more support and recognition from the local authorities;
- Transferring knowledge among its members, to prevent losing the organisational memory and experience when there is a turnover of representatives.

“What is important is practicing of democracy and participation inside of the youth organisations itself and working together with municipalities for mutual understanding and in order to include them for understanding what each party is and wants to do” - Milosh

CID then went on and promoted this model in twelve other municipalities. Lipkovo was one of 12 municipalities involved in the project and is an example of youth participation in rural areas. Read about it [here](#).

Strong from the success at local level, together with youth organizations from Poland, Turkey and Belgium they worked on project “Honeycomb of Participation in National Level Youth Organizations”<sup>6</sup>, which addressed one of the key issues in national-level youth organizing: the aspect of real effective and meaningful participation, quality management and outreach.

For more information and inputs, see the live streaming [video](#) on the topic of Local Youth Councils.

<sup>6</sup> Read more about the outcomes of the project in the website <http://honeycomb.cid.mk/>.

### Citizen Participation Councils (France)

Another example of participation at municipal level comes from the **Citizen Participation Councils**. Eugenie Bienaime and Anne Veronique Auzet presented the activities of the *Citizens' Council of Port du Rhin*.

The "Rhine Port" is a small neighbourhood east of Strasbourg, a historically disadvantaged neighbourhood with health problems, school dropouts, very few business, services and local shops. The Citizen's Council in this neighbourhood meets once a month and works on the basis of a three-step model:

1. Meeting with the locals, and with other Citizens' Councils
2. Creating proposals
3. Being ambassadors of information

In the meeting they identify together the priorities for the neighbourhood, around which the Council will then organize consultations to include all other stakeholders, analyse and work together on how to solve the identified problems. This happened in the education field where citizens felt that quality education was not offered to youth and so the citizens' council together with the chair of primary and secondary schools, the representative of the City and other local agencies made a list of criteria of evaluation to monitor schools and their service provision.

#### **What are the Citizen's Councils?**

A space for proposals and initiatives based on the needs of the inhabitants and the local actors - municipalities, education providers, actors in the local public health system, etc. The Citizens Councils are founded on independence and neutrality. They were created as a result of a law for City Programming and Social Urban Cohesion (2014), as parts of the "City Contracts", which are contracts between the state and the municipalities. They are established in priority neighbourhoods that face particular challenges of urban poverty, integration and exclusion.

Despite the big percentage of youth population of the neighbourhood, Eugenie and Anne recognised that it is yet not appealing for young people to participate in the Citizens' council as they have low attendance among younger citizens. This remains an important issue to tackle in the future of the Council. For more information and inputs, see the live streaming [video](#) talking about the work of the Citizens' Council of Port du Rhin.

### Regional Cooperation (Portugal)

Bruno Antonio, Executive Director of ECOS, presented "Algarve 2020"<sup>7</sup>, a project in two phases that in 2012-2013 saw the development of a regional youth strategy and in 2015-2016 the implementation and monitoring of actions by the local and regional authorities. The development of this regional action plan intended to create a process that would bring together stakeholders to dialogue. It aimed to change the models of participation of young people in Algarve, the Southern region of Portugal, by involving them in a structured way in collective decision-making processes. This was done at local and regional level through the innovative creation of spaces of dialogue and cooperation between young people, local authorities, associations and youth organizations. Algarve 2020 involved 93 entities from regional and local governments, NGOs, along with researches and academics, and it managed to directly consult about 1000 people in each phase.

Key to success that lead to the joint design of the regional youth plan was:

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<sup>7</sup> <http://algarve2020.ecos.pt/>

- Effort of including all stakeholders: at the beginning it was a time-consuming process because each actor was to be addressed individually to create reciprocal trust and then it ensured that all actors would step into the process with equal understanding. This eventually created reciprocal motivation and commitment to the process. It took a lot of sensitivity to include all, and we managed to overcome different party positions to block the process.
- Non-replication of activities but to synergize and better use the resources instead
- Make a S.M.A.R.T. action plan
- Establish a monitoring strategy since the beginning

“There is always a risk of youth manipulation not only from local authorities but also from civil society. However as engagement grows, there is less and less space for manipulation, thus the importance of having more people engaged in decision-making” – Bruno Antonio

A relevant outcome was the fact that Municipalities started engaging themselves in other participatory processes like structured consultations, revitalization of the local youth councils and design of municipality youth strategies.

Built by a multisectorial team, forged by the experiences in youth associations at local, national and international level, **ECOS – Cooperativa de Educação, Cooperação e Desenvolvimento, CRL** is registered Portuguese cooperative, that aims to contribute to promotion, recognition and valorization of non-formal education as a methodology for social integration and for stronger social cohesion.

The follow-up of the process will include:

- a) Systematization of the methodology to adapt it to other realities, as other regions of Portugal, and also outside the country, are requesting ECOS support to adapt the process to their local reality, in an effort to reproduce its outcome and success.
- b) Dissemination
- c) Creation of regional youth councils
- d) Support municipalities to re-build their youth councils or to define their local youth action plan.

To hear more about Algarve 2020, see the following [video](#).

## European Examples of youth participation

### Structured Dialogue for Youth: the model of the European Union

As a result of several policy decisions at EU-level, like the White paper [A New Impetus for European Youth](#) (2001), in 2005 and 2009, two European Union Council Resolutions invited the European Commission and the Member States to further consult young people in decision-making about youth issues and recognized them as key actors in society that should be considered as an important resource. Thus to implement these resolutions so that young people would be involved and would participate in the elaboration of policies that affect them, a permanent structure was designed to support the dialogue between decision makers, young people and youth organizations. It is now known as the **Structured**

Structured Dialogue is a methodology of consultation and cooperation among stakeholders and decision-makers focusing on a certain theme or topic of interest of both parties.

## Dialogue<sup>8</sup> with young people and youth organizations.

The EU model of structured dialogue is a process enabling young people to be involved in the shaping of policies that affect them, through continuous cooperation among youth representatives and decision-makers. It is called "Structured Dialogue" because it happens in a very concrete frame which has been set by the European Commission together with the European Youth Forum.

Currently, the Structured Dialogue process works in the following way:

- 1 Cycle lasts 18 months
- Each cycle has a thematic priority on which the dialogue will take place
- Each cycle involves a Trio presidency
- Each cycle has one political outcome: A Council Resolution that is based on the outcome of the 18-month Dialogue process.

During each cycle, national working groups organize country-wide consultations on the thematic priority (broken down into guiding questions). These inputs are put together and discussed at higher level among youth representatives and Member state representatives at the EU Youth Conferences.

The outcome, the Council Resolution<sup>9</sup>, is not a binding document, but only the political position of the Council. However it is often felt as a political commitment thus inviting the member states to take action and it does bring results. For example: the youth guarantee was partially born from the Structured Dialogue process and presented in a Council Resolution that was then implemented by Member States Europe-wide.

## The co-management system and the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe

The Council of Europe's youth sector works on the basis of a partnership between non-governmental youth organisations and governments, in what is known as the [co-management system](#). As explained by its name itself, the system adopted by the Council of Europe envisioned the joint work of youth and governments in setting the priorities for the youth sector and making recommendations for future budgets and programmes. This means that representatives from non-governmental youth organisations and youth networks cooperate closely with government officials from the [European Steering Committee for Youth](#) to establish the standards and work priorities of the Council of Europe's youth sector and make recommendations for future priorities, programmes and budgets.

The Advisory Council is a body made of local, national and international youth-organization representatives that provide opinions and input on all youth sector activities. It ensures that young people are involved in other activities of the Council of Europe, and it sits at the same table with the European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ), representative of the ministerial body.

Read more about the co-management system [here](#) or see the following [video](#).



<sup>8</sup> Read more <http://www.youthforum.org/claims/the-structured-dialogue/>

<sup>9</sup> What is a EU Council Resolution? <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/conclusions-resolutions/>

## The Congress of local and regional authorities; and their work with youth

Muriel Grimmeissen, Co-Secretary to the Current Affairs Committee of Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (CLRA) of the Council of Europe, presented the work and responsibilities of the CLRA and how this body strives for all people to enjoy full citizenship and to take part in decision-making at national, regional and local level. It works on thematic issues that change at each session (twice sessions per year) and it is complementary to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe: while this one targets issues at national level, the CLRA targets the same issues but at the local-regional dimension.

Youth is a dimension that has been addressed many times and there are several recommendations put forward by the CLRA regarding young people and their role in societies, mainly looking at young people and governance at local level and overall participatory democracy. In particular, each recommendation comes with an explanatory memorandum that gathers research and good practices collected among the Member States.

Main recommendations regarding youth are:

- Resolution 319 (2010) on integration of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods;
- Resolution 346 (2012) on youth and democracy: the changing face of youth political engagement;
- Resolution 386 (2015) on bringing down barriers to youth participation: adopting a lingua franca for local and regional authorities and young people.

Other relevant resolutions include:

- Resolution 207 (2006) on young people and new information and communication technologies;
- Resolution 259 (2008) on Integration and participation of young people at local and regional level;
- Resolution 394 (2015) on E-media: game changer for local and regional politicians.

In 2014, the Congress introduced the initiative "*Rejuvenating politics*" that brings young delegates being present at its sessions, as a way not only to show what the congress does but also to encourage young people to participate and get more involved in their local and regional life.

## E-participation of young people in decision-making

A crucial dimension of how young people interact today is the digital one. For this reason e-participation is becoming more and more important and all stakeholders should have a better understanding of it and should start engaging with it if they really aim to reach out to all young people. **E-participation can be defined as interactive online decision-making.** It has many positive sides, like the easy collection and processing of many inputs. When compared with "traditional" participation it is being more independent of time and place. However, digital participation is even more effective when it is combined with additional face-to-face events. Hence, a combination of both online and offline elements is required, promising a more successful participative process.

Jessica Walker of the *European Youth Information and Counselling Agency* (ERYICA) presented the project "EU<sup>th</sup> - Tools and Tips for Mobile and Digital Youth Participation in and across Europe". This initiative aims at getting more young people involved in political decision-making and increases their trust in European political institutions through youth-friendly digital and mobile participation tools.

The project looks for solutions on how to efficiently and successfully combine online and offline participation. For this reason, the consortium of partners created OPIN, an all-in-one proven digital and mobile participation toolbox, ready to be embedded in web presence of youth organisations or administrations.

OPIN provides participation projects with a digital home. Existing features include:

- collaborative text work
- collecting ideas
- mobile polling

All stages of the project are transparent and supported by OPIN's software:

- features for digital and mobile participation
- easy to embed participation processes on a web site
- intelligent community management
- integration of offline events
- multimedia information about youth projects

Once the project will end, the partners aim at making OPIN available for all youth organisations and local administrations to use when working on joint decision-making. Find out more about this new tool for enhancing youth participation, on the following [video](#).

## Participation for all: ensuring inclusiveness

When addressing youth participation, the topic of inclusiveness is an imperative. From participants' presentation emerged a strong emphasis on inclusive participation and respect of human rights. This is especially important for youth facing marginalization for their socio-economic situation, for example young people experiencing poverty, Roma youth, youth with migrant backgrounds, and young people with disabilities. Young people in these situations often face multiple discriminations; because of being young and because of the situation they are facing. These conditions then distance the young people from opportunities, further discriminating and marginalizing them.

### Young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and experiencing poverty

The situation of young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, experiencing poverty or other discrimination often serves as a barometer of the integration and cohesion within communities and society at large. This is because they are more vulnerable and insecure, and because they are more directly affected by uncertainties regarding the development of their autonomy, as well as participation in society and contribution to its development.

The importance of working with discriminated youth was recently highlighted by the Council of Europe in the Committee of Ministers' Recommendation **CM/Rec (2015)3 on the access of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights** and its guiding manual "**TAKING IT SERIOUSLY**". The recommendation was the outcome of the Enter! Project, initiated by the youth sector of the Council of Europe in 2009, that aimed at the development of youth policy and youth work responses to situations of exclusion, discrimination and violence affecting young people, particularly in multicultural disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The project promotes young people's access to social rights as a means for their inclusion and participation in society.

"Taking it seriously" offers advice and examples of actions to take and policies to develop in the field of access to social rights for young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods in order to tackle the problems of exclusion, discrimination and violence. In this way it is making the content of the recommendation more accessible and closer to the realities of policy makers, youth workers and youth organisations.

## Roma youth

In all European countries, Roma people have historically suffered from discrimination and Roma youth often face double discrimination due to being young and with Roma background, which often makes them even more vulnerable and discriminated.

Michal Miko, of the Forum of European Roma Young People (FERYP) presented his personal experience as well as the work of the FERYP network. He gave some concrete tips on how to include young Roma in the activities of our organization and municipalities such as:

- a) Starting from valuing and strengthening their identity;
- b) Including them in youth participation structures like youth parliaments, youth councils;
- c) Including Roma in national youth councils and other national level organizations.

The Council of Europe is active in this agenda with its **"ROMED" Programme**, initiated from the 2010 "Strasbourg Declaration on Roma" that with its article 46 engaged the commitment of signatory states to "set up a European Training Programme for Roma Mediators" as mediation is one of the tools recommended by most instances at European level for reducing the gap between Roma communities and public institutions, such as schools, health facilities, but also local and regional administrations. In 2011 the Council started "ROMED", aiming for the training of mediators around Europe and in 2012, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted the Recommendation CM/Rec (2012)9 to Member States on mediation as an effective tool for promoting respect for human rights and social inclusion of Roma.

## Young Migrants

Bertrand Manegabe also brought his experience as young refugee in the Netherlands as well as the experience of youth participation in democratic governance in Uganda.

The reasons behind why someone migrates or seeks refuge are very diverse; migrants have very different background and are also looking for different situations in the countries where they go (study, work, etc.). The challenges they face are many: learning the language, communication, integration, dealing with racism, and seeking information and for this reason there is the need of additional and specific support to young migrants and people with migrant background.

## Young people with Disabilities

Zara Todd, of the **European Network on Independent Living**, talked about the experiences of young people with disabilities and how they participate. There needs to be more opportunities for young disabled people to be involved in decision making. With proper attention and a change in attitude all young disabled people can be included and participate. For a group to function well and for disabled young people to stay involved, we need to make sure we meet each person's individual access needs. Meeting people's needs doesn't necessarily cost lots of money but it does mean planning and being flexible. If a young person has an access requirement that we are not sure how to meet, we can ask them and their family for suggestions and indications.

Zara shared the activities of the project VIPER, which stands for "Voice, Inclusion, Participation, Empowerment and Research" as well as one the guide **"Hear Us Out - a VIPER guide to participation in decision making"**.

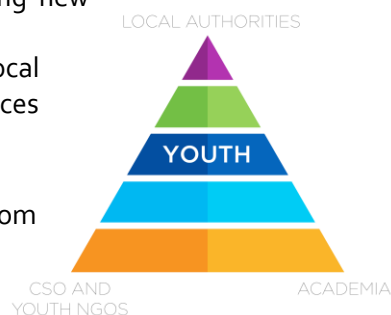


# Stakeholder cooperation: an approach to inclusive youth participation

For many participants, this study session was a first working opportunity to engage with local authorities or youth organizations in a mind-set of cooperation and reciprocal learning. It was clear since the beginning when exchanging views, until the last days when they were working on possible projects of cooperation that the diversity and the complementarity these stakeholders bring are very important if we really want to tackle youth participation at local level not as an accessory but as a systematic approach, embedded in all steps of decision-making.

“our *every-day tool* might be surprising or innovative to others” – participant

Civil society and local authorities need also to bring on board the academia and research institutions, to support a deeper and systematic reflection to youth participation, to improve the implementation of what is already in place, to foster innovation and bring new sustainable practices supported by a strong knowledge base. To make this cooperation start there is the need of dialogue and reciprocal understanding, but it can only start with building the capacity and the spaces for this dialogue to take place.



When we are talking about outcomes, one of the most important ones from the study session was the development of partnerships and projects among the participants in the field of youth participation.

Due to the diversity of participants where we had representatives of local and regional authorities, universities, youth organizations, but also youth workers and youth leaders, we had partnerships developed on different levels and among different stakeholders, addressing youth participation on local, regional and European level.

Within the study session we allowed the principle of double and triple applications. In this way 2 or 3 people working in the same reality but representing different stakeholders could submit a joint application form. As a result, we had participants coming from the same realities but different fields in which they are active, and they had the chance to exchange ideas and knowledge, but also

provide means for mutual collaboration when it comes to assuring and enhancing youth participation in their local and regional realities. The collaboration between the participants from United Kingdom resulted in a collaboration between the local youth council and the municipal youth service in developing a set of activities for including the opinion of the young people within the work of the youth service, but also the inclusion of young people through the youth



council within the work of the local authorities and decision making processes. The participants from Portugal on the other hand developed a Municipality Youth Plan in order to enhance youth participation and offer the means to all young people to take part as a way to develop a sustainable society where all young people have the chance to be included. This plan included capacity building training courses for student organizations and youth NGOs, but also the use of different creative methods to engage young people such as different forms of art, photography etc.

Besides these regional and local collaborations many international partnerships were also made as a direct result from the study session, with this ensuring the continued exchange of practices and development of innovative ways to tackle youth participation as such, but also on many other topics in the field of youth. One of the developed collaboration projects during the study session that was particular was the collaboration between participants from "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" and Moldova, coming from both municipalities and organizations, who developed a plan for increasing participation of young people with disabilities within their societies, but also within the decision making processes within the same.

A conclusion that was drawn from the study session was that each of the relevant stakeholders and institutions in the field of youth has to work in the direction of access to social rights of young people with fewer opportunities, coming from disadvantaged and rural areas, ensuring their inclusion and participation within the society.

In line with this, many of the participants and organizations present started developing plans and projects for further collaboration with the Council of Europe and the European Youth Foundation.

Besides the collaboration, few of the participants of the study session also took part of other processes under the Council of Europe, such as being youth representatives within the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, but also taking part of long term training courses such as Enter!

## Conclusions

At DYPALL, we believe that stakeholders should look at youth, and its energy, creativity and potential for change, as a source of solutions for our society's challenges. We believe that these challenges need to be addressed at local level, where local actors can cooperate and contribute to policy reforms on but also influence national and European policy processes becoming relevant stakeholders on setting the agendas that will affect their lives.

The work done during the Study Session, and all the practices and examples presented in the previous pages showed that in this quest to develop a new culture of youth participation there is no need to start from scratch. We already have practices being implemented that constitute a diverse range of examples across Europe in terms of having young people directly involved in decision-making at local and regional level, where strong bonds and cooperation are boosting the involvement and participation of youth and youth organisations in representative democracy structures in their local communities.

The Study Session offered the space and opportunity that all participants can explore different practices and ways of addressing and enhancing youth participation in 19 different European countries and local realities, but also the institutional approaches of the European Union and the Council of Europe.

Taking all this newly gathered knowledge and experiences, the participants developed precise plans and strategies of enhancing the cooperation between the local authorities, civil sector and academia, that will increase the youth participation in their own local realities. The participants diverse profiles and backgrounds proved that the most successful strategies are always developed with the participation of all three above mentioned sectors, but also with the direct involvement of young people.

Thanks to the different experiences and knowledge of the network and each of the participants, on the Study Session we worked towards increasing youth participation and enhancing cooperation by:

- collecting and systemizing practices: exploring the various ways in which models are transformed and adapted to each local reality
- disseminating these practices: analysing “what makes it work” as well as “what makes it fail” to see if and how each practice can be adopted and transfer to “my local reality”
- reinforce evidence-based policy making, encouraging more research and data collection about youth matters and bringing this evidence to the decision-making table.

By seeing the direct outcomes of the cooperation and developed projects/initiatives/strategies now we are even more driven by the idea of the network , and by working with each of the selected individuals that attended the Study Session we are even more motivated and encouraged to work for what DYPALL Network believes in - that this triangular cooperation can strongly contribute to create space and structures for the development of competences of the youth workers, youth leaders, local authorities’ officers responsible for youth and other people involved in developing and supporting mechanisms to enhance youth participation at the local level.



# APPENDIX I: USEFUL MATERIALS

This list aggregates materials and other useful information used through the Study Session

## MEDIA SHARED ON FACEBOOK

Video about youth participation "Hear my voice! Amplify participation of young people in Europe!"

<https://youtu.be/CUHpGEEHSM>

Video "Message of the Ukrainian youth to people of the Netherlands #StudRadaBuk"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XkmzoUdBoQ8>

Video "OURS BY RIGHT: Participation of Youth in Democratic Governance"

<https://youtu.be/HxoSJeAbajA>

Video "Who's on My Side"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AuAjxJ-cEgk>

Video "Participation of Youth in Democratic Governance in Uganda"

<https://youtu.be/HxoSJeAbajA>

## DOCUMENTS USED DURING THE STUDY SESSION

Doc "Participation Models – Citizens, Youth, Online" [Download](#)

Doc "model for effective practice" [Download](#)

Link to "Participation and inclusion" [Download](#)

Doc "Irish Traveller Health Study" [Download](#)

Powerpoint about the Citizens Council of Strasbourg "Présentation Conseil Citoyen Port Du Rhin" [Download](#)

Doc "Your Access Requirements" [Download](#)

Doc "Viper Guide Hears Us Out" [Download](#)

Doc "How to inclusive groups" [Download](#)

Links about the project "[Honeycomb of Participation](#)" [1](#) [2](#) [3](#)

## COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Funding opportunities:

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-youth-foundation>

<http://www.euthproject.eu/open-call/> (deadline December 2016)

Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

[http://www.coe.int/t/congress/Members/Delegations\\_en.asp?mytabsmenu=4](http://www.coe.int/t/congress/Members/Delegations_en.asp?mytabsmenu=4)

Examples of youth participation

Roma youth <http://www.coe.int/.../web/youth-roma/the-stories-and-examples>

Disadvantage youth\_“Taking it seriously” [Download](#)

Link “Youth Department”

<http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/>

Link to “No Hate Speech Movement”

[www.nohatespeechmovement.org](http://www.nohatespeechmovement.org)

## ADDITIONAL USEFUL LINKS

Preparation of the Study Session

<http://dypall.com/2016/07/01/study-session-preparatory-meeting-meet-the-team/>

<https://www.facebook.com/DypallNetwork/posts/1483550591660354>

Opening of the Study Session

<http://dypall.com/2016/10/10/starts-today-study-session-2016/>

Photos and additional posts of the Study Session

<http://dypall.com/2016/10/18/study-session-transferring-positive-practices-of-democratic-youth-participation-models-from-the-european-to-the-local-level/>

[https://www.facebook.com/pg/DypallNetwork/photos/?tab=album&album\\_id=1493063947375685](https://www.facebook.com/pg/DypallNetwork/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1493063947375685)

<https://www.facebook.com/DypallNetwork/posts/1575818885766857>

<https://www.facebook.com/DypallNetwork/posts/1490966824252064>

<https://www.facebook.com/DypallNetwork/posts/1492547964093950>

<https://www.facebook.com/DypallNetwork/posts/1497422090273204:0>

## DYPALL NETWORK

Call for participants [Download](#)

“Join DYPALL Network” – Use this link to register your organisation as part of DYPALL.

<http://dypall.com/join-us/>

Also, if you’d like to receive our newsletter follow this [link](#).

# APPENDIX II PROGRAMME

	Sunday 9 Oct	Monday 10 October	Tuesday 11 October	Wednesday 12 October	Thursday 13 October	Friday 14 October	Saturday 15 October	Sunday 16 October	
9:30 – 11:00	<b>ARRIVALS</b>	Opening & Introduction	Youth Participation in Practice	Strengthen cooperation among actors working in youth participation and youth policies	Developing skills for strengthen cooperation and participation	New perspectives on my local reality	Steps towards Youth Participation	<b>DEPARTURES</b>	
11:00 – 11:30		<b>COFFEE BREAK</b>							
11:30 – 13:00		Group building	Youth Participation Models	Inspiring Practices: cooperation among actors working in youth participation and youth policies	Developing skills for strengthen cooperation and participation (cont.)	Steps towards Youth Participation	Steps towards Youth Participation		
13:00 – 14:30		<b>LUNCH</b>							
14:30 – 16:00		My local reality	Youth Participation Models in practice	Inspiring Practices: Instruments, Structures and Initiatives of Youth Participation across Europe	FREE AFTERNOON	Funding and other support opportunities for our steps towards youth participation	Strengthen involvement in DYPALL NETWORK's next initiatives		
16:00 – 16:30		<b>COFFEE BREAK</b>							
16:30 – 18:00		My local reality (cont.)	Inclusive Youth Participation	Inspiring Practices: Instruments, Structures and Initiatives of Youth Participation across Europe	FREE AFTERNOON	Steps towards Youth Participation	Evaluation & Closing		
19:00		<b>DINNER</b>							

# APPENDIX III LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

## Participants

### **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Aleksandar Slijepčević, Perpetuum Mobile – Institute for youth and community development

### **Denmark**

Wazir Ilyas Abdulrahman, UngSolrød

### **Finland**

Tytti Tikkakoski, Helsinki Youth Department

### **Germany**

Sebastian Müller, Studiengruppe Jugendbeteiligung

### **Greece**

Afroditi Milidou, Regional Government of Central Greece

### **Ireland**

John Delap, Dublin Institute of Technology, Access & Civic Engagement Office

### **Italy**

Orazio Giovanni Fiorini, Associazione Elios  
Giuseppina Rubino, Municipality of Acireale  
Silvia Pieretto, DYPALL Network

### **Latvia**

Jānis Šaudiņš, Rezekne Municipality  
Daniela Lozda, Rezekne region municipal government, Dricani civil parish administration

### **Republic of Moldova**

Eugenia Godoroja, Lumos Foundation Moldova

### **The Netherlands**

Hanan Al-Dubai, ADYNE Netherlands

### **Portugal**

Vasco Caleira, SEIS – Society of Studies and Intervention in Social Engineering  
Cátia Oliveira, Youth Office – Municipality of Setubal

### **Russian Federation**

Timur Ivanov, Moscow Youth Parliament Center

### **Spain**

Jose Francisco Rios Milan, Galizia Region  
Brais Ferbandes Alvarez, Daquiedacola

### **Sweden**

Nassir Abdullahi, Stockholm Municipality

## **“the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”**

Iskra Doneva, City of Skopje

Sashka Antolovic, (accompanying Ms.Doneva)

Elena Ceban, Centre for Intercultural Dialogue

## **Turkey**

Başak Polat, Association for Supporting Contemporary Life

Ümran Bektaş, Kadıköy Municipality

Baris Orhanlioglu, Kadıköy Municipality

## **Ukraine**

Vitalii Yaremchuk, Student Council of Bukovyna

Rostylav Tyshkuk, Department for youth and sport of Chernivist Regional State

Administration

## **United Kingdom**

Garvin Deeney, EANI Youth Service

Patrick Mccolgan, Strabane Youth Council

## **Speakers**

Milosh Ristovski, Center for Intercultural Dialogue, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”

Bruno António, Cooperativa ECOS and DYPALL Network, Portugal

Jessica Walker, European Youth Information and Counselling (ERYICA), Luxemburg

Zara Todd, European Network on Independent Living, United Kingdom

Michal Miko (Forum of European Roma Young People - FERYP)

Eugenie Bienaime and Anne Veronique Auzet, from the Citizens Council of Port du Rhin (Strasbourg)

## **Preparatory Team**

Ana Morgado, Cooperativa ECOS

Bertrand Manegabe, ADYNE Netherlands

Dragana Jovanovska – course director, Center for Intercultural Dialogue

Leila Rasima, Active Society

Lenka Karafiatova, AGU Youth Factory

## **Council of Europe Secretariat**

Muriel Grimmeissen, Co-Secretary to the Current Affairs Committee, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

Tina Mulcahy, Executive director of the European Youth Centre Strasbourg

Mara Georgescu, Education and Training Division, Youth Department

Lubelli Jackie, Education and Training Division, Youth Department

Karen Palisser and Natalia Militello, European Youth Foundation