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YOUTH PARTICIPATION 2.0

The Joint Council on Youth (CMJ) guidelines on young people's participation

Agenda point 7.1.4

Draft decision

The Joint Council on Youth:

- adopted the CMJ guidelines on youth participation as a tool to strengthen the implementation of Recommendation Rec(2006)14 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on citizenship and participation of young people in public life and Congress Resolution 152 (2003) on the revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life, that require renewed attention due to the changing conditions young people across Europe are facing;
- entrusted the secretariat with communicating them to the Committee of Ministers and to work jointly with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities to ensure their widest dissemination and follow-up;
- underlined that the guidelines aim to serve as a guiding reference to member states to enhance youth participation at local, regional, and national levels, while aiding youth organisations in accessing relevant Council of Europe policies, and noted their complementarity with the ongoing efforts to integrate a youth perspective in Council of Europe's intergovernmental work and other deliberations, following the Council of Europe's Reykjavik Summit;
- invited the authorities in member states, as well as youth and other civil society organisations, to disseminate widely the guidelines and promote their implementation at all levels;
- called upon the Youth Department to use widely the guidelines during its education and training activities;
- recommended a reflection be launched on the opportunity to update and review the constituent policy documents of the guidelines, to reflect the major evolutions in the youth field and the transitions over the last 15 years;
- thanked the members of the drafting group, the European Youth Forum and the researcher for their contribution and support to the drafting process.

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1. The Joint Council on Youth's (CMJ) guidelines on young people's participation

In October 2006, the Committee of Ministers adopted Recommendation Rec(2006)14 on citizenship and participation of young people in public life emphasising the vital role of youth participation in democracy and society. This Recommendation sets standards for Council of Europe member states, stressing the importance of inclusive participation without discrimination. Similarly, Congress Resolution 152 (2003) on the revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life highlights the right of young people to take part in decision-making and to engage in actions and activities so as to contribute to building a better society, and the means and support they need to be able to do so.

Despite nearly two decades of progress, there is a need to intensify and expand implementation of the two documents across member states and the Council of Europe. The Joint Council on Youth's (CMJ) guidelines on young people's participation aim to serve as a guiding reference to member states to enhance youth participation at local, regional, and national levels, while aiding youth organisations in accessing relevant Council of Europe policies. The CMJ's guidelines, which are listed below, will be explained in more detail in the following chapters.

Recognition of participation beyond institutional politics

1. Recognise, promote and integrate into the life of public institutions and policies non-institutional forms of youth participation to ensure inclusivity and representation.
2. Recognise and acknowledge every form of participation by every person.
3. Provide funding to invest in research initiatives aimed at understanding and analysing new forms of youth participation.
4. Recognise the crucial role of youth organisations in facilitating meaningful dialogue and engagement between politicians and young people when using non-traditional forms of participation.

Promotion of participation in political institutions

5. Introduce and promote e-voting and other forms of electoral facilitation that are beneficial to young people.
6. Initiate and maintain a constructive dialogue between political institutions and young people by fostering a culture of co-creation and shared destiny (e.g. a co-management system).
7. Use engaging, inclusive and non-bureaucratic language, bridging the communication gap between institutional politics and young people.
8. Create comprehensive feedback mechanisms for young people to voice their opinions, concerns and suggestions to political institutions and act on them.
9. Ensure policymakers actively explore the spaces where young people interact in their daily lives in order to be able to engage with them in their own environment (e.g. public parks, shopping malls, sports facilities).
10. Take proactive measures to develop robust tools to assess the effectiveness and impact of interactions and engagement with young people.
11. Explore the utility of youth impact assessment mechanisms as part of the policy-making process and use them to actively involve and represent young people in decision-making.

12. Support and encourage non-formal and formal educational activities (e.g. promoting debates in schools; simulation games, mock elections) that increase the participatory competence of young people and other stakeholders (e.g. politicians, administrators, educators).

Translation of youth voices and interests into public policies

13. Listen to the concerns of young people and include them in policies.
14. Design policies inclusive of young people by taking into consideration their values and priority issues.
15. Acknowledge youth interest and preferences, also in policy areas not traditionally associated with young people (e.g. environmental policy, foreign policy, security policy, health policy, open government and digitalisation).
16. Harness the activism and power of young people in their quest for social justice and a sustainable, just and open society (e.g. consumer activism; different strategies for using web-based tools).

Recognition of the opportunities (and dangers) of information and communications technology

17. Invest in digital and media literacy programmes to equip young people and other stakeholders with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate the digital world safely, competently and responsibly.
18. Consider targeted strategies to use effectively the networked dimension of young people's participation in social issues (e.g. participation and communication patterns, support and pressure campaigns, online discussions).
19. Explore innovative approaches, such as gamification and interactive platforms, to create meaningful and immersive experiences that resonate with young people to enable meaningful youth participation.
20. Introduce regulations and policies to prevent the deception of young people on social media platforms, including by protecting their privacy and well-being, and ensuring information has been fact-checked.
21. Recognise the value of (digital) youth work in promoting and securing online youth participation.
22. Address the problem of the digital divide among young people and its impact on youth participation.

The importance of civic spaces and youth work in securing youth participation

23. Recognise the particular challenges facing young people as civic spaces shrink and the unique position of youth work and youth organisations in addressing these challenges.
24. Facilitate and protect a safe, supportive and enabling environment for youth work and youth organisations, regardless of their size, focus or geographical location, to promote youth participation through open civic spaces (e.g. an enabling legal environment, robust funding, ensuring the safety of staff and its professionalisation).
25. Avoid unnecessary administrative and reporting burdens, as additional red tape limits the capacity of already weakly professionalised organisations to implement their missions, thus reducing civic space.
26. Support the enhancement of existing online and offline civic spaces and build the capacity of young people, youth workers and representatives of youth organisations to sustain these spaces.
27. Recognise the importance of different modalities of youth work (e.g. mobile youth work, digital youth work) to facilitate youth participation, especially in environments with low participation opportunities (i.e. civic deserts).
28. Collect data and introduce analytical lenses that address the shrinking of civic spaces for young people and highlight differences in access and agency among young people with different identities, cultures and communities.
29. Co-design programmes and initiatives aimed at slowing the shrinkage of civic space based on evidence and with sensitivity to the differences in access and capabilities of young people
30. Promote cooperation, synergies and an exchange of experiences between formal educational institutions, youth work and youth organisations, as well as within the youth sector in addressing issues related to youth participation.

2. Guidelines at a glance and the role of the Council of Europe in addressing youth participation

Aim of the guidelines

The sustainability of the Council of Europe's core values relies on the creativity, competences, social commitment, and contribution of young people as well as on their future confidence. The [Council of Europe Youth sector strategy 2030](#)ⁱ resolves that the Council of Europe youth sector should aim at broadening youth participation, so that young people participate meaningfully in decision-making, on the basis of a broad social and political consensus in support of inclusion, participatory governance and accountability. The meaningful participation of young people is possible in an environment in which young people can freely assemble and form, join and be active in associations or political processes. It refers to their active involvement in decision-making processes, policy development and other activities linked to democratic citizenship.

Meaningful youth participation is important also in light of the [Reykjavik Declaration](#)ⁱⁱ, which recognises the youth sector's importance and calls for a “new path of increased transparency and co-operation with its stakeholders, with strengthened visibility and sufficient resources”. It clearly indicates that this path should include a youth perspective in the Organisation's intergovernmental and other deliberations as the participation of young people in these processes improves the effectiveness of public policies and strengthens democratic institutions through open dialogue.

With the aim of supporting these ongoing processes, these guidelines on young people's participation focus on two documents, Committee of Ministers' Recommendation Rec(2006)14 and Congress Resolution 152(2003), that require renewed attention due to the changing conditions young people across Europe. The guidelines recognise the ongoing need to encourage young people's active, creative, and productive participation in local, regional, and national contexts, which goes beyond simply soliciting their opinions. They aim to provide clearer guidance and concrete examples to help member states and other relevant stakeholders to achieve this goal, as well as to help youth organisations access Council of Europe policies that directly affect them.

These guidelines look at the major processes that have marked youth participation since these important texts were adopted. These processes are clustered around the topics of the evolution of youth participation, low youth participation in institutional politics, the changing citizenship of young people, the impact of the internet and web-based tools on youth participation and young people in general, and the problem of shrinking civic spaces and the role youth work and youth organisations have in curbing them. Every topical area is covered by a section devoted to evidence, key takeaways from existing studies, guidance to relevant stakeholders

on how to curb problems related to youth participation and possible cases of addressing the problem in practice.

When taking stock of positive examples related to youth participation, endeavours primarily recognise the efforts made by different institutions and actors to facilitate youth participation. When looking at different practices, it is important to consider the context in which they were generated. Evidence from other practices can only be useful if the context is provided.ⁱⁱⁱ As it is never possible to simply copy effective practices to other environments without significant revision,^{iv} these guidelines provide mostly recorded examples that improve youth participation. Examples of recorded policies, practices, projects, programmes, mechanisms etc. are listed after each major topical area.

Target group(s)

This publication aims to reach various target groups in order to further promote youth participation in different fields and at different levels (local, national, international). These target groups include governmental and nongovernmental actors, youth organisations at all levels, organisations within the youth sector that provide services for young people and advocate for their interests, such as youth workers and other professionals working with young people, individuals and groups concerned with youth participation as well as other relevant actors.

Scope

This publication primarily refers to Committee of Ministers' Recommendation Rec(2006)14 and Congress Resolution 152(2003), with a focus on youth participation and how member states and other stakeholders can promote it. It also highlights the importance of these provisions, especially the recommendations to member states, in the current circumstances faced by young people today. The publication contains examples of the promotion of youth participation in different contexts across Europe, collected through a survey open to all stakeholders, an analysis of relevant Council of Europe documents, publications of the Youth Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe, and other institutions active in this field (e.g. European Youth Forum, United Nations, UNDP, OSCE ODIHR, International IDEA and others). The order in which the practices appear in the sub-chapters goes from those most relevant to the local level to those most relevant to the international level.

The process of delivering the guidelines

The Joint Council on Youth (CMJ) recognised the need for clearer guidelines on how to implement important documents that guide member states in strengthening youth participation in local, regional, and national contexts with respect to the changing circumstances that young people face. To develop the guidelines, the CMJ created a drafting group consisting of two members of the Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ), two members of the European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ), and a representative of the European Youth Forum. The Drafting Group invited representatives from youth organisations to participate in the development of the

guidelines and explored ways to strengthen cooperation between the CCJ, the Congress, and the Congress' Youth Delegates (see annex 1).

3. Committee of Ministers' Recommendation Rec(2006)14 and Congress Resolution 152(2003) at a glance

[The Committee of Ministers' Recommendation Rec \(2006\)14^v](#) on citizenship and participation of young people in public life underlines the importance of young people's participation in democracy and society and provides specific standards for Council of Europe member states to follow. It consists of seven recommendations to member states. These seven recommendations call for the provision of learning opportunities that enable active citizenship and participation; the exchange of good practices on youth participation; the recognition of the importance of non-formal learning in youth associations for education for democratic citizenship; the promotion of the establishment of independent youth councils; the development of partnerships between public authorities and youth councils and organisations, taking into account the co-management model; support for the establishment of student and pupil councils and the promotion of dialogue between formal and non-formal education actors; and the development of an enabling environment, taking into account living conditions, targeting the disadvantaged and vulnerable. The last recommendation also underlines the importance of youth research, providing information that meets democratic standards, ensuring adequate funding for relevant actors providing these services, encouraging political parties to engage in dialogue with young people, and calling for the effective implementation of the Revised European Charter.

Similarly, [Congress Resolution 152 \(2003\)^{vi}](#) emphasises that participation means having the right, means, space and opportunity to engage in decision-making with adequate support and to contribute to building a better society, and adopts the Revised European Charter in its Article 8. The resolution calls on the Congress' members to endorse the Charter, to use it as a reference document for their daily work with young people and to contribute to its dissemination. The resolution also calls for young people to have access to new technologies that promote participation, to make increased efforts to involve young people in decision-making, especially those who face obstacles to participation, to promote cooperation between municipalities and regions in the field of youth work and to provide Council of Europe bodies with examples of good practice in relation to youth participation, work with relevant actors to protect young people from sexual exploitation, as well as to protect them from violence and help victims of violence.

The [Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life](#) provides young people, youth organisations and local authorities with guidelines, tools and ideas for promoting youth participation at local and regional levels. It describes a range of actions where local authorities should incorporate a participatory approach and presents concrete tools to support youth participation, such as training, counselling centres, youth projects and local media by and for young people, it also gives advice on possible ways to

support the institutional participation of young people in their local environment. The Charter goes into more detail about youth councils and parliaments and gives suggestions on how young people can get involved in decision-making processes at all levels.

4. (New) challenges addressed by the Guidelines

4.1 How youth participation has evolved

Paragraph 1 of the Revised Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life considers the active participation of young people in decisions and actions at local and regional levels as essential for democratic, inclusive and prosperous societies. The Charter understands participation as more than just voting or standing for election. It is about having the right, the means, the space and the opportunity to influence decisions and engage in actions of a society.^{vii}

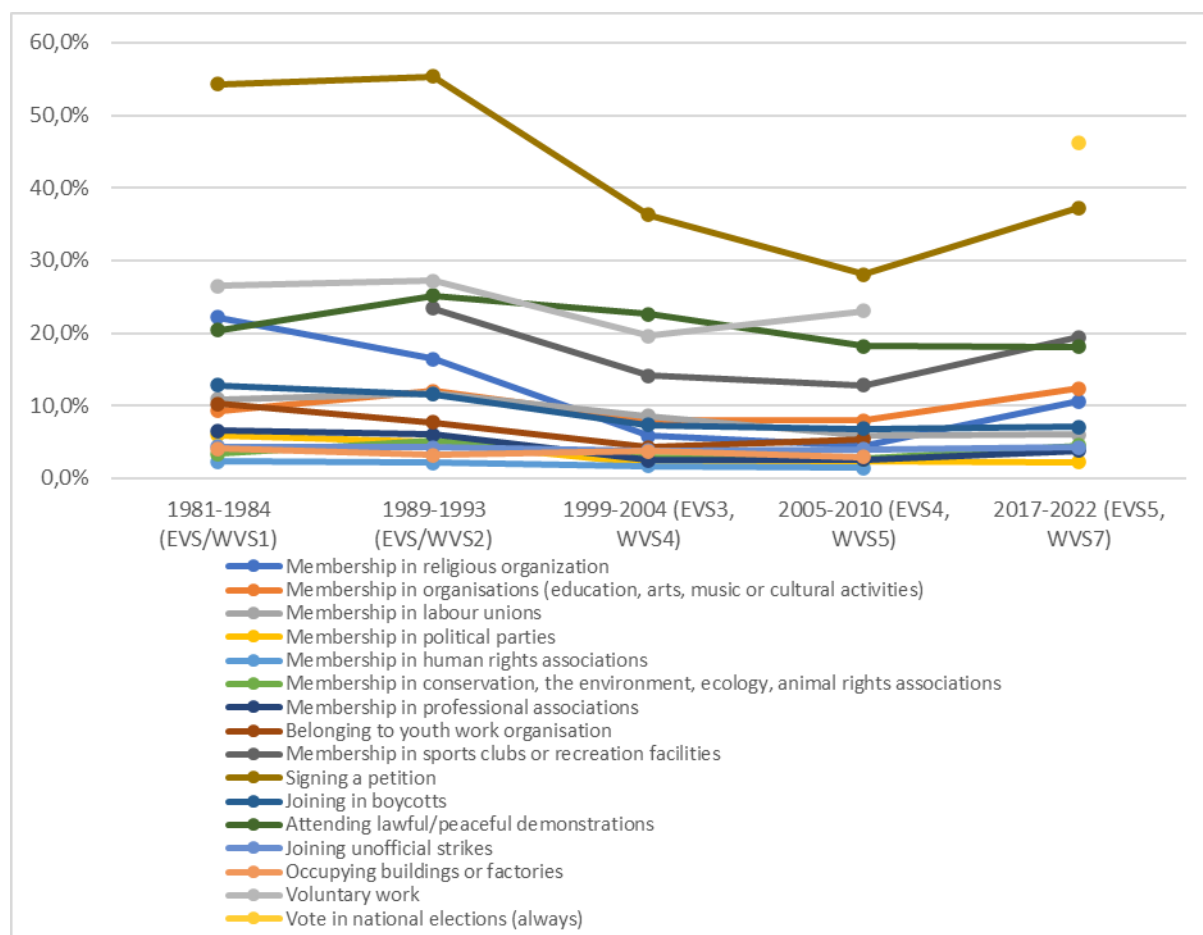
Such a broad definition of youth participation in local and regional life is not only a feature of, and often emanates from, policy documents but also academic debates. Political science and (political) sociology are the two most prominent disciplines offering theoretical foundations, conceptualisations as well as empirical measurements^{viii} of the processes covered by the Revised Charter. Whether civic engagement or political participation, political science or sociology, the conceptual stretching of the two key terms is immense^{ix} and there is no single designated meaning for them. In different variations, they range from voting in elections to donating money to charity to bowling in a community league.^x In all these definitions, it depends on both the time period and the observer (who is defining, scholar or participant).^{xi} For the purposes of the Revised Charter and related policy instruments, the definition provided in the preamble is appropriate, as its broader notion goes beyond voting and activities in public institutions and more realistically takes into account how young people engage in their communities.

The concept of participation has thus changed in recent decades and now generally encompasses a variety of actors, forms and targets.^{xii} This is due to the emergence of new social movements, more flexible membership and a variety of new forms of collective action. These changes are either a reinvention of older forms of action or a consequence of the technological innovations of recent decades.^{xiii} The changing goals of political action also signal a shift in political power and authority from the nation state to a variety of transnational and supranational public and private actors.

Research suggests that young people tend to turn away from institutional forms of participation and focus more on non-institutional forms of engagement. As a result, the focus of the debate on participation is shifting from whether young people are active to where they are active.^{xiv} Recent data suggest that while young people remain active, they participate in different ways that are shaped by their experiences with institutions and people in their daily lives.^{xv} Youth participation in the strict sense of influencing public institutions has its pitfalls (see Title 4.2) but voting remains one of the most widespread forms of youth engagement and also one of the

most effective.^{xvi} According to various studies,^{xvii} when it comes to political action, young people still vote and sign petitions most often, suggesting that institutional forms of engagement are still relevant.

Figure 1: Membership in organisations, political action and voluntary work of 15-29 year olds?



Source: Source: EVS (2022)

But young people also engage in less institutional forms of participation, for example by sharing their opinions online in many different ways. They also engage in politically motivated consumption, street protests and demonstrations. They volunteer significantly for charities or campaign organisations and participate in public consultations. Various forms of online engagement as well as consumer activism appear to be the most common practices that young people engage in when it comes to non-institutional forms of participation. Rather than focusing on the most practised forms of participation, it is important to note that young people participate through a diverse repertoire of participation. In this context, Deželan and Moxon emphasise that only about one tenth of young people do not participate in any of the forms of participation measured, suggesting that young people are more engaged than is commonly assumed.^{xviii}

Key takeaways

1. Traditional tools for measuring youth participation are too narrow and outdated.
2. Voting is still one of the most important ways of political participation for young people.
3. The actors, forms and targets of political participation are changing and so are the ways in which young people are politically active.
4. Depending on their preferences, abilities and other relevant factors, young people participate in different ways.

Guidelines

1. Recognise, promote and integrate into the life of public institutions and policies non-institutional forms of youth participation to ensure inclusivity and representation.
2. Recognise and acknowledge every form of participation by every person.
3. Provide funding to invest in research initiatives aimed at understanding and analysing new forms of youth participation.
4. Recognise the crucial role of youth organisations in facilitating meaningful dialogue and engagement between politicians and young people when using non-traditional forms of participation.

Examples from practice

Youth budget

Some municipalities have set up participatory budgets specifically for young people or for services aimed at young people. The youth budget is a way for young people to influence their local environment and activities. It is part of a broader range of opportunities for youth participation in municipal decision-making. See, for example, the city of Ghent https://stad.gent/sites/default/files/media/documents/Concept%20Note%20EYC%202024%20Ghent_0.pdf

Youth juries and dialogue days

A youth jury is a special form of citizens' jury composed only of young people, usually aged 12–25. Ideally, youth juries give young people a voice, leading to more equity in decision-making and greater diversity in the political arena. It is important that a youth jury, like a traditional citizens' jury, creates a safe public space for young people to open up to others and listen well. See, for example, the case of Vaasa [134ac3bc-vaasa-participation-program-en_draft.pdf](#)

Mock trials of young people

A mock trial of young people is an interesting concept in which young participants act as jurors, prosecution and defence. The main difference with a youth jury is that there are no adult experts, but the information base for the jury is created by the young people themselves. See, for example, <https://www.ymcatriangle.org/youth-government-mock-trial>

Zombies are not democrats (*Zombie nejsou demokrati, Czech Republic*)

The aim of the project was to develop a participatory play for students on the theme of the constitution, democracy and freedom. The play is set at the brink of destruction and a group of nine people must set the rules and create a functioning order for the community. The young people in the audience are questioned during the play itself, they can influence the characters and reflect their thoughts with the actors throughout the play. See https://www.dzs.cz/sites/default/files/2023-01/Zombie_nejsou_demokrati_Participativni_predstaveni_pro_studenty_na_tema.pdf

EYCA Youth Panel

EYCA Youth Panel is made by up to 11 panel members selected amongst the European Youth Card holders. The Panel's main functions are to contribute a youth perspective to the EYCA management; to run local or national actions to engage peers in debates around European topics; to promote the community of cardholders during different events. See <https://eyca.org/youth-panel>

Youth observatory

The city of Sion in Switzerland has set up a Youth observatory to coordinate youth policy and address emerging issues affecting young people. The observatory works to promote youth participation by involving young people in decision-making and policy implementation. The youth observatory serves as a platform for young people to express their opinions, concerns and suggestions, which are then taken into account in the development of youth policies. The observatory also conducts research on issues affecting young people and identifies gaps in existing policies, which helps in the design of more effective policies. See, for example, the Basque youth observatory. See: <https://www.sion.ch/themes/19240>

Research focusing on youth participation

Continuous and systematic research on youth should be supported by public authorities at different levels (e.g. youth observatories) to track youth participation, representation and inclusion, the transition of young people from school to work, the impact of policies on different groups of young people, and to provide continuous data on key points of youth participation in the policy process. See, for example the Youth Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/peyr>, RAY network <https://www.researchyouth.net>, Finnish Youth Research Society <https://www.youthresearch.fi>

Structured dialogue with young people

Structured dialogue is a platform for young people that is inclusive and participatory. This platform can be considered a process that uses both e-participation and face-to-face meetings. See for example [EU Youth Dialogue | European Youth Portal \(europa.eu\)](#) and [Mladinski dialog v Sloveniji - Urad RS za mladino - mlad.si](#)

Co-management system

In the Co-management system, young people and government representatives sit around the table to make decisions together based on the reality of young people. The Council of Europe's groundbreaking co-management system is a living example of participatory democracy. It is a place for common reflection and co-production, combining the voice of young Europeans and that of public authorities responsible for youth issues, leading to a sharing and evaluation of experience. See: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/co-management#:~:text=The%20Joint%20Council%20on%20Youth,Council%20and%20what%20it%20does.>

Youth Wiki

The Youth Wiki is an online platform containing information on youth policies in European countries. Its main objective is to support evidence-based European cooperation in the field of youth. It does this by providing information on national policies to support young people in a user-friendly and constantly updated form. The general purpose is to support the European Commission and

Member States in their decision-making by providing information on reforms and initiatives. It enables the exchange of information and innovative approaches and can support peer learning activities. See <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki>

Youth progress index

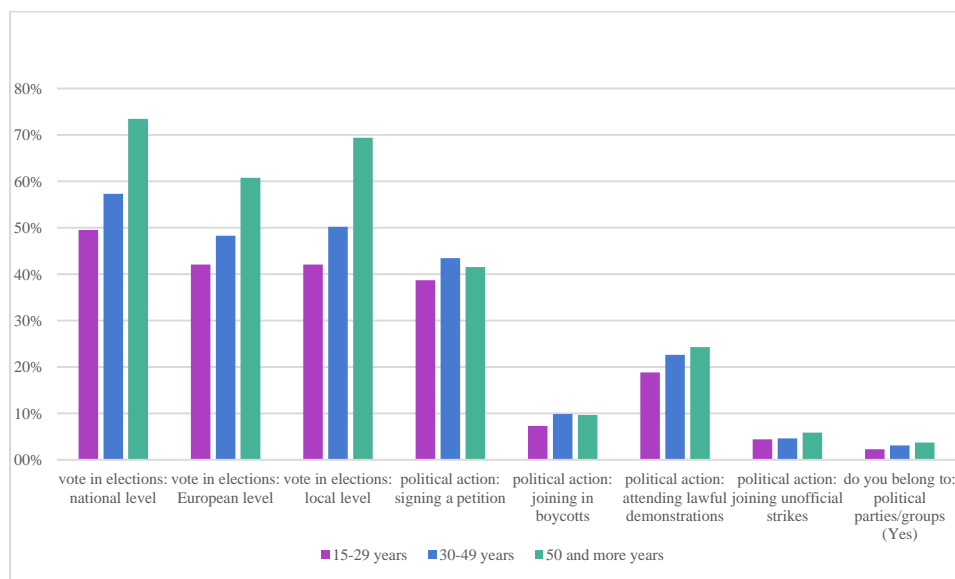
The Youth Progress Index (YPI) is a comprehensive tool that measures the quality of life of young people worldwide, independent of economic indicators. It focuses on three key areas: Basic Human Needs, Foundations of Wellbeing and Opportunities. Based on these factors, a score is calculated for each country. It enables policymakers to better understand the needs of young people and determine which policies are effective. See <https://www.youthforum.org/topics/youth-progress-index>

4.2 Negative effects of lower youth participation in institutional politics

Youth participation in politics is a complex issue. Compared to other age groups, young people tend to score lower in almost all areas of political participation, based on the methodological designs of most international comparative studies.^{xxix} The low political participation of young people in democratic countries is a widely recognised problem. Studies show that young people participate less in institutional politics, including elections, than other age groups and less than in previous decades. Studies also show that the gap between young and older voters has widened significantly across the democratic world in recent decades.^{xxx}

This trend is reflected in declining party memberships and young people's lack of intention to run for political office, which seriously affects the recruitment and mobilisation function of political parties and the political representation of young people.^{xxxi} Young people's involvement in political parties and organisations is also increasingly rare. Only 5% of 15-29-year-olds participate in such activities.^{xxxii} This decline is also evident in other forms of participation in institutional politics, including campaigning, contacting public officials and active participation in political groups.^{xxxiii} Young people today are less likely to sign petitions, participate in legal demonstrations and take part in unofficial strikes.

Figure 2: Political participation in Europe by age groups



Source: European Values Study, Wave 7 (2020)

The lack of young people in politics has a negative impact on youth representation. In most OECD countries, less than 2% of national parliamentarians are younger than 30.^{xxiv} Even in selected national parliaments across Europe, less than 0.5% of MPs are younger than 30 and less than 0.1% younger than 25.^{xxv} Young women are particularly underrepresented. The low participation of young people in politics leads to low expectations of government and politicians have little incentive to focus on policies that benefit young people. This leads to policy outcomes that tend to favour those who participate the most. Even when other age groups represent the interests of young people, empirical research shows that this is generally not the case.^{xxvi}

Key takeaways

1. Youth participation in institutional politics is relatively low compared to other age groups.
2. The gap between youth participation and other age groups is widening.
3. Low participation rates have a negative impact on young people's political representation.
4. Lower political representation of young people leads to policies that are less responsive to the needs of young people.

Guidelines

1. Introduce and promote e-voting and other forms of electoral facilitation that are beneficial to young people.
2. Initiate and maintain a constructive dialogue between political institutions and young people by fostering a culture of co-creation and shared destiny (e.g. a co-management system).
3. Use engaging, inclusive and non-bureaucratic language, bridging the communication gap between institutional politics and young people.
4. Create comprehensive feedback mechanisms for young people to voice their opinions, concerns and suggestions to political institutions and act on them.
5. Ensure policymakers actively explore the spaces where young people interact in their daily lives in order to be able to engage with them in their own environment (e.g. public parks, shopping malls, sports facilities).
6. Take proactive measures to develop robust tools to assess the effectiveness and impact of interactions and engagement with young people.
7. Explore the utility of youth impact assessment mechanisms as part of the policy-making process and use them to actively involve and represent young people in decision-making.
8. Support and encourage non-formal and formal educational activities (e.g. promoting debates in schools; simulation games, mock elections) that increase the participatory competence of young people and other stakeholders (e.g. politicians, administrators, educators).

Examples from practice

#ИЗБОРИСЕ

In the period leading up to the national elections, the National Democracy Institute (NDI) approached the National Youth Council of Macedonia (NYCM) and together they planned the #ИЗБОРИСЕ61 campaign to encourage: a) political parties to take into account the concerns of young people when developing their policies; b) young people to get involved in politics and go to the polls; and c) young people in North Macedonia and their politicians and decision-makers to engage in an ongoing dialogue (Crowley and Moxon 2017, 32).

Participation Hub (Hub na nÓg, Ireland)

Hub na nÓg, as the national centre of excellence and coordination driving the implementation of the strategy, supports ministries, government agencies and non-governmental organisations in giving children and young people a voice in decision-making on issues that affect their lives, with a particular focus on those who are rarely heard. Hub na nÓg, as a centre of excellence, increases capacity in all sectors by providing training, support and advice to service providers and policy makers. Hub na nÓg also develops, documents and disseminates innovative international best practices on children and young people's participation in decision-making and works with universities and adult education institutions to build the capacity of professionals. Hub na nÓg published the National Framework for Child and Youth Participation in Decision-Making in 2021. See <https://hubnanog.ie>

Youth Commissions

Many jurisdictions have established special youth commissions to increase youth participation in local affairs and provide input on issues important to youth. While both Local Youth Councils and Youth Commissions aim to involve young people in decision-making processes, they differ in their structure and function. Local Youth Councils are more about representing youth voices at various levels of governance, while Youth Commissions typically work in an advisory capacity to governing bodies or organisations. See, for example, European Youth Coordination Committee <https://www.ifrc.org/our-work/inclusion-protection-and-engagement/youth-engagement/youth-europe>

Youth Parliaments, Boards and Councils

The establishment and promotion of youth-led national and local councils and parliaments provide a very rich 'first-hand' experience of parliamentary functions and procedures for civic education. In the absence of conclusive evidence of the impact of these initiatives on policy in relation to young people and politicians, there is a growing trend to give such structures certain competencies — primarily an advisory role on youth-related issues — and to provide them with an adequate budget to meet on a continuous basis and to play a monitoring role in certain state institutions. See, for example, European Youth Parliament <https://eyp.org/>, Youth sounding board https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/youth/youth-sounding-board_en, cases of national parliaments <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/comparative-overviews/participation/national-youth-parliaments/2021>

Youth multi-partisan and multi-stakeholder settings

A very important feature in the general effort to establish political dialogue among the various youth representatives, stakeholders as well as young individuals outside organisations is the provision of a forum, network or organisation that facilitates networking across party lines and beyond and promotes both democratic dialogue and ways to achieve it. This framework could also transcend national borders through international networks, thus enabling cross-ideological and cross-cultural dialogue. The dialogue would involve different social groups, especially women, ethnic minorities, groups with disabilities and so on. These networks are excellent and safe places to providing training and promotion of cooperation on youth issues. See, for example, European Forum Alpbach Youth Lab <https://www.alpbach.org>

Youth-check/ impact assessment mechanism

The Youth Check Mechanism is a regulatory process that aims to assess the impact of legislative proposals on young people. It aims to make the potential impact of legislation visible and ensure that the needs and interests of young people are taken into account in the decision-making process. The Youth Check Mechanism includes young people's perspectives and concerns in policy development and implementation, with the ultimate goal of achieving better outcomes for youth. See, for example, JoKER from Flanders <https://studylib.net/doc/5298564/joker.-mainstreaming-children-s-rights-in-flanders> the European Youth Forum https://www.youthforum.org/files/YFJ_EU_Youth_Test.pdf

Youth capital

A Youth capital is a designation for a city or region recognised for its focus on youth development, engagement, and empowerment. It is a title given to a place that is committed to providing opportunities, resources, and support for young people to thrive and actively participate in society. The National Youth Capital designation aims to highlight and promote initiatives, programmes and policies that prioritise the needs and interests of young people and promote their growth, well-being, and positive contributions to their communities. See, for example, Romanian youth capital <https://en.pontgroup.org/projects/romanian-youth-capital/>

Lowered voting age, Vote at 16

Since the legal voting age defines citizenship, some authors argue that lowering it, e.g. to 16, would increase voter turnout, since turnout proved to be higher among 18-year-olds than among 19- to 21-year-olds. See, for example, the case of Austria

<https://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/en/analyses/voting-at-16-in-austria-a-possible-model-for-the-eu/>

Collaborative campaigns and projects

Political institutions can work with youth-led organisations or initiatives to carry out joint campaigns or projects that address issues of common interest. By working with young people, political institutions can harness their creativity, energy and expertise to develop effective solutions and increase young people's participation in decision-making. See, for example,

<https://www.oecd.org/mena/governance/Young-people-in-OG.pdf>

Youth involvement in electoral management

Youth involvement in all phases of an election campaign by including young individuals on electoral management bodies' advisory boards (or including experts on youth) and as poll-station workers, as well as election observers, would improve the knowledge about the needs of young voters as well as the ownership of the political process of the involved youth.

See <https://www.youthpower.org/sites/default/files/YouthPower/files/resources/UNDP%20Y%20in%20Electoral%20Processes%20Handbook.pdf>

Youth electoral quotas

The introduction of youth electoral quotas in electoral legislation or as a voluntary act of political parties and electoral lists is a measure that can produce a fast-track solution for unbalanced representation as well as for the participation of certain groups. See <https://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/yt/yt30/youth-quotas>

Youth surveys

Political institutions can conduct regular surveys specifically targeting young people to gather their opinions on political issues. The feedback collected should be taken into account in policy formulation to create a sense of ownership and ensure that youth perspectives are taken into account. See, for example, Youth in Iceland <https://rannsoknir.is/skyrslur/>; Youth 2020 in Slovenia <https://press.um.si/index.php/ump/catalog/book/616>

Youth-driven policy initiatives

Political institutions can set up special channels or competitions through which young people can submit policy ideas, which are then reviewed and considered by decision-makers. This practise promotes a sense of empowerment and allows young people to contribute directly to policy formulation. See, for example, Youth action plan https://internationalpartnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/youth/youth-action-plan_en

4.3 The changing citizenship of young people

Young people have a changing relationship with politics, as evidenced by their limited representation in traditional political institutions and their engagement in everyday life.^{xxvii} This engagement is guided by ethical principles and expressed in daily actions, leading to a diversification of issues and concerns relevant to them. The complexity of youth transitions, with longer and reversible transition periods, has shaped this relationship and led to higher levels of insecurity and vulnerability, affecting their ties to the community, especially in terms of socialisation and engagement. Studies suggest that a new type of citizen is emerging, where younger generations are less engaged in institutional politics and more likely to belong to informal groups and participate in protests.^{xxviii} The turn towards personal identities and detachment from political institutions has led to an emphasis on self-expression and experimentation with new forms of mass communication. Peers and social media now play a greater role in the formation of political beliefs.^{xxix}

As young people's political identities and attitudes are increasingly shaped by their social networks, we are witnessing networked individualism since social media play a central role in the political engagement of individuals.^{xxx} Networked citizens are usually members of non-hierarchical networks and maintain their relationships through social media.^{xxxi} They can perform some actions reminiscent of traditional politics and realise their identity through lived experience. This shows a positive relationship between social media use and political engagement.

Young Europeans today have a mix of citizenship norms that prioritise social order, personal responsibility and forming one's own opinions, while supporting those who are worse off. This suggests that critical and deliberative aspects of citizenship, as well as ethical responsibility towards others, are important parts of young people's citizenship. A new citizenship requires attention to issues that young people care about, such as poverty, inequality, climate change, youth unemployment, education, training, health and well-being, and corruption that affects trust.^{xxxii}

The changing citizenship of young people is also reflected in different issues that young people prioritise. The issues that are most prioritised by young people are the fight against poverty and inequality and the fight against climate change, with a clear focus on environmental protection. The solidarity dimension is complemented by traditional youth policy priorities that young people are concerned about, such as youth unemployment, education and training opportunities, and health and well-being, especially mental health.^{xxxiii} Corruption, as an

indicator of integrity, which has an immense impact on trust, also proves relevant.^{xxxiv} The current political and humanitarian crisis related to the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine is also high on the list of young people's concerns – as it is for other age groups – however, young people see environmental change as equally important to their livelihoods and therefore rank it even higher, also much higher than other age groups.^{xxxv}

Key takeaways

1. A new type of young citizen is emerging with different citizenship norms, more focused on protest politics and self-expression.
2. Peers and social networks play a greater role in shaping young people's political beliefs.
3. Young people are becoming more networked, but still value social order alongside solidarity and self-expression.
4. The environment, poverty and inequality, and humanitarian crises, including global conflicts, are high on the list of young people's concerns.
5. Traditional youth issues such as employment, education and training as well as (mental) health and well-being remain high priorities for young people.

Guidelines

1. Listen to the concerns of young people and include them in policies.
2. Design policies inclusive of young people by taking into consideration their values and priority issues.
3. Acknowledge youth interest and preferences, also in policy areas not traditionally associated with young people (e.g. environmental policy, foreign policy, security policy, health policy, open government and digitalisation).
4. Harness the activism and power of young people in their quest for social justice and a sustainable, just and open society (e.g. consumer activism; different strategies for using web-based tools).

Examples from practice

Chaos/City of Oulu Urban Development Project

The CHAOS Method is a tool for urban development and progressive procurement. It effectively helps the city to create new solutions and services with local NGOs via citizen participation. The CHAOS Challenge, a practical example of the CHAOS Method, encourages young citizens of Oulu to propose, create and establish creative and cultural solutions to issues they themselves perceive within their city. Co-creation is at the heart of the projects the CHAOS Challenge funds, enhancing the trust between the city and young citizens and enriching Oulu's culture with sustainable projects. See <https://use.metropolis.org/case-studies/the-chaos-challenge>

Youth-friendly information sharing and feedback mechanisms

Youth-friendly information sharing and feedback mechanisms should be developed, as young people should be seen as partners in governance at all levels. Therefore, social media and other online tools should be used to involve youth in national and local decision-making.

Fact-checking mechanisms

A fact-checking mechanism is a process by which the accuracy of reports and statements is verified. It can be carried out before or after the text is published. Fact-checkers review content and assess its accuracy using various categories. This mechanism aims to combat misinformation by identifying potentially false content and providing warnings or additional context based on the assessment. It has the potential to correct citizens' perceptions and prevent the spread of false claims. See, for example, Demagog <https://demagog.sk>

Youth participatory evaluation

Youth participatory evaluation is an important tool to promote youth engagement and empowerment and to ensure that young people have a voice in decisions that affect their lives. Involving young people as partners in the evaluation process leads to better data and positive outcomes for all stakeholders. Programmes are strengthened; organisations can transform and learn how to make youth engagement part of normative practice; young people build new skills and social capital. See, for example <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7721/chilyoutenvi.17.3.0251>

Voter education campaigns

To promote political participation, voter education programmes are crucial. Therefore, these youth programmes should focus on relevant youth groups and include youth-related content. Of particular importance are projects and programmes that focus on the functioning of the political system, which could often be broadcast through media productions specifically designed for young people. See, for example, The league of young voters <https://www.youthforum.org/news/league-of-young-voters-launches-tool-for-young-people-to-compare-political-parties-ahead-of-eu-elections>

4.4 The impact of the internet and social media on youth participation

As indicated earlier, information and communications technology (ICT) has given rise to new patterns of youth citizenship and new forms of political expression and activism that have led to a reworking of existing forms and opened up new avenues of action and interaction that are only possible in a digitally networked space.^{xxxvi}

Young people today are very politically active online and prefer social media as their primary channels for political engagement.^{xxxvii} They differ from other generations in the way they are informed about political issues and communicate with others. Young people mainly inform themselves about political and social issues online and use a variety of news sources.^{xxxviii} Social media are the top source of information on political and social issues for young Europeans, followed by news websites, the preferred social media tools being Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter. Young people are more likely to engage in civic and political issues through digital media such as blogs and social networks than other age groups.^{xxxix} This includes sharing opinions and spreading political information online. Experts believe that this trend is a partial solution and can provide important information for those who are not interested in institutional politics.^{xl} However, we must not forget that there are significant differences between different groups of young people.^{xli}

Studies suggest that using social media for political purposes can increase political participation among young adults.^{xlii} Social media can help develop skills and attitudes that lead to offline participation, and they can increase exposure to political information, leading to learning and traditional political participation.^{xliii} Ultimately, social media can increase political efficacy.^{xliiv} The internet also has a positive impact on offline political engagement and

engagement in broader civic issues.^{xlv} Research on social media has largely confirmed the positive effect of new media use on political participation,^{xlvi} and the use of the internet for information purposes has also been shown to be positively related to online and offline participation.^{xlvii}

In addition, participation in cause-oriented activities that are in line with young people's values and citizenship can be made more efficient through the internet and social media platforms. Young people from different backgrounds and with different political identities can connect for issue-oriented campaigns, form organisations with lower communication costs and gain access to official sources.^{xlviii} Technological innovations, such as crowdfunding, crowdsourcing and networking practices, enable different actors to engage in public campaigning, activism and lobbying to influence policymakers and other actors.

Although social media are beneficial for political participation when used for information about politics and society, young people use them mainly for entertainment and relationship purposes.^{xlix} This can distract individuals and have negative effects on political mobilisation.¹ The negative effects of excessive screen time, primarily for leisure, on children and young people, are also well documented, particularly in terms of the negative impact on mental health and physical development.^{li}

Key takeaways

1. The internet is an important source of information on politics and social processes.
2. The use of the internet can have positive effects on the online and offline participation of young people.
3. Social media can strengthen political literacy and skills.
4. Since social media are mainly used for recreational purposes, they do not have a positive impact on political mobilisation.
5. Excessive recreational screen time has a negative impact on young people's mental health and physical development.

Guidelines

1. Invest in digital and media literacy programmes to equip young people and other stakeholders with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate the digital world safely, competently and responsibly.
2. Consider targeted strategies to use effectively the networked dimension of young people's participation in social issues (e.g. participation and communication patterns, support and pressure campaigns, online discussions).
3. Explore innovative approaches, such as gamification and interactive platforms, to create meaningful and immersive experiences that resonate with young people to enable meaningful youth participation.
4. Introduce regulations and policies to prevent the deception of young people on social media platforms, including by protecting their privacy and well-being, and ensuring information has been fact-checked.

5. Recognise the value of (digital) youth work in promoting and securing online youth participation.
6. Address the problem of the digital divide among young people and its impact on youth participation.

Examples from practice

Ichmache>Politik

Ichmache>Politik is a project of the German Federal Youth Council (Deutscher Bundesjugendring – DBJR) which uses digital methods (ePartool) to support young people’s participation in policy making at a national level. DBJR is the umbrella of nation-wide youth organisations and regional youth umbrellas based in Berlin. See <https://www.schwedt.eu/de/25470>

Voting (advice) applications, tools covering elections

There are several voting advice applications that make it easier for young voters to decide how to vote. They provide young people with information on how to register to vote, how to vote and what issues are at stake in the elections. They inform voters about upcoming elections and provide them with information about candidates and issues. In addition, web-based applications covering entire elections facilitate the process of elections and offer information about them. See, for example, Wahl-O-Mat <https://www.bpb.de/themen/wahl-o-mat/45484/archiv/#page-Archiv>

#IVoteIWin Campaign

EYCA teamed up with the European Parliament to inform and mobilise young people to cast their votes in the 2019 European Elections and take ownership of the European Project. The #IVoteIWin campaign was all about engaging young people in the democratic process by having them take the lead, giving them the space to ask the questions for which they needed answers in debates with candidates at the national level, supporting them to explore more of Europe and celebrating their achievements. See <https://eyca.org/european-projects/ivoteiwin-campaign-to-inform-and-mobilise-young-people-for-the-eu-elections-2019>

E-voting

E-voting — the ability to vote from anywhere via the internet — is a frequent topic on the agenda of many states that have tried to increase voter turnout over the past. This measure builds on the idea that voter turnout depends on the cost of voting. Apart from the technical challenges of implementing such a task and the impact on citizenship, results reflect the increasing importance of e-voting as a form of electoral participation, though its greatest impact is expected when part of a broader e-democracy agenda. See <https://www.valimised.ee/en/internet-voting-estonia>

SALTO Participation Resource Pool

SALTO Participation Resource Pool aims to provide trainers, youth workers, youth leaders and educators with trustworthy information and access to the most up-to-date online tools. It addresses the newest trends in Youth Participation, Media & Information Literacy, Strategic Communication and Digital Transformation. It explores best practices, up-to-date training materials and hands-on tools. See <https://participationpool.eu/about/>

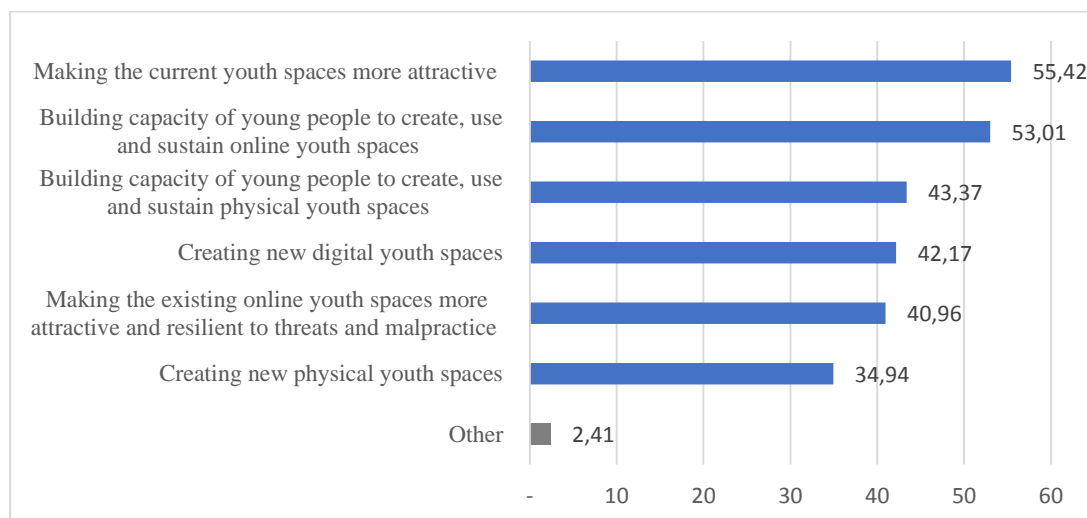
4.5 Shrinking civic spaces and the role of youth work in addressing this problem

Recent research on youth participation in Europe shows that spaces, whether virtual, physical or legal, are crucial for youth participation at a time when democracies around the world are shrinking. Young people are often underrepresented or have limited access to these spaces, which are closely linked to important human and civil rights and freedoms.^{lii} The interplay of social exclusion, unemployment and changing patterns of participation in both ‘offline’ and ‘online’ civic spaces (e.g. social media) makes young people the most vulnerable social group when it comes to closing the gap between ‘open’ and ‘unfree’ civic spaces. Although the expansion of the civic space through ICT innovations has opened up a number of opportunities to amplify the voice(s) of young people and other vulnerable social groups, ICT is at the same time an important area for the enforcement of surveillance, online censorship, control and criminalisation of dissent.

The closure of the civic space has a disproportionately negative impact on the exercise of young people's civil rights and their well-being in general. As youth work and youth organisations are among the key actors that create and open up the civic space for young people – i.e. environments that secure the pathways, structures and vehicles that enable young people to engage in critical discussion, dialogue and action – impairments to the normal functioning of these organisations harm young people's participation. Many youth-work and youth organisations report political pressure and state interference in their work, as well as a reduced willingness of authorities to recognise the opinions of individuals and organisations. Technocratic agendas imposed on youth work and youth organisations, such as diversification of funding, comprehensive reporting, impact assessment and quantitative indicators, also significantly disrupt their work. Covid-19 has made these challenges even more evident and limited the possibilities for youth work and youth organisations in the long run.^{liii}

Studies have shown that effective civic spaces for young people emerge both offline and online.^{liv} Youth centres, organisations, campuses, public spaces, and sports facilities function as effective civic spaces offline. On the other hand, online environments, especially social networking sites such as Facebook, videoconferencing and image-sharing tools such as Instagram, have also proven to be crucial for youth engagement, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. Contrary to popular belief, the youth-work and youth organisations most committed to stemming the tide of shrinking civic spaces for young people already focus on improving existing offline spaces to make them more attractive, rather than creating new spaces where young people can engage. They also recognise the immense importance of empowering young people to competently create, use and sustain both online and offline youth spaces.

Figure 3: What strategies related to youth spaces will your organisation pursue most to ensure youth engagement in the post-pandemic period?



Source: Deželan (2022)

Key takeaways

1. the civic space for young people is shrinking and the Covid-19 pandemic further increased this problem.
2. Open offline and online spaces for young people are an important prerequisite for youth participation.
3. Youth work and youth organisations are two of the most important actors to ensure open and safe civic spaces for young people.
4. It is not only about creating new spaces, but also about maintaining and improving existing ones.
5. The capacity of young people to create, recognise and competently use open civic spaces must be ensured, especially with the help of youth work and youth organisations.

Guidelines

1. Recognise the particular challenges facing young people as civic spaces shrink and the unique position of youth work and youth organisations in addressing these challenges.
2. Facilitate and protect a safe, supportive and enabling environment for youth work and youth organisations, regardless of their size, focus or geographical location, to promote youth participation through open civic spaces (e.g. an enabling legal environment, robust funding, ensuring the safety of staff and its professionalisation).
3. Avoid unnecessary administrative and reporting burdens, as additional red tape limits the capacity of already weakly professionalised organisations to implement their missions, thus reducing civic space.
4. Support the enhancement of existing online and offline civic spaces and build the capacity of young people, youth workers and representatives of youth organisations to sustain these spaces.

5. Recognise the importance of different modalities of youth work (e.g. mobile youth work, digital youth work) to facilitate youth participation, especially in environments with low participation opportunities (i.e. civic deserts).
6. Collect data and introduce analytical lenses that address the shrinking of civic spaces for young people and highlight differences in access and agency among young people with different identities, cultures and communities.
7. Co-design programmes and initiatives aimed at slowing the shrinkage of civic space based on evidence and with sensitivity to the differences in access and capabilities of young people
8. Promote cooperation, synergies and an exchange of experiences between formal educational institutions, youth work and youth organisations, as well as within the youth sector in addressing issues related to youth participation.

Examples from practice

Dive Maky – Wild Poppies (Young Roma Leaders)

The Young Roma Leaders project focuses on supporting young Roma aged 15-22 as activists and advocates and promotes dialogue between policymakers, practitioners, and young Roma (Crowley and Moxon 2017, 32).

Travelling Ahead

Travelling Ahead is hosted by Save the Children in Cardiff. The project aims to support young Sinti, Roma and Travellers from across Wales to bring about change and positively influence policy and service development and practise at community, local and national levels (Crowley and Moxon 2017, 43).

The Art of Ethics in Youth Work

The project aims to improve the quality and recognition of youth work by promoting ethical frameworks at policy and practice levels in Europe and beyond. It aims to raise the awareness of youth workers and policymakers of the importance of ethics for the recognition of youth work, to explore the benefits and limitations of existing policies and support mechanisms related to ethics in youth work, to strengthen the capacities of youth workers by improving their competences for moral and critical thinking, and to introduce innovative support methods and tools related to ethics in youth work. See: <http://www.napor.net/sajt/index.php/sr-yu/medjunarodni-projekti/the-art-of-ethics-in-youth-work>

Youth Focus North West

Youth Focus North West is a charity in the North West of England. It was set up by local authorities in the region to support youth work and public youth services. It runs youth participation programmes directly with young people and provides networking and support services for organisations working with young people (Crowley and Moxon -2017, 48).

Collaboration of youth work and youth organisations

On the initiative of the PRONI Centre for Youth Development and in cooperation with local municipalities and the government of the Brcko district in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Youth Clubs Network was established in 2007, in which 26 youth clubs were opened and established in local communities (villages). Young people gather for activities that promote cultural, peacebuilding, human and youth rights, educational and sports activities, and work in groups through exceptional promotion of volunteering, activism, healthy and safe environment. See: [ENG - PRONI Centar za omladinski razvoj](#)

MAHIS: “OPPORTUNITY HIDES IN YOU”

“Mahis” (*The opportunity is in you*) is the longest running project of the Youth Academy, since 1998. It is about supporting young people in Finland, mainly aged 13 to 17, in precarious life situations or with fewer opportunities, e.g. by promoting their participation and inclusion in society and strengthening their sense of being able to take control of their lives. The trainers can also apply for financial support to carry out joint activities planned by the young people themselves. Mahis has funded a total of about 2,400 youth projects involving about 20,000 disadvantaged young people in Finland. See <https://www.mahis.info/>

The Pan-Ukrainian Forum of Youth Workers

The Pan-Ukrainian Forum of Youth Workers is an annual event that includes a summary of work, elaboration of plans for the development of the 'Youth Workers' programme, introduction of best practices and tools for youth work organisation, training of youth workers to work with young people, discussion of various competences necessary for youth workers to respond effectively to the needs and demands of young people, and challenges related to the negative consequences of war. See: <https://youthplatform.com.ua/en/>

European Academy on Youth Work

The European Academy on Youth Work aims to promote the development of quality youth work, to support its capacity to respond to current and future developments and to contribute to creating a common basis for youth work and youth work policy. To this end, it focuses on supporting innovation in youth work in response to the trends, challenges and uncertainties faced by young people in today’s rapidly changing societies. It provides a platform for the exchange and collection of knowledge on trends and developments in the youth field in Europe and on innovative youth work responses to these trends and developments. See <https://www.eayw.net>

Council of Europe’s Quality Label for Youth Centres

The Quality Label for Youth Centres is a project to promote European youth centres as standardising tools and examples of good practice in youth policy. It aims at sharing knowledge and networking youth centres across Europe and consists of a label awarded to youth centres that meet a number of quality criteria (e.g. promotion of international cooperation; a clear mandate from public authorities; in-house educational staff); an annual meeting to ensure networking between the centres that bear the label and those that aspire to it; and an annual training course for educational staff of youth centres. See <https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/quality-label-for-youth-centres>

The European Youth Foundation

The European Youth Foundation is a fund established in 1972 by the Council of Europe to provide financial and educational support for European youth activities. It is an instrument to make the voice of youth heard at a top decision-making level; managed by both youth non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and government representatives, who decide and monitor the Council of Europe's Youth programme; to support European non-governmental youth organisations and networks; and to promote peace, understanding and respect.

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

Annex 1: The Council of Europe and its Youth Department explained

The Council of Europe is an intergovernmental organisation established in 1949. It currently has 46 member states and has its seat in Strasbourg. Its main values and mission are human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The Council of Europe sets standards for its 46 member states, co-operates with them and with civil society in the fields related to its main mission, and monitors human rights and the implementation of its standards in its member states.

The Youth Department is part of the Directorate of Democratic Participation within the Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity (DGII) of the Council of Europe. The department draws up guidelines, programmes and legal instruments for the development of coherent and effective youth policies at local, national and European levels. It provides funding and educational support for international youth activities and seeks to bring together and disseminate expertise and knowledge about young Europeans.

The Council of Europe guides member states in the development of their national youth policies by means of a body of recommendations and other texts that ensure a minimum level of standards in youth policy in Europe. It has created several standards and models that define meaningful youth participation and its co-management system is a living example of participatory democracy. Its Joint Council on Youth (CMJ) is a place for common reflection and co-production, combining the voice of young Europeans and that of public authorities responsible for youth issues, leading to a sharing and evaluation of experience.

The voice of young Europeans is represented by the Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ), made up of 30 representatives of youth NGOs and networks. The representatives of ministries and bodies responsible for youth issues of the member states come together in the European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ). The Joint Council on Youth (CMJ) is the co-managed body which brings together the Advisory Council and the CDEJ.

Annex 2: Other relevant Council of Europe documents on youth participation

OTHER RELEVANT COUNCIL OF EUROPE DOCUMENTS ON YOUTH PARTICIPATION

- Recommendation Rec(2006)14 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on citizenship and participation of young people in public life (https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805b251a; <https://rm.coe.int/09000016805b251a>)
- Congress Resolution 152 (2003) on the revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life (<https://rm.coe.int/the-revised-european-charter-on-the-participation-of-young-people-in-l/1680719a93>)
- Recommendation Rec(2004)13 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the participation of young people in local and regional life ([https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?Reference=Rec\(2004\)13](https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?Reference=Rec(2004)13))
- Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the participation of citizens in local public life (<https://rm.coe.int/16807954c3>)
- Recommendation No. R (97) 3 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on youth participation and the future of civil society (https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016804d4953)
- Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life (<https://rm.coe.int/1680718821>)
- Voting at 16 – Consequences on youth participation at local and regional level [Report CG/2015\(29\)8](#) - [Resolution 387 \(2015\)](#)
- Bringing down barriers to youth participation: adopting a lingua franca for local and regional authorities and young people [Report CG/2015\(29\)7](#) - [Resolution 386 \(2015\)](#); [Recommendation 376 \(2015\)](#)
- Empowering Roma youth through participation: effective policy design at local and regional levels [Report CG\(26\)8](#) - [Resolution 366 \(2014\)](#); [Recommendation 354 \(2014\)](#)
- Youth and democracy: the changing face of youth political engagement [Report CG\(23\)9](#) - [Resolution 346 \(2012\)](#); [Recommendation 327 \(2012\)](#)
- Resolution 463 (2021) of the Congress: “Youth work: the role of local and regional authorities”)1 <https://rm.coe.int/youth-work-the-role-of-local-and-regional-authorities-current-affairs-/1680a17019>

Annex 3: Further reading on key trends in youth participation

Further reading on key trends in youth participation	
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