

Cities of Welcome

Good practices of participation of youngsters with a migrant background and young migrants



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DYPALL
DEVELOPING YOUTH PARTICIPATION
AT LOCAL LEVEL

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ABOUT THE PARTNERS

Migrafica: A non-profit organisation founded by young African refugees and migrants in Germany to promote the interests of and empower young migrant people in their communities. The main objectives of the organization are the promotion of the social, economic, political and cultural integration of migrant young people in Germany and beyond; the promotion of social and business entrepreneurship among the migrant young people; the promotion of the integration and participation of young migrant in decision-making processes at local, national and EU levels and the raising of awareness on irregular migration from Africa and legal paths to migrate to Europe.

 **MIGRAFRICA** <https://www.migrafica.org/us/>

DYPALL Network: A European platform with over 80 civil society organizations and local authorities from more than 30 countries. The main goal of the organisation is to involve young people in decision-making processes at the local level, and thus enable municipal and regional authorities to address the needs and interests of youth, engage young people as active actors of problem-solving and increase their level of ownership, commitment and involvement, regardless of their cultural background. All their actions are based on democratic values, respect for diversity, complementarity between the public and private sectors, shared decisions and equal opportunities.

 <https://www.dypall.com>

Fundació Catalunya Voluntària (FCV): An NGO that actively promotes solidarity and peace education as tools to transform society and as a real opportunity to gain relevant competencies. It uses non-formal, intercultural and service-based learning methods to empower young people according to their personal intentions and situation. It also works together with young leaders and youth workers to improve the social and global impact of their initiatives. At the local and regional level, FCV develops innovative training programs and resources to support the active social inclusion of vulnerable youth.

 <https://www.catalunyavoluntaria.cat/>

Citizens Association United Youth: An NGO based in the Republic of North Macedonia. It aims to achieve international collaborations with organizations, institutions and individuals to bring them closer to European policies, cultures, traditions and trends. It also promotes equality for all citizens of Europe regardless of nationality, religion, level of education and age. The organisation actively participates in intercultural dialogue and offers an opportunity to understand the cultural, national, traditional and religious differences of Europe.

 <https://ngounitedyouth.org/>

ABOUT THE PROJECT

“Cities of Welcome – Improving the Participation of Young Migrants at Local Level” is KA2 Erasmus+ Project between Migrafrica (Germany), DYPALL Network (Portugal), Fundació Catalunya Voluntària (Spain) and Citizen Association United Youth (North Macedonia) which aims to improve the conditions, overall integration and participation of young people with migrant backgrounds and young migrants (YMB) in their local communities by sharing good practices and examples of integration and collectively trying to find better solutions together with and for this target group.

This project allowed municipalities and organizations in partner countries to exchange best practices and models coming from South, North, and East Europe and compile experiences and integrated ways to facilitate and support the participation of young people with migrant backgrounds and young migrants and thus ease their integration in society. This project allowed local authorities and youth workers to avoid the “tokenization” of YMB, ensuring that their inclusion and participation is meaningful, which is required for full integration. Project partners consider that the specific needs of target groups regarding civic and political participation fall between the cracks of existing youth and inclusion policies.

Two activities were foreseen in the project: a study visit in Portugal and a training course in Germany. The study visit was implemented in November 2022 in Portugal, where municipality officers and NGO youth workers could see a variety of good participation practices in the decision-making of YMB in the Lisbon, Cascais, and Sintra municipalities. The study visit was also an opportunity for the participants from different backgrounds to discuss the obstacles YMB face in their communities.

The aim of the second activity, the training course in Cologne, Germany, in 2023, was to raise the awareness of the local stakeholders from Germany, North Macedonia, Portugal and Spain of the impact that quality practices, models, and spaces of YMB participation have at the local level on their integration, and how these benefit both them and the local community they live in. During the training course, project partners shared with municipality officers and NGO youth workers the Publication “Models and strategies of improvement of young migrants participation in decision-making processes,” which is the joint intellectual output led by DYPALL Network and the project's key result.

Project partners developed the Publication "Good practices of participation of youngsters with a migrant background and young migrants" which will help municipalities and organizations deepen their knowledge on how to implement inclusive, quality practices that improve the participation of YMB at the local level, by getting inspired with the collection of good practices and following the assessment tool and guidelines developed.

METHODOLOGY

In this publication, we will be using the term young people with a migrant background (YMB) with reference to the European Commission (1), which defines a person with a migratory background as a person who:

- (A) migrated into their present country of residence and/or
- (B) previously had a different nationality from their present country of residence and/or
- (C) at least one of their parents previously entered their present country of residence as a migrant.



The overall aim of this publication is to explore how YMB can participate in the decision-making processes, which is the fundamental prerequisite for welcoming cities where everyone can express themselves, regardless of their cultural background.

The research questions were the following:

- What good practices of YMB participation already exist?
- What policy frameworks for YMB in decision-making processes are already being implemented?
- What are the experiences and perceptions of YMB about their participation in decision-making processes?
- How can we further expand and develop the YMB participation in decision-making processes?

The research used a mixed-methods approach, including:

- The **collection of materials** to provide the policy framework regarding YMB in decision-making processes. This involved gathering relevant documents at international, European and local levels.
- The **mapping of good international practices** included reviewing existing research, case studies, and examples of successful initiatives. The aim was to find and learn from best practices.
- The **implementation of surveys and interviews** with YMB and stakeholders to gather their experiences and perceptions of participation in decision-making processes. The survey was designed to gather quantitative data on YMB participation, while interviews provided more in-depth qualitative data. The online survey was disseminated among partner countries between youngsters and YMB. Online interviews were conducted with selected municipalities and NGO youth workers from partner countries. The survey and interviews were conducted in 2022-23.
- Several **focus groups** were organized with project partners and stakeholders to gather feedback on the assessment tool and to discuss the development of guidelines for improving YMB participation in decision-making processes.
- **The design of the assessment tool** was based on the literature review. Partners developed an assessment tool to enable local stakeholders involved in facilitating the integration and participation of YMB to evaluate their local integration policies, practices, and spaces for the participation of YMB in their municipalities.
- **The development of guidelines** was based on the research findings and the feedback from the focus group. The research developed guidelines for policy-makers to improve YMB participation in societies.

GENERAL CONTEXT

INTERNATIONAL POLICIES

Participation of all members of society, including migrants, in the political decision-making process is crucial to the legitimacy of democratic political systems. The forms of participation of migrants can and should be diverse and differently applied in each community, region, or country. The extent to which migrants can contribute to development is directly linked to their ability to access services, integrate into society and stay connected to their communities of origin. Migrants can face many barriers that limit their ability to reach their full development potential. The main one is the difficulty in getting citizenship, which enables full social and civic participation and builds a sense of belonging that allows them to engage in the decision-making processes of the host community.

While conducting the desk research on existing policies and guidelines, we found that even the highest international and European institutions provide few policies and guidelines regarding the participation of YMB in decision-making processes. The guidelines for the participation of YMB seem to mostly fall under the recommendations for the participation of young people or migrant minorities with no youth-age specificities. Nevertheless, there has been an effort to promote cooperation at all levels - local, national, regional, and international – and strengthen meaningful youth participation in the migration policy debate.

UN RECOMMENDATIONS

The UN Recommendations for Providing Meaningful and Safe Participation Opportunities to Ensure Inclusion and a Safe Civic Space for Youth (2), aiming to create opportunities for participation, especially intergenerational participation, for youth in the civic space, recommend that States should:

- Include civic and human rights education into the national curriculum;
- Consider introducing quotas in national parliaments and other decision-making bodies at all levels to increase youth participation, ensuring the participation and inclusion of minority, indigenous and other underrepresented youth communities;
- Collect data at all levels to systematically and regularly track youth participation;
- Include or increase youth representation and inclusion in political processes and institutions and facilitate the access of youth individuals and organizations to regional and international bodies;

- Establish or strengthen accessible and inclusive youth structures while ensuring that all other governmental and administrative bodies mainstream a youth focus and youth perspectives throughout their operation, with the inclusion and representation of young people, to avoid parallel and disconnected institutions and the creation of silos.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM)

In the framework of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), in particular in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (3), “migration is a multi-dimensional reality that cannot be addressed by one government policy sector alone”. Therefore, the IOM applies a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to migration governance, supporting governments in understanding how these governance areas are interrelated and affected by migration and to what extent other sectoral policies facilitate or impede migrants’ ability to contribute to society. To achieve this, IOM supports governments ‘mainstreaming’ migration into local and national policy planning. This means amending or developing new national, regional, and local laws, policies, and plans that consider these interlinkages and the needs of and challenges faced by migrants. IOM also assists governments in piloting and implementing these policies and plans as needed.

IOM works with its member states to promote the protection of migrants’ rights and empower them through the provision of services and supports their need to become an integral part of their new society and contribute to their home communities. This means helping governments engage, enable and empower their diaspora and migrants in development efforts (4).

ORGANISATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE (OSCE)

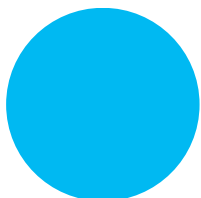
Across the OSCE region, participation in political and public affairs varies. People are generally increasingly more involved in alternative forms of political participation and more detached from traditional democratic institutions such as political parties. Participation in political life through freedom of association and expression or the formation of political parties should be based on the principle of non-discrimination following OSCE commitments. The political participation of migrants forms a core element of OSCE (5) commitments both from the perspective of fundamental human rights, such as the right to freedom of assembly, association and expression, and the right to non-discrimination, as well as ensuring access to migrants to decision-making processes within political movements and trade unions. The respect for these rights and migrants’ ability to advocate as members of

civil society and the media can increase migrants' integration in host societies and contribute to political stability in OSCE participating States.

Local governments often pioneer and test new measures, develop internationally measured migrant integration quality benchmarks and participate in transnational policy learning networks. Policy areas most prone to decentralization include education, social housing, and labor market services. In several countries, migrant-specific national integration policies focused on language and "citizenship" acquisition are also implemented at the local level. Employment services in several OSCE participating States have also recently taken the lead in coordinating and implementing integration measures, with resounding implications for regional and local governance.

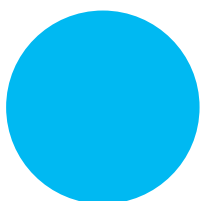
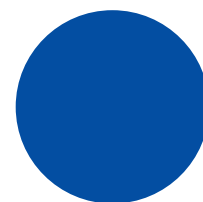
EUROPEAN COMMISSION

The European Commission outlines, in their report **'Using EU Indicators of Immigrant Integration'** (6) that immigrants, regardless of their ethnic origin, are more politically active in the countries where natives are most politically active (North and Northwest Europe). The general political environment appears to influence active citizenship outcomes just as the labor market and education system influence employment and education outcomes.



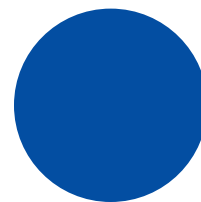
Citizenship and long-term residence are only two elements of active citizenship. Indicators for other forms of civic participation of migrants, such as voting, membership in organizations, running for or holding a political office, protesting, or volunteering, are needed to capture immigrants' political and civic involvement.

The interaction between access to citizenship and integration is complex. Naturalization is both a final step in a process and a tool to further improve integration in several areas of life. Citizenship is a societal outcome indicator, a policy indicator, and a measure of the openness of receiving societies, all simultaneously.

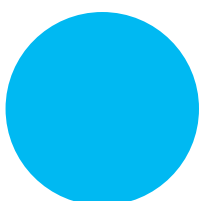


Across the EU, many immigrants living in a country for more than ten years have not naturalized. These people are still seen as foreigners and largely excluded from the democratic process.

Immigrants become citizens and long-term residents more often in countries where the process is more inclusive and where dual citizenship is accepted in both the country of origin and destination. Beyond legal changes facilitating naturalization, support to pay naturalization fees and minor changes in administrative procedures could facilitate the acquisition of citizenship.



Naturalized immigrants have, on average, better integration outcomes than non-naturalized immigrants in most countries, regardless of whether naturalization policies are inclusive or restrictive. It remains unclear whether this 'citizenship premium' is greater or lesser in certain countries due to their policies or to other factors. More research is needed on who benefits most from naturalization.



COUNCIL OF EUROPE

The importance of the participation of migrants in decision-making processes in society has been recognized many times by the Council of Europe (7). Political rights are often limited to those immigrants who are citizens of the country of residence. By far, the most important political rights are voting rights. This does not imply, however, that all immigrants are excluded from voting rights. First, some immigrants may have been citizens of their country of residence since their arrival. The second category of immigrants with full political rights is those who have become naturalized. There are important differences between the European countries in their naturalization policies and procedures.

The mainstreaming of migrant integration policies means that integration is embedded in a broad range of policy initiatives that target nationals and migrants, as opposed to being treated as a stand-alone policy field. The mainstreaming of migrant integration policies was listed as one of the European Union's "Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy" (8) objectives adopted in 2004.

The three principles underpinning the mainstreaming process are:

- All relevant policies and actors should incorporate the migrant integration perspective into their work.
- All members of increasingly diverse societies, including migrants, should have equal access to the services provided by organizations responsible for addressing the needs of society as a whole.
- A mainstream approach does not preclude some temporary or permanent targeted measures addressing migrant populations.

Three types of mainstreaming can be identified:

- Political discourse mainstreaming: an emphasis on the need for a cross-cutting approach.
- Governance mainstreaming: coordination between relevant government departments.
- Policy mainstreaming: the implementation of mainstreaming in practice.

CROSS-NATIONAL INITIATIVES

The **Intercultural Cities Programme** (9) of the Council of Europe supports cities in reviewing their policies through an intercultural lens and developing comprehensive intercultural strategies to help them manage diversity positively and realize the advantages of diversity. The program proposes a set of analytical and practical tools to help local stakeholders through the various stages of the process. The network enables local authorities to learn from each other through separate city reports and workshops and deliver a more effective integration policy. The unique character of the CLIP network is that it organizes a shared learning process between the participating cities, between the cities and a group of expert European research centers, and between policymakers on the local and European levels.

EUROCITIES (10) is a network of major European cities comprising the elected local and municipal governments of major European cities. Founded in 1986, it is now a network of more than 200 cities in 38 countries, representing 130 million people, working together to ensure a good quality of life for all. Integration happens at the local level and cities have a key role in building inclusive and welcoming communities where no one is left behind. Cities also have a role to play in challenging the public perception of asylum seekers and promoting a better understanding of our collective responsibility to respect their basic human rights and right to protection. Successful migration policies, therefore, work in two ways: ensuring that migrants are welcomed into the host society and that the host society's services and policies are adapted to a diverse population. The Integrating Cities Charter (11) is a tool to work with cities for better migrant integration.



(9) Intercultural cities programme (ICC). Council of Europe.

(10) Migration and Integration. Eurocities.

(11) Eurocities Integrating Cities Charter. Integrating Cities.

MIGRANT YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING







GERMANY

LOCAL POLICIES/NATIONAL CONTEXT

In Germany, almost one-third of the children and young people come from a family with at least one parent without German citizenship. This will qualify them as young people with a migration background. Participation in decision-making is essential for young people in Germany. According to a 2020 study that the Vodafone Foundation carried out, 80 percent of young people believe it is crucial to be able to influence politics in Germany. At the same time, the number of young people participating in political decision-making processes is still low. It's created a massive challenge for the government to promote the participation of young people in decision-making processes.

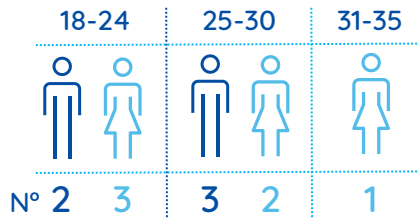
Germany is a federal state and has 16 federal and regional states. Each federal state has its youth council. Regional and national youth councils are one of Germany's main institutions for youth participation. The main instrument of YMB to participate in the decision-making processes at the local level is the communal integration councils. For example, they are legally anchored in the North Rhine-Westphalia Municipal Code as mandatory bodies. In addition to the elected migrant representatives, they have delegated council members who ensure they are closely linked to the respective council. All members of the integration councils work on an effective integration policy on an equal footing. As democratically elected bodies closely related to municipal politics, the integration councils fulfill two functions: they politically represent the people with a migration background in North Rhine-Westphalia and constitute the expert bodies for integration in the municipalities.

Young people express their will to make a difference in decision-making processes in various ways, often outside formal procedures, like online petitions and demonstrations, for example, the "Fridays for Future" protests. YMB favors the expansion of digital participation formats, such as nationwide online direct political participation and the option to vote online or to work on election and party programs. In addition, young people do not feel that politics takes them seriously: almost three-quarters of them say they are dissatisfied or even very dissatisfied with how politics considers young people's concerns and interests.

Migrafica's analysis found that YMB are not adequately informed or involved in decisions that affect them. This happens for several reasons, such as the lack of official structures for consulting them, language barriers, and limited representation in youth councils, contributing to their underrepresentation in politics and civil society. The Integration Council, while involving migrant representatives, does not focus specifically on YMB. Also, the regional youth council from the NRW region involves a few YMB and does not directly represent their interests. YMB are not well represented in state and national youth councils. That is especially true for first-generation migrants and refugees. Even if the youth population includes many migrants, the youth councils do not reflect this reality. Overall, people with a migration background are less likely to participate in politics and civil society than people without a migration background.

SURVEY RESULTS

Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents:



- 55% Immigrant (intention to have more stable permanence in the welcoming country)
- 36% Migrant (permanent residence and citizenship in the welcoming country)
- 9% Migrant background (at least one parent who don't have the citizenship of the country of residence)



Are you participating in local activities?

What helped? "My job and colleagues from the city I live now and active participation in a local NGO."

"Being curios, networking with people, googling events in the city."

"Social Media."

"Migrafrica NGO - the projects that they have for migrants and refugees."

"Learning the language."

"Finding a friend from my country, or just being properly supervised."

"Encouragement from fellow youths."



Are you aware about local policies for integration?

Which ones?

"Education, access to healthcare"

"Language courses, social support, financial support"



Do you know how to get in contact with decision-makers in your municipality?

How to get in contact with them?

"To go to special organizations that helps migrants,"

"I either go to my German-speaking friends or my workplace to help me out,"

"Contact the municipality but I don't do that because I am afraid my German is not good enough."



1

Feels heard in their local community



8

Feel that their community is welcoming



10

Feel participation is important to them



9

Believe that Youth participation has a meaningful impact in their community



5

Feel connected with their local community



6

Feel involved in the local community

out of 11

Which are the biggest barriers that you face in order to actively participate?

Language barrier

Access to services

Discrimination

Lack of information

Yes, I have easy access to all important city services to be active in the society

5 out of 11

What could the local authorities do in order to make your area more welcoming and inclusive?

- "Let more migrants become members of authorities. Let them participate in the decision making. Empowering them."
- "They should probably organise an orientation program for young immigrants. To let them know where to go when they need assistance."
- "They could run some integration trainings, let people know how the area functions."
- "The availability of integration courses would facilitate inclusion. Also, we need to fight discrimination and racism in government institutions, among police forces, and generally in public. Migrants need a mechanism to take part in the social and political life of the communities in which they are living."

YMB participation in decision-making is crucial for promoting inclusion and compliance with policies. When migrants are involved in policy-making, the solutions are more realistic and reflect their interests. However, most local, national, and international authorities do not include migrants in decision-making processes, especially YMB. In Germany, migrants with foreign passports cannot participate directly in policy decisions and are rarely consulted in policy-making processes. As a result, YMB often feel neglected in the democratic process and disagree with policies they are subjected to, feeling that they restrict their freedom.

YMB with foreign citizenship can not directly participate in the local policy-making processes. The only possibility is to participate in the so-called integration councils. These councils include municipality parliament members and elected migrants who consult the municipality legislature and decision-making bodies. Their suggestions are only taken as recommendations and the municipality authorities are not obliged to include them in the decision-making. The other issue is the decreased interest of YMB in taking part in politics at the local level. Young people have the feeling that their wishes are rarely taken into consideration in the decision-making process. Most are frustrated because they are passive receivers of policy decisions.

The municipality currently does not have a special program to involve YMB in decision-making. However, the municipality organizes several events to motivate young people to participate and be more engaged in the democratic process. Most young people are called for action through different initiatives and NGOs. They mainly participate in civic activities, demonstrations, and signing petitions. Also, schools and universities play an essential role in the participation of young people in decision-making processes. But in general, few young people are participating in the democratic process. The number is even lower regarding the participation of YMB.

In Germany, the only available structure for the participation of migrants without German citizenship is the integration councils. These councils were established as advisory boards of elected officials for certain German cities, offering a solution to the disenfranchised. While they do not have any direct power to make political decisions, they can advise on policy-making. Migrants with German citizenship have the opportunity to actively participate in the election process. However, the participation of young people, in general, has been declining in recent years. Special mechanisms need to be developed to increase the participation of YMB.

The local and national government identify the needs of migrants and young people through different kinds of summits, conferences, and workshops organised by different entities. At the national level, the famous integration summit is the primary source of information about the inclusion and integration of migrants. The local and national authorities also conduct studies and research to identify needs. The YMB participate in the studies.

In Germany, political participation is limited to those with a German passport. As a result, at least 11 million people are excluded from exercising their political rights to vote and choose. Although the city may desire to change this, it would require significant effort and work to implement a reform. Additionally, if the city were to encourage YMB to participate in politics, they would need to share power and allow youth to have a say in how budgets are allocated in this area. However, the city may not be prepared to relinquish control and allow youth to influence decision-making processes significantly.

YMB often feel that their representation is superficial. They feel that while the municipality may speak about diversity and multiculturalism, these values are not reflected in the political sphere. As a result, they feel a lack of connection and do not feel directly addressed by the municipality. Additionally, the municipality prioritises other issues that require attention, such as public transport, climate, and schools, beyond just integration.

Efforts have been made to encourage YMB to take part in the decision-making process, and migrant organizations have been available to support them for several years. Numerous young migrant associations are operating in various fields, such as social engagement, politics, and parliaments. These associations have been established for at least 8-10 years and provide opportunities for migrants to engage in various spheres of society.

The idea of Municipal suffrage is being proposed as a means to highlight the importance of migrants and their interests. The proposal suggests a constitutional change in Germany, allowing people with foreign passports to vote at the local level. The idea is that if migrants are given the right to vote, it would demonstrate their significance and value within society. Currently, associations are working to advocate for migrant interests through lobbying efforts.

The interests of YMB can be identified by addressing their needs and concerns, which are often achieved through lobbying efforts. However, these interests are not guaranteed to be fully or even partially addressed. Migrants are often marginalized within society. Through consultations, language lessons, and personal interactions, NGOs can establish individual relationships with people, which enables them to understand better and address their unique needs.

GOOD PRACTICE



Location:

Cologne



Aim:

To increase the local political participation of YMB.



Brief description:

The project is designed to identify how YMB can participate in influencing political decisions that concern them. In partnership with several stakeholders, the participants identified the different forms of political participation.

Responsible organization

Migrafrica

Contact person

info@migrafrica.org

Duration

2018 - 2020

Target group:

YMB

Number of beneficiaries

120



Stakeholders

Representatives of the municipality, NGO representatives, business/private sector representatives, universities



Needs:

Through the dynamic work relationship with the city of Cologne, Migrafrica has gained insight into the needs of YMB. It has become apparent that migrants only have one structure available to influence policy in the municipality, namely the Integration Council. However, young people are underrepresented in this council, which does not guarantee their needs and concerns are adequately addressed.



Impact of the Practice

As part of the project, alternative methods of influencing policymaking were introduced, which included various approaches such as demonstrations, petitions, civil disobedience, flash mobbing, and social media campaigns. These methods were designed to provide opportunities for influencing decision-making processes beyond traditional methods. Additionally, Migrafrica has trained approximately 90 YMB in different forms of political participation to further support their engagement in society.



Results

Migrafrica has published research documents on the local participation of YMB in Cologne, which shed light on their level of engagement in various spheres of society. Additionally, the organization has also published documents outlining alternative methods of influencing political decisions at the local level, which serve as a resource for those seeking to engage in policy-making processes through non-traditional means.

Contribution to involving young people in decision-making processes and creating Welcoming cities

The primary objective of this project is to provide alternative strategies for YMB to participate in decision-making processes. While traditional political participation methods, such as voting, counselling, and running for office, are available, there are also other means for YMB to influence political decisions. The project aims to highlight these alternative approaches, which can be just as impactful as formal political participation methods.

Challenges implementing the practice

The challenges were getting the right and effective funding to promote YMB' political participation.



More information about the practice



GOOD PRACTICE



Location:

Munich, Dortmund, Cologne



Aim:

This follow-up project on the structured dialogue between YMB from Africa and decision-makers aimed to further strengthen and make concrete changes that YMB want to see in their lives.



Brief description:

The project aimed to undertake youth meetings in three cities in Germany (Cologne, Dortmund and Munich) to advocate for further involvement of YMB and their organizations in addressing the root causes of slow inclusion at the local level and increased irregular migration at the international level. In collaboration with local stakeholders and decision-makers at national and international levels, YMB from Africa built a permanent consultation structure on integration, participation, and international development cooperation.

Responsible organization

Migrafrica

Contact person

info@migrafrica.org

Duration

January - December 2019

Target group:

YMB and decision-makers

Number of beneficiaries

180



Stakeholders

Decision-makers at local, national, and EU levels



Needs:

The project was initiated in response to the expressed need of YMB to have greater access to decision-makers at various levels. This need was identified through several surveys conducted among YMB, which helped to gain insight into their specific requirements and challenges. By addressing these identified needs, the project aims to facilitate better communication and collaboration between YMB and decision-makers, ultimately leading to greater engagement and participation of YMB in decision-making processes.



Impact of the Practice

The practice contributed to the involvement of YMB in decision-making by creating a unique opportunity for these young people to come in direct contact with decision-makers. Migrafrica has discussed the different youth policies and youth agendas with decision-makers from our local communities in local conferences such as labor market integration, migration, integration policies, and housing policies.



Results

The result was the organisation of 7 structured dialogue workshops with decision-makers at the local, national and EU levels. Migrafrica consulted institutions on involving YMB in decision-making through dissemination events by applying the C.L.E.A.R model. The local and national meetings were opportunities to train young people as multipliers to support empowerment, inclusion, and entrepreneurship.

Contribution to involving young people in decision-making processes and creating Welcoming cities

The project has made a significant contribution towards increasing the involvement of YMB in decision-making processes by creating a platform for direct engagement between YMB and decision-makers. Migrafrica facilitated discussions on various youth policies and agendas by bringing together decision-makers from local communities in conferences that focused on topics such as labor market integration, migration, integration policies, and housing policies. Through these engagements, YMB were given the opportunity to express their perspectives, concerns, and suggestions, and decision-makers were able to gain a better understanding of the needs and aspirations of YMB.

Challenges implementing the practice

The main challenge was involving the decision-makers, they usually showed less interest to come to events organized by YMB.



More information about the practice



GOOD PRACTICE



Location:

Berlin



Aim:

Keeping in line with the UN SDG4, the project's aim is to provide quality education through workshops for first-time voters, as well as companies, all over Germany, in the form of games, creative brainstorming and using “artistic-activist tools.”



Brief description:

Since 2019, Radical Daughters have been inspiring effective, unusual forms of political participation in their workshops. Its training schedule of action, art and politics is designed to ignite the spark - to show how easy it can be to take action. The project involves a critical mass of young people passionate about democracy, human rights, and social justice. The project supports values such as freedom, equality, and fraternity.

Responsible organization

Radikale Töchter gUG

Contact person

contact@radikaletoechter.de

Duration

2019 - ongoing

Target group:

Young people, first time voters

Number of beneficiaries

Over 2000



Stakeholders

Young people, decision-makers



Needs:

When elections are held in Germany, many young people may once again fail to exercise their right to vote. And this election will set the trend for decades to come. The group of people under 29 has the highest proportion of non-voters and is, therefore, the most underrepresented group in Germany regarding voting. That's why democracy needs new formats that specifically address young people, allow them to express themselves on political issues, and inspire and activate non-voters for democracy.



Impact of the Practice

Through several workshops, the project provides training on civil courage and the importance of taking action to change the situation of young people. It promotes the participation of young people in politics and especially in the election processes.



Results

The main tangible result is the organization of over 20 workshops in 2021 in Brandenburg, Thüringen und Sachsen. The project is also very active on social media, to educate young people on how they can make their voices heard on the issues that concern them the most, like climate change, combating right extremism, racism, and other topics.

Contribution to involving young people in decision-making processes and creating Welcoming cities

The practice provides examples of additional indicators of political participation of young people, such as creative engagements, civil courage and solidarity. These indicators can also be used to assess the level of youth political participation.

Challenges implementing the practice

The main challenge was obtaining financial support for the project, which led the team to design and implementing alternative ways of fundraising including crowdfunding.



More information about the practice



GOOD PRACTICE



Location:

Berlin



Aim:

The project aimed for young people to successfully intensify their social and political participation in key areas affecting their lives.



Brief description:

The Landesjugendring Berlin worked closely with youth associations, youth work institutions, schools and other actors in youth welfare to create workshops for more than 450 young people. The Structured Dialogue instrument was used for the workshops. It was unique because the young people did not develop their ideas alone but with political and social decision-makers such as members of the Berlin House of Representatives, district councilors, decision-makers from the state administration and representatives of the social partners. This created the opportunity for the immediate implementation of concrete demands and suggestions.

Responsible organization

Landesjugendring Berlin e.V

Contact person

info@ljrberlin.de

Duration

2014 - 2015

Target group:

Young people from Berlin and decision-makers

Number of beneficiaries

454 young people



Stakeholders

Youth associations, youth work institutions, schools and other actors in the field of youth welfare. Members of the Berlin House of Representatives, district councillors, decision-makers from the state administration and representatives of the social partners.



Needs:

The organization identified the need to develop this project after a survey conducted at schools and vocational training colleges to analyse the extent of the representation of the interest of young people in decision-making. The results of the survey showed that the interest of the young people was not represented well. Also, the young people themselves were not present in the spaces where decisions were being made.



Impact of the Practice

The project applied the structured dialogue method to collect the young people's recommendations and present them to decision-makers. The practice contributed to the participation of young people in decision-making using the consultation processes. Young people mainly focused on improving the education policy. They demanded improvement in the vocational education system and student loan system.



Results

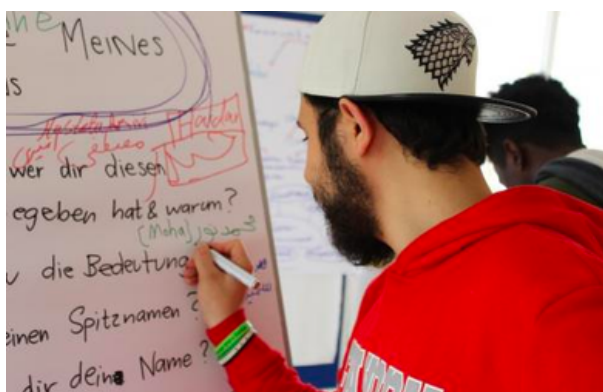
The tangible result is 10 pages of recommendations collected through the 13 youth consultations and workshops in 2014 and 2015. The intangible results include building the capacity of young people to be active participants in the issues that concern them, bringing the young people and decision-makers closer, narrowing the gap between policy and the interest of young people.

Contribution to involving young people in decision-making processes and creating Welcoming cities

Due to the diversity of the cooperation partners, very different target groups were reached. The young people prepared the workshops to ensure that the topics of interest to the young people were discussed. In 13 workshops, 454 young people developed their suggestions and demands for co-determination opportunities.

Challenges implementing the practice

The challenge was to secure a follow-up of the consultation process in which to see to what extent the recommendations of the young people were taken into consideration by the decision-makers. There is a need for a follow-up survey to see the actual impact of the activity.



More information about the practice





NORTH MACEDONIA

LOCAL POLICIES/NATIONAL CONTEXT

The Government of the Republic of North Macedonia is responsible for making decisions regarding youth policy, with the Agency of Youth and Sport leading the process and coordinating with relevant ministries. Local Self-Government is also involved in decision-making based on Local Youth Strategies and Councils of Youth. Macedonia has a National Youth Policy document, the National Youth Strategy (2016-2025), followed by an Action and Monitoring Plan. The Agency for Youth and Sports is responsible for its implementation and for activities related to young people in Macedonia. The country is an Erasmus+ Program Country, allowing participation in all program actions.

The North Macedonian law on Youth Participation and Youth policies is regulated by a few bodies intended to increase youth participation in policy-making, such as the National Assembly of Youth, National Advisory Body for Youth policies, Local Assembly of Youth and Local Youth Councils. The central responsible authority is the government, specifically the Agency of Youth and Sport. The main coordination is in the hands of the Agency of Youth and Sport, which is also responsible for monitoring the implementation.

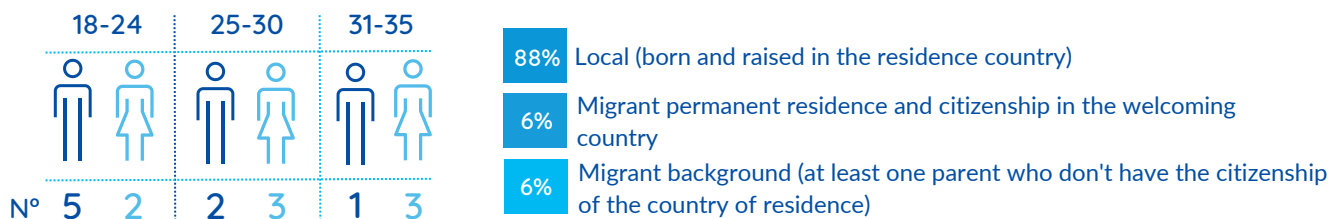
The Republic of North Macedonia adopted the National Youth Strategy 2016-2025, where one of the nine thematic areas is Youth Participation. The document had a wide consultation process authentic for Southeast Europe and included many young people. It was adopted in January 2016, and it targets all young people aged 15-29, promoting youth activism to those with fewer opportunities. The Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies adopted in January 2020 envisages preparing and adopting a new National Youth Strategy. The Strategy states that the critical challenges in youth participation are related to the opinion of young people that they are only partially involved in policy creation. Members of civil society organizations consider that only a small percentage of young people are members of any organization and that a significant percentage are not interested in politics.

The Strategic Priorities of the National Youth Strategy 2016-2025 are to provide a better standard of living and equal opportunities for a decent life, create conditions for effective observance and protection of fundamental rights and freedoms, and systems integration and interaction of different categories of young people. The aim is also to create opportunities for the involvement of young people in the monitoring and implementing policies and decisions that affect them and equal access to quality education and other personal and professional development forms.

Within the Strategy, a monitoring plan is provided with an assessment of the implementation of the planned activities and an assessment of the overall impact of the Strategy. There are no monitoring reports publicly available currently.

SURVEY RESULTS

Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents:



Are you participating in local activities?

What helped?

- "Engagements in seminars and volunteering in several national and international organizations."
- "Learning about local organizations and their work."
- "Making more friends, socialization, having fun, helping other people."
- "Being able to express ideas and opinions, getting to meet inspiring youth workers."



Are you aware about local policies for integration?

Which ones?

- "Health care system and education system." "Legal assistance, job orientation, language courses, social support."
- "Housing, legal assistant, health care, education."



Do you know how to get in contact with decision-makers in your municipality?

How to get in contact with them?

- "By writing to them and in person."
- "By the local youth council or NGOs."
- "It requires nepotism and favoritism, which makes it difficult to take the direct approach."



Which are the biggest barriers that you face in order to actively participate?

Language barrier

Access to services

Yes, I have easy access to all important city services to be active in the society

5 out of 12

What could the local authorities do in order to make your area more welcoming and inclusive?

- "Promotion of more youth organizations and people familiarising with what they can achieve through them."
- "New Youth Council."
- "They should open more sport centres, pools, more open parties for having fun and making friends etc."
- "To inform more about the opportunities that young people have."
- "The local authorities need to allow opening more non formal organizations which will make more welcoming and more accessfull medical care, housing, job orientation."
- "Building facilities for this purpose, taking action in providing clean and safe environment."

Including YMB in the decision-making process and active social life is very important. Migrants face significant life challenges such as discrimination, hate speech, and racism. YMB must get a chance and space to promote their attitudes and opinions and share their life experiences, which will be of great importance for developing an inclusive society and educational opportunities for all. The municipality is only engaged in the migrant crisis process when they transit from North Macedonia; the city is a transit city - a zone for migrants who usually come from Greece.

The municipality participates in activities with institutions working with young people. However, the municipality lacks a strategy for including YMB in decision-making due to a small number of assessments of the needs of young people. The YMB living in the municipality are mainly 3rd or 4th generation refugees from a region called Macedonia, which is now part of Greece. However, YMB are generally not well represented in local decision-making, as they usually aim to leave the country and seek a better future in Europe.

Usually, young Roma and Roma with fewer opportunities need more courage, interest, knowledge, and motivation to get involved in promoting local activities and actions in Gevgelija Municipality. The municipality conducts a needs assessment for refugees who want to cross into North Macedonia from Greece. They work with the refugees, volunteers, and assistants to fill out questionnaires that are then analyzed by their services. However, the refugees are mostly interested in migrating to European Union countries.

Limited financial support and lack of cooperation with other organizations limit opportunities for effective participation of YMB. Increased funding from the EU would enable the municipality to organize more educational and practical activities to support their education, socialization, and integration into North Macedonian society. The municipality acknowledges that there is still much to learn about working with different communities and effectively promoting an open society.

The municipality communicates with marginalised categories by organising activities in the field of non-formal education where migrants participate and have the opportunity to get closer to new information and acquire new knowledge. The municipality is in cooperation with the NGOs active in social inclusion. Through this, they are in the process of effective communication and long-term cooperation with people with fewer opportunities.

The process of YMB integration plays a pivotal role in establishing robust, inclusive, and culturally diverse communities, with significant benefits accruing both to the host country and the migrants themselves. Leaving their countries, YMB bring with them a wealth of skills, fresh perspectives, and a rich cultural heritage. Their presence can stimulate economic growth and rejuvenate entire neighbourhoods and communities.

Achieving social cohesion requires mutual understanding and adaptation from the YMB and the receiving population. Young people can play a vital role in this process as they straddle two cultures: their parents' country of origin and the host country. However, YMB often face obstacles when attempting to participate actively in society. These difficulties can stem from a lack of anti-discrimination legislation or discriminatory attitudes in the community, administration, or service providers. Additionally, inadequate qualifications or professional experience and limited knowledge of the host country's language and labor market conditions may contribute to their exclusion.

There are policies in place to facilitate the participation of migrants in decision-making processes. However, the actual implementation of these policies varies based on factors such as the region where the migrant lives and the ethnic diversity of the community. Certain regions are more open to involving migrants in decision-making due to their greater ethnic diversity, while others may be less inclusive.

The successful implementation of policies related to the integration of YMB can be restricted by the community's attitude toward migrants. Some people in North Macedonia still have closed-minded views towards migrants. To integrate migrants, the first step is to educate people about diversity. Integration involves various domains such as economic, social, cultural, civic, political, and identity domains. It requires joint efforts from the State and civil society to welcome immigrants and develop inclusive strategies to ensure non-discrimination and equality in their rights and opportunities. At the same time, immigrants and their descendants must also make efforts to engage and participate in society.

The needs of YMB can be identified through sustained and regular supervision. Dialogues and activities that allow a certain degree of reflection help create an atmosphere perceived as trusted, friendly and warm. Group leaders must actively promote equality and inclusivity in intergroup relations to overcome natural tendencies to group by salient characteristics. More frequent and intensive participation leads to better attitudes toward others, and involvement in intervention design. As well, institutional support is critical to promoting and strengthening intergroup relations, such as through free language lessons and scholarships provided by the government.

GOOD PRACTICE



Location:

Kocani



Aim:

Inclusion, education and promotion of young people with fewer opportunities (marginalized categories) through non-formal education and youth work.



Brief description:

The interns for 3 months were part of the work and engagements of the organization and were actively involved in the process of creation, design of activities in the field of non-formal education and youth activism.

Responsible organization

United Youth

Contact person

ngounitedyouth@gmail.com

Duration

June - August 2020

Target group:

Marginalized young people (unemployed, rural youth, low level of education, migrants)

Number of beneficiaries

3



Stakeholders

Employment Center of North Macedonia



Needs:

The organization conducted an assessment of young peoples' needs through various methods, including active debates, interviews, and surveys.



Impact of the Practice

The young people gained new experiences in youth activism and were motivated to participate in new local engagements. Through this collaboration, they got even more motivated to be part of the organization's future Erasmus+ collaborations throughout Europe. Young people are supported with programs for youth employment, including training in creating new businesses and opportunities for active collaboration with the business sector.

SUPPORT FOR LOCAL VOLUNTEERS-INTERNS IN THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL SECTOR



Results

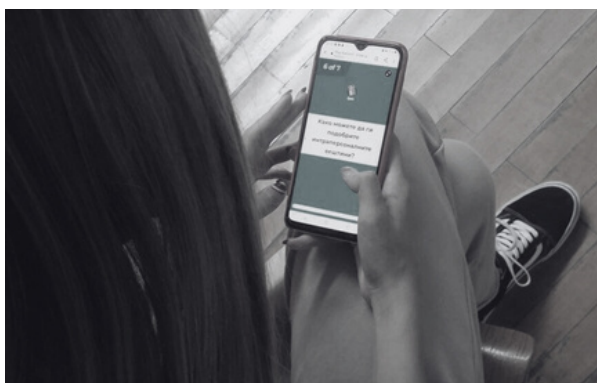
Improving the knowledge of participants about non-formal education, contributing to increasing their motivation for active participation in youth activism, and sharing with them the opportunities of the Erasmus+ program.

Contribution to involving young people in decision-making processes and creating Welcoming cities

This is an excellent practice for all marginalized youth to cooperate and work in organizations tackling different topics. Through this process, they had an active role in the operations of the organizations, and they increased their motivation to participate in future Erasmus+ collaborations throughout Europe. Furthermore, young people had the opportunity to improve their knowledge and acquire new skills in non-formal education.

Challenges implementing the practice

Good preparation for the intern program was essential since some participants had special needs and a low level of education.



More information about the practice



GOOD PRACTICE



Location:

Kocani



Aim:

Education of youth workers on how to work with marginalised categories - young people with fewer opportunities.



Brief description:

The project implemented a local workshop as part of the KA2 project Dialogue for future - How to gain stability during change. During the project, methods for successful interaction, communication and dialogue with marginalised youth categories were developed.

Responsible organization

United Youth

Contact person

ngounitedyouth@gmail.com

Duration

3rd - 10th January 2021

Target group:

Youth workers, students, young people, youth leaders, social workers and trainers

Number of beneficiaries

20



Stakeholders

Youth workers, teachers, students, educators



Needs:

Needs for cooperation between youth workers were assessed by filling in questionnaires and online evaluations.



Impact of the Practice

By participating in this cooperation, young people had the opportunity to acquire new knowledge, skills, and competencies in communication and collaboration. Through this cooperation, they got closer to the local activities offered by the municipality of Kočani. The participants had the opportunity to cooperate, exchange different views, and get closer to the institutions that work on social inclusion and cooperation. Also, we created new places for education by supporting marginalized young people through entrepreneurship and youth work.



Results

Through this workshop, national practices were promoted by the other participating organizations within the Erasmus+ programme. The participants acquired new knowledge, skills and competencies in dialogue, communication and cooperation. Through this cooperation, they could share their experiences in limited dialogue and limited opportunities for socialization and cooperation. Stakeholders created new social contacts to understand the problems of young people with fewer opportunities and discussed opportunities to promote an open society.

Contribution to involving young people in decision-making processes and creating Welcoming cities

Through this workshop, the participants had the opportunity to improve their knowledge of how to understand marginalized groups and the problems they face in everyday life. During this process, the participants improved their competencies in the communication process and discussed ways of creating an equal and inclusive society. The participants could cooperate internationally with people from marginalized categories during the project. Through the implementation of various workshops, methods were created to raise public awareness and understanding of diversity aimed at target groups such as migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, Roma, and people from rural areas.

Challenges implementing the practice

There were no significant challenges.



More information about the practice





PORTUGAL

LOCAL POLICIES/NATIONAL CONTEXT

According to the High Commissioner for Migration, Portugal has made progress in policies and practices for hosting and integrating migrants, including government interventions, civil society organizations, and migrant communities. Local-level intervention is seen as the most efficient for integration. National plans and strategies have been developed, and local plans and tools are also available to promote joint performance and collaboration between different actors in migration. The High Commission for Migrations has created various services for YMB.

These services include "Portuguese for All" language courses, which are free and certified, offering technical Portuguese courses for various sectors. The "Choices Program" finances social inclusion projects in vulnerable communities, and the "Mentors for Migrants" program promotes exchange experiences and support between Portuguese citizens and immigrants through volunteering. Professional Insertion Offices are established by public and private non-profit entities for unemployed young people and adults looking to enter or reenter the labor market.

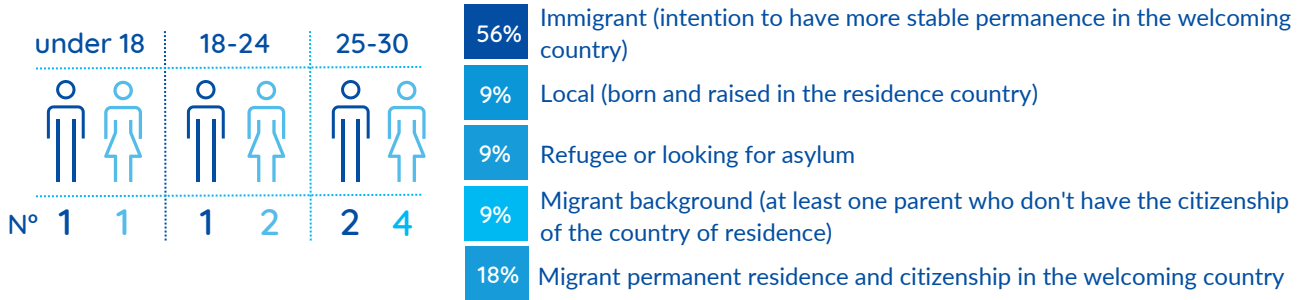
The High Commissioner for Migration provides information on local policies for hosting and integrating migrants. One such policy is the Network of Municipalities Friends of Immigrants and Diversity, which develops and implements sustainable local policies for integrating immigrants based on an accurate diagnosis of their needs. Additionally, there are Local Centers of Migrants' Integration Support connected to the National Centers of Migrants' Integration Support in Lisbon, North Portugal, and the Algarve region. These centers provide decentralized support and information to immigrants about their rights in host countries and assistance with return and reintegration in Portugal.

The ACM provides technical and financial support to immigrant associations through the Program of Support for Immigrant Associations. The objectives of the program include promoting the dignity and equal opportunities of immigrant citizens, changing attitudes and mentalities towards immigrants, providing technical and vocational training, creating support services for immigrant families, establishing exchanges with foreign counterparts or associations, studying and investigating cases of social integration and discrimination, and eliminating all forms of discrimination based on race, color, national or ethnic origin. The support also includes training activities for managers, technicians, and volunteers of immigrant associations, including legal and other forms of information, documentation, and bibliographies.

Immigrant associations play a crucial role in promoting cultural belonging, community participation, and defending the rights of YMB. Over a hundred immigrant associations are recognized by the High Commission for Migration across Portugal, representing various countries of origin. These associations engage in dynamic and proactive work, including providing school support for children and youth, legal aid, language and cultural lessons, leisure activities, and cultural/recreational events. They also organize awareness campaigns, political interventions, and development projects in their countries of origin.

SURVEY RESULTS

Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents:



Are you participating in local activities?

What helped?

- "The personal interest in looking for places where I could manifest my desire for change."
- "More event promotions on social networks."
- "Communication about events from young people on the same language of young people."
- "Seeing that people and institutions are accountable for their actions."



Are you aware about local policies for integration?

Which ones?

- "Social Workers, Community centres, Social and integration projects, schools, IEFP, Embassy."
- "Social Security, APEB, Students' Association."
- "Accessible Rental Programme, IEFP."



Do you know how to get in contact with decision-makers in your municipality?

How to get in contact with them?

- Through people that I met previously and who know something, or I look for institutions.
- Through the associations and volunteer teams that have direct contact with those responsible,
- Through direct contact with the town hall.



2

Feels heard in their local community



6

Feel that their community is welcoming



9

Feel participation is important to them



8

Believe that Youth participation has a meaningful impact in their community



5

Feel connected with their local community



6

Feel involved in the local community

out of 11

Which are the biggest barriers that you face with in order to actively participate?

Language barrier

Access to services

Discrimination

Family situation/lack of friends

Yes, I have easy access to all important city services to be active in the society

5 out of 11

What could the local authorities do in order to make your area more welcoming and inclusive?

- "Involve migrants in decision-making, from thinking, planning and executing."
- "Find an efficient way to distribute information about events and meetings."
- "Empathetic, inclusive education."
- "More awareness raising, more events where locals and migrants can meet each other."
- "There should be no xenophobia, instead it should be mutual respect between the various cultures as well as a possibility to show different cultures."
- "Welcoming people coming from other countries by developing activities so that they can learn about the laws or about something relevant to a new country."

Decision-making cuts across various aspects of young people's lives, not just politics. All the initiatives they develop seek to include the beneficiary people by listening to their perspectives. When developing programs and projects, it is essential to hear the voice of those whom the project will serve. Currently, the municipality has no specific projects with young people but particular moments in which young people can participate, such as the Youth Participatory Budget. The municipality considers that each project should start by listening to the target audience and should be implemented with their collaboration. They are willing to launch a program to sensitize YMB' political participation by exercising their right to vote.

There are no local policies to promote the participation of YMB, but there are transversal policies for young people in general. The municipality believes that because of a lack of communication with young people, there is a limitation to implementing initiatives and measures and receiving input from them. One of the solutions proposed by the municipality is that the youth workers must put themselves on an equal footing with the young person so that they feel understood and heard.

Young people are encouraged to get involved in projects and participate in decision-making processes, but this is under the responsibility of the Youth Division. However, communication often fails due to a lack of coherent communication with young people in their language and limited resources to work with them. The municipality of Cascais has the principle of working based on interculturality, with most initiatives transversal to all community sections. They believe that not doing so could reinforce discrimination. The municipality also seeks to work closely with local associations, where they develop specific projects to listen to young people to solve specific problems of migrant communities.

The current perception is that young people do not vote because they do not feel represented. It is essential to let young people know that they can play a more active role by participating in decision-making. The participation of young people as mediators or promoters of the initiatives allows the initiatives to be more effective. For example, ACM's Choices program recognizes and includes young people as community influencers. This happens because it will enable a correct cultural interpretation of the community. But, as mentioned earlier, no effective structures exist to impact the participation of YMB. Usually, it may emerge ad hoc.

The Municipality of Cascais has taken steps to support and integrate YMB through various initiatives such as the Municipal Plan for the Integration of Migrants, Help Points for Migrants, and the national program Escolhas 5ª Geração. Additionally, motivation for participating among YMB can be achieved through associativism. Even though YMB are not always closely associated with migrant associations, some are becoming more active in collaborating with youth volunteer projects promoted by the Youth Division of the Cascais Municipality.

Greater Lisbon is divided between newcomers living in the city and descendants of migrants living in the outskirts. These communities are generally younger than Lisbon's aging population. Sintra, a municipality in the Greater Lisbon area, is the youngest council in Portugal. Communication with the youth community is vital, but they work with limited resources. However, there are great examples, such as the Municipality of Sintra, which offers an open call for education, providing project implementation, financing, and management resources. Programs like "Escolas" are bureaucratic, but public spaces provide opportunities to connect with youth. Participatory diagnosis, which includes community mapping, helps to find solutions.

YMB are not involved in decision-making. Usually, they are not recognised enough on the local level or are even discriminated. Lisbon is a multicultural city, yet policies still fall short of providing equal opportunities for YMB. Inclusion policies should encompass cultural and social perspectives, accounting for the nuances of different generations of migrants. Institutional discrimination previously prevented migrants without Portuguese-born parents from obtaining citizenship. The education system perpetuates segregation and territorial segmentation, leading to multiple disempowerments and a lack of representation in institutions.

To know a neighborhood, it is necessary to talk to YMB directly. Using flip charts on the streets to engage youth and plan activities they enjoy is really effective. Knowing the community makes it easier to connect with the youth. Nowadays, the municipality has actors that stay in touch with the community. For example, in one project, youngsters cleaned an area to build a workout space. Later, they presented a 3D modeling project to the mayor, who budgeted it and secured EU funding. Although the connection between decision-makers and the youth city council is helpful, street action is still more efficient.

The state didn't show much concern in the past, but people took the initiative to organise themselves, leading to a strong sense of citizenship. Despite having access to education, people didn't have the opportunity to exercise this right in reality. Areas such as football fields, cultural spaces, and organizations were used not only for sports and cultural activities but also for political and housing campaigns. While social policies were in place, there weren't specific youth policies. Instead, social and community policies were crucial in shaping people's lives.

The local governments don't have a systematic programme to identify the needs of young migrants. There are organizations to address this issue, but not in a coherent way. The local government is not engaged in the process, mostly outsourcing this task to other organizations. While neoliberal policies and gentrification create challenges for communities in the peripheries of Lisbon, community-led initiatives and the need for solidarity among marginalized groups to challenge institutional neglect are on the rise to build a more equitable city.

GOOD PRACTICE



Location:

Portugal national territory (50 different schools/municipalities)



Aim:

To listen to the experiences and recommendations of Portuguese students to inspire decision-makers to make better decisions and schools to work at their best.



Brief description:

The practice included **listening sessions**: listening to students from different schools in Portugal in group sessions (investing in relational dimensions and using creative methodologies), **sharing at the local level** by organising meetings where the students shared the process with school boards (at the end of the project, each school received a document with specific recommendations from young people attending that local context), **content analysis** of the student's knowledge and creating a booklet of recommendations, **sharing at national level** by organising the final meeting, where students share their experiences and recommendations with decision-makers at the national level, and finally, **spreading the knowledge** on events and conferences for professionals and decision-makers from the area of Education in Portugal where students share their experiences and recommendations.

Responsible organization

ComParte - Fundação Maria Rosa

Contact person

equipa@comparte.pt

Duration

1 year

Target group:

Students attending middle and secondary school in Portugal

Number of beneficiaries

2.643 young students



Stakeholders

School boards of 50 schools, the Minister of Education, (former) Secretary of State of Citizenship and Equality, Young Students



Needs:

The first step of the practice, the listening sessions, included two main goals: finding the needs by asking the students which practices work well and which practices should be created or transformed and finding experiences that can be used as recommendations/solutions for maintaining or transforming.



Impact of the Practice

ComParte practice involved young people in decision-making processes by ensuring that the experiences and recommendations of students are shared with and considered by decision-makers. The students themselves shared their experiences and recommendations, ComParte's team only facilitates the dialogue. For example, apart from the meetings between students and school boards/Secretaries of State, the resulting booklet from this specific practice was, afterwards, shared with many professionals from other schools and municipalities in Portugal to inspire changes in the Portuguese Education system, both on the national and local level.

The practice was included in an initiative promoted by the former Secretary of State of Citizenship and Equality called "Roteiro Cidadania em Portugal". This practice inspired an amendment to the law (Decreto-Lei n.º 55/2018), stating that schools should have regular mechanisms for listening to students. Students have continued to contribute to education policies and, more recently, were involved in the action "Voice of Students", which is part of the National Learning Recovery Plan.



Results

2.643 students from 50 schools were involved; organisation of 50 school meetings, meaning that 50 school boards were inspired which led to the production of one booklet of students' recommendations that was published. In the scope of the practice, students had one meeting with national decision-makers. Two Secretaries of State were inspired by this practice. This practice, made decision-makers hear for the first time about the importance of relationships in Education. Also, it inspired the alteration of OECD meetings, which started to involve students in their forums.

Contribution to involving young people in decision-making processes and creating Welcoming cities

ComParte believes that Cities of Welcome had a positive impact, especially regarding Participation. ComParte thinks that the way of working on the projects/practices contributes to the creation of out-of-the-box, more meaningful participation processes in Portugal.

Challenges implementing the practice

ComParte had little time with each group of students to create trusting relationships and implement the listening sessions at the schools.

Other information Testimonials and feedback (12)

Feedback from the Secretary of State of Education

"I have had several moments listening to young people, but I had never been in a meeting like this where the relational dimension came up so much on the table."

A students' feedback

"Being here has changed the way we view the board. Students need to know that they can give opinions and ideas to the board."

"My motivation to be involved in the running of the school has increased a lot and personally, there has been a big change, especially in how I express myself. I now feel I am part of the school and make a difference."

(12) Equipa Comparte. (2018, July 18). Feedback do Secretário de Estado da Educação aos Prós.



More information about the practice

<http://www.comparte.pt/>

Booklet

Other ComParte booklets



[https://www.youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6M4As98t6xU)

[/watch?v=6M4As98t6xU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6M4As98t6xU)



GOOD PRACTICE



Location:

Fundão



Aim:

The objective of Fundão is to consolidate itself as a “welcoming territory”. Since April 2016, Fundão has started an ambitious project to welcome migrants and refugees from the European Union and third countries.



Brief description:

Based in an old catholic seminary, Fundão Migrations Centre works on three strategic axes that include different areas of intervention; welcoming that ensures a close network and proximity with (and between) the YMB, to understand their realities better and provide tailored responses upon arrival and during the initial stages in the territory; integration to empower the YMB so they can take advantage of their potential and benefit from their rights and duties and development of community life by integrating migrant communities through cultural offerings and initiatives that promote cultural diversity.

Responsible organization

Municipality of Fundão

Contact person

centromigracoesfundao@cm-fundao.pt

Duration

2018-2023

Target group:

Asylum seeker; seasonal workers; students from PALOP countries

Number of beneficiaries

853 (253 refugees, 300 students and 300 foreigners)



Stakeholders

Several municipal services/plans/projects in an economic (Fundão's Innovation Ecosystem; Project for Attraction and Integration of TCNs; Fundão ACOLHE - Empowerment Centre for TCNs) and social (CLAIM - Local Support Centre for Migrant Integration; Social Action; Professional Insertion Office; MIXin2 - Fundão's Municipal Plan for Migrations; Fundão Strategic Plan for Cohesion and Integration; Fundão MEDEIA; Fundão's Centre for Migrations) dimension.



Needs:

Fundão Migrations Centre addresses 2 global challenges: the socio-demographic and economic challenges arising from population ageing and desertification and the sociopolitical challenge associated with migration.



Impact of the Practice

To undertake the referred migrants integration strategy it is fundamental to have the synergy and collaboration between several municipal services and plans/projects in an economic and social dimension. Municipio do Fundão also worked with organizations external to the Municipality, namely the High Commissariat for Migrations, Foreigners and Borders Service, Institute of Employment and Professional Training, Fundão's Journal, and some companies. During the projects, the following

policies were implemented: Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), namely SDG 10 - Reduction of Inequalities, SDG11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities and SDG16 - Peace and Justice, created for this purpose several pioneering policy lines at the national level, which respond to issues such as inclusion, integration, and social mobility. The policies are seen as institutional and social innovations ways for territorial and social cohesion promotion, as well as the fight against aging and the progressive depopulation of territories with low population and industrial density. On a local level, supporting cultural initiatives created and promoted by migrant communities and the dissemination of events is taking place. Also, enhancing the practice of active citizenship through the creation of migrant associations and the dissemination of information and active citizenship events.



Results

The Municipality of Fundão, through the Fundão Migrations Centre, developed a holistic, innovative, and multidimensional approach, which ensures the inclusion of migrants in the community, allowing them to build their human capital. The methodology, with three areas of intervention (Welcoming, Integration and Community Life), allowed progress in 4 strategic municipal needs: **housing** (reuse and reconstruction of old buildings; decent and affordable houses); **training** (training, guaranteeing safe and stable work and reinforcing the labor supply); **empowerment** (individualized monitoring to enhance total autonomy); and **Portuguese language** (learning the language aiming to social and labor integration); Transport network (facilitating the journey from home to work).

Contribution to involving young people in decision-making processes and creating Welcoming cities

The work developed by the Fundão Migrations Centre ensured the sustainability and future of the city through its economic and population growth. The project assures the continuous mobilization of the collective conscience of the Fundanense society on themes such as diversity, dialogue between cultures, solidarity, and cooperation.

Challenges implementing the practice

The focus is developing sustainable, integrated, and participative solutions to address new social challenges. However, their main challenge is to attract, retain and integrate around 8,000 migrants in the next ten years to become a multicultural region and set an example for neighbouring regions.



More information about the practice

<https://www.facebook.com/fundaocommunity>
https://www.instagram.com/fundao_community/
<https://t.me/INFundaoCommunity>



GOOD PRACTICE



Location:

Almada



Aim:

The project focuses on empowering YMB living in Almada coming from countries with a Muslim majority population and strengthening social and public services in Almada in the interaction with YMB living there.



Brief description:

The project unites different services such as Portuguese language workshops aimed at daily life situations that migrants face, an online platform with educational resources and communication channels for supporting migrants.

Responsible organization

Associations Rato and Árabe Portuguesa

Contact person

novosprojectos@rato-adcc.pt

Duration

26 months

Target group:

Migrants, social and public services workers in the municipality of Almada

Number of beneficiaries

697 participants



Stakeholders

30 partners between local municipalities, companies and nonprofit organizations



Needs:

This good practice was based on the work in partnership with the local community of Almada, mainly with the target group identified previously to provide support to YMB and increase the quality of public services for this matter.



Impact of the Practice

It approached a target group that was invisible in the institutions to the hosting community – the involvement of young people in the project allowed the possibility of some youngsters to participate in volunteering activities and in international projects within the Erasmus+ Programme. The project contributed to Municipal Plan for the Integration of Migrants in Almada. By actively contributing to the creation of this plan, the project has helped shape and guide future initiatives and interventions in the municipality. The Municipal Plan for the Integration of Migrants ensured a more coordinated and targeted approach to addressing the specific needs and challenges faced by migrants, thereby fostering a more inclusive and welcoming environment for individuals from these communities. Overall, the project's impact is evident in the tangible efforts made to improve the integration process and enhance the overall well-being of migrants in Almada.

AL-MADENSE: INCLUSION OF THE MUSLIM CITIZEN IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ALMADA



Results

As a result of the project, decision-makers and social workers in Almada have developed a heightened awareness and understanding of the specific needs and challenges faced by migrants from countries with a Muslim majority population. This increased awareness enables them to make more informed decisions and create targeted policies and programs to address the unique requirements of this particular community. By recognizing and acknowledging the diverse needs of these migrants, decision-makers and social workers can develop more effective strategies and initiatives to support their integration, well-being, and overall empowerment.

Contribution to involving young people in decision-making processes and creating Welcoming cities

The project contributed to the clarification of gaps in the work of public services for migrants. It is important to understand that the empowerment of this population is still in the initial stage. The institutions are not fully prepared, and the community focused on this good practice is still closed to itself. A long process is still needed to implement the model proposed in Cities of Welcome.

Challenges implementing the practice

During the implementation, the project faced several challenges. First of all, the invisibility of the community was a serious obstacle. Secondly, there needs to be more knowledge and awareness regarding the social problems of this community. Moreover, a lack of specific social responses together with a weak representation in the public sphere. Furthermore, the lack of language slows down the process of adaptation and inclusion.



More information about the practice

<https://almadense.rato-adcc.pt/>
<https://www.facebook.com/almadense2020>



GOOD PRACTICE



Location:

Porto, Braga, São João da Madeira, Vila Nova de Gaia, Trofa, Viana do Castelo, Barcelos and Gondomar



Aim:

The project aims to promote individual dignity, social cohesion, and acceptance through dialogue and proximity. Their goals include preparing for a better future, promoting acceptance, cultivating diversity, being part of the story, and generating social transformation. They also strive to create support networks for refugees and migrants in Portuguese communities to fight social isolation and facilitate inclusion.



Brief description:

MEERU Aproxima aims to promote the sense of belonging and community engagement of migrant and refugee families living in Portugal. Their volunteering program aims to foster informal support networks for migrant families: to train and mentor volunteers who, alongside these families, boost and carry genuine bonds of affection, belonging, and trust. They commit to sharing their life with a family through weekly meetings for moments of leisure – Proximity Encounters. The program with each family Proximity Team lasts for eight months, and the final goal is that the relationship created between family and volunteers lingers on beyond that threshold.

Responsible organization

MEERU | Abrir Caminho

Contact person

abircaminho@meeru.org

Duration

Ongoing from 2020

Target group:

Refugee and Migrant families

Number of beneficiaries

115 refugees and migrants (16 were between 12 and 17 years old and 23 were between 18 and 29 years old)



Stakeholders

The project stakeholders, refugee and migrant families, volunteers, proximity Teams, - the community - schools, companies, youth groups, public offices, etc



Needs:

The primary focus of the project is to address the needs of YMB and their families. The project addresses needs such as housing, health, education, and daily expenses. The project was established in response to these needs and has been working with families in 8-month cycles since 2020. Through regular feedback from volunteers and beneficiaries, the project strives to innovate and respond to their evolving needs.



Impact of the Practice

In partnership with ComParte, from November 2021 to March 2022, the project conducted an intermediate evaluation process. This process involved conversations, reflections, and focus groups with families and volunteers to understand what worked and could be improved. The resulting Book of recommendations "From Friends to Friends," which systematizes the feedback and experiences of beneficiaries and volunteers.

The book highlighted the importance of MEERU Aproxima for integrating beneficiaries in the country and their community and it was presented to decision-makers. The book included recommendations related to integration policies, but the impact is yet to be seen as it was not formally presented to public institutions. However, considering the book's inputs and recommendations, the project's activities have already been redesigned.



Results

The project targeted both tangible and intangible outcomes. The project allowed families to practice Portuguese with native speakers, contributing to their integration; families changed their decisions regarding their future in Portugal and found jobs through their connections within the informal networks they built. Moreover, young members of the families joined local youth groups, sports teams, scouts, etc. The project had a tremendous social impact as young members of the families had opportunities to go back to school and finish their studies. Members of the families started volunteering within the community. Regarding intangible results, the project promoted the formation of intercultural communities, fostering a sense of belonging among the families involved. It also contributed to their overall well-being, positively impacting their lives and the community.

Contribution to involving young people in decision-making processes and creating Welcoming cities

The project helps to motivate YMB not only to stay in the city where they are living, but also to inform them of the possibilities that they have within the community, and how they can be heard.

Challenges implementing the practice

From the start, one of the major challenges MEERU faces is communicating and measuring the program's actual impact on people's lives, as the major impact is primarily intangible. Moreover, it has been a challenge in some cases to adjust the families' expectations regarding what the program offers and how it differs from the formal integration process and program provided by the government. The project worked on these expectations through close relationships with the hosting entities and families, mostly through reality-check conversations.



More information about the practice





SPAIN

LOCAL POLICIES/NATIONAL CONTEXT

Young migrants in Spain face various challenges regarding political participation and policy inclusion. According to the International Organization for Migration, a significant number of international migrants, around 11%, are under the age of 24. Despite their importance and mobility, specific policies that foster their active participation in decision-making processes still need to be improved. At the national level, the Spanish government has recently taken steps to improve the incorporation of migrants, mainly young migrants, into the national labor market. A reform of the migrant regulation code has been implemented to address the vulnerability faced by young migrants.

One of the fundamental changes introduced by the reform is to ensure that YMB stay safe and avoid falling into irregularity once they reach the age of 18. The reform facilitates authorizations for living and working in Spain for up to 15,000 foreigners, including 8,000 migrant minors and 7,000 young migrants previously protected by the State aged between 18 and 23.

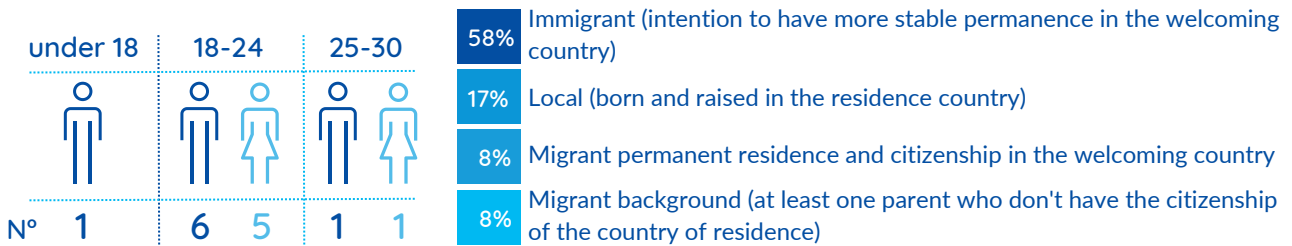
In 2021, Spain implemented a reform that enables easier access to residence and work permits for unaccompanied children. This includes those who arrived as children and were between the ages of 18 and 23 in October 2021, as well as those who will reach adulthood in the future. These changes have been long-awaited demands from young people, NGOs, and the Ombudsman, reflecting the collective efforts to address these issues over the years. The revised regulations also reduce the period for the Immigration Office to initiate the documentation procedure for minors. Previously, this process took up to 9 months, but now it must be completed within a maximum of 3 months. The residence permit obtained during their time as minors will also serve as a work permit when they reach 16 years old, and it will remain valid even after they turn 18 and are no longer under state protection.

The reform also encompasses changes to regulations to promote the continued presence of foreign students in Spain. Under the new provisions, students can combine their studies with work if their weekly working hours are at most 30. Additionally, the previous restrictions that hindered their transition into the labor market after completing their studies have been eliminated. Furthermore, when justified by labor market developments, the "Catalogue of particularly sought-after occupations" has been revised to facilitate recruitment in a person's country of origin. This modification allows for targeted efforts to attract individuals with the necessary skills and qualifications from their home countries, aligning with the evolving demands of the labor market. The reform also addresses the situation of minors who reach the age of 18 without documentation. They will now have access to an exceptional authorization that grants them a residence and work permit, both for employment with others and for self-employment.

While these measures may appear bureaucratic, they offer YMB an opportunity to feel a sense of belonging and be treated as equal community members. The feeling of belonging is crucial for individuals to actively participate in the daily life of their neighborhood, community, and family. Implementing these regulatory changes marks a positive step toward recognizing and addressing the unique needs and rights of young migrants in Spain, allowing them to participate more actively in society and overcome the challenges they face.

SURVEY RESULTS

Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents:



Are you participating in local activities?

What helped?

"Open mind." "The municipality made it possible through giving us spaces to talk and brainstorme."

"Program called Treball i Formació that helps immigrant young people to get the opportunity to work and meet people."



Are you aware about local policies for integration?

Which ones?

"Access to health care, legal assistance, job orientation."

"There is the local information point for young people where you can get information about the local policies."



Do you know how to get in contact with decision-makers in your municipality?

How to get in contact with them?

- By personal contact,
- I know the politics team in the municipality,
- It's not so easy,
- Through the Council Hall and the Police Office.



3

Feels heard in their local community



9

Feel that their community is welcoming



13

Feel participation is important to them



10

Believe that Youth participation has a meaningful impact in their community



9

Feel connected with their local community



7

Feel involved in the local community

out of 14

Which are the biggest barriers that you face with in order to actively participate?

Language barrier

Access to services

Discrimination

Other culture

Yes, I have easy access to all important city services to be active in the society

8 out of 14

What could the local authorities do in order to make your area more welcoming and inclusive?

- "They have to show more patience for migrants."
- "To create spaces specifically to those in need of extra help."
- "Give more access to muslim community."
- "Help to search for work."
- "To create more young people led associations to make them part of the decisions."
- "More initiative for participation."
- "Develop some project that helps young immigrated people through the sport, it can be inclusive and help them to get to know the city."

The city council's new political group promotes citizen engagement in decision-making processes, resulting in various initiatives being established. Additionally, several independent commissions support the city council as a civil society organization. One such commission is the Cultural Commission of "No Discrimination", recently formed to provide a platform for the migrant community to voice their concerns.

While youngsters participate in many activities, they often don't engage much in the decision-making process of their community. To address this issue, they require safe spaces such as young people's forums or activities where they can voice their opinions. Fortunately, the city council is highly receptive and is making an effort to reach out to the migrant community. The municipality hopes this initiative will motivate young people to participate more actively by providing them with opportunities to engage and the assurance that their voices will be heard.

YMB are expected to participate in decision-making within the youth activities department in their respective territorial areas. They also visit the city council's information department to learn about education and employment opportunities. Generally, an open call is optional as the YMB are already aware of the various social and youth services provided by the city council and makes use of them for different reasons. However, they are more likely to use these services rather than participate in creating new ideas or processes.

Regarding the participation of YMB, there are contradictions within the policies. For example, there are a lot of training courses for young people that require regular documents to be beneficiaries. Some young people need to have their situation already regulated to participate. The online examination of documents is also a barrier as they are complicated and very bureaucratic, making it difficult for YMB to participate.

In order to identify the needs of YMB, the government of a certain region uses various methods. One of them is the Participatory Budget, which allows civil society to allocate funds for specific projects. Additionally, both Catalan and Spanish are utilized to improve communication and increase involvement. Youth workers also maintain constant contact with territorial services for young people. The government also reviews annual reports of activities to learn about the situation of YMB and to improve local policies.

The integration process for migrants emphasizes the significance of cultivating a sense of belonging and active participation. This entails ensuring migrants feel connected to their new environment and have opportunities to engage in community activities that align with their interests. The inclusion of such activities plays a vital role in fostering a sense of belonging and promoting their integration.

YMB often encounter challenges in feeling represented and actively involved in their communities' decision-making processes. Many of them enter into institutions that do not adequately support their participation and engagement. These barriers include language barriers, unfamiliarity with the political system, and time constraints due to other pressing priorities they may have.

We as an NGO possess the necessary resources and financial stability to encourage migrant participation effectively. However, a lack of communication exists with the CRAEs (Child and Adolescent Residential Centers), as they are often secluded and operate with significant opacity. Moreover, a few local-level policies, such as Espai Joves and Participative Spaces for young people, specifically focus on promoting the participation of young migrants.

Several things limit participation. Starting from the language barrier, YMB have a fear of social conflict, a highly stigmatised and criminalised group. Another issue is linked to a need for more understanding of how YMB can access services and how they communicate and interrelate. The cultural part is essential, but they want to be accepted as something more. There is a necessity to implement policies that are accessible to young people..

The government identifies the needs of YMB by spending time with them in reception services. However, the people on the street do not have the opportunity to share their feedback. We, as an NGO, gather feedback in several ways, such as constructing a link to facilitate communication. The tangible outcome of this feedback process is improved access to rights and services for YMB. Moreover, the intangible part is the strengthening of the bond and the sense of gratitude.

GOOD PRACTICE



Location:

Santa Margarida de Montbui



Aim:

Involving youth in decision-making processes.



Brief description:

The project provides an open space for youth to brainstorm possible activities to organize in the municipality. The Youth Service of the Santa Margarida de Montbui City Council has opted for the progressive reopening of Mont-Jove as a youth meeting space. Around a hundred young people attended to find out about the activities and use the opportunity as a space to be involved in decision-making through discussions, games and educational activities.

Responsible organization

Youth service (Montjove) of the Town hall

Contact person

ajuntament@montbui.cat

Duration

3-4 times a year

Target group:

Teenage and youth from the municipality, mostly YMB

Number of beneficiaries

There is no limitation, normally there are 10 participants on each session



Stakeholders

Youth counselor of the Town hall, Youth workers, Young people



Needs:

The project covered needs in the areas of feedback and communication. During the project, feedback on policies first-hand was collected, and the needs of youth were defined by hearing the proposals from the young people.



Impact of the Practice

The practice contributes to involving young people in decision-making processes within their representation in the Town hall, and defining the services that give answers to the needs of youth.



Results

The project generated both tangible and intangible outcomes. In terms of tangible results, the project offered various activities organized specifically for the youth. On the other hand, the intangible results were focused on non-formal education and the development of essential skills. Through the project, the youth learned how to actively participate in decision-making processes, express their opinions, and respect the viewpoints of others.

Contribution to involving young people in decision-making processes and creating Welcoming cities

More young people were involved in general participation, with an emphasis on decision making processes. This highly impacted their motivation and had tangible results in the community.

Challenges implementing the practice

The biggest challenges were how to keep the youngsters committed for longer period and how to reach new participants.

Other information

Young people can get involved also in Commission for Children and Teenagers.



More information about the practice

<https://www.instagram.com/montjove>
https://www.instagram.com/montbui_jove/



GOOD PRACTICE



Location:

Region of Catalonia



Aim:

The project has three key objectives: preventing YMB from staying on the streets, supporting them until they fulfil a certain level of autonomy, and facilitating access to their rights.



Brief description:

This practice is based on hosting, supporting and mentoring YMB that have been under state protection until the age of 18. From 18 years old onwards, YMB do not have any support and their vulnerability increases exponentially. For this reason, Coordinadora Obrim Fronteres looked for places for YMB to be hosted until they achieved a certain level of autonomy. On the other hand, they also provide legal counseling, moral and professional support, and social mentoring to provide skills to youngsters to open new opportunities. Within this practice, there is also a critical advocacy part of making visible the situation of the young people, which is usually hidden.

Responsible organization

Coordinadora Obrim Fronteres

Contact person

coordinadora.obrim.fronteres@gmail.com

Duration

6 months and follow up period

Target group:

YMB, young people

Number of beneficiaries

50 – 100 people



Stakeholders

There are no direct stakeholders involved but private and anonymous funds. Therefore, the only stakeholders are young people.



Needs:

From ages 18 to 21, YMB receive some state assistance, but it abruptly ends when they reach 21. At this point, the majority of young people are evicted from reception flats and left to fend for themselves, with limited opportunities for employment and social stability. This reality is common but often hidden, only evident when closely working with reception centers, flats, and a supportive network involved in migrant rights.



Impact of the Practice

Within the informal established network, the individual has the autonomy to make decisions that enhance their life opportunities. This network allows YMB to engage directly and better understand their community. However, institutional processes that involve migrants often infantilize them, disregarding their opinions, which leads to frustration and a sense of obligation among young individuals.

The implementation of the practices has a significant impact in two key areas. Firstly, YMB gain improved access to their fundamental human rights through increased access to rights. It includes providing essential services such as legal counselling and support with managing their documentation, ensuring they can navigate legal processes and assert their rights. Secondly, focus on empowerment and personal development fosters self-trust, autonomy, independence, and confidence. Moreover, it offers opportunities for growth and skill development, enabling them to take control of their lives and build a more promising future for themselves.



Results

The project includes tangible and intangible results. Firstly, political advocacy and mentoring with the community of YMB enable direct contact with them. Secondly, the project contributed to the personal growth of people who are receiving support, happiness and autonomy. Moreover, it increased speed and flexibility in the management of emergencies. The intervention resulting from the practice streamlines the bureaucratic process. Additionally, it provides direct help and support to young people in need in critical aspects such as managing legal documents, finding courses for professional formation, finding work opportunities, etc.

Contribution to involving young people in decision-making processes and creating Welcoming cities

The project helps to improve the participation of YMB. The project does necessarily intervene to address the problems of YMB.

Challenges implementing the practice

The main challenges in assisting migrants are finding immediate housing solutions and overcoming the perception of privileged white individuals managing their support. Emergency accommodation is often provided by volunteer families while searching for more stable options.

Other information

Networking with other organizations with similar values and goals is key to positively impacting vulnerable groups and giving them proper support. YMB need to know they have the support, but they own their decisions.



More information about the practice



GOOD PRACTICE



Location:

Vilanova I la Geltrú (Barcelona)



Aim:

The goal is to expand the number of collaborating entities, sports clubs and organizations to encourage the participation of children and young people (including YMB) who live in the city and have vulnerable contexts.



Brief description:

ADDING, MULTIPLY! is a collaborative project between entities, sports clubs, and organizations, together with the support of Vilanova I la Geltrú City Hall, intending to contribute to equal opportunities for children as well as youth and their families, particularly for the ones in vulnerable situations. It facilitates the access and participation of youngsters in social spaces through entertainment programs and leisure activities under conditions of equity, regardless of origin.

Responsible organization

Department of Childhood and Youth

Contact person

joventut@vilanova.cat

Duration

Ongoing from 2015

Target group:

Children and young people up to 29 years old and their families, who are in a vulnerable situation

Number of beneficiaries

The number of places offered by the entities according to achieved agreements.



Stakeholders

The project involves multiple stakeholders. The stakeholders from City Hall are the Department of Children and Youth and the Department of Social Action. Moreover, sports clubs and socio-cultural organizations are also involved.



Needs:

The main need is the lack of equal opportunities for children and youngsters, especially in vulnerable situations.



Impact of the Practice

This participation reinforces the personal empowerment of YMB in decision-making. Moreover, entities that participate in the program are key actors in creating activities and their management, resulting in their intervention in public policies from the local government. Moreover, the Public Budget was also allocated to the program and managed by local organizations.



Results

During the first four years of the program were established 23 annual agreements with organizations from different areas, and 151 children and teenagers enjoyed the advantages of the partnerships for free. As a result, YMB were involved in local activities and engaged with positive motivation. Moreover, youngsters got to know other kids and improved their social skills. The project increased motivation to participate in non-formal learning activities and improved healthy lifestyles.

Contribution to involving young people in decision-making processes and creating Welcoming cities

The project focused on several areas of decision - making process. It involved YMB through promoting equal access to socialization, leisure activities, sports, and cultural programs for children, young people, and their families. The project aimed to foster a sense of belonging and connection within the community by providing these inclusive opportunities, particularly for vulnerable individuals and families. Furthermore, the project actively supported YMB' personal development and socialization. The project also recognized the importance of family participation and facilitated their involvement in supportive spaces. Promoting a sense of inclusivity and equity by creating collaborative and inclusive partnerships between non-formal organizations and the city council, the project emphasized the significance of partnerships with local organizations, encouraging further inclusion and equity within the community.

Challenges implementing the practice

The challenges in implementing the project include establishing efficient referral circuits and the significant time investment required to identify and engage relevant entities.



GOOD PRACTICE



Location:

Vilanova I la Geltrú (Barcelona, Spain)



Aim:

The project aims to support YMB to develop their potential by promoting social inclusion and advocating for the situation of YMB through shared experiences with other people in the community.



Brief description:

"Vincles" Social Mentoring project aims to become a social tool that facilitates the integration of YMB between the ages of 18 and 25 who live in Vilanova I la Geltrú by supporting local people who voluntarily share informal spaces with the youngsters. This initiative is a 1-to-1 relationship between mentor and mentee. The follow-up meetings happen 1 or 2 times per week for six months. The goal is to foster integration and a feeling of welcome for the mentees throughout the connection with the mentor. These relationships aim to offer emotional support to the young person and accompany them in developing their potential. As well as collaboration promotes social inclusion by expanding the support network and fostering YMB' knowledge of the host society.

Responsible organization

City Hall of Vilanova I la Geltru,
Children Department of childhood
and Youth + ACTUA S.C.L

Contact person

mentoriajove@vilanova.cat

Duration

January - July 2023

Target group:

Migrants and YMB

Number of beneficiaries

7 adult migrants and 7 YMB



Stakeholders

The main stakeholders of the project are mentors (volunteers) and their mentees. Moreover, two professionals from the Department of Children and Youth were involved.



Needs:

Through observations and feedback from professionals working with young people, it has been identified that there is a lack of participation among YMB in city activities. This can be attributed to insufficient information and inadequate hosting arrangements.



Impact of the Practice

Engaging young people in meetings with adults from the city can provide them with comprehensive and in-depth knowledge about the city's organization, various entities, and avenues for participation. This opportunity can help young individuals enhance their language skills, deepen their understanding of the city's culture, and encourage active involvement in civic activities.

“VINCLES” SOCIAL MENTORING PROJECT



Results

The recently implemented project has shown promising outcomes, although a comprehensive evaluation is still pending. One notable achievement is that young migrants have been able to familiarize themselves with their new surroundings in a welcoming and informal manner. Additionally, the project has increased awareness of available resources, encouraging their participation. Furthermore, through engaging in conversations and firsthand experiences with local individuals, migrants have expanded their knowledge base and gained a deeper understanding of their new environment.

Contribution to involving young people in decision-making processes and creating Welcoming cities

This initiative involves YMB in decision-making processes in Vilanova in several ways. Firstly, through facilitating familiarization, YMB are introduced to their new environment in a friendly and informal manner, making them feel more comfortable and connected to the city. Furthermore, promoting resource awareness helps them to gain knowledge about the available resources that they can utilize, fostering their active participation and engagement in the community. Additionally, through conversations and firsthand experiences with locals, young migrants expand their understanding of the city, its culture, and its dynamics. This exposure increases their knowledge and promotes cross-cultural exchange.

Challenges implementing the practice

The project encounters two main challenges, such as difficulty in recruiting volunteer mentors and challenges in matching mentors and mentees.



More information about the practice



REMARKS

The Publication "Good practices of participation of youngsters with a migrant background and young migrants" aims to inspire municipalities and organizations with the collection of good practices to deepen their knowledge on how to implement inclusive, quality practices that improve the participation of YMB at the local level.

For this purpose, we analysed the local policies of Germany, North Macedonia, Portugal and Spain tackling youth participation, specifically YMB participation. The analysis showed that in each country, there is a policy for migrants, but some countries have a more in-depth developed strategy that aims directly at YMB integration and participation. Furthermore, we conducted online interviews with selected municipalities and NGO workers to get their perspectives on the structures and opportunities they offer to YMB. The gathered qualitative data shows that each municipality and organisation has a different practice that depends on many factors, such as legislation and means (mainly financial and human resources). Nevertheless, here is an effort to make their municipalities and communities more welcoming to YMB by implementing different strategies and practices.

To hear the voices of the ones that the practices are made for, consortium partners conducted an online open survey disseminated among partner countries between YMB. The survey results show that although there are existing policies and opportunities in each partner country, just one-sixth of the young people who answered the survey feel that their voice is being heard. The results show a better picture regarding the involvement in the community, in which two-thirds of the respondents expressed that they feel involved, and three-quarters of the respondents said that they feel their communities are welcoming. Although the survey sample can not stand for the population of the YMB in the partner countries since it is rather small, the results show that there is a gap between the offered opportunities for YMB participation in decision-making and how YMB see their voice is being perceived and the impact they are making in decision-making processes.

To make that gap smaller, the project consortium developed an assessment tool for municipalities and organisation which will help municipalities and organizations to evaluate their local integration policies, practices, and spaces for the participation of YMB in their communities. After completing the assessment tool, municipalities and organizations are invited to read the guidelines, which aim to strengthen and facilitate the participation of individuals by municipalities, NGOs and their communities in political decision-making.

Partners consortium believes that this collection of good practices and developed tools can help to make the communities and cities even more welcoming and participative for youngsters, particularly for YMB.



ASSESSMENT TOOL

This assessment tool allows local stakeholders involved in facilitating the integration and participation of young people with a migrant background (YMB) such as local authorities or civil society organizations (CSOs), to evaluate their local integration policies, practices, and spaces for the participation of YMB in their municipalities and improve them by following the examples of good practices mapped on the international level and guidelines developed for the scope of the project.

OVERVIEW

This tool can assist municipalities and CSOs in determining how they involve YMB in participation and decision-making processes at the local level. The assessment tool contains reflective and closed questions. These will be used to assess the YMB participation quality levels by the municipality and NGO workers.

Based on the literature review of different assessment tools already in place at the European and local levels, especially on the ACCESS project Framework “Strengthening municipalities to work towards a more profound involvement of migrant youth” (13), this tool has been designed by conducting several focus groups with project partners and other stakeholders to gather feedback. This also led to the development of guidelines for improving YMB participation in decision-making processes at the local level, available in the next chapter of this publication.

INDICATORS/ SUBSCALES

The indicators for the participation of YMB in decision-making mapped based on the literature review are the following:

- **Motivation**
- **Impact**
- **Competences**
- **Participation**
- **Strategy**

It is important to take into account that these indicators are qualitative, meaning that they do not strictly involve enumeration. Qualitative measurements are best suited for measuring progress that is complex, multi-faceted, or multi-dimensional.

(13) ACCESS project Framework. “Strengthening municipalities to work towards a more profound involvement of migrant youth”.

LENGTH & HOW IT IS MEASURED

- 5 indicators (with descriptions)
 - 25 reflective questions
 - 27 closed-ended questions
 - Closed-ended questions are scored by a 5-point scale: 1 (lower score) to 5 (higher score)
 - Score assessment by visual dot plot in 3 categories: low (orange), medium (yellow), high (blue)
 - Available in English
-

TARGET GROUP OF ASSESSMENT TOOL

- Youth workers
 - Municipal officers
 - Decision makers
-

HOW TO USE THE ASSESSMENT TOOL

Municipality officers and CSO youth workers should do the implementation of this tool before planning annual activities.

Preparing a discussion group with participants from the targeted group is recommended to reflect on opportunities offered for YMB to participate in the decision-making processes by using the reflective questions of this assessment tool. Although not mandatory, YMB can be invited to join the discussion group.

After the discussion group, municipality officers and CSO youth workers can then proceed to use the scale below to access in more depth their level of YMB welcoming and offered opportunities to involve YMB in participation in decision-making processes at the local level. After completing the questionnaire, locate where most answers are positioned. Find in the next chapter the guidelines according to that category (orange, yellow or blue) where most of your answers fall into.

INDICATORS

MOTIVATION

Sense of belonging to a community;
Communication between actors;
Satisfaction with the involvement in the processes;
Level of knowledge of their participation opportunities;

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS:

- **What opportunities do you offer YMB to increase their sense of belonging in the community?**
- **How can we motivate YMB to participate in decision-making?**
- **What are the communication channels you use to reach youngsters and specifically YMB?**
- **What are the tools to measure the success of your dissemination strategy?**
- **How do you encourage YMB participation or help them participate more actively locally?**

IMPACT

The impact of initiatives for YMB in local communities;
If YMB voices are heard and their input is taken seriously and processed adequately;
If YMB are integrated in local structures for their participation in decision-making processes;
If there is any systematic follow-up on how their input is processed.

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS:

- **Do you collect the feedback from YMB to understand to what extent they feel represented and involved in the decision making processes at the local level?**
- **If you collect YMB's ideas, suggestions and contributions, how do you ensure the recognition of their ideas, suggestions and contributions so they feel empowered and represented?**
- **How are YMB collaborating with local entities in order to have an impact on decision-making processes?**
- **What are the obstacles in facilitating their participation (in decision-making processes)?**

COMPETENCES

Youth workers, municipal officers and politicians knowledge and ability to work with young residents, including YMB;
Civic education and training of youth workers, municipal officers and politicians on youth participation, specifically considering YMB needs;
Tackling language and access barriers caused by lack of access to information

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS:

- How do you provide YMB with knowledge about different ways of youth participation in decision-making processes?
- How do you provide YMB with other learning opportunities to make them participate actively at the local level?
- How do you ensure that you have specific personnel able to offer different training opportunities to YMB to actively participate in society?
- Where can YMB find more information about engaging in learning opportunities (online platform, website, etc.)?
- How do you ensure that the language you use to provide information is accessible to YMB?

PARTICIPATION

Structures and opportunities made available as well as actual participation of young people, with special attention to including YMB needs, at the local level.

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS:

- What are the implementing activities regarding youth participation in your municipality or organisation?
- Are there specific measures that are tackling YMB' participation?
- What do you offer in terms of participation opportunities to YMB?
- How do you address the importance of YMB' participation at the local level in your community or organisation?
- How can YMB access places where decisions are being made or discussed?
- Do you have monitoring and evaluation tools to measure that YMB are aware of the opportunities?

STRATEGY

Developed strategy for the participation of YMB by the NGOs and institutions;
Specific policies for young residents participation in decision-making processes, including
YMB specific needs;

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS:

- **Do you have a specific strategy for engaging YMB in decision-making processes in your local community?**
- **Did you define the action plan for YMB to participate in decision-making processes?**
- **What limits the implementation of YMB policies?**
- **What mechanism do you use to follow up on the strategy?**
- **Do you have a specific policy for young people's participation in decision-making processes?
If yes, do you have specific policies for YMB participation?**





THE SCALE

MOTIVATION						Comments
	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	
Are YMB satisfied with their involvement in decision-making at the local level?	●	●	●	●	●	
<i>Consider the opinion of the YMB that were actively involved in activities. If no activities were held, then choose N/a.</i>	No or N/a	Some	Fairly	Quite	Very	
Do you gather meaningful feedback from the YMB' community on the specific policies implemented?	●	●	●	●	●	
<i>Meaningful in this context means that it was useful in some way.</i>	Never	Rarely	Not targeted	Sometimes	Always	
Do you gather meaningful feedback from the YMB community on the services provided?	●	●	●	●	●	
<i>Meaningful in this context means that it was useful in some way.</i>	Never	Rarely	Not targeted	Sometimes	Always	
Are YMB encouraged to be involved in the decision-making process at the local level?	●	●	●	●	●	
<i>Is this specific target group of young people encouraged?</i>	Not specifically	Rarely	Not targeted	Sometimes	Always	
Is there a guarantor who acts as an intermediary between YMB and the local authorities that ensures that the necessary support for the participation of YMB is provided?	●	●	●	●	●	
<i>This guarantor may be a municipal officer or a peer.</i>	No	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	
Do you think there is effective communication between you and YMB?	●	●	●	●	●	
<i>Communication includes direct dialogue and indirect dissemination of information (eg. social media).</i>	No	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	

IMPACT		★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	Comments
Do you conduct any interviews or discussions to hear the feedback of the YMB?		●	●	●	●	●	
<i>Is this specific target group of young people heard</i>	No	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always		
Are YMB informed about policies and opportunities in your local community?	●	●	●	●	●		
<i>Is this specific target group of young people informed about policies and opportunities</i>	Never	Rarely	Not targeted	Sometimes	Always		
Are the services you provide supporting the future development of YMB's participation?	●	●	●	●	●		
<i>Are the services you provide inclusive towards participation of YMB or are targeting directly YMB's participation</i>	No	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always		
Are the feedbacks of YMB processed?	●	●	●	●	●		
<i>Is the information gathered analyzed and integrated?</i>	Never	Rarely	Not targeted	Sometimes	Always		
Do you use specific procedures to elaborate the inputs received from YMB?	●	●	●	●	●		
<i>Is there any follow-up for more details on these inputs</i>	Never	Rarely	Not targeted	Sometimes	Always		
Does your organisation or municipality periodically monitor the implementation of the actions and compare actual performance to the goals set in the design of the action?	●	●	●	●	●		
<i>Consider, for example, budget, scope, schedules</i>	Never	Rarely	Not targeted	Sometimes	Always		

COMPETENCES					Comments	
Can YMB attend trainings on political/decision making processes?	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	
	●	●	●	●	●	
Do you offer training on political/decision making processes	No	Rarely	Not targeted	Sometimes	Yes	
	●	●	●	●	●	
Can YMB attend a language course?	No	Occasionally	Conditioned	Frequently	Freely	
	●	●	●	●	●	
Courses designed to reduce language barriers and promote integration	No	Just one	Sometimes	Majority	All	
	●	●	●	●	●	
Are your staff members trained to work with YMB?	No	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	
	●	●	●	●	●	
Do they receive training to work with this specific group	No	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	
	●	●	●	●	●	
Do you frequently provide your staff with training to improve their skills on how to include YMB in the decision-making process at the local level?	No	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	
	●	●	●	●	●	
Do they frequently receive training to motivate this specific group	No	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	
	●	●	●	●	●	
Do you provide any training for anti-discrimination actions to the staff inside your entity?	No	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	
	●	●	●	●	●	
Do they receive anti-discrimination training regularly	No	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	
	●	●	●	●	●	

PARTICIPATION					Comments	
Are there any moments that YMB can attend to understand participation opportunities available?	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	
Do you organise workshops, seminars, sessions, open days ect about participation opportunities?	●	●	●	●	●	
Is there a specific approach or effort that you're making to ensure that the spaces to participate in decision-making processes are inclusive for YMB?	No	Rarely	Not targeted	Frequently	Yes	
Spaces meaning physical spaces but also moments designed for participation in decision-making processes	●	●	●	●	●	
Are any activities proposed and/or performed by YMB in your community or organisation?	No yet a priority	Few details	Improving our processes	Sometimes	Very welcoming	
These include all initiatives either suggested by YMB up to those fully organised by them with your support	●	●	●	●	●	
Do you have a specific monitoring mechanism to access the level of YMB participation to make space for improvements?	No	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Often	
If you have monitoring mechanism such as indicators of expected results and evaluation tools	●	●	●	●	●	
Can you financially support YMB' initiatives?	No yet a priority	Occasionally	Improving our processes	Sometimes	Efficiently	
Consider all support that otherwise would imply some costs to the organisers. The option conditioned means that you have specific criteria for financial support to this specific target group.	●	●	●	●	●	
	Never	Occasionally	Conditioned	Sometimes	Yes	

STRATEGY		★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	Comments
Are there any cooperation projects to contribute to developing existing participation strategies at regional, national and European levels?		●	●	●	●	●	
	<i>Partnerships with local authorities, service providers, or civil society organizations</i>	No	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Often	
Are you working with any other relevant partners to jointly review operations, practices, services and integration outcomes?		●	●	●	●	●	
	<i>Partnerships with research centres, public institutions, foundations or companies</i>	No	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Often	
Does your municipality or organisation have a strategic plan on how to include YMB in decision-making?		●	●	●	●	●	
	<i>It could be a part of the strategic plan for the community inclusion on decision-making processes with specific actions for YMB</i>	No yet a priority	Few details	Improving our processes	Welcoming	Very welcoming	
Are you devoting economic resources to develop and implement YMB participation opportunities?		●	●	●	●	●	
	<i>Do you ensure enough economic resources to successfully reach your goals set</i>	No	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Often	
Do you have long-term policies to address discrimination?		●	●	●	●	●	
	<i>Do you create welcoming environments for young people to participate in the decision-making process regardless of their race, colour, religion, sex and national origin</i>	No yet a priority	Few details	Improving our processes	Welcoming	Existing and implemented	



GUIDELINES FOR YMB PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING

The document enumerates the conditions and principles that enable active participation and the fundamentals of civil participation in political decision-making. It also describes different forms of civil participation, such as providing information, consultation, dialogue, and active involvement.

These guidelines aim to strengthen and facilitate participation of individuals by municipalities, NGOs and their communities in political decision-making.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY

“organisation”: a group of people who work together in an organized way for a shared purpose;

“non-governmental organizations” (NGOs): voluntary self-governing bodies or organizations established to pursue the essentially non-profit-making objectives of their founders. They may include, for example, voluntary groups, non-profit organizations, associations, foundations, charities or geographic or interest-based community and advocacy groups;

“civil participation”: the engagement of individuals, NGOs and civil society in decision-making processes by public authorities. Civil participation in political decision-making is distinct from political activities in terms of direct engagement with political parties and from lobbying in relation to business interests;

“decision-making process”: the development, adoption, implementation, evaluation and reformulation of a policy document, a strategy, a law, or a regulation at a national, regional, or local level, or any process where a decision is made that affects the public, or a segment thereof, by a public authority invested with the power to do so;

“migrant communities”: the ensemble of individuals in organised, less organised and informal groups that contribute to the community or express their views and opinions, including raising and tackling issues regarding migrants' rights, discrimination and other misconducts. Such organised or less organised groups may include professional and grass-roots organizations, universities and research centers, religious and non-denominational organizations and human rights defenders;

“public authority”: any executive, legislative or administrative body at the national, regional, or local level, including individuals, exercising executive power or administrative functions;

“municipality”: a city or town with its own local government, a community under municipal jurisdiction, or the governing body of such a district or community.

CONDITIONS

YMB face unique challenges that make it difficult to participate in decision-making processes. However, there are some key conditions that can help facilitate their involvement:

- **Inclusive policies and practices:** Decision-making bodies must create inclusive policies and practices that specifically include and consider the needs and perspectives of YMB. Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, adherence to fundamental democratic principles, political commitment, clear procedures, shared spaces for dialogue and good conditions overall for a vital, pluralistic and sustainable civil society.
- **Supportive environments:** Decision-making bodies must create supportive environments that encourage the participation of YMB. This can include providing mentoring and training opportunities and creating safe spaces where YMB can express their opinions freely.
- **Accessible information:** YMB must have access to information that is easy to understand and in a language they can understand. This information should be provided in multiple formats, including online, in-person, and social media.
- **Meaningful opportunities:** YMB must have meaningful opportunities to participate in decision-making processes. This can include being involved in developing and implementing policies and programs that directly impact them.
- **Recognition and representation:** YMB must be recognized and represented in decision-making processes. This includes ensuring that decision-making bodies have diverse representation that reflects the perspectives and experiences of YMB.

By addressing these conditions, decision-making bodies can help to ensure that YMB can participate fully in decision-making processes and have their voices heard.

PRINCIPLES

Civil participation should be promoted and enabled by the following principles, which apply to all actors involved in civil participation in political decision-making:

- Mutual respect between all actors as the basis for honest interaction and mutual trust;
- Respect for the independence of NGOs, whether their opinions are consistent with those of the public authorities or not;
- Respect for the position of public authorities with whom responsibility and accountability for decision-making lies;
- Openness, transparency, and accountability;
- Responsiveness, with all actors providing appropriate feedback;
- Non-discrimination and inclusiveness so that all voices, including those of the less privileged and most vulnerable, can be heard and taken into account;
- Gender equality and equal participation of all groups, including those with particular interests and needs;
- Accessibility through clear language and appropriate participation means, offline or online, and on any device.

STRATEGIC AREAS TO FOSTER YMB PARTICIPATION



By using these strategies, it is possible to motivate YMB in your community to actively participate in decision-making processes. This can help to ensure that their voices are heard and that they are able to contribute to shaping policies and decisions that affect their lives.

- 1 Provide leadership opportunities:** Providing leadership opportunities can help to motivate YMB to participate in decision-making processes. This can include initiatives such as youth councils or leadership programs that give young people a voice and a platform to share their ideas.
- 2 Emphasize the importance of their input:** It is important to emphasise the importance of the input of YMB in decision-making processes. Letting them know that their opinions matters and that they can make a difference can be a powerful motivator.
- 3 Facilitate access to decision-making processes:** Facilitating access to decision-making processes can make it easier for YMB to participate. This can include providing information about upcoming meetings, offering translation services, or arranging transportation to meetings.
- 4 Collaborate with community organizations:** Collaborating with community organizations that support YMB can help build trust and foster engagement. These organizations may have established relationships with young people in the community and can help to encourage participation in decision-making processes.
- 5 Recognize and celebrate their contributions:** Recognizing and celebrating the contributions of YMB in decision-making processes can help to motivate them to continue to participate. This can include acknowledging their contributions publicly, providing certificates of participation, or offering other forms of recognition.
- 6 Use social media and technology:** Using social media and technology can be an effective way to engage with YMB and encourage participation. This can include using social media platforms to share information about decision-making processes, hosting virtual meetings and forums, and creating online surveys and polls to gather feedback.



PARTICIPATION OF YMB

By following these steps, it is possible to build effective participation of YMB in decision-making processes. This will help to ensure that the voices of YMB are heard and that they can contribute to shaping policies and decisions that affect their lives:

- 1 Create safe spaces:** For YMB to share their opinions, ideas, and experiences without fear of discrimination or prejudice. This can be achieved by providing opportunities for open discussions and creating a supportive environment.
- 2 Provide access to information:** Ensure that YMB have access to relevant information about the decision-making processes they are interested in participating in. This can include information about the decision-making bodies, their structure and functions, and the policies they are responsible for.
- 3 Provide training and education:** Provide training and education to YMB on the skills and competencies required for effective participation in decision-making processes. This can include training in public speaking, advocacy, and leadership.
- 4 Encourage engagement:** Encourage YMB to engage in decision-making processes by providing them with opportunities to participate in public consultations, community meetings, and other forums where their voices can be heard.
- 5 Foster partnerships:** Foster partnerships between YMB and decision-makers to ensure they have a seat at the table and their voices are heard. This can include initiatives such as youth advisory councils or youth representation in decision-making bodies.
- 6 Celebrate diversity:** Celebrate the diversity of YMB and promote inclusion in decision-making processes. This can be achieved by valuing the unique perspectives and experiences of YMB and ensuring that they are represented in decision-making processes.



COMPETENCIES OF YOUTH WORKERS AND MUNICIPALITY OFFICERS

In order to work with young residents, including migrants, youth workers and municipal officers need to have certain capacities and knowledge, namely:

- 1 Municipalities working with NGOs:** Building sustainable contacts and networks to create spaces where young people can get information and support to participate
- 2 Exchange of knowledge:** Municipalities have constant exchanges with different organizations working in the field, especially ones working directly with YMB
- 3 Increase knowledge and expertise:** By attending training courses and workshops on local, national and international levels on the topic of how to tackle YMB integration and participation in decision-making in different ways
- 4 Sensitivity trainings:** For youth workers and municipal officers to know how to communicate with young generations, especially with the YMB, to address their needs and involve them more actively
- 5 Work with them, not for them:** Consulting the YMB in their environment and regularly to make them feel comfortable and involve them in the decision-making process.



STRATEGIES/ POLICIES

Several policies can support and promote the participation of YMB in decision-making processes. Here are some examples:

- 1 Youth Advisory Councils:** Establishing youth advisory councils that include YMB can provide a platform for young people to share their ideas and perspectives on issues that affect them.
- 2 Youth representation in decision-making bodies:** Including youth representatives in decision-making bodies can help to ensure that the voices of YMB are heard and taken into account in decision-making processes.
- 3 Inclusive decision-making processes:** Ensuring that decision-making processes are inclusive of all young people, regardless of their migration status or background, can help to promote the participation of YMB.
- 4 Providing training and support:** Providing training and support to YMB can help to build their capacity to participate in decision-making processes. This can include training in public speaking, advocacy, and leadership.
- 5 Offering translation and interpretation services:** Offering translation and interpretation services can ensure that YMB can participate fully in decision-making processes, regardless of language abilities.
- 6 Targeted outreach and engagement:** Conducting targeted outreach and engagement with YMB and their communities can help to build trust and encourage participation in decision-making processes.
- 7 Funding for youth-led initiatives:** Providing funding for youth-led initiatives can support the participation of YMB in decision-making processes by giving them the resources to implement their ideas and solutions.



Overall, the key to ensuring that the voices of YMB are impactful is to create a supportive environment that empowers them to share their experiences and perspectives, amplifies their message, and involves them in decision-making processes.

- 1 Create opportunities for YMB to share their stories:** Providing platforms for YMB to share their experiences and perspectives is crucial in ensuring their voices are heard. These platforms can be in the form of community events, focus groups, or social media campaigns.
- 2 Foster an inclusive environment:** Creating an inclusive environment for YMB is essential. This involves promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in all areas of society, including education, employment, and social settings. Build partnerships with organizations that work with YMB
- 3 Building partnerships with organizations that work with YMB can help ensure their voices are heard.** These organizations can support and guide YMB, helping them develop their skills, build networks, and advocate for their rights.
- 4 Amplify their voices through media and advocacy:** The media can be a powerful tool in amplifying the voices of YMB. Partnering with media outlets and advocacy organizations can help spread their message and raise awareness of their issues.
- 5 Involve them in decision-making processes:** Inviting YMB to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives is critical. This includes involving them in policy development, program design, and other decision-making processes directly impacting their lives.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO EMERGING ORGANIZATIONS AND MUNICIPALITIES TO FACILITATE YMB PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING

Promoting YMB participation in decision-making processes is crucial to ensure their voices are heard and their needs and perspectives are considered. Here are some suggestions for beginner organizations to promote YMB participation:

1 Outreach and Engagement: organizations and municipalities can actively reach out to YMB and engage them in activities that foster participation. This can be done through social media, community events, or outreach programs.

Create Safe Spaces: It is important to create safe spaces where YMB can express their opinions without fear of judgment or discrimination. organizations and municipalities can host meetings, workshops, or focus groups where youth can engage with each other and with organisation representatives in a respectful and inclusive environment.

2

3 Use Youth-Friendly Language: When communicating with YMB, organizations and municipalities should use language that is easy to understand and avoid jargon. This will help youth to feel more included and empowered to participate.

Recognize and Celebrate Youth Participation: organizations and municipalities should recognize and celebrate the participation of YMB in decision-making processes. This can be done through public recognition, awards, certificates or other forms of acknowledgment.

4

Overall, promoting YMB participation in decision-making processes requires a sustained effort. In the next step, organizations and municipalities should continue to engage with them, provide safe spaces, involve them in planning and decision-making, and provide training and support.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SEMI-EXPERIENCED ORGANIZATIONS AND MUNICIPALITIES

If an organisation or municipality is somewhat experienced in promoting YMB participation in decision-making processes, several additional recommendations can be considered:

1

Build Trust: Developing trust between the organisation and/or municipality and YMB is key to promoting their participation. This can be achieved by being transparent, listening to their feedback, and following up on their suggestions.

Foster Mentoring Relationships: organizations and municipalities can foster mentoring relationships between YMB and experienced members of the organisation. This can provide guidance and support for the youth as they navigate the decision-making process.

2

3

Involve Parents and Community Leaders: organizations and municipalities can involve parents and community leaders in the decision-making process to help build support for the organisation's efforts to promote YMB participation.

Utilise Technology: Utilising technology can help organizations and municipalities continue reaching out to YMB and engaging them in decision-making processes. For example, online surveys or discussion forums can gather feedback and input.

4

5

Continue raising awareness on Diversity and Inclusion: It is important to emphasise diversity and inclusion in all aspects of the decision-making process. This can include ensuring representation from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds and that all participants feel valued and included

Evaluate and Reflect: It is important for organizations and municipalities to evaluate their efforts to promote YMB participation and reflect on what worked well and what could be improved. This can help to refine strategies and ensure that the organisation is making progress toward its goals.

6

Overall, partly experienced organizations and municipalities can build on their previous efforts by building trust, fostering mentoring relationships, involving parents and community leaders, utilising technology, emphasising diversity and inclusion, and evaluating and reflecting on their efforts.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXPERIENCED ORGANIZATIONS AND MUNICIPALITIES

organizations and municipalities with relatively mature experience involving YMB in decision-making can do the following to sustain their efforts:

1

Provide leadership training: organizations and municipalities can offer leadership training programs that help YMB develop the skills and confidence to become effective advocates for their communities. This training could cover topics such as public speaking, networking, advocacy, and community organising.

2

Provide financial support: As much as possible experienced organizations and municipalities can provide seed fundings to YMB organizations and youth leaders to support their engagement. These fundings can also act as a motivational factor.

3

Foster youth-led initiatives: organizations and municipalities can encourage and support youth-led initiatives that address the issues that affect their communities. This could include providing resources, funding, and mentorship to young people interested in starting their projects.

4

Engage with decision-makers: organizations and municipalities can work to connect YMB with decision-makers at the local, regional, and national levels. This could involve organising meetings or forums where young people can share their experiences and perspectives with policymakers and other stakeholders.

5

Evaluate and improve their programs: organizations and municipalities should regularly evaluate their programs to assess their impact and identify areas for improvement. This could involve collecting feedback from participants, tracking outcomes, and making changes to their programs based on the feedback they receive.

Overall, partly experienced organizations and municipalities can build on their previous efforts by building trust, fostering mentoring relationships, involving parents and community leaders, utilising technology, emphasising diversity and inclusion, and evaluating and reflecting on their efforts.

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