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DIVER-SITY OF FORMS OF PARTICIPATION

OF YOUNG PEOPLE
IN DEMOCRATIC LIFE

BELGIUM, BRUSSELS

12.2014

2

Over the past few years we have witnessed a growing interest from policy-makers, researchers and various youth work practitioners in the participation of young people in democratic life. This interest was prompted by a justified concern about low voter turnout, declining levels of civic engagement, low confidence in the institutions of representative democracy and other signs of scepticism, apathy and lack of trust in policy-makers. Young people have become increasingly disengaged from the traditional forms of political and civic participation, a phenomenon that might make us think that young people are simply not interested in democratic life. Youth unemployment is yet another cause that makes young people reluctant to participate, participation depending on the social inclusion and well-being of young people in general. Their presumed political idleness is also amplified by the perception that the power of citizens to influence decision-making is decreasing.

Nonetheless recent studies, such as one on the democratic participation of young people in Europe, carried out by the London School of Economics on behalf of the European Commission¹, informs us that there is no crisis of democratic participation and that young people cannot be considered to be disengaged; they still participate in their own ways, according to their new interests and lifestyles. Young people seem to have understood that voting is not the only way of making their voices heard and institutions still need to understand and accept that voter turnout is not the only indicator of citizen participation.

Young people choose unconventional, spontaneous and sometimes unexpected ways of participation, going beyond traditional institutions. The alternative political and civic participation of the youngest generations takes many forms and has different degrees; it can be individual or collective; continuous or isolated, Internet-based; private or public; manifest or latent. Young people support causes on Facebook, sign petitions, donate money to support cancer or AIDS research, write blogs, wear T-shirts with political and social messages, organise car pools to get to work to save money and protect the environment, consume organic and fair-trade food, boycott products, recycle and participate in protests and new social movements such as the Indignados. This list of unconventional examples of participation in democratic life is certainly not exhaustive as new forms of participation continue to appear.

SALTO-Youth Participation is committed to promoting a wider understanding of the notion of participation, while continuing to support the active and informed institutional participation of young people. This new issue of the magazine therefore showcases diverse forms of participation of the young generation, ranging from electoral participation to online participation and social entrepreneurship.

We hope that the magazine will enrich your understanding of the current trends of participation of young people in Europe.

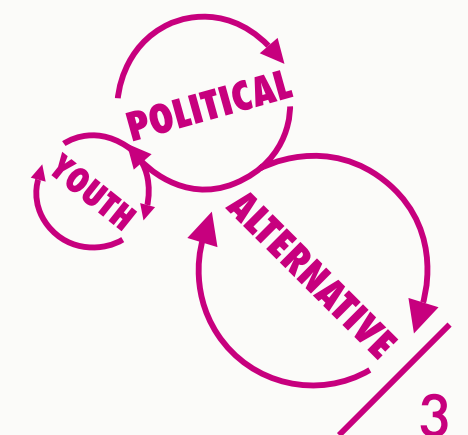
If you would like to see your ideas or experiences of participation of young people in the magazine, please do not hesitate to contact us at participation@salto-youth.net. We also encourage young (social) entrepreneurs to share their entrepreneurial journey in the magazine and inspire other young people in Europe. If the 'Erasmus+ Youth in Action' programme played a role in your entrepreneurial project, we are interested in knowing more about it.

Happy reading!

SALTO YOUTH
PARTICIPATION TEAM

Footnotes

¹eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/tools/documents/lse_study_on_youth_participation_2013.pdf



NEW YOUTH PARTICIPATION TRENDS

YOUTH COMMUNITY ORGANIZING PROCESSES

YOUTH VOICE ROMANIA

ROMANIA, BUCHAREST

11.2014



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When speaking of youth, adults always have the tendency to associate a lack of interest in community issues and apathy to the specified target group. But youth is the main resource for the future and not a problem to be administered. Additionally, considering the permanent change in the situation for young people – in terms of needs and interests, the approach of considering them as the beneficiaries of youth services and programmes is no longer sufficient. Consequently, youth work is also required to go through a change of paradigm and to target youth participation, not only through the services targeting youth development, but by having young people as the main partners in developing processes and services.

Acknowledging the situation and having the opportunity to understand the efficiency of international models with the support of the Harriet Tubman Center in April 2013, Partners Foundation for Local Development FPDL started piloting Youth Voice Romania, a youth community organizing model, where young people play the leading role in making change. FPDL met the students outside school at a meeting of the leader of Youth Voice – Harriet Tubman Center with high school students in Bucharest. After the meeting, the students had been approached and they had been leading the partnership process with the 5 high schools partners now in the process. Community organizing is characterized by the mobilizing of volunteers, for Youth Voice Romania, the volunteers being high school students, meeting every week with a community organizer, whose role is to help the group to create the mechanisms to put their own views forward (Parachini, Covington, 2001). Except for the methodological support and moderating the meetings, which are the responsibility of the community organizer, all the other phases are led by the initiative group. The initiative group, composed of around 10 high schools students, meets every week and at the beginning of the process starts looking for problems affecting the community of pupils. The problem is identified using consultation processes with their peers (focus groups, one on one meeting, collecting the problems on post-its and then selecting the problem mentioned most frequently). After selecting the relevant problem, the community organizer supports

the group in finding a solution and in creating a map of allies and opponents when solving the problem, the community organizer helping the group to formulate position papers and to prepare the negotiation meetings with the stakeholders (school boards, pupils' councils). Having a clear working plan and strategy, the process aims to create school boards to hold the proposals of the group accountable for the actions and projects to be implemented and to meet the needs of the community – the pupils' community.

The main problems addressed so far have been related to the lack of access to information related to opportunities, projects and problems and the lack of proper access to library services. These problems have been validated in public meetings (with between 100 and 200 supporters), the groups then researching the causes of the problem as well as stakeholders who could support their cause. Negotiation meetings have been organized with the principals of the schools and ways of getting support for solving the problems have been developed (in two of the high schools getting the facilities for information banners where both pupils and teachers are now posting information, and in one of the high schools, having the library rearranged in a more youth friendly way). Since June 2013, with the support of EEA grants through the project 'Youth Voice, Here and Now!', Youth Voice Romania has integrated the 'No Hate Speech Movement Campaign', with initiative groups currently researching hate speech cases within the pupils' community and preparing campaigns on combating hate speech in their community.

Youth Voice Romania is approaching young people as the main actors in generating social change, youth led movements definitely being the effective model to boosting youth participation. Having young people as the main actors for change, rather than as the beneficiaries of services, offers them full ownership on the initiatives developed. As a successful initiative, the youth community organizing model developed within Youth Voice Romania is also being adapted to and replicated by projects developed in partnership, as well as being piloted within a rural youth community organizing model in 3 rural communities by the Center for Sustainable Community Development (CSCD).

YOUNG LEADER

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ADINA MARINA CALAFATEANU, PHD & ANDREEA BÚZEC

Partners Foundation for Local Development, FPDL Bucharest, Romania

About

Adina Marina Calafateanu PhD – is a project manager and trainer within Partners Foundation for Local Development FPDL and the leading figure of the CSCD. Adina holds a PhD in Comparative Youth Policies in Romania and Turkey and in 2012/2013 had been a member of the Advisory Council on Youth and starting with 2014 is a member of PEYR – Pool of European Youth Researchers. Adina has extended expertise in working with youth with fewer opportunities, developing structured dialogue mechanisms, youth policy and youth research.

Andreea Buzec – is a project manager and trainer within Partners Foundation for Local Development (FPDL) being the leading figure of 'Youth Voice Romania'. Andreea is also a trainer of the Romanian National Agency – Erasmus+ Pool of trainers, having extended expertise in community organizing, lobby, advocacy, strategic participation, global education and development education, graphic facilitation and graphic recording, learning methodologies and intercultural dialogue.

Contact

adina@cdcd.ro
andreea@fpdl.ro

Links

www.fpd.ro

A STEP TOWARDS AN E- DEMOCRACY ?

YOUTH POLITICAL
PARTICIPATION THROUGH
NEW TECHNOLOGIES



BELGIUM, BRUSSELS

09.2014

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Nowadays, there are indicators showing that young people tend to be sceptical regarding traditional forms of political participation. According to the EU Youth Report 2012, across Europe, the percentage of members of parliament aged 30 years or younger is around just 3%. This data reflects the low level of party affiliation among young people in Europe today. Since 2002, the percentage of young Europeans who are members of political parties has hovered around roughly 2%.

This does not mean that young people today are necessarily less interested in politics. Many researchers and practitioners agree that young people are rather interested in engaging on less conventional platforms. As such, traditional political activities and participation formats simply have little appeal to younger generations. Young people, especially those below the age of 30, are naturally inclined to use new technological applications. Today, literature tends to agree that people born after 1990 can be defined as 'digital natives'. This generation has been the most exposed to the use of 'Web 2.0' applications and, as such, has been using social media and video sharing platforms since their teenage years.

It is undeniable that social media such as Facebook and Twitter and blogs are increasingly used by young people to engage in political discussion or simply share their views. This is reshaping traditional means of political communication and participation. New media facilitate interactive, peer-based and networked activities, and have lowered traditional barriers to the production and circulation of political content. Traditional forms of political activism, such as demonstrations, are also taking advantage of the use of these new virtual platforms. Digital tools reduce the barriers to organizing collective actions. We all remember the events that led to the so-called 'Arab-spring', where social media were used to assemble young people on Tahrir Square in Egypt. Other traditional forms of participation such as petitions or protests are also becoming 'virtual'. Websites like change.org, where online petitions are organized, are transforming traditional methods of participation, creating new spaces and reducing the effort needed to raise issues of general interest. As some scholars have noted, the advantage of this website is that it does not take a great deal of commitment to support a cause, and consequently has led to an increase in the use of online petitions. The digital era also allows the organization of effective virtual protests.

To provide an example, when U.S. Representative Todd Akin suggested that women's bodies are able to prevent pregnancy in cases of rape, the outrage expressed on Twitter went 'viral' and quickly spread to other social networks and blogs, while reporting on the subject was amplified by traditional news channels such as CNN. Before the introduction of 'Web 2.0' technologies, his words would probably have provoked only a small protest, organized in a physical space where fewer people would have been able to participate. This type of experience also shows that 'Web 2.0' technologies can enhance the capacity of the general public to make politicians accountable for what they say and pay the consequences for their words. In this case, the success of the online protest resulted in the U.S. Republican Party reducing support for Akin's campaign.

E-CiTiZEN

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Also, studies (EU Youth Report 2012) have shown that, in recent years, the number of young people using social media to contact their public authorities through social networks has increased. Political actors have come to recognize the potential of social media as a new forum for youth political participation and they are slowly adapting. One of the ‘first revolutionaries’ was probably Barack Obama, who extensively used social media to engage young people during his 2008 electoral campaign. But we have many other more recent examples: the Government of the Republic of Croatia has a particularly active Twitter account, while Matteo Renzi, the current Italian Prime Minister, is an assiduous user of Facebook and Twitter accounts, where he participates in live discussion sessions with citizens. Moreover, statistics report that by 2009, 80% of United States’ Congress members had set up their own YouTube channels, enabling unfiltered communication to their constituents.

A very interesting example embodying the power of the net is the experience of the ‘Movimento 5 stelle’ (5 stars movement) in Italy. Born from a political blog, it became a political entity where election candidates were selected, and programs discussed by the registered members of the movement on the Net. Many have questioned the inclusiveness of the process, but it is undeniable that the Movement ranked first amongst political parties participating in the 2013 electoral competition in Italy.

Since the beginning of the development of ‘Web 2.0’, observing the sharp rise of social and participatory use of the Internet by (co-)creative Internet users producing user-generated content, it was expected that citizens would increasingly contribute to policy making in all kinds of ways: a digital democracy was about to start. Despite the quick and interesting developments, as described above, nowadays both practitioners and scholars tend to agree that the Net is not the panacea for repairing the disengagement of young people from traditional forms of political participation. The so-called ‘digital divides’ – differences in the opportunities to access the internet and its different uses depending on age,

gender, ethnicity, social and economic conditions, disabilities, etc. – need to be addressed. Therefore, to aim at a digital democracy some preconditions need to be in place. For instance, equal access for all to the Internet and ICT tools is vital. Some scholars even question if access to the Internet should be considered a human right. Secondly, the promotion of media literacy is crucial in order to create the necessary skills to actively use these new tools. This needs to be accompanied by Civic/Citizenship Education in schools in order to form critical and selective minds and active citizens capable of contributing to the development and well-being of the society in which they live. Finally, human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of expression and freedom of association, as well as clear normative principles should be extended to the online world.

This process needs to involve and engage not only researchers, practitioners and users, but also civil society groups and youth organizations in close cooperation with governments.

CHIARA LORENZINI

About

Chiara Lorenzini has worked as a Project Manager in Brazil and Italy. She spent five years in Kosovo working with the UN Peacekeeping Mission and with the OSCE, for whom she focused on the protection and promotion of human rights, minority rights and principles of good governance. She also worked as a Senior Adviser on Higher Education and Youth Empowerment for the OSCE, engaging mainly with young people and students from minority communities in Kosovo. She is currently based in Brussels and works as a freelance researcher on youth participation.

Contact

chiara.lorenzini@gmail.com

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FOCUS – ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

A PLATFORM THAT RE-CONNECTS YOUTH

WITH TRADITIONAL
DEMOCRACY?

BELGIUM, BRUSSELS

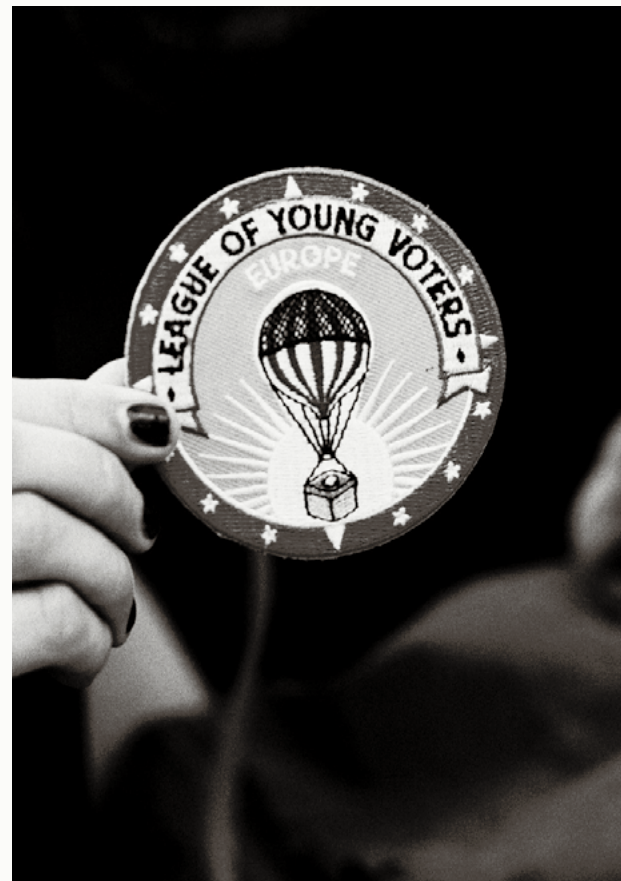
05.2013 – 05.2014



‘This time it’s different’ ran the European Parliament’s 2014 campaign motto. At the Youth Forum, we were already thinking along these lines in 2011, when the League of Young Voters in Europe was first suggested as a possible project to accompany the European elections that would take place three years later. We foresaw at the time that 2014 would be different, not because of the changes from the Lisbon Treaty coming into force, but because this would be the first pan-European test of public opinion since the crisis erupted, triggering a spectacular loss of confidence in the EU. Falling turnout had been talked about and anguished over time and time again – young people are the group most likely not to vote (67% of 18-24 year olds didn’t vote in the 2004 European Parliament elections, a figure which rose to 71% in 2009, while we still wait for the 2014 figures). The older generations vote, the young do not. This is the reality.

The League of Young Voters and the European Elections 2014

To identify what went wrong in previous campaigns, the League of Young Voters joined forces with the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance to research the curse of youth absenteeism. Our research analysed why young people abstain from voting, looking at the sociological profile of young abstainers and the offers that political parties make. Further research will be conducted end of 2014 to look at how different 2014 was. Our first study concluded that young people are not disengaged from political issues and can be brought back to the ballot box. It makes a set of recommendations in this regard: member states should propose a quota of 25% of party candidates to be under 35; political parties should replace their old methods of selecting candidates in favour of open primaries; they should include youth issues clearly in their manifestos; political campaigns should target key groups of young people, such as students, the socially excluded and first-time voters. The role and history of the EU should feature on school curricula in EU member states; in the longer term the voting process for EU elections must be simplified and the voting age lowered.



Member States, the EU institutions and political parties share responsibility for this. However, as the voice of young people and youth organisations in Europe, the European Youth Forum also has an important role to play. The League of Young Voters is our contribution. It provides a space for young people to express their concerns and expectations in the run-up to elections, and fuses together youth campaigns of all levels and from across the EU into a pan-European movement.

When planning our 2014 activities – the European Elections were always to be the first phase of this ambitious initiative – these recommendations were constantly present in our minds. Our online platform provided a set of tools for a young person wishing to vote: a dummies guide to the elections, to understand how to vote and what the elections are about; an unbiased and easy-to-navigate app with a politically neutral comparison of the political offer, what is at stake; and which political offer best matches your political priorities and preferences. In partnership with the University of Maastricht and Euronews, a televised youth-focused debate among the top candidates of the European elections – the European political parties’ nominees for the position of President of the European Commission – targeted first time voters and students as one of the groups that vote the least. Our last major event for 2014 was the League of Young Voter’s participation in the European Youth Event in May in Strasbourg bringing together 10,000 young people for 3-days to discuss their ideas for a better Europe.

Elections results and the future

One would be forgiven for looking at what happened in May 2014 and questioning the impact of any of the European elections mobilisation campaigns. While the breakdown by age groups will only be made available late in 2014, very few would see the much-celebrated steadying of the general turnout as a major success factor.

OLDER YOUNGER GENERATIONS DON'T VOTE / 11

Yet if European youth continue not participating in elections and other traditional forms of political processes, the opportunity to change their lives for the better will not come about. Shrinking voter turnout in general is furthermore alarming in terms of the opportunities it provides to populist and extremist parties. The League of Young Voters was set up to tackle these concerns. If anything, the results of the European Elections 2014 prove that the objectives the League set out for itself, as a tool to improve youth political participation in a qualitative way, remain relevant now more than ever.

Research results suggest that despite a growing gap between youth and traditional forms of participation, this gap is not typical of all political activity. It’s just rather the case of not looking in the right place; the gap in participation between youth and other age groups is virtually non-existent, or even reversed, in unconventional forms of participation. These include

cause-oriented political actions and political engagement on the Internet, via blogs and social media for instance. With regards the latter, it can be said that from the opposite side’s perspective, political institutions, governments and political parties have approached these forms of political activism in a tentative way at best.

All these elements put together highlight the need for further research and understanding of this relation, but especially the need for a platform that raises this dialogue between traditional political entities and young people’s political participation methods. In 2015, the League of Young Voters will aim to cement its status as this platform, and will plan activities that will target both young people through their own means and political parties. These will include further research on new forms of youth participation, including e-participation, and fun and humorous accountability mechanisms for young people to compare the promises of politicians made during their campaign on youth-related issues, with their voting behaviour once elected.

The absence of youth, of all backgrounds, from the conventional political process could seriously damage the future of democracy.

JOHN LISNEY

*European Youth Forum
Coordinator of the League of Young Voters*

Contact

john.lisney@youthforum.org

Links

www.youngvoters.eu/eu
www.youthforum.org

YOUR EUROPEAN ELECTION

IN BELGIUM



How do you make people care about the European elections? How do you explain a complicated and unknown process, especially when you have two other elections on the same day? How do you foster political awareness and participation? To a large extent, these are the questions that have driven our project: 'bEUvote2014, Your European Election in Belgium'.

'bEUvote2014' was an online project run by young people to explain the workings and important issues of the 2014 European parliamentary elections, with a special focus on Belgian – related issues. It was mainly based on new ways of communication and aimed at raising awareness of the European elections.

BELGIUM, BRUSSELS

09.2013 – 05.2014

EUROPE

13

During the month of September 2013, two friends were chatting over a few cups of coffee, and the discussion veered towards the upcoming elections in Belgium, nicknamed 'La mère de toutes les élections' (the mother of all elections) because of their importance and the fact that people had to vote in three different ballots: at regional, federal and European level.

Having just graduated in European Studies in Brussels, we quickly concluded that the European debate would lack sufficient media coverage compared to the federal and regional levels. Indeed, we knew about the difficulty of promoting a healthy democratic life in the European institutions: the European Union is a concept still hard to grasp for a large part of the population, its policy making process remains largely unknown, and the institutions themselves are becoming more and more unpopular for a perceived lack of democratic legitimacy (this sentiment having been reinforced due to the financial crisis). But we didn't want to remain passive and complain throughout the whole campaign, so we decided to act. That was the main reason for launching the project 'bEUvote2014': explaining the electoral campaign for the European elections, with a clear focus on the issues linked to Belgium.

We approached the project from a clear educational and pedagogical perspective: how to make the EU and its work more understandable to the non-specialized citizen. We wanted to provide a more accessible form of information and different perspectives on the subject.

To do so, we developed a website with several sections and tools to explain the whole process. We mainly relied on

new ways of communication to spread the word (website, social media, infographics). To realise our project, several elements were included in the website: a press review on general European issues, and another one more related to the Belgian situation, interviews (several MEPs and candidates as well as dedicated scholars), infographics (to give a broad picture of the workings of the European Union and its elections), opinion pieces (by the young people involved in the project) and also a complete list of all the candidates in Belgium (with their current position, party allegiance, communication channels, ...).

During the whole campaign, we promoted our initiative by actively participating in events linked with the European elections: from conferences with Belgian candidates to the Eurovision debate on 15th May at the European Parliament between the leading candidates, to the European Commission presidency. And, as a final event, on 25th May – the day of the elections, we hosted an electoral party in the building of our former university in Brussels. Many students attended, questioning the results and exchanging their points of view on what was going on that night.

At the beginning of the project the team was only composed of the two creators: François Balate and Pierre-Yves Leveaux, and the version offered on the website was only available in French. After a while and some positive feedback from our audience we contacted other people in order to launch a Flemish version of the website: Julien Vrydagh, Jimmy Los, Niels Gheyle, Thomas Vanhuyse and Sofie Defour joined the bEUvote2014 adventure and helped us reach a larger audience, reflecting the linguistic diversity of Belgium. At the end of the project the bEUvote2014 team was composed of a good bunch of individuals mainly centred around our universities: the Institute for European Studies in Brussels and the University of Gent. Original content was produced both in Dutch and French and most of the articles and interviews were translated into the other language, which was particularly interesting for the candidates' interviews, allowing us to compare the political propositions in the North and South of the country.

After the elections, we continued to analyse the different dynamics going on: the appointment of the new European Commission president, repartition of the seats in the assembly, who would be the Commissioner for Belgium...

If we look back today, we can say that it was a successful initiative, even if it was on a small scale. From the moment we were just chatting about the potential lack of media coverage of the European elections to the electoral party, consistent progress was made. We listened to the critics and their feedback, we developed our own way of working (our main step forward being the bilingual version of the website, which is unavoidable in Belgium) and we learned a lot about the importance of the political participation of young people nowadays. Indeed, while the project has slowed down somewhat recently, we are all still in contact to launch potential new projects. The idea of working together is still in our minds and a new project will probably emerge in an innovative form.

We all agree that politics, especially at the European level, can sound complicated. But if we want citizens – and mainly young people – to take an interest, it has to be accessible. If you have the key to understanding what is going on, what is true and what is not, what is at stake and who the actors are, then democracy can be truly functional. Perhaps that was the idealistic motto behind the bEUvote2014 project...

**FRANCOIS BALATE
& PIERRE-YVES LEVEAUX**

Contact

f.balate@gmail.com

pierreyves.levieux@gmail.com

Links

www.beuvote2014.eu

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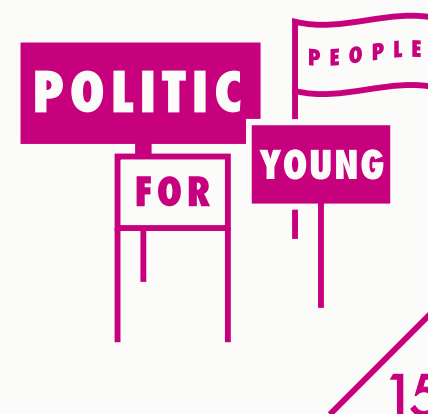
EUROPE CAN LEARN FROM THE SCOTTISH REFEREN- DUM!



UNITED KINGDOM, LONDON

11.2014

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The Scottish referendum has been one of the hottest trending topics in the world news for the past few months, with notable figures from all walks of life and careers, from the UK and internationally giving their support to either the yes or no campaign. Even if you were in a cave in the UK or in Europe you would have heard about it.

On the 18th September of this year, the people of Scotland turned out to vote in the Scottish referendum on the question ‘should Scotland be an independent country?’¹ On the following day, it was concluded that 55% of Scottish voters said ‘No (thanks)’ to the idea of Scotland being separated from the UK, as they believed Scotland was ‘better together’ as part of the UK².

A massive 97% of all Scottish people registered to vote in this referendum and an astonishing majority of 84.6% (3,623,344) of those registered to vote, voluntarily chose to go to the polling stations and have their say. In some parts of Scotland, such as East Renfrewshire and Stirling, voter turnout was over 90%³.

A lot can be said about the turnout of this democratic process, such as, it was almost as high as the turnout in elections in places such as Belgium and Luxemburg where it is compulsory to vote by law. The turnout in the Scottish referendum is also one of the highest in the democratic world and became the highest turnout for any election held in the UK since the introduction of universal suffrage in 1918.

Apart from the high turnout in the Scottish referendum, what made this election very different was that this was the first time in British electoral history that 16 and 17 year olds in the UK were enfranchised with the right to vote and have a say on the future of their country. Most pessimists would have thought that democracy would come to an end when they were given the right to vote. Some people expected 16 and 17 year olds not to engage with politics or be competent or mature enough to vote. Some people expected them to be influenced by their parents, but studies in social attitudes in Scotland showed that this was far from the case. People also expected

the overall turnout to be lower, believing that if people older than them were not really engaged and voting, then why would 16 and 17 year olds do it? However, to the surprise of many pessimists at the lowering of the voting age, over 80% of 16 and 17 year olds were registered to vote before polling day. 16 and 17 year olds, like other young people, could not be called apathetic; they were campaigning, taking part in events, debates, and questioning politicians on their policies and proposals.

This engagement from 16 and 17 year olds had politicians such as Conservative Member of the Scottish Parliament, John Lamont, who was originally opposed to allowing 16 and 17 year olds the right to vote, changing his view and arguing, ‘*We now need to look to reform the law to achieve this extension to the franchise for all elections*’⁴.

Whilst some might argue that 16 and 17 year olds only had to vote on a ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ question, the question these 16 and 17 year olds were faced with turned out to be very complex and complicated for both them and older people. 16 and 17 year olds had to hear about what an independent Scotland would be like and policies regarding important issues such as agriculture, immigration, the economy, EU membership and currency being discussed by both sides (yes and no campaigns). As far as I am concerned, this was a much bigger, more difficult decision for 16 and 17 year olds to make than which politician to elect to represent their constituency. Like the rest of the Scottish population, these 16 and 17 year olds had to decide whether an independent Scotland was what they wanted or not.

The engagement of 16 and 17 year olds in this election is no surprise. The young people in Scotland were as engaged as their counterparts in Austria, The Isle of Man, Guernsey, Jersey and parts of Norway, who can also vote at 16 and 17 years olds. The case for the lowering of the voting age was stressed in The Kenny Report 2: ‘Is Politics for young people?’⁵ However, the Scottish referendum only strengthens the arguments for why the voting age should be lowered when I wrote this report. It surely puts the argument

back on the table for all European states, not just the UK. How many more examples of 16 and 17 year olds engaging in politics do we need to see before we give them the right to vote in our European States?

As well as member states lowering the voting age, they also need to ensure that politics is taught as a subject in schools, so that young people understand and engage with politics whilst they are young. Teaching people about politics and the importance of voting whilst they are young is crucial for a healthy democracy. This is the only true way we can engage younger people in politics. We also desperately need to see young people in our national parliaments, otherwise we are only sending the message of ‘young enough to vote but not to be elected’. This is a reality that needs changing. More political parties across Europe need to encourage younger people to stand for election and, if anything, create a shortlist.

What the rest of Europe also needs to learn from this election is that the only way an election can be engaging for everyone, not just the people who vote religiously at every election, is when politicians and political parties bring the conversation to voters. In Scotland campaigners were not just talking politics in the media or on social media, they were putting in the ground-work and canvassing and knocking on almost every door to raise awareness of the Scottish referendum and why they wanted people’s votes. They were campaigning a long time before polling day, not just a month or two before like most so-called campaigners would do.

Campaigners made sure they were engaging and including the people who were least likely to vote, and those who felt excluded from society, such as ethnic minorities and those from poorer backgrounds in Scotland. They made people feel that the power to make change was in their hands, not just in the hands of the converted habitual voters and an elite few.

Politicians and political parties across Europe need to physically communicate with voters instead of throwing leaflets through letterboxes and making party political broadcasts, which are proven not to be effective. Voters are getting smarter and tired of only seeing politicians when it is time to vote. People want to know ‘who’ and ‘what’ they are voting for and ‘why’.

Let us stop playing this lazy game of labelling people or groups in society who do not vote as ‘apathetic’. We are all aware through research that there is a lot of political participation from these so-called ‘apathetic’ people outside the ballot box. What all politicians and political parties can learn from Scotland is that if they get off their backsides and talk to real people on the ground and engage with them, they can show people why they should vote and why they should vote for them especially. Then maybe, like Scotland, we can have almost 9 out of 10 citizens in our own countries voting in our democratic elections.

KENNY IMAFIDON

About

Kenny Imafidon (21 years old) is an advisor on youth policy, a social entrepreneur and a campaigner on socio-economic issues affecting young people in the UK. He is also the award-winning author of The Kenny Reports.

Kenny decided to pursue his love for politics from a young age and has been in the political arena since he was 16 years of age. Whilst on his journey as a young person growing up in Peckham, South East London, Kenny’s passion was ignited to investigate, create and write the series of ‘Kenny Reports’. The purpose of these reports is to raise awareness and articulate the challenges young people and disadvantaged communities face. The award winning Kenny Reports also provide solutions to issues such as voter apathy, crime, education, youth unemployment and youth engagement in politics.

Kenny continues his educational journey and his love for politics and law, winning a 3-year Amos Bursary scholarship to study a LLB degree at BPP University College. He is currently the Chair of the social enterprise Push Your Passion and a trustee of the British Youth Council. Kenny was awarded the number one position of Rare Rising Stars 2014, and acknowledged for being the most outstanding black student in the UK. Kenny is using his voice to influence change with practical solutions across the UK and has been an advocate for the young people of Britain in countries such as Spain, Lithuania, Israel, Germany and Austria.

Footnotes

¹ scotlandreferendum.info

² Ibid

³ Ibid

⁴ www.bordertelegraph.com/news/borders/articles/2014/10/01/511252-msp-supports-votes-for-16-and-17-year-olds

⁵ kennyimafidon.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/The-Kenny-Report-2-Is-Politics-for-young-people.pdf

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

JOB’IN



Job’In is a non-profit organization based in the French-speaking part of Belgium. Its mission is to promote and support entrepreneurship and self-employment. Customized business support is provided – free of charge – mainly to unemployed people. In 17 years, Job’In has already helped to create more than 1,500 small companies.

From the first idea to the launch of the activity, Job’In’s team of experienced counsellors informs, advises and guides unemployed people who want to become self-employed.

During the counselling process, Job’In helps each person to prepare their project and create their business plan. For any soon-to-be entrepreneur, the purpose of this process is to validate the commercial potential of the idea, estimate its profitability, evaluate the needs, build the best strategy and develop the necessary management tools.

Job’In also provides a business incubator system that allows project holders to test their activity during 6 to 12 months under certain conditions. During this period, they benefit from a temporary status that allows them to invoice their clients and/or to sell their products under Job’In’s legal guardianship. In order to cover the launching costs, any beneficiary of the business incubator receives an advance of up to €5,000.

Job’In also helps with applications for financial help from public or private organizations and provides information in order to help project holders to comply with administrative formalities, launch the business and develop it.

Within this structure, a branch called Job’In Design has also been developed in order to help young designers. A specialized team guides industrial and object designers, stylists, fashion designers, architects and graphic designers to launch their own business, regardless of their social status. Thanks to Job’In Design, designers receive advice about building a brand image, applying for export grants, participating in international fairs and contests, and developing their professional network in the relevant sector.

ARNAUD HUBERTY

Adviser Job’in

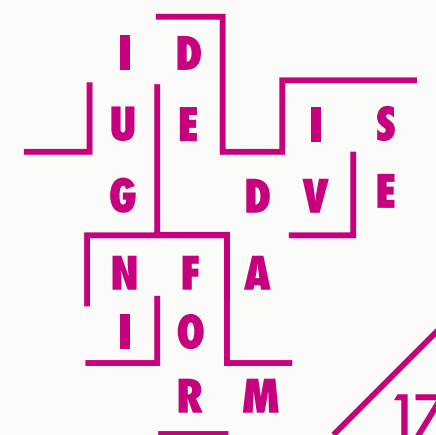
Contact

arnaud.huberty@jobin.be

Links

www.jobin.be

www.jobin-design.be



BELGIUM, LIÈGE

11.2014

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JOB YOUR SELF



NATHALIE JEUDY

Contact
Njeudy@jyb.be
 Centre d'entreprises Dansaert
 Rue d'Alost, 7-11, 1000 Brussels Belgium

Links
www.jyb.be

Photo
 Florian Leonard

Presentation

In Brussels, JobYourself (JYB) and the three Activity Cooperatives (AC): 'Bruxelles-Emergence', 'DEBUuT' and 'Baticrea', accompany people towards entrepreneurship. Their social mission is to enable young people to undertake and create their own jobs in a secure environment that helps them to acquire the know-how of an entrepreneur through individual and group training and coaching. After a preparation period which can last 6 months, Candidates for Entrepreneurship (CE) can start to work legally, as a self-employed person, for example, and safely test their activity on the market for a period of 18 months within the AC, while keeping their social benefits. JYB operates on a mix of public (at federal, regional and local levels) and private resources (10% taken from the gross margin of the CE in the trial period and patronage).

Target group

The main target group is job seekers entitled to unemployment benefit and recipients of social welfare benefits issued by the CPAS (Public Center for Social Action). There are no eligibility criteria, only a critical analysis of the project's feasibility, as well as an evaluation of the CE's motivation and his/her entrepreneurial skills. Some candidates are 'profiled' by job counsellors, mainly from Actiris (public employment service), but most of them come spontaneously after searching on line. JYB is now developing a sensitization program with different partners for young people up to 30 years of age, aimed at creating a link between education and (self)-employment, and fostering entrepreneurship among young people.

Type of activities

A wide range of activities can be developed in the AC. The system is particularly advantageous for seeking service jobs, crafts and activities that require little investment and stock. Here are some examples: beautician, graphic designer, consultant, trainer, designer, gardener, craftsman, carpenter, electrician, translator, caterer, itinerant trader... There is also a strong focus on sustainable development and social entrepreneurship.

ENTREPRENEUR

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How does the program work?

Info Session – Collective information.

Coaching-Mentoring – meetings are held each month to define the goals that must be achieved for the next meeting and for the good economic development of the project.

Workshops – parallel to these meetings, CEs participate in some workshops such as project management, accounting, making a business plan, prospecting, and sales techniques, which are necessary to increase their entrepreneurial skills and chances of success.

Test period – Accounting and analytical management: CEs can test their activity on the market during 18 months, using the VAT number of the cooperative to produce and sell their product or service and generate income from their activity. Their social benefits are maintained during the whole period and the AC manages the CE's accounting. During the test period, the AC takes 10% from the

CE's gross margin. Monthly accounting extracts, analysed during the individual coaching sessions, allow CEs to monitor their activity month by month: income, expenses, debts, profits, bank balance, etc. When they leave the AC, they recover their income, which helps them to launch their business.

Skills assessment & reorientation – These two coaching services are offered to a CE whose project is not progressing enough and to all those who have lost the confidence or motivation to complete it. JYB's mission is to lead CEs towards positive results; thanks to the reorientation service, many of them find a job which corresponds to their aspirations.

The BAB (Entrepreneurs Club) – Thematic meetings are regularly organized, encouraging friendly networking between entrepreneurs (CE and ex-CE who have created their business). Experts also come to these events to share their know-how (testimonies).

In summary, the JYB offers

- Customized support;
- The opportunity to undertake an individual professional project supported collectively;
- A safe environment;
- Autonomous development of one's own activity in a network of peers;
- A cooperative and participatory framework;
- A real trial period, within a legal structure and with the AC's VAT/Business number;
- Professional accounting and administrative management.

BOOST YOUR TALENT

ENTREPRENEURSHIP
'DISCOVERY' COURSES



BELGIUM, BRUSSELS

2008 – 2014

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Faced with a lack of entrepreneurial culture among the young people of the canal area and the central districts of Brussels, structures experienced in raising awareness of entrepreneurship have defined a joint strategy under the name 'Boost Your Talent' (BYT).

'Boost Your Talent' offers schools and local structures working with young people the chance to integrate a training programme on entrepreneurial spirit (entrepreneurship) and awareness of the socio-economic environment that teachers/organisers can integrate into their curricula (primary education – secondary education – universities) or extracurricular activities. 'Boost Your Talent' is an ERDF project (European Regional Development Fund).

BYT was launched in 2008 for a period of 5 years. The partners of 'impulse.brussels' are 'Step2You' (ICHEC), 'Groupe One', 'les Jeunes Entreprises' and 'UNIZO'. BYT has already directly trained more than 13,000 young people and was a finalist in the 'promotion of entrepreneurship' category at the European Enterprise Promotion Awards 2013 organised by the European Commission.

'We owe this success to the collaboration between the various partners, the schools, the associations and the economic fabric of Brussels. Young people's enthusiasm to discover the world of entrepreneurship, to want to develop their entrepreneurial skills, or indeed their pride, at the end of the course, at being involved in their project, are infectious. That reinforces our idea that this initiative is one of the ways to support the economy in Brussels', explains Annelore Isaac, director of 'impulse.brussels' and coordinator of the 'Boost Your Talent' project.

Since 2013, BYT has increasingly met the precise and specific requests of schools, extracurricular structures and local partners. Within this framework, the partners co-create courses that integrate different programmes and offer new tools with new partners linked to youth, employment and entrepreneurship. In this way, BYT offers tailored packages combining the maximum number of programmes to provide a logical course for young

people. In addition, to encourage entrepreneurs to become involved in the development of entrepreneurial culture, 'Boost Your Talent' invites them to speak in classes but also to welcome them onto their premises.

In March 2014, 20 young people from Brussels aged between 14 and 20 took part in a pilot immersion project in a company in the Brussels-Capital Region during their spring holiday. Taken from all types of secondary education, these young people regularly and voluntarily visit extracurricular structures. Plunged into the world of business, such was their choice for these school holidays. This immersion placement was spread over 3 days, for 6 hours a day, and took place in the Village Partenaire business centre encouraging sustainable entrepreneurship. The young people had direct contact with the business world through different activities such as visiting the business centre, interaction with entrepreneurs and meetings with coaching professionals. Above all, this work placement was designed to provide complete immersion in the professional world. Encourage creativity and innovation, and raise awareness of responsible and sustainable entrepreneurship are the slogans for this type of project. These 3 days of immersion in the business world formed part of a wider course of 4 months' duration that incorporates the BYT tools ('learning by doing') and which aims to develop a desire to embark on new business ventures from a young age.

'Through this project, we want to show young people that starting a business or becoming self-employed is still possible today. We hope to develop their taste for entrepreneurship by helping them become aware of their strengths and why not given them the desire to opt for an entrepreneurial career', explains Virginie Losson, coordinator of the 'Boost Your Talent' project at 'impulse.brussels'.

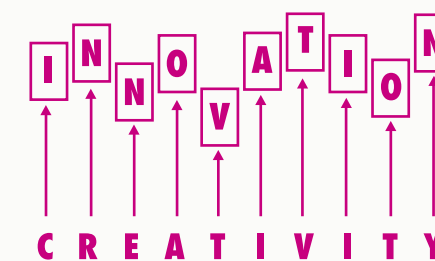
Given the success of this first initiative, 'impulse.brussels' is repeating the experience with the Schaerbeek Local Mission, which is offering the '10/30' project, a project to mobilise young job-seekers to design and put in place a professional project through the performing arts.

'Boost Your Talent' incorporates an entrepreneurial touch for 3 days in this 3-month course aimed at young people aged between 18 and 25 (young people removed from the job market). They will first be put at the head of small businesses and through the game will have to calculate and take decisions about the operation of their business. The young people will then be asked to reflect on their strong points, their driving forces and the areas that interest them, before being prepared to meet the entrepreneurs of 'La Lustrerie', another business centre also based in one of the 19 Brussels municipalities.

VIRGINIE LOSSON

Contact
impulse.brussels
02/800.00.69
vlo@impulse.iriset.be

Links
www.boostyourtalent.be
www.facebook.com/boostyourtalent.be
www.youtube.com/boostyourtalent
(Several videos presenting the educational tools offered, activities experienced by students, testimonies ...and a great deal of enthusiasm to embark on new ventures.)



ENTREPRE- NEURSHIP TRIP IN QUEBEC

U-
START



BELGIUM & QUEBEC

11.2013

22



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Before talking about the exchange project in Canada, it is crucial that we talk about our club and how it has evolved since its foundation 10 years ago. 'Starters ULB' is, in the first place, a circle of students from the Université Libre Bruxelles, whose main goal is to promote entrepreneurship inside the campus by organizing different activities during the academic year.

Today 'Starters ULB' has taken the first step to becoming 'UStart Entrepreneurship Club'

In fact, in 2013, Jessica Hakizimana, Nicolas Phillemote, Maria Wouters Rentero and Simon Souris decided to completely change the aim of the circle. The idea now is to create a nationally based network of young entrepreneurs from different colleges and universities. Every group will comprise 25 students from various faculties who are chosen to participate for one year in the UStart programme. The programme is based on three main axes: 'Discover, Experience, Exchange'. Since the start of this new model, UStart is now present at the Université Libre de Bruxelles, Université Catholique de Louvain and ICHEC Brussels Management School, and we hope to attract even more schools of higher education in our new organization.

UStart offers a full academic programme. This way, during the whole year, the members of every club will have the chance to develop a project with the help of a number of conferences and workshops on how to manage teams, facilitated by Belgian entrepreneurs. They will cover different dimensions of entrepreneurship: from brainstorming and legal and accounting aspects to business plans and marketing strategies. Students will be followed and assessed twice during the academic

year by a jury of entrepreneurs and business angels. The objective will be to validate their idea at the beginning and finalize their prototype at the end.

That said, the construction of a toolbox in the different fields of entrepreneurship and the development of a business idea are worthless without a share capital. This is why 'UStart Entrepreneurship Club' is trying to create a network through its walking dinners and meetings with entrepreneurs and its visits in the start-ups around Europe. What is more, the club organises a business trip twice a year. This is where the 'Bureau International de Jeunesse' (International Youth Office) played a major role. The founders had the chance to discover another approach to entrepreneurship and to meet with their homologues in Quebec, thanks to the support from BIJ. This was a whole new experience for the club because it gave them not only the opportunity to establish a strong bond with members of the Quebec clubs (who attend our National Entrepreneurship Seminar every year) but also to bring added value to Belgian entrepreneurship.

Today it is time to expand the impact of our club both in Belgium and abroad. This project therefore aims to develop a network of Belgian and Quebec students – entrepreneurs by building a bridge between Belgium and Quebec over the coming years. Our objectives are:

- The establishment of an annual inter-clubs Belgium-Quebec exchange program;
- The development of a common alumni network;
- The organization of an annual francophone seminar;
- The creation of a Belgium-Quebec internship program in the field of entrepreneurship.

During the exchange held in November 2013, several elements were already implemented. One of the main objectives was to create an address book with contacts. On this occasion, the Belgian delegation had the opportunity to meet several circles of Canadian students – entrepreneurs including the Dobson Centre for

Entrepreneurship, Laval University Club and the Club of HEC Montréal, as well as several Belgian entrepreneurs and expatriates attending the exchange.

This year, our delegation expects to meet them again to discuss an inter-club partnership and to implement a medium term vision in order to achieve this common objective. In addition to this primary objective, we hope to encounter different aspects of entrepreneurship through our trips in Quebec, i.e. social entrepreneurship, ecological entrepreneurship, classic entrepreneurship, etc. In fact by experiencing these different aspects we wish to maximize opportunities and bring the know-how to our country to develop these various concepts. We are also looking for new innovative ideas and meaningful ways of thinking that we can share and apply when we come back.

Finally, knowing that the experience abroad will add a touch of dynamism and eclecticism to 'UStart Entrepreneurship Club' and that it will allow us to expand the vision of entrepreneurship and bring it to an international level, we intend to promote this trip by organizing a photo and video exhibition from the recruitment campaign of our clubs within our University, but also from our Conferences or Seminars. This way we will show the impact that these events have had on us. We wish to emphasize the fact that entrepreneurship is an extraordinary thing full of lessons and opportunities.

To conclude, there is a phrase from A. De Lamartine which we believe embodies the ambitious objectives we have set for ourselves quite well: 'There is no man more complete than the one who has travelled a lot and who has changed twenty times the shape of his thinking and life'.

JESSICA HAKIZIMANA

(co-President of UStart Entrepreneurship Club)

Links

www.ustartbrussels.com

Photo

www.alaindionnephotographe.com

TO BE STUDENT & ENTREPRENEUR



BELGIUM
QUEBEC

11.2013

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ACEE (Association of student entrepreneurship clubs) is an organisation aimed at coordinating the Belgian entrepreneurship student clubs called BeCEO's. As part of a youth association, the main objective is to stimulate and make people, especially students, aware of entrepreneurship and how it works in particular. We operate across the different university campuses in Belgium. This allows us to gain credibility and recognition from companies and academic authorities.

The main objective of our project and exchange in Quebec was to share different knowledge about entrepreneurship and build up a wide network beyond Belgium. Besides that, we really wanted to discover new cultures as well as different ways to live, build ideas and work. Initially we really wanted to discover new cultures and the ACEE Colloquee was the best way to start doing that.

The idea for the project started a few years ago when 3 major entrepreneurs clubs, not at that time involved in BeCEOs (the organism striving to coordinate the student entrepreneurship clubs), decided to take part in the ACEE's seminar organised in Quebec (Canada) in order to improve their entrepreneurial competencies. When they came back from their incredible trip, they started to share their experience with Belgian students and raise awareness about the importance of cultural diversity between our two countries.

This capital event probably marked the beginning of our willingness to experience the same thing ourselves. This proved to be a very successful project, with great results. The association members learned all about the differences between the way in which entrepreneurship is viewed in our two countries. And last but not least, they learned all the necessary skills to build a strong business-the kind of practical knowledge that is absolutely not taught in our Belgian universities...

Our main challenge was the budget: it seemed that this would be an expensive project, but we managed to develop strong relationships with local students which allowed us to greatly reduce our total costs (accommodation costs) given that we were, most of the time, hosted by those kind people. Added to this, we were given an exchange scholarship of €850 which represented approximately half of the budget for our trip. In total, the amount required for our exchange was €1,550 for 11 incredible days!

In order to draw some conclusions; the project as a whole was an incredible experience, enabling us to discover new cultures and learn new skills (related to entrepreneurship). We learned so much during this trip that we have decided to repeat it this year!

BRICE KELECOM

Vice-president of BeCEOs

Contact
brice.kelecom@gmail.com



THE SOCIAL BUSINESS THAT BECAME A LEADING WEBSITE

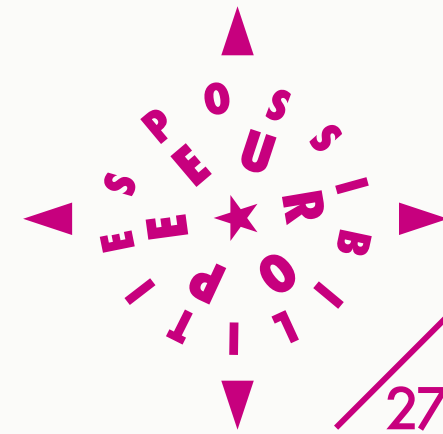
ABOUT THE EU IN TURKEY.



TURKEY, ANKARA

11.2014

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AB-ilan.com (EU-ads.com) was formed as an internet platform to promote Turkey's EU accession process in 2008. It is a major source of information for EU actors, experts, NGOs as well as for students seeking a career in the EU and Turkey. AB-ilan.com provides EU actors with the most relevant, updated information on open positions, tenders, scholarships and other related opportunities.

Originally started as a blog page in 2008, the website grew and became the leading website on the EU in Turkey. Turkey's membership process has a long history and Turkey and Europe have had close ties for a very long period of time. But much of that process has focused on the political side of things. When talking about the EU, the perception has very much been influenced by the political disagreements with some member countries and this has started to overshadow the technical side and benefits of EU membership. As the support for EU membership has been declining in rates and numbers, we decided to highlight the fact that the European Union is not only about politics and has many more dimensions to it. Thus, we started making news and publishing opportunities for careers, education, and EU funding under IPA, and the content generated a lot of interest in Turkey. Currently we are followed by over 250,000 people a month, making us the top EU related website in Turkey. Since 2008, AB-ilan.com has helped thousands of people in Turkey find opportunities in Europe, do mobility projects, get scholarships and receive funding for their projects.

At first, although the website appears to be only an ads website, it is just a tool for us to show the non-political side of EU accession and there is much more than the disputes and political agreements/disagreements to experience. We would like to see the number of supporters for EU accession in Turkey increase. We are constantly in touch with institutions, universities, and NGOs to find what possibilities there are for Turkish people that we can announce.

We refer to ourselves as a social business. We are not a not-for-profit organization, but we are not necessarily a for-profit organization either. We would like to call ourselves a social enterprise; there is no profit distribution in our organization and everyone, including the owners, is paid a salary. The profit generated in the company is re-used for the organization's other social works. We receive no support from government institutions, the website is free of charge for everyone but we charge for the consultancy and training services we provide.

Being a social enterprise comes with difficulties at times, as does the terminology of social enterprise (social entrepreneurship is quite new not only in Turkey but also in the world). The concept is very much associated with non-governmental/non-for profit organizations (such as associations and foundations) and people tend to be quite sceptical towards organizations that do social work and earn money at the same time. But over time, we believe that the perception will start to change.

HUSEYIN AKTURK

About

Huseyin Akturk was born in Izmir, Turkey. He is currently Managing Director of AB Akademi, an Ankara based project management consultancy firm and General Manager of AB-ilan.com, an internet platform (visited by 200,000 people a month) aimed at promoting Turkey's accession process. Akturk completed the International Baccalaureate Programme at Waterford Kamhlaba UWC of South Africa, in the Kingdom of Swaziland as a United World College Scholar. He graduated from Colby College in Waterville, Maine in 2007 with a major in International Relations and minors in Economics and Administrative Sciences. He started his professional career as an Africa Analyst for International Strategic Research Organization. He served in many organizations including but not limited to Kale Group, The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges, United Nations. Previous to his current job, he worked as Social Research Expert in an EU funded technical assistance Project, Internal Migration Integration Project. Currently he is working as a consultant in EU funded projects in Turkey.

Contact

*huseyinakturk@yahoo.com
www.linkedin.com/in/huseyinakturk*

Links

AB-ilan.com

SPEECHLESS IN EUROPE



RESTORE THE DEBATE WITH
AN APOLITIC POINT OF VIEW

GERMANY
HUNGARY
FRANCE
ITALY

09.2014 — 08.2016

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The new EU Erasmus+ programme supports the creation of new forms of participation for young people in society. Among the projects submitted and granted in the first round of Erasmus+ related to this topic is the strategic partnership for youth *Speechless in Europe/Sprachlos in Europa/Sans voix en Europe – the PlanetEUrope method – Innovative forms of dialogue about Europe and the EU for young people unacquainted with the concept of European citizenship*.

From September 2014 until August 2016, the project will work on finding and developing ways complementary to existing forms to engage young citizens in expressing their wishes and ideas for the future of the EU. The main beneficiaries will be young people aged between 15 and 25, who are not reached by the European Union's usual communication measures. The project will be realized by an international partnership between the German-based coordinating organization 'Eurosoc#digital gGmbH' and its partners 'Liquid Democracy' (Germany), 'All Content Presse' (France), 'Solutions4.org' (Hungary) and 'Associazione Culturali IMPULSI Onlus' (Italy).

The project in brief

One frequently noted criticism of the European project is that, from a citizen's perspective, it appears to be elitist and lacking popular support. It is therefore increasingly necessary to close the gap between young people living in the EU today. The project Speechless in Europe aims to close this gap by developing and offering forms of engagement for young citizens who are not reached by the European Union's existing communication measures.

By combining both on- and offline tools, the project explores the innovative forms of e-participation, exchange and dialogue, both at a local and European level, on the themes and issues considered relevant for the state and future of European integration by the young people involved. The project fosters European integration by employing a personal, 'storytelling' method which allows for the development of

close ties between young people from different European countries. One main focus of the project is to overcome language barriers by using means of communication like storytelling through photography, video, art, etc., that do not leave the participants 'speechless'.

The idea for the strategic partnership for youth 'Speechless in Europe' came about during its predecessor project: 'PlanetEUrope'. Participants noted that one frequent criticism of the European project is its apparently elitist character and lack of popular support. This is not only due to the top-down approach of European integration. Some perceive the activities and organizations around the 'Brussels bubble' which promote the European idea, its institutions and policies as equally elitist: They mainly address a well-educated, well informed percentage of young people in Europe who are already politically interested and have a high tendency to participate in a democratic society anyway.

Aims and objectives

The project 'Speechless in Europe' aims to give young people who consider themselves apolitical, EU-sceptic and feel alienated from the forms and debates of traditional politics, the opportunity to make their wishes and ideas for the future of the EU heard.

The main objectives

- Involving young people from all spheres of society, but who often face obstacles in terms of language and literacy barriers (especially those from difficult educational backgrounds) in the dialogue about Europe.
- Exploring the innovative forms of e-participation, exchange and dialogue, both at a local and European level, on the themes and issues considered relevant for the state and future of European integration by combining both on- and offline tools.
- Developing fresh methods, formats of dialogue and communication that are open, fun and creative in order to contribute to building a sense of European citizenship.

DIAN
Y
EUROPEAN
UNION
29

To this end, the project has received a financial contribution from Erasmus+ Youth in Action of €211,634. The project 'Speechless in Europe' is an innovative project that engages young people who do not yet consider themselves as European citizens in a dialogue about the European Union. It has a strong focus on multiplier-events to build up local structures for multipliers to connect, exchange and plan future activities. The international partnership of the consortium comprises old and new member states to ensure the transfer of the project results to a large number of other EU countries.

LEONI BECKMANN

Project Coordinator

Contact

Eurosoc#digital gGmbH
c/o Leoni Beckmann
Glogauer Str. 21
10999 Berlin
lbeckmann@eurosoc-digital.org
T: +49 30 2023 9615 0

Links

www.eurosoc-digital.org

AGORA- POLIS 2014



GO LAÏCITÉ!

BELGIUM, NAMUR

09.2014 – 05.2015

**BUILD
YOUR
FUTURE**

31

'Go Laïcité!' is an association that has an extended network in Belgium which works in close contact with local youth clubs and offices. They also found partners in France due to a common interest in promoting the active participation of young people in society.

The project 'Agorapolis 2014-2015' wants to bring a creativity lab close to the political world. Young people will be encouraged to foster their sense of active citizenship by participating in the creation of their 'ideal city'.

They will face the challenge of constructing a model of a neighbourhood in which they will be encouraged to think about the real problems that affect our society by having to face and solve them. The models of their ideal cities will be shown to policy makers and the young people involved will have the chance to discuss various topics with them and showcase their solutions to real problems.

The idea comes from a cycle of previous projects that Go Laïcité has realized in the past few years. The project 'Laicitat' focused on the same idea of letting young people build their ideal future city, and gave them the right input to start thinking about how to make the project bigger. Fostering their experiences and learning from past mistakes, Go Laïcité has decided to present the project 'Agorapolis 2014-2015' as a continuation of the learning process they offer to young people.

Go Laïcité's principle aim is to raise awareness of secular morality among young people and allow them to get in touch with values such as social engagement, human dignity, innovation, education, liberation, democracy and the right to vote. In particular with this project they aim to get youngsters to reflect on the important role they play in building their own future in society, and to involve them in the political process. The city model will be the tool by which young people can face real challenges and solve the real problems affecting our society nowadays. This will allow the youngsters to foster a sense of critical appraisal and active citizenship.

The project is financed by the Erasmus+ programme under Key Action 3 – 'Structured Dialogue', because it is considered as a good example to represent the main aims and objectives of this action. It will also be supported by the resources of each partner organization. What makes this project a good example of

'Structured Dialogue' is that each participant organization, located in different areas of Belgium and France, will be in charge of creating a neighbourhood model. In this way each model realized will be focused on the local environment. The adopted methodology, based on non-formal learning, allows young people to foster their contact with the environment they live in, directly facing and reflecting on local issues and developing a sense of critical appraisal. Moreover, it will allow the opportunity to foster transversal competencies by stimulating their creativity to build something real and concrete. Each group will be followed by a trainer and local experts in urbanism and politics. During the realization of this project we will see a real interaction between young people and local authorities, which is exactly the aim of Key Action 3 – 'Structured Dialogue'. The youngsters will be involved from the first step and will demonstrate how to build their (and our) own future.

All the work will be exhibited at the end of the project during an 'open door' event called 'RécupEre' in Namur around December 2015. During the event the policy makers will be invited to see how young people imagine the society they want to live in and this will also provide an occasion to exchange opinions and raise awareness among local citizens.

A video presenting the project during its preparation phase has been produced, and it is possible to see it by following the links.

PIERRE BODART

Contact
pierre@bodart.be

Links
golaicite.eu
youtu.be/iaAP5I0mxN0

KEY ACTION 3

POWER SHIFT 2014



SWEDEN, JOHANNESHÖV

07.2014 – 11.2014

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Brief description

The objectives of this activity are to demonstrate the strong link between ecological and social sustainability and get participants to reflect on what this means. A meeting was held between young people, academics, policy makers and promoters whose work is in some way linked to the themes of climate and social sustainability, and who can raise the level of knowledge and meet young people for a common dialogue. The highlight of this project was a conference that brought together nearly 100 participants aged 16-30 during a weekend in northern Sweden.

The project also contributed to policy change by creating public opinion and trying to contribute to a knowledge-based youth policy through meetings between young people and policy makers. These meetings were based on equality and mutual learning and dialogue, and participants were able to communicate their perspectives, questions and opinions about sustainability and the future.

Relevant issues related to the theme were introduced in advance through blog posts, music videos, workshops, newsletters and shared articles on social media. Material for the conference was also gathered through meetings with youth in schools when the conference was marketed.

After the conference the participants got help to keep in contact with, and support each other through the network coordinated by 'Push Sweden'. This will lead to long-term, non-formal learning.

One important result of this conference were new insights into the importance of socially sustainable ways to work as a young change maker in an NGO working for a sustainable future. This led to an internal campaign in 'Push Sweden' to reorganise in order to find socially sustainable structures and ways to work on the change of the society, and to include a social focus in every planned activity.

How did the idea come up?

'Power Shift' is an international concept, arranged globally to build a global, youth climate movement. The idea to focus on social sustainability came from the intention to broaden our perspective of sustainability.

Objectives

People who have not, and would not otherwise have met will get to know each other and create new networks and forms to support each other. This will contribute to a more dynamic, diverse and representative movement of young people for sustainability.

The unique, equal meeting between policy makers and youth, just before the national elections in Sweden, will narrow the gap between the two groups, give new insights and a clear message to policy makers on how to improve youth policy and environmental policy. This will also contribute to a more holistic and visionary debate about the future of young people.

Our long term objective is the rise of a young, united and socially sustainable movement that pushes Sweden, Europe and the whole world in a sustainable direction. Every young person in Sweden will know about

'Power Shift' as the conference to attend if you want to make an impact on youth policy, and work for sustainable development in Sweden and Europe. We also want to contribute to the empowerment of young people in Sweden in general by showing what is possible and disseminating tools for leadership.

Strong points

The application shows an overall thinking on the topic throughout the entire project. What is particularly positive is that the various events provide opportunities and different ways for young people to meet and debate with decision makers on environmental issues. Many non-formal methods were used during the project and it provided the opportunity for contact between young people from different backgrounds. There were also very interesting thoughts about the dissemination and exploitation of results through various channels. Participants were also encouraged to hold a press conference when the project finished. The application is well developed regarding the mutual exchange of experiences, lessons learned and ideas between young people and academics, inspiration and politicians.

MÅRTEN PELLA

Contact
marten@pushsvergie.se

Beneficiary/promoters
'Push Sweden' is a platform where young people collaborate for sustainability. It operates as a network of and for young people who are active in and committed to a movement for sustainability and a strong youth voice on climate change. The idea to build an organisation emerged from the network created in the Swedish 'Power Shift' conferences that started in 2011. 'Push Sweden' launched in conjunction with Earth Hour in 2013.

Budget
€36,400

Detailed Partnership
*The municipality of Umeå
The county of Västerbotten.
WWF.*

SUSTAINABLE
FUTURE 33

SOCIETAL NETWORK

Do you want to carry out intelligent, inclusive and sustainable projects? With a higher degree of quality and responsibility? No matter if you are an NGO, a company, or public administration, Societal provides you with 'the Societal Method'. This is a method for responsible project management, based on the main international standards of Social Responsibility, yet simplified and adapted to the structure and needs of non-profit projects.

CREATING
SUSTAINABLE
VALUE



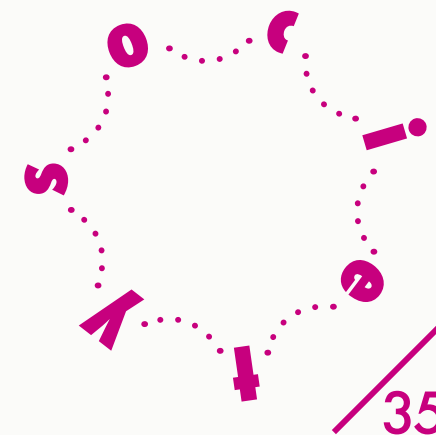
ROMANIA, BUCHAREST

09.2014

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'Societal' briefly

'Societal' is a network shaped by REPER21 (European Network for Promoting a Responsible Economy, 21st century) and ANPCDEFP Agency – the institution which manages the comunitarian programmes in education in Romania (the Erasmus+ Programme 2014-2020). Societal aims to promote Societal Responsibility and to implement it in all types of not-for-profit projects. It is only through the 'triple performance' – economic, environmental and social, that our projects can help Europeans to overcome the current crisis through integrated and efficient solutions which do not ignore any of these three spheres. Societal's main references are, at a normative level, Europe 2020 strategy (which promotes 'intelligent, inclusive and sustainable' projects) and, at a managerial level, the international standards of Societal Responsibility (ISO26000, Global Reporting Initiative).



Premises

Although the project you are implementing is a 'not for-profit', as well as a 'for-profit' project, it involves human resources, natural and financial. Societal premises that these resources are of great value to our society and that the way they are used should be socially responsible.

'Social Responsibility' means the application of the principles of sustainable development (environmental equilibrium, social equity, economic efficiency) and of good governance (transparency, ethical behaviour, stakeholder involvement) in the activities and

projects of the organisation. The concept of Social Responsibility initially appeared in the business world. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) defines the company's contribution to Sustainable Development. But CSR does not have to remain the 'private property' of the conventional business environment. A coherent strategy for responsibility would bring forth numerous advantages for your organization: better financing opportunities, motivation for human resources, better chances to attract talented employees and volunteers, improvement of the relationship and collaboration with your partners, the opportunity to diversify your projects, a better reputation in the local community.

Last but not least, the actors from civil society and social entrepreneurs should play a leading role in sustainability and social responsibility! So not for profit projects must be exemplary both for conventional 'for profit projects' (made by companies) and for projects in the administrative field (carried out by public actors).

Societal toolbox

The method for responsible management elaborated by Societal allows the launch of responsible, flexible and efficient initiatives, and it involves the use of 3 instruments:

- **Societal Code** – a Normative instrument, which briefly presents the aim, values and management principles to which the management of an organisation must adhere in order to be part of the network.
- **Societal Indicators** – an Operational Instrument, made up of a set of 36 indicators, organised into 4 areas of intervention (social, environment, economic, governance). They allow the systematic integration of all the aspects of Social Responsibility in project management.
- **The Dashboard** – an Organisational instrument, which defines the role of the project principals (the management of partner organisations, the project coordinator, societal managers, the implementation team) in all the 4 phases of the responsible initiatives (Plan/Do/Check/Act).

For particularly complex projects (with a large number of partners, heterogeneous objectives, large budget, actions at an European level), if it is considered that the first 3 instruments are too simple, Societal offers counseling and assistance for adequate usage of the main international standards of Social Responsibility: ISO26000 and Global Reporting Initiative.

Societal in numbers

- 500 member NGOs;
- 80 'Societal Managers' who learned the method during the implementation of the pilot projects and thanks to a training programme;
- 20 pilot projects, financed through Grundtvig and Youth in Action programmes, which tested out our responsible management method during their implementation;
- 10 cultural events branded with the Responsible Event logo;
- 1 Responsible Event logo – a sign of recognition for the Romanian cultural festivals applying Societal Responsibility Methodology;
- 1 Responsible Project Management Method – 'Societal Method'.

A double enlargement

Starting with 2014, Societal aims to blossom through:

- **Branch Enlargement** – Societal aims to integrate into its network companies and institutions implementing 'not for profit' projects in partnership with the NGOs from the network.
- **Geographical Enlargement** – Societal targets the integration in the network of organisations (NGOs, companies, institutions) from various European countries, partners with the NGOs from the network.

DIANA IOANA CALIN

Corporate Social Responsibility Expert
REPER 21

Contact
diana.calin@reper21.org

SHAPE THE FUTURE

CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION & DIGITAL MEDIA



GERMANY, BERLIN

2011 — 2014

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Brief description

How do digital and online media affect the opportunity for young people to have their say and participate in democracy? How can citizenship education make use of digital media in seminars and workshops, and strengthen the perspective of young people in society and politics? These were the main questions of a three year project of the Protestant Academies and institutions of protestant youth, carried out all over Germany. Throughout the project, partner institutions used social media platforms, computer games, creative forms of internet-based protest such as flash mobs, and mobile applications like Geocaching or smart phone devices to test new methods in citizenship education. Young people gave an insight into their vision for the future, working on issues such as climate justice, sustainable development and European democracy.

How did the idea come up?

At the beginning of the project, there were great expectations about the impact of digitalization and online media on participation and democracy. In particular, some argued that online media opened new channels for voicing one's own opinions on political issues, creating an enlarged space for deliberation, working out intelligent solutions and mobilizing others for a common cause. For citizenship education, these expectations were both promising and challenging:

If democracy changes profoundly, we would have to understand these developments and adapt learning formats. If new forms of collaboration and political activism emerge, we need to take these into account when supporting young people and their commitment.

Digital and online media provide enormous opportunities – not for learning with new media, but for a new learning culture supported by media. Media can really change the relationship between those who provide a learning space and participants in seminars and workshops. They allow for sharing the process and its results with people outside the seminar room. And they open up new forms of collaboration among participants.

Objectives

'Shape the future' was therefore meant to strengthen the participation of young people through digital media, change citizenship education and develop methods that could later be used by other actors in citizenship education. The approach was to test different devices and applications, always trying to develop ideas, visions and initiatives for the future. All the results were to be presented on the website shape-the-future.de, on social media and the websites of partner organisations. As an example, in two projects, young people used the popular computer game Minecraft to develop ideas for the prospective development of their hometown and produced 'machinimas' (films created with the help of a computer game). Similarly, other groups

found 'hit places' and 'shit places' in their home towns, and documented the status quo and the changes they would like to see, using Geocaching or digital scavenger hunts with smart phone apps.

In another seminar, high school students came up with creative activism and a campaign to make daily life in their town more sustainable. This was also related to two projects dealing with climate change. One team organised a globally connected campaign for climate justice, bringing together participants from Africa, Latin America, Asia and Europe. People organised an action day on these continents, stayed in touch via the internet and developed action tool kits to involve others. In yet another project, a regional network of young people was founded. The young activists built up a platform to exchange practical ideas for change, and go out in schools and public places to tell others about how to reduce emissions in daily life. Other workshops focused more on how to pragmatically change the way in which young people – who are already active – work together and create more impact, e.g. using collaborative tools for their association, storytelling in online media, and internet-based campaigns.

Another strong topic was the future development of Europe. In two projects, participants got in touch with experts and a wide audience outside the seminar room, using video conferences and crowdsourcing via social media. All the results were presented to policy- and other decision-makers, as well as to the public through diverse forms of expression, which could then be shared and commented on via social media.

DIGITAL
DEMOCRACY

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Pitfalls/difficulties

As expectations were high, not only among the general public, but also within the team, some important lessons were learnt! First, using digital and online media in seminars needs preparation, time, and a willingness to constantly adapt the working process to participants' needs. Second, as in any other form of participation, it is important to define exactly what can be achieved with each project.

Many online platforms in use today are not interesting for young people as they have a good sense to distinguish between real opportunities for participation and mere public relations projects. Therefore, partners from the media, politics and relevant stakeholders need to be involved in making young peoples' voices heard and in establishing exchanges with real politicians. This also means, thirdly, that new forms do not replace established forms of youth participation, but supplement them and it was very important for the success of the project to link the two spheres. Finally, social media work best when it makes sense to use them: So don't try to pep up existing projects, but rather develop new formats and really make use of the potential offered by digital media.

Strong points

If used in this way, and that will be the long-term impact for citizenship education with young people, digital media and online media offer diverse channels for working on the perspectives of young people and sharing them with policy-makers and a wider audience. In particular, several projects successfully reached out to young people with fewer opportunities, taking their daily realities and needs as starting points and engaging them through media that they found interesting and could easily access. The learning environments and formats changed profoundly, leaving space for participants' creativity and initiative.

On a very practical level, online media helped to open the door to the seminar room, connecting participants with experts in a certain policy field, to young people across the globe and across different projects. The use of media helped to show the ideas and commitment of young people in an inspiring way. With regards to the general development of a digital democracy, the project shows: Participation with online media can be more fun, it can be sustainable and it can make a difference.

The topical focus of 'shaping the future' proved to be an interesting and inspiring question to work on different subjects – as the future always starts now. Last but not least, project results were discussed and compiled in a publication entitled 'Shape the future – Citizenship education and digital media' (available in 2015).



OLE JANTSCHKE

Contact

jantschek@politische-jugendbildung-et.de

Budget

The project was primarily financed by Stiftung Deutsche Jugendmarke, a German public foundation, and supported by the participating institutions and several partners.

Beneficiary/promoters

Protestant Academies in Germany (EAD) / Evangelische Jugend in Deutschland (aej)

Detailed Partnership

The project was carried out with a variety of partner organisations at regional, national and international levels.

ABOUT US

SALTO-YOUTH PARTICIPATION

What do we do?

SALTO-Youth Participation fosters the active and informed political, social, economic and cultural participation of young people via our training activities, seminars, conferences, pedagogical resources and support brought to coaching in youth work. We build close links to youth-related research and policy to design relevant and innovative tailor-made activities and resources to better respond to the needs of the beneficiaries of 'Erasmus+ Youth in action'. Moreover we adopt and promote a cross-sector approach in line with the new integrated structure of Erasmus+ to build synergies between different fields and foster co-operation.

How do we do it?

- A website;
- Practical guides;
- Publications;
- Magazines;
- Newsletters;
- Training courses;
- Organisation of events;
- Best Practice Projects Database;
- Partner Finding Database – OTLAS.

Contact

participation@salto-youth.net

steph@salto-youth.net

raluca@salto-youth.net

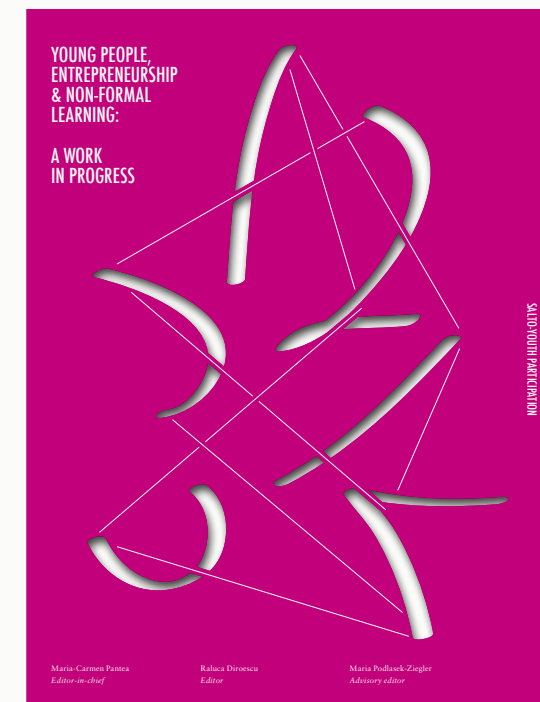
Links

www.salto-youth.net/participation

www.salto-youth.net/Participationcourses

SUPPORT, ADVANCED LEARNING & TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

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AMPLIFY PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN EUROPE!

Recommendations for policy and practice



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Contact
Rue du commerce 18 – 1000 Brussels, Belgium
T: +32 (0) 2 219 09 06
F: +32 (0) 2 548 38 89

Links
www.salto-youth.net/participation

Editor-in-chief
Raluca DIROESCU

Editorial support
Stéphanie NOWAKOWSKI

Proofreader
Alex WEBBER

Graphic design
Kidnap your designer

Paper
Cyclus Offset

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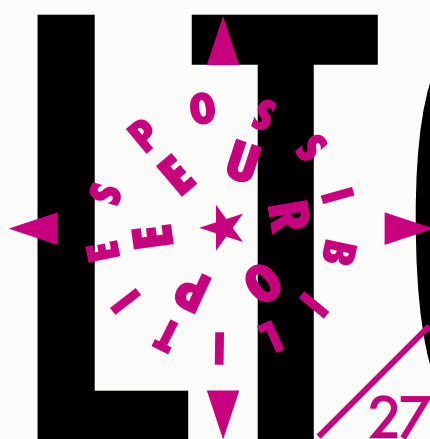
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SUPPORT,
ADVANCED
LEARNING &
TRAINING
OPPORTUNITIES



EUROPE

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ENTREPRENEUR

POLITIC

PEOPLE

FOR

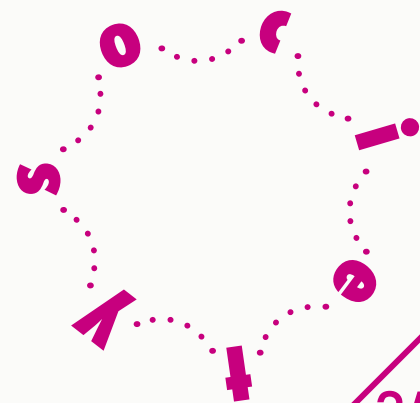
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INNOVATION
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CREATIVITY

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DIGITAL
DEMOCRACY

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YOUTH PARTICIPATION

SALTO-YOUTH
PARTICIPATION
RESOURCE CENTRE

