LOCAL/REGIONAL NETWORKS FOR (MEANINGFUL)
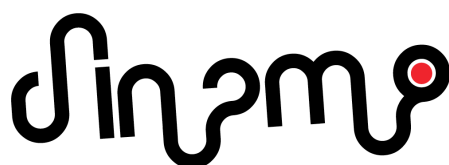# YOUTH PARTICIPATION

A practical guide for Youth organisations & Youth Workers

dinamo

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A practical guide for Youth organisations & Youth Workers about
local/regional networks for (meaningful) youth participation

FOR BIG ISSUES, BIG SOLUTIONS.

portuguese saying

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INTRODUCTION

" A local/regional network for (meaningful) youth participation is the name for a instrument/mechanism that provides a stronger voice to a youth community while being a convenient vehicle for this voice to be heard and to have the respective - significant - impact in the target context.

Putting Youth working together at local/regional level may well be a great advantage in achieving social transformation, but it may be as well a challenge due to different factors like diversity of stakeholders, lack of resources or support, low youth sector development, lack of recognition of the value of youth work or non formal education, cultural diversity of communities, etc. Generally, if it does not look challenging, probably there's not a great need to create a local/regional network for (meaningful) youth participation.

This practical guide is targeting youth organisations and youth workers aiming to strengthen youth participation in their contexts through local/regional networking in the youth field. It's an outcome of the process of creating two networks in the framework of the project "Local/regional networks for meaningful youth participation" - it results of the experience of the two contributors organisations, Dínamo (Portugal) and Il Sestante (Italy), in this field and with the collected feedback from young people that were involved in these experiences.

It's an attempt to help youth organisations and youth workers in their strategical work, considering that a network is generally a long-term process. This guide is not intended to be exhaustive, it's rather a very practical approach to networking about, with, and for young people.

Regardless of the target stakeholders of this guide, it does not mean that other social actors can't benefit from using it, namely young people, perhaps can use it to help the ones that can help them to achieve their networking objectives.

We hope this guide proves to be useful and we wish you a happy (and meaningful) networking. "

A STRATEGY PROPOSAL

Following, a step-by-step strategy is presented aiming to be inspiring to youth organisations and youth workers in their work on networking for youth participation. This strategy does not intend to be a closed proposal, it intends to be inspiring and flexible for your own action instead.

Also the proposed order of these steps can sometimes be modified (for example, in the cases where a relevant youth network already exists) but, the general approach for this guide was the cases where no significant steps are already taken, and where the network will need to be created from scratch.

THE STEP-BY-STEP STRATEGY

1. STOP, THINK AND MAKE SOME QUESTIONS TO YOURSELF

Youth organisations often find difficult to stop their ongoing processes and to think critically about them. The creation of a local/regional network may well be a long-term process, so it is important to invest some time on thinking about it before it starts.

Try to make yourself (or your organization) some questions related to local/regional networking like:
- for how long don't you cooperate with other youth organisations in your territory?
- how many times did the youth community of your territory met?
- Are there any mechanisms or structures that provide an opportunity for young people to dialogue with   youth policy-makers?
- Is there any knowledge-based analysis of the Youth reality in your context?
- Is there any document built by young people expressing their needs in your territory?
- Are the youth policies in your context evidence-based?

If you are not satisfied with the answers, it may well mean that it makes sense to promote a network project in the context where you work.

If some of the answers make you happy, it may be good to re-check the real need of a project about networking for youth participation or if networking is the best way to establish solutions in your context. If there's still a significant need of a network, you may try to focus your project in the questions that didn't provide a satisfying answer.

2. UNDERSTANDING THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF
A COHERENT YOUTH PARTICIPATION PROJECT

PARTICIPATION SHOULD BE BASED ON A CHALLENGE

The challenge means here a theme that shoulddirectly related to the daily reality of young people and the issue should be engaging or interesting for young people;

PARTICIPATION SHOULD BE BASED ON A CAPACITY

Young people need to have some knowledge and skills to get involved. Therefore projects or initiatives should fit the capacity of these young people and need to ensure that the missing competencies can be developed in the frame of the project;

PARTICIPATION SHOULD BE BASED ON A CONNECTION

Young people have to feel 'connected' with and supported by humans, communities, ideas, movements. This means essentially that they want to know that they are not left alone and they can identify with and count on a group or institution (to count on them also in the sense of getting support and necessary space).

Besides the three above-mentioned principles, the experience of practitioners working in the field of youth involvement shows that if one wants to achieve meaningful youth participation, then this should be:

Available to all young people, regardless of background, nationality, religion etc.

The revised Charter states that the principles and various forms of participation advocated in this Charter apply to all young people without discrimination. So access to participation cannot be limited on the basis of such factors such as where somebody comes from or what his / her convictions and beliefs are;

VOLUNTARY

This means that participation is not compulsory and young people have a right not to participate if this is their choice. They can also decide on the degree and form of their involvement;

Related to real needs of young people

It is important and motivating for young people to get involved in issues that directly affect them: to achieve some positive change, to look for solutions to their problems, to gain new skills, to develop their interests and hobbies. That way they also feel that they take the responsibility for their own lives and communities;

VALUED

Everybody should know that his / her contribution is important (even if this contribution is limited);

Beneficial to all the actors involved Meaningful participation brings benefits to young people, to adults, to organisations and communities as it achieves positive changes in different areas – personal development, level of efficiency, social change etc.;

OFFERING DIVERSE FORMS OF INVOLVEMENT

One form of participation appropriate for all young people does not exist. Therefore it is important that a variety of ways to get involved is offered to youth so that they can choose what they find the most relevant and interesting;

BACKED UP WITH RESOURCES NEEDED

If the resources are not available, access toparticipation becomes very limited, and for some – impossible. There need to be different resources allocated such as time, human resources, finances, know-how, transportation etc.;

BASED ON REAL PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE ADULTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Partnership means communicating expectationsand fears, negotiating roles, sharing power and responsibility. Partnership does not always mean sharing all the areas of work and responsibility equally. It means sharing these areas according to what both sides want, need and can contribute;

TRANSPARENT

It is necessary that all the parties involved in the process are aware of the purpose of participation and its limits. They should also have a clarity on what kind of influence young people have, what can be changed and what not;

Anchored as a policy principle rather than a mere technique

Participation is not one technique or form of involvement. It is complex and it embraces various areas, levels and dimensions. Therefore it should be a transversal element within different policies and strategies planned within organisations or communities;

ENJOYABLE

In general people (disregarding their age) are more likely to undertake actions on a voluntary basis if this work is enjoyable. Enjoyable does not necessarily mean fun, but simply something that brings satisfaction or pleasure from accomplishing it.

In "Have your say!" - Manual on the Revised European Charter

on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life, Council of Europe, 2008.

TO DO A CONSTANT RE-CHECKING IF THESE PRINCIPLES ARE BEING MET IS A GOOD WAY TO MONITOR AND EVALUATE YOUR PROJECT, AND THE QUALITY OF YOUR (YOUTH) WORK.

3. INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE

There are no networks without people, and there are not youth networks without young people. It's important that the network process is led and initiated by young people, so that the process of networking for youth participation is a youth participation process itself and, therefore, an opportunity to develop competences for participation and democratic citizenship.

UNDERSTANDING WHAT IS ALREADY THERE

Young people, formally or informally, may be already organized in your territory. If so, this is a very good starting point for a network - don't underestimate what is already existent on your context, invest some time on understanding the most convenient way to involve these already existing synergies, even if it is a gradual involvement.

ASSESING NEEDS

If young people are not engaged it probably means that their needs were not tackled. Find a convenient and effective method to engage young people on assessing their needs, for example, create a youth community wall in a local school for young people to write down their opinion about youth participation in the territory.

Remember the best way to assess young people needs is to ask them directly, creating the conditions in your specific context to to encourage them to freely have their say. The work with young people will be easier and more effective if it's connected to any needs that are eventually assigned into their agenda by a third party person or organisation.

GATHERING AND INFORMING

There are very precious assets you can have when it comes the time to gather and inform young people about the action you're up to support as an youth organisation/youth worker:

a) **Start from a core group of young people** - let young people help you mobilizing more young people and, if you have the means, put a phone on their hand so that you can be surprised on the end of the day - help young people helping you.

b) **Be inclusive** - help creating space for diversity in the group. A diverse group is a multi-competent group, ready for a diversity of situations. Young people with fewer opportunities may be harder to involve, but may also be the ones that need more these opportunities - identify them and help on creating the favourable conditions for them to get involved.

b) **Use the information you already have** - this can be very important specially if you already have the results of a previously made needs assessment. With this information you may better know your target group, what are the issues they are concerned with, how they engage a process, what is the media they read/listen, and other important data that can be very helpful in adjusting your communication strategy. The more you know beforehand, the more chances you have to get involved the participants that suit best the convenient profile.

In whatever information you provide, be sure to be as persuasive as transparent - this is specially important in long-term democratic citizenship processes where high motivation is fundamental and where clarity is very valuable by young people. Having this in consideration, and in the other hand, its not favourable to overload your target group with information so one should find the balance within.

4. PREPARING THE NETWORK

It may take time to have everything set and ready for the debut of the network, meaning that patience, intensive work and perseverance are key factors at this stage. The preparation of a network may include two phases: pre-preparation and preparation.
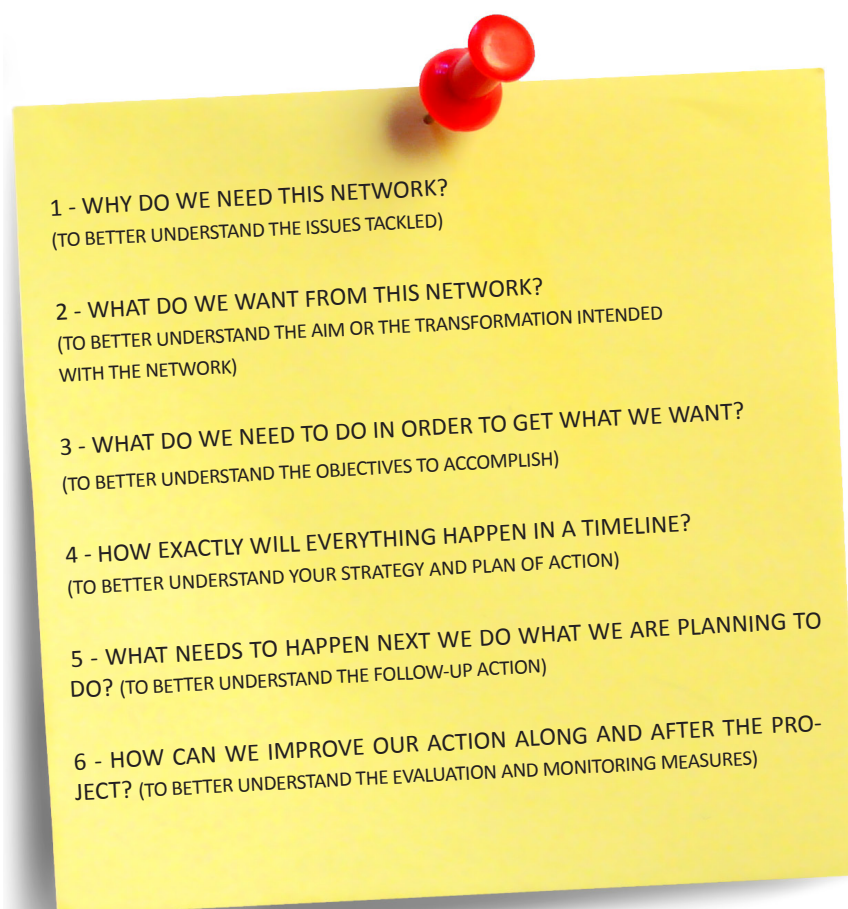
PRE-PREPARATION

We can say that it is everything that happens until you assure all the resources you'll need for the project. It goes from the already mentioned early analysis of your context and gathering and informing young people about the action you're up to promote, assessing their needs and the needs of your context with their help. It generally ends with the designing of the project with young people and possibly with an application for funding.

a) **Motivation - Handle with care** – it's always challenging to manage motivation during long-term processes. Motivation haves peaks – high and low ones. The early contacts you have with young people in the framework of a networking project are important moments to manage motivation and expectations. It's important to help young people to understand that it will most likely take time to see any results and that 'changing the World' ain't easy – nevertheless, it's possible! Having this in consideration, handle motivation with care and think long-term whenever you're managing it. Draft together with young people a wide timeline on the different phases of the project, including the timing where the group will probably be waiting for 3rd party answers (funding applications, policy makers decisions/authorizations). It may also be very helpful to spend generous time on preparing the first sessions with young people. Non-formal education stills being an excellent practice in youth participation projects – use it, get inspired by it, learn from it. Non-formal education can be also a good approach to keep the levels of motivation of young people, because of it's participatory, learner-centered, transparency principles.

b) **Networking process as a democratic citizenship school** – Europe stills struggling to raise its standards in education for democratic citizenship. Processes like creating a network for youth participation represent great opportunities for learning about, through and for democratic citizenship. To be an "active agent" in a youth participation process is a great opportunity to learn how to be an active citizen that cares about his/her own future and of the life of the community. Make sure the project have the right and protected setting for this learning to happen. Don't invent the wheel, get inspired with the already existent non-formal learning framework to help you going forward, being coherent and achieving quality results.

c) **Mapping the context with young people** – at this early stage it may be helpful to map the different social actors (institutions, youth organizations, youth workers, informal groups of young people, policy-makers, etc.) and the relationships between them. This will provide you a precious advocacy map that can be very inspiring along the whole project. It is very important to understand who can directly help you in the territory and who can help you reaching other people that can help you as well. Social transformation possibilities become clearer with such a map, for you (or your organization) and for young people you're working with. Don't underestimate the possibilities of going international – there are foreign stakeholders that can seriously boost your advocacy potential at local level. In plus, having a motivated partner working on similar agendas but on a different context, can be very productive in terms of mutual exchange of good practices and can significantly increase the learning outcomes.

d) **Design with young people** - one thing is to design a project for young people, other thing is to design a project with young people. A youth worker meaningful job is mainly characterized by a supportive approach and promoting principles and methodologies that let young people participate and design processes, rather than deciding the contents of these processes for young people. Whatever you do, don't get out of the track of serious planning, and don't make it so serious that is too much abstract and disengages young people. Support young people in their doubts, don't be afraid to present them a project cycle management model, but adapt it to the group you have - sometimes making some graphical changes to a model is the difference between an interested and an uninterested group of young people. Design with simple questions like:

1 - WHY DO WE NEED THIS NETWORK?
(TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE ISSUES TACKLED)

2 - WHAT DO WE WANT FROM THIS NETWORK?
(TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE AIM OR THE TRANSFORMATION INTENDED WITH THE NETWORK)

3 - WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO IN ORDER TO GET WHAT WE WANT?
(TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE OBJECTIVES TO ACCOMPLISH)

4 - HOW EXACTLY WILL EVERYTHING HAPPEN IN A TIMELINE?
(TO BETTER UNDERSTAND YOUR STRATEGY AND PLAN OF ACTION)

5 - WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN NEXT WE DO WHAT WE ARE PLANNING TO DO? (TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE FOLLOW-UP ACTION)

6 - HOW CAN WE IMPROVE OUR ACTION ALONG AND AFTER THE PROJECT? (TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE EVALUATION AND MONITORING MEASURES)

e) **Apply for funding with young people** - the need for resources is also a good opportunity for young people to learn about how to get them. In this sense, an effort shall be made to involve young people in the process of applying for eventual funding - even if it is by providing their feedback along the process of producing the application. If that is the case make sure to include this feedback and to answer it - show results from the process of feedbacking. In the other hand, be understandable with young people that are not available to contribute in this process (or at any one point of the project - remember, it is voluntary).

f) **Don't just wait for the application results** - since it may take some time until the eventual application for funding results to come out, try to keep in touch with the group meanwhile, even if it is with a completely informal programme like having a tea, going to an event, having a dinner together, etc. - staying connected is fundamental to keep the motivation levels high and to avoid a new (and counterproductive) process of participants 'recruitment'.

Typically after securing the resources needed for the project, the preparation process initiates. It is important at this stage to inform the eventual partners that the project will really happen and that the contacts about it shall intensify soon.

This may imply some general retuning since some time may have passed since the group was designing the project. Some new people may have jumped in as well so, for these reasons is good to go back to from where the project come from and to do a quick memory refreshing and maybe adjust the project to the new developments that may had happen. Some of these refreshments may be:

- Catching up with everyone's news in a fotoromanzo;
- Writing up a small text (or make a drawing) with the reasons that each one of the involved young people became involved;
- Re-assess expectations;
- Do a fishbowl with everyone's questions about the project and let young people answer to each other;
- Simulate a press conference where young people have to explain to the press what is the project about.

After everyone is again fully understanding the project it's important to invest some time on preparing the group to work as a team, tackling communication, valuing diversity, solidarity and interdependence.

Later on, it may be helpful to identify the competences needed by the group along the whole process and to plan how to help on creating opportunities to develop/learn these competences in key moments of the project, like the ongoing preparation phase.

5. CREATING THE NETWORK

DEVELOP A DATABASE FOR YOUTH IN YOUR CONTEXT

Gather the information you may already have from your previous work in the territory and initiate an organized and updated database of the youth different actors in your context. Perhaps you can find allies in the territory to help you with this task, namely by providing you with their databases. It's important to involve a diversity of stakeholders in the youth field, from both private and public sectors. Key stakeholders in your context may be: young people, informal groups, youth associations, non-governmental organizations, students associations, institutions, youth centres, children protection commissions, youth workers, teachers, schools, policy-makers, youth political parties, etc. It may be helpful to think beforehand how to structure your database in the most convenient way - what data do you need exactly? Do you need the same data of the different stakeholders?

UNDERSTAND HOW CAN BE THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO MOBILIZE

### THE DIFFERENT YOUTH ACTORS INTO THE NETWORK

Different people have different ways to get attracted to participation. Maybe young people in your context are highly responsive to social networks like Facebook, or maybe by sms's, institutions perhaps get more attracted with an official invitation. Providing a role to stakeholders can also be a way to mobilize them - maybe you know some youth workers that would like to help the group by facilitating a local meeting, or maybe a youth policy-maker that would be glad to be a speaker on a meeting, or a teacher that would be delighted

to share a youth participation good practice on his/her school. Email stills being a cheap and acceptable way to communicate but not always people read it so it's important to make sure that you at least monitor your email campaigns checking if the message is reaching the target or not. Also, whatever you do, please remind to be inclusive in your information flow - some people don't have Facebook, some people don't have internet, some people don't have a computer - alternative solutions shall exist in a way to include everyone on the network process.

CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL MEETINGS

There's no network potential if people don't get to know each other, that's why it's very important to create opportunities for the different stakeholders to meet at local level. These meetings can have different objectives like getting to know each other, or deciding together about how the network shall work, or reflecting about the youth situation in your context, or creating common statements/documents - whatever the objectives are it's important to feature non-formal education principles in these events, because it's a proven to work approach that favours (and is coherent with) youth participation. If you are not familiar with non formal education it may be wise to invest from an early stage in someone that has this experience, contributing highly for the quality of the meeting process and results.

The Structured Dialogue principles can also be inspiring for the meetings you arrange for your local youth community - it's important to keep the different stakeholders involved somehow in these meetings, otherwise you may face difficulties on defending a "common voice" or the representativity of the reached results. The engagement of the most stakeholders in the network may be challenging, but may as well be fundamental for the mainstreaming and sustainability of it's work. The following model is inspired in the Structured Dialogue principles and illustrates what would be a good balance of stakeholders present on a local youth community meeting.
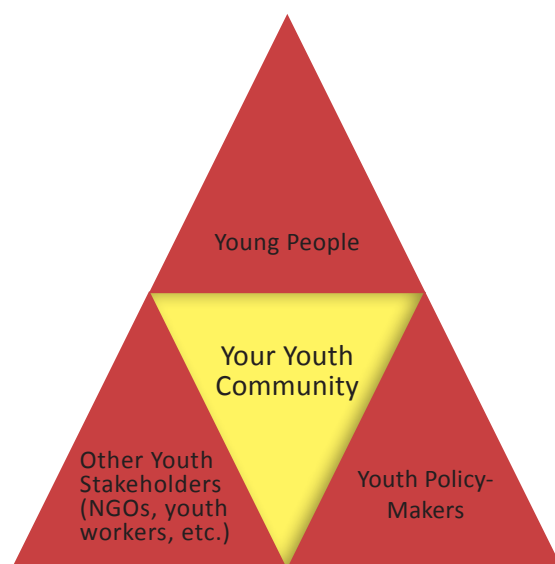
Furthermore, it's also important to think about the duration of the meetings - the more time you have, the more results you may have, nevertheless, the less time the meeting takes, easier it gets to mobilize participants for it. It sometimes make sense to involve different stakeholders in different moments of the meetings, for example, policy makers can be only in the moment of the presentation of the conclusions of the meeting.

Make sure young people is involved in the planning of the meeting - this is the best way to guarantee that it is a youth-friendly meeting. Don't underestimate the capacity of Young people in assuming challenges and taking responsibilities - the learning process stills happening in these moments, and local meetings may represent a peak for young people to develop competences.

It's possible as well to involve punctual volunteers in these meetings performing simple tasks like, registering participants, preparing refreshment breaks, preparing the setting for sessions, etc.

Try your best on having the necessary conditions set, like accessibility to people with disabilities, having refreshments available, providing a lunch for the group (which can be a great informal moment as well for everyone to know better each other), providing the necessary space and sound system for everyone to be able to participate, etc.
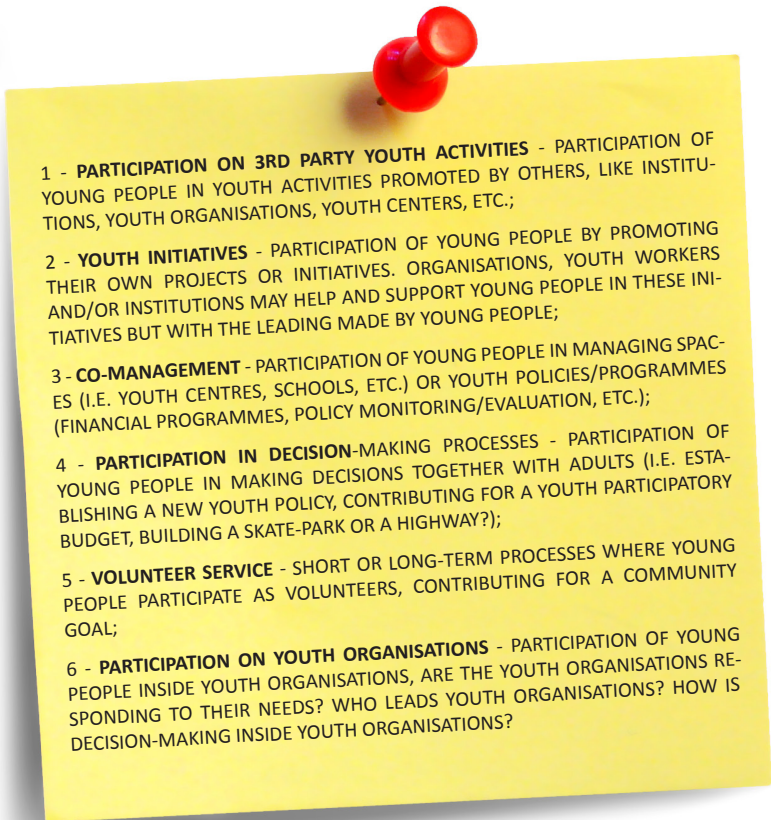
LET THE YOUTH COMMUNITY MAKE CHOICES

A network for meaningful youth participation is only meaningful if the members of the network have property on defining it. Create the necessary space for the network members to take big decisions together, for example, shall it be an informal or formal network? What shall be the main agendas of the network? What shall be the outcomes of the next 12 months? What shall the network say about a new youth policy? etc.

CREATE A SPACE TO BETTER UNDERSTAND WHAT YOUTH PARTICIPATION IS

Youth participation does not have a "closed" definition and perhaps it shall not have. It makes sense for you to define what youth participation is in the frame of your context and in the frame of the network. It's fundamental to create a space for the network members to reflect together about this matter, in a way to create a common understanding.

In example, a local youth community found useful to divide youth participation in the following "6 dimensions" so to work in a Charter of Recommendations addressing all the youth stakeholders in the territory:

1 - **PARTICIPATION ON 3RD PARTY YOUTH ACTIVITIES** - PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN YOUTH ACTIVITIES PROMOTED BY OTHERS, LIKE INSTITUTIONS, YOUTH ORGANISATIONS, YOUTH CENTERS, ETC.;

2 - **YOUTH INITIATIVES** - PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE BY PROMOTING THEIR OWN PROJECTS OR INITIATIVES. ORGANISATIONS, YOUTH WORKERS AND/OR INSTITUTIONS MAY HELP AND SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE IN THESE INITIATIVES BUT WITH THE LEADING MADE BY YOUNG PEOPLE;

3 - **CO-MANAGEMENT** - PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN MANAGING SPACES (I.E. YOUTH CENTRES, SCHOOLS, ETC.) OR YOUTH POLICIES/PROGRAMMES (FINANCIAL PROGRAMMES, POLICY MONITORING/EVALUATION, ETC.);

4 - **PARTICIPATION IN DECISION**-MAKING PROCESSES - PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN MAKING DECISIONS TOGETHER WITH ADULTS (I.E. ESTABLISHING A NEW YOUTH POLICY, CONTRIBUTING FOR A YOUTH PARTICIPATORY BUDGET, BUILDING A SKATE-PARK OR A HIGHWAY?);

5 - **VOLUNTEER SERVICE** - SHORT OR LONG-TERM PROCESSES WHERE YOUNG PEOPLE PARTICIPATE AS VOLUNTEERS, CONTRIBUTING FOR A COMMUNITY GOAL;

6 - **PARTICIPATION ON YOUTH ORGANISATIONS** - PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE INSIDE YOUTH ORGANISATIONS, ARE THE YOUTH ORGANISATIONS RESPONDING TO THEIR NEEDS? WHO LEADS YOUTH ORGANISATIONS? HOW IS DECISION-MAKING INSIDE YOUTH ORGANISATIONS?

Like this approach, there are many others and what is important is for the network members to develop their own understanding together.

6. FOLLOWING-UP THE NETWORK

DOING SOMETHING WITH THE NETWORK

Once a network is created that's quite an achievement. Nevertheless, it is recommendable to do something through the network, in order to consolidate it. Like every group, the networks are basically constituted by two main aspects: relationship between the members and one or more shared objectives. Having this in consideration, it's very important to feed continuously this two aspects. A network without shared objectives that justify its existence is a network that won't last for long.

Both its members and non-members will boost their resonance with the network if they have a specific result/outcome like establishing a managing committee, initiating a youth participation campaign, producing a charter of recommendations addressing youth stakeholders, holding a debate about youth co-management of urban facilities, launching a local/regional youth participation monitoring work group, etc. An easy to explain outcome/result also facilitates the process of understanding what exactly is the aim of the network and what kind of work is it focused on. When a network does not feature a concrete result/outcome, there is a greater risk of being perceived as something "too abstract" for young people (and eventually to other youth stakeholders as well).

MAINTAINING THE NETWORK

Maintaining a network may require endurance and persistence from a core group - which may be subject to "workload hangovers" -   and it may be wise to think about a strategy in how to renovate this group with new members, with a renewed motivation as well. This strategy can be designed by crossing and optimizing different efforts, for example, while there is a dissemination of the main results/products of the network (i.e. through a public event), one can gather newcomers in a database and after that send them a call to integrate the core group. In this process it may as well be interesting to try to address different communities than the ones that are already involved in the network, for example, young people living in different areas, youth informal groups with different backgrounds or aims, teachers coming from different schools, policy-makers from different parishes, and so on. For this it may be useful to better understand the already achieved results and to put them in a map, before learning the new "targets". A network focused in Youth participation shall be coherent with it's results and, for example if a charter of recommendations is produced, the first measure to mainstream these recommendations shall be the network itself to put these recommendations into practice - one can't expect others to mainstream good practices if the promoter of these good practices does not put them into practice as well.

LET IT GROW EVEN IF IT IS SLOW

Even online social networks aren't made in one day - large territories may demand more time to mobilize, and to captivate more young people, youth organisations, youth workers, etc. One can't expect everyone to get involved fastly and it may be necessary to promote the network a number of times, targeting different social actors, in order to foster it's growth. Don't give up because it is difficult - if it is difficult, it may well mean that it's necessary. Social transformation usually means social inertia as well and don't come easy.

APPENDIX

This appendix was inspired in the presentation of the 1.3 Youth Democracy project "Regional/local networks for meaningful youth participation", made in the context of the training "Listening to the Youngsters", that took place in Braga, European Youth Capital, Portugal, 27 April 2012.

CHALLENGES AND GOOD PRACTICES OF YOUTH DEMOCRACY PROJECTS FROM A YOUTH WORKER PERSPECTIVE - A COLLECTION OF PRACTICAL TIPS & PLAUSIBLE QUESTIONS

WHAT CHALLENGES ARE THERE TO TAKE IN YOUTH DEMOCRACY PROJECTS?

12 MONTHS WITH A GROUP OF YOUNG PEOPLE IS LIKE A LONG-LASTING-OVERCROWDED SAUNA?

IS THIS ABOUT THE WORLD MAKING CAPACITY-BUILDING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE, OR IS THIS YOUNG PEOPLE MAKING CAPACITY-BUILDING WITH THE WORLD?

DO WE NEED IMPORTANT PEOPLE OR DO IMPORTANT PEOPLE NEED US?

MAINSTREAMING IS ALSO ABOUT HOW WELL YOU CAN BE THE RABBIT FROM ALICE IN WONDERLAND?

IS THIS STUFF REALLY MADE BY YOUNG PEOPLE?

DO WE REALLY NEED PARTNERS?

HOW CAN I TELL TO MY OTHER SCHOOL THAT IT WOULD BE VERY IMPORTANT TO BE ON THIS MEETING WITH THE GROUP TOMORROW?

12 MONTHS WITH A GROUP OF YOUNG PEOPLE IS LIKE A LONG-LASTING-OVERCROWDED SAUNA?

- Is this about the world making capacity-building with young people, or is this young people making capacity-building with the world?
- Do we need important people or do important people need us?
- Mainstreaming is also about how well you can be the rabbit from Alice in Wonderland?
- Is this stuff really made by young people?
- Do we really need partners?
- How can I tell to my other school that it would be very important to be on this meeting with the group tomorrow?

DO WE NEED IMPORTANT PEOPLE OR DO IMPORTANT PEOPLE NEED US?

- Learn about advocacy and put it into practice
- Impress the press

MAINSTREAMING IS ALSO ABOUT HOW WELL YOU CAN BE THE RABBIT FROM ALICE IN WONDERLAND?

- Always go higher and faster
- Practice what you preach – you're the first line of the mainstreaming.
- Make your structured dialogue inclusive
- Make them need the mainstreaming
- Don't hostilize – make it together

HOW CAN I TELL TO MY OTHER SCHOOL THAT IT WOULD BE VERY IMPORTANT TO BE ON THIS PROJECT?

- Take the opportunity to raise awareness about non-formal learning recognition issues. ALL the education is an Human Right
- Make use of your country law
- Issue elaborate justification letters
- Go Doodle and Skype
- Make friends inside the schools
- Be reasonable and understand

IS THIS ABOUT THE WORLD MAKING CAPACITY-BUILD-ING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE, OR IS THIS YOUNG PEOPLE MAKING CAPACITY-BUILDING WITH THE WORLD?

- This is a learning environment, provide space for mistakes
- Use your best trainer's skills in the very beginning
- Maybe it starts with young people being transformed by the "World", but this is only because young people are transforming the World
- Calculate a progressive handover of property of the process
- Involve young people that you would never involve in the project

IS THIS STUFF REALLY MADE BY YOUNG PEOPLE?

- Don't "self-NGO" too much
- Create media guidelines with the group.
- Help on finding opportunities for young people to talk publicly about the project
- Let young people change the project
- Train the group for representing each other
- Encourage a participative methodology where everyone can have their say, don't take decisions for young people.

DO WE REALLY NEED PARTNERS?

- Not really, if we dont properly plan
- Don't do it with any partner – know your partners beforehand
- Keep in touch
- Use the differences for adding up
- Give 3 months to build your application and do it with your partners, including the timmings and the budget

Last but not least tip:
Be a YOUTH worker!
(or get one that can be for you)

THIS PRACTICAL GUIDE IS TARGETING YOUTH ORGANISATIONS AND YOUTH WORKERS AIMING TO STRENGTHEN YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN THEIR CONTEXTS THROUGH LOCAL/REGIONAL NETWORKING IN THE YOUTH FIELD.

IT'S AN OUTCOME OF THE PROCESS OF CREATING TWO NETWORKS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PROJECT "LOCAL/REGIONAL NETWORKS FOR MEANINGFUL YOUTH PARTICIPATION" - IT RESULTS OF THE EXPERIENCE OF THE TWO CONTRIBUTORS ORGANISATIONS, DÍNAMO (PORTUGAL) AND IL SESTANTE (ITALY), IN THIS FIELD AND WITH THE COLLECTED FEEDBACK FROM YOUNG PEOPLE THAT WERE INVOLVED IN THESE EXPERIENCES.