

Thursday 11th July 2024

Intergenerational participatory workshop: “Shaping the Future Together – How to Use the Human Potential in the Civil Society”

Subgroup 2: “Empowering Youth”

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Questions: How is the situation for youth in your country? What are you proud of, what are challenges, strengths?

1. Contributions of participants:

- Feeling young means you still have the confidence to shape the future.
- There needs to be intergenerational solidarity, respect and learning from each other.
- Youth is how you feel.

2. Opportunities to shape the future, examples of the different countries:

Germany:

- “Jugend aktiv in Ulm“: youth parliament that consults local mayor, theme week about protecting environment
- In some cities representatives of youth in municipal council, decisions are checked by young people

Serbia:

- Activities like sports, healthcare, political debate to push politicians towards not fearing young people but work with them
- Popular programme “my first salary”, program to integrate to work life, 9 months, exchange with others and sometimes internationally (if participating company has subsidiaries in other countries)

Ukraine:

- Eco activism → ask people to separate garbage and recycle
- No official recycling, people can bring garbage to recycle points and recycle it themselves
- Also schools tried to do the recycling, but it didn’t work out but was worth trying it

Bulgaria:

- Student council initiative, one student of every class represents class and their interests in the student council (e.g. building a football court, installing recycling points)
- Each school in Sofia has them, together all schools in the city form a student council

3. How to connect with other generations:

- Find common topic that is interesting for both, e.g., housing, digitalisation
- Example: Younger teaching older people in digitalisation, within the project they connect (older people tell the young how life was without the internet)
- “Get out of your bubble and change perspective.”

4. Wishes for the future:

- Young and old should understand and respect each other.
- Digitalisation should help make our life better, not control it.
- Every child should have an older person that listens and the other way around → to help understand each other’s behaviour.
- Older people could share their experience with right-wing parties and help the young understand why it is not a good idea to vote for them.
- Stop splitting the society in age groups. Rather than have one young person in each council, mix experiences around a topic. Also competence is important.
- Mix the power of the youth with the competence of older people → combining the strengths of all generations.
- We need a lot of patience for each other and listen more.
- Improve career chances, promote dual education systems, have career days in school, take children to workplace.
- Promote more contact between generations.
- Youth needs to make their own mistakes.
- Also older people have to show respect and interest in youth and respect that the circumstances of their lives have changed (not everything is comparable and they also have valuable experiences and insights to offer).
- Experience does not only come with age. That needs to be seen and respected by everyone.

Resume:

- **Societal division is the real untapped potential.**
- **Communication and interaction need to be at eye level.**
- **Countries need to create opportunities for the young to develop themselves.**
- **The young not only needs to have a voice but also a vote.**