**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

**Alexander Kauschanski**

is a political scientist from Germany. He works with the German Federal Youth Council and the National Youth Council of Ukraine. His activities include writing action plans, conducting workshops and promoting mechanisms for youth participation. Mandated as the German Youth Delegate to the United Nations, he represented German youth at the General Assembly, the Commission on Social Development and the Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW). He worked with the German United Nations Association to develop a German Youth Observer Programme to the UNSCW. As a journalist, he has written for "Süddeutsche Zeitung" and "Deutsche Welle". Alexander Kauschanski has organized international academies on science, politics and culture in Peru, France, Russia, Ukraine and Germany.

---

The publication was written for the project "Promotion of Sustainable Civic Engagement of Youth at Oblast and Community Level" by the National Youth Council of Ukraine that was part of the UNICEF program "Strengthening the Resilience and Civic Engagement of Adolescents and Youth in Conflict-Affected Eastern Ukraine", funded by the European Union. Its contents are written in the sole responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union or UNICEF.
Table of Contents

Table of contents ................................................................................. 1

Youth participation ............................................................................. 3
  Introduction .................................................................................. 3
  The definition of youth .................................................................. 4
  The concept of participation ......................................................... 4
  Participatory exclusion of youth ................................................... 5
  Participation and improved quality of democracy ......................... 7
    Voting ....................................................................................... 7
    Parliamentary representation ..................................................... 7
    Demographics .......................................................................... 7
    Intergenerational justice and stability ........................................ 8
  Youth rights in international documents ....................................... 9
  Youth participation in legislation ................................................. 11
  Hart’s ladder of meaningful participation .................................... 12

Case studies ..................................................................................... 16
  Goals and structure ...................................................................... 16
  Use of the case studies .................................................................. 16
  Overview of the mechanisms ...................................................... 17
  Participatory budget ...................................................................... 20
  Voting age .................................................................................... 24
INTRODUCTION

People younger than 25 make up half of the world’s population (United Nations 2017). With a growing global population, the number and proportion of young people is continuing to increase. Young people around the world are engaged in civil society activism, and take part in political life. However, youth are often structurally excluded from civic and political participation and decision-making processes. High minimum voting ages for elections, the lack of systematic formal representation and the insufficient number of participatory mechanisms sideline young people from democratic participation. This impairs the quality of democracies and creates generational tensions in politics. Engagement of young people in politics strengthens their civic literacy and makes them agents of their present and future living conditions. Despite some apparent deficits concerning inclusion of youth in civic and political participation practices, models exist to empower them democratically in many communities, regions and countries. The goal of this desk review is to highlight good practices of meaningful youth participation and to set out recommendations for the design and operation of youth participation models.
THE DEFINITION OF YOUTH

The concept of youth is fluid and susceptible to contextual cultural understanding. The United Nations generally defines youth as all people between the ages of 15 and 24 (United Nations 2001). Young people in this age cohort are a significant social group globally. They constitute about a fifth of the world’s population. The majority of youth lives in the global south (United Nations Development Programme 2013, p.13).

In general terms, youth is defined as the transition period between childhood and adulthood. Some definitions describe youth as the transitional age between an individual leaving compulsory education and finding first employment. However, youth is not a homogenous group, but includes a widely diverse spectrum of people with visions for their lives and political agendas. The outlooks, opinions and stances of young people are shaped by the social, cultural and political contexts they live in. The United Nations specifically states that youth may be understood in a flexible manner according to local and national understandings of the term (UNESCO 2019). When it comes to participatory mechanisms and platforms for youth, often the definition of youth stretches beyond the age of 24. Many youth parties or other youth organizations have a maximum age limit of 35 for their members. Because of the high average age of members of parliaments all over the world, people under 40 are considered to be young in politics (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2018).

THE CONCEPT OF PARTICIPATION

The term ‘participation’ is derived from the Latin words pars ‘part’ and capere ‘to take, grasp’. Its literal translation would therefore be as partaking (Online Etymology Dictionary). The term describes a democratic process that transforms particular popular demands into general liabilities for society (Easton and Dennis 1969, p. 48). In this understanding, participation is an array of mechanisms for the public to express opinions and exert influence on political decisions.

A common understanding of participation includes all activities that citizens undertake voluntarily to influence decisions at different levels of the political system (Kaase 1991, p. 521). This understanding encompasses the understanding that participation emanates from citizens and is the prerequisite for the democratic principle of rule by the people. Voluntary participation of citizens it a key aspect of the concept of participation. Citizens should decide based on their free will and not be forced or manipulated to participate in a particular political or civic process (Walz 2012, p. 17).

Participatory approaches to democratic politics became popular with the rise of social protest movements in the 1960s and 1970s in the western hemisphere. The protests were intended to challenge the dominant notion of democracy in a representational sense. Representative democracies limit the exertion of power of ordinary citizens to the act of voting. In this particular political context, the task of the citizen is limited to electing the political leadership and exercising public control over it. Participatory approaches to democracy require the inclusion of citizens and civil society in political and social processes. Practical approaches to participation can range from conventional forms, such as town hall meetings and advocacy campaigns, to unconventional forms that entail protests, citizen initiatives and political performances (Weber 2016, p. 223).
The concept of participation is multidimensional. It can be divided into instrumental, transformative and intrinsic dimensions. All the dimensions focus on different aspects, mechanisms or effects that result from participation. The instrumental dimension considers the function of selection, programming and control of the political elite. The transformative dimension underlines the educatory effect of participation in forming responsible and politically literate citizens. The intrinsic dimension of participation stresses that it is a form of practising political freedoms, rights and liberties. The latter dimension is expansive and encompasses any form of civic activity, even if it takes place in non-conventional pathways that are not created by the state (Pateman 1970, 43 ff.). The various dimensions are relevant for analysis of the effectiveness, domain and area of influence of a participatory mechanism.

In the contemporary world, participation is understood as a fundamental democratic right. It is intended to remove existing barriers and discriminatory structures that inhibit the inclusion of youth in civic and political processes. Youth participation enables an educative and civic learning process through and about politics. Political decisions made by adult politicians are often irrevocable. Nevertheless, young people must live with the consequences of decisions that they cannot take part in (Tremmel and Rutsche 2016, p. 316).

Young people younger than a certain ages do not have the right to vote. Therefore, they need alternative avenues for participation in civic and political processes and decisions. Participatory mechanisms for young people encompass the ability to create, develop, decide on and implement their own ideas, demands and visions for their communities and broader society. This process is directly linked to the exertion of influence, responsibility, agency and ownership in concrete political and social decision-making contexts. Youth participation transcends areas and fields directly affecting the immediate life contexts of young people, such as education and the job market. It must also be linked with broader social and political questions concerning the economy, the environment, security, health and society.

**PARTICIPATORY EXCLUSION OF YOUTH**

The patterns of civic activity among young people are different to adult patterns. This is directly linked to their political and social rights, their status in society and political life and their divergent living condition. Available data suggests that the turnout of young people eligible to vote is generally lower than that of older people. Furthermore, there is evidence that young people are less active in formalized political structures such as political parties and parliaments. They are more inclined towards participation through informal political processes as activists or taking part in youth movements (UNDP 2013, 14 f.). Youth are often involved in voluntary and civic activities. When taking political action, young people are often results-oriented and advocate for specific political problems to be solved. Because young people are systematically disadvantaged in the political process, informal participation practices are broadly more popular among young people than structured avenues.
YOUNG PEOPLE ARE EXCLUDED FROM THE PARTICIPATORY PROCESS BY:

- The dominance of older people in decision-making positions and their reluctance to help young people advance or pass on their seats in parliaments, governments or decision-making processes to younger people (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2018).

- The relatively high minimum age of eligibility to vote, which excludes young people from the election process to democratic institutions that hold political and legislative power (Chan and Clayton 2006).

- Civic and political engagement often involve volunteerism and are unpaid. Therefore, a certain amount of spare time and social resources are required to engage in civic activities in addition to education, work and personal matters (Wilson and Musick 1998).

- Youth-led organizations sometimes experience difficulties gaining access to financial resources and operate with limited organizational know-how.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES IS AFFECTED BY STRUCTURAL DISADVANTAGES INCLUDING:

- Lack of political capital, which lowers chances to form personal and institutional networks to mobilize for various policy positions within political groups and society (Pontes et al. 2019).

- The fact that young people sometimes lack knowledge and experience about the formal rules and proceedings within the political process because they are often not admitted to the political arena (Pontes et al. 2019).

- The low level of acceptance by the political establishment and society due to age-based stereotypes about young people among adults, including an assumed deficit of expertise, professionalism and political capacities (Kelly 2018).

- Political organizations and institutions rarely favour or actively consider including youth without audacious advocacy campaigns by civil society groups and the raising of public awareness of the issue (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2018).

- The political culture, codes and language in many decision-making institutions and bodies rarely appeal to young people and have an exclusive effect on youth. While young people express interest in politics and political life, they generally distrust conventional traditional actors such as political parties (Albert et al. 2015).
PARTICIPATION AND IMPROVED QUALITY OF DEMOCRACY

VOTING

The right to vote is the most important instrument of a citizen in a democracy. Yet, young people are often excluded from the opportunity to cast their vote in elections that will determine their present and future living conditions. Groups that acquire the right to vote can impact the results of elections. Granting young people the right to vote can trigger politicians, parties and political actors to adjust their political agendas to the needs of the groups (Chan and Clayton 2006). Excluding youth from the political process creates a massive blind spot concerning their distinctive needs despite youth’s vital place in society. In elections policy makers do not have to take into consideration the votes of young people who are ineligible to vote as they cannot steer the election in one direction or another. The sidelining of youth in elections hinders them from playing a role in selecting their representatives in politics. Lowering the minimum voting age can increase their ownership of political decisions and improve their sense of taking personal, societal and general responsibility for their countries and their people.

PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION

Young people make up half the world’s population, but only 2 per cent of the world’s parliamentarians are under the age of 30 and more than 70 per cent are older than 45 (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2018, p. 3). This discrepancy in age is indicative of a lack of democratic representation in parliamentary decision making. Age is not always indicative of the decision making of a member of parliament. Yet diverging experiences in growing up, perceptions of the world, approaches to problems and solutions vary between politicians of different ages due to the eras they grew up in. If mechanisms such as youth quotas are introduced into parliamentary life and decision-making bodies, the perspectives of young people will be more present and representation will be ensured of diverse generations in politics. The perspective of young people could better be included with more voting rights, lowering the minimum voting age, lower eligibility ages to run for elections and an active endorsement of youth participation in formalized political institutions such as parliaments.

DEMOGRAPHICS

According to current estimates, the world’s population will continue to grow until the end of this century reaching more than 10 billion people by 2060 (Roser and Ortiz-Ospina 2019). However, it will be distributed unevenly in national and geographic terms. In 2017, Germany, Japan and Italy had aging populations with median populations of about 45 years, while Niger, Uganda and Mali were home to many young people with national median ages of about 15 years (The World Factbook 2017).
These trends will continue in the future. In post-industrial countries older people will be the largest part of the electorate. The governments of countries with a lower proportion of young are at risk of catering to the older population in their societies while ignoring the living conditions of future generations. Young people have to live with the consequences of political decision-making for longer periods of time. For instance, neglecting policy decisions to combat climate change in favour of unsustainable quick economic growth can cause future problems such as irreversible contamination of the environment and shortages of life-providing resources. Even with rights to vote and impact political processes, young people can be outnumbered by older people and therefore marginalized in democratic systems.

In emerging countries, young people will make up the majority of the population. In countries with young societies, youth form a considerable group and an important future electorate. However, without access to effective participatory mechanisms, they cannot steer the political directions of their countries. And if the politicians in parliament turn out to disproportionately represent a different generation, young peoples' interests will not sufficiently be taken into account.

Levelling out demographic asymmetries is important to achieve equal access to political and social participatory rights. As young people have to live longest with the consequences of political decisions, taking part in deliberation processes is crucial to create political measures that cater to young peoples’ needs.

**INTERGENERATIONAL JUSTICE AND STABILITY**

Democratic principles are violated when countries fail to represent youth and provide it with equal access to political rights, freedom of expression and control over the political process. When the exclusion of certain groups becomes blatant in the political process, people take to the streets and start protesting (UNDP 2013, p. 11). The Arab Spring and Ukraine’s Euromaidan are examples of such popular uprisings. Protests are responses to deficits in the democratic feedback processes. They are directed at their political systems and actors operating in them who have failed to address various political and existential needs and provide adequate services to vast parts of the population. If the political system fails to incorporate the demands drawn from the protests, the dynamic of conflict between civil society and the government can accelerate. In order to avoid riots and protests that lead to political instability, governments should democratize themselves and create participatory mechanisms, so that the needs of young people and the population in general can be channelled into political action driven by the political system.
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Meaningful participation is a driver for civic engagement. Adolescents and young people who are empowered through participatory bodies are more likely acquire the knowledge, skills and confidence required for further civic engagement. Civic engagement encompasses a variety of forms and perspectives surrounding relationships between the individual, the community and broader society (United Nations, 2016) and can be defined as a scope of “individual or collective actions in which people participate to improve the well-being of communities or society in general, and which provide opportunities for reflection” (Innovations in Civic Participation 2010).

Supporting positive ways for young people to engage in civic affairs and participate in public life is a key element of mitigating the risks of marginalization that make adolescents and young people more vulnerable to use negative coping mechanism and to be drawn to violent ideas and groups. Sustainable civic engagement mechanisms allow young people to develop important transferrable skills. They ensure meaningful engagement of young people in public life and give youth groups and associations the opportunity to organize themselves and develop effective community-based projects, consultative mechanisms and campaign approaches.

The concept of civic engagement is closely related to active citizenship and tends to place increased focus on values and responsibilities, as well as the rights of individual citizens (UNESCO 2012). Democratic societies require citizens to obtain the understanding, skills, and commitment to promote accountability and good governance (UNICEF 2018). Therefore, besides transferrable skills, social cohesion and active citizenship skills empower young people to become leaders and change makers in their communities and society in general, thus contributing to sustainable development. The development of active citizenship may include building mechanisms and learning platforms on conflict resolution, creating participation tools, increasing school connectedness, and human rights and diversity education.

YOUTH RIGHTS IN INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTS

The international community has often recognized and reaffirmed the importance of youth political and civic participation. The need for youth participation at all levels of decision making is upheld and stressed by various international conventions, declarations and documents. All international framework documents stress the increasing need for the rights of youth to be included in civic and political participatory processes. They further highlight the international community’s commitment to ensuring participation for everyone and youth in particular. The documents provide a strong and rights-based approach to youth participation. All frameworks can be used as tools to hold governments and administrative bodies to account and to advocate for ensuring young people’s participatory rights.
Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) emphasizes everyone’s “right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives” (United Nations 1948).

The United Nations’ Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) is the most widely ratified agreement encompassing different civil, social and political rights for children. It is the only instrument addresses the full range of human rights of children in a legally binding manner. The Convention only takes into account people under the age of 18. However, there is no comparable treaty that operates for youth as a social group. In Article 12(1), the Convention underlines “the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child”. Article 12(2) stresses that to ensure these rights, the child should be “provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law” (Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989).

In 1996 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the World Programme of Action on Youth (WPAY). The document outlines 15 priority areas of action. As follow up to the WPAY, the General Assembly adopts a resolution on youth every two years. The provision of WPAY that focuses on “full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and in decision-making” proposes the following actions:

1. Improving access to information in order to enable young people to make better use of their opportunities to participate in decision-making;

2. Developing and/or strengthening opportunities for young people to learn their rights and responsibilities, promoting their social, political, developmental and environmental participation, removing obstacles that affect their full contribution to society and respecting, inter alia, freedom of association;

3. Encouraging and promoting youth associations through financial, educational and technical support and promotion of their activities;

4. Taking into account the contribution of youth in designing, implementing and evaluating national policies and plans affecting their concerns;

5. Encouraging increased national, regional and international cooperation and exchange between youth organizations;

6. Inviting Governments to strengthen the involvement of young people in international forums, inter alia, by considering the inclusion of youth representatives in their national delegations to the General Assembly” (United Nations 1996).
The government representatives at the 1998 World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth in Lisbon committed themselves to ensuring the active participation of youth in decision-making processes in all fields at national, regional and international levels. They also stated that education, democracy training and civic responsibility would be promoted to strengthen their commitment to, participation in and full integration into society (United Nations 1998).

The youth frameworks, initiatives and programmes in the United Nations system are streamlined through the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD), the System-Wide Action Plan on Youth (SWAP) and the Focal Point on Youth located in the Division for Social Policy and Development in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN LEGISLATION

Countries have various legislative and administrative instruments to create legal norms, aims and targets for participatory policies.

Youth strategies set the ground for various projects involving youth. They are created at national, regional or local levels. Usually, youth strategies set goals that the government would like to achieve for youth. The thematic issues covered in youth strategies include safety, health, education, civic engagement and civic education. Some projects implemented on the basis of youth strategies are of participatory nature. Other elements call for reports and surveys to better analyse and assess the situation of youth. As follow up, the responsible government branch creates commissions and bodies to address the issues identified. In most cases youth strategies are developed and decided by the ministries responsible for youth in consultation with experts in the field, as well as by young people themselves. Youth strategies apply for a certain time frame in which they are valid, implemented and evaluated. The scope of the projects and elements implemented within the youth strategies are often determined by the budget and spending allocated to youth and education. Because youth strategies are bound to specific issues and challenges for the young generation that seem relevant at the time of adoption, they are frequently reviewed and renewed with new targets and projects planned (Youth Policy Labs).

Youth laws often reinforce the systems of coordination between policy areas to ensure that the objectives of the national youth policy are achieved. Laws are the most formalized arrangement of youth policy.
Youth bills are legislative manifestations of youth strategy to create frameworks and action plans. They are legislative acts that determine the governmental budget for the youth sector and can include amendments to youth laws already in place. While a youth strategy is often adopted by a certain ministry and does not require legislative action, youth laws and bills offer a more formalized and institutionalized approach to youth policy. To implement youth strategies and bills, the government partners with civil society organizations such as youth organizations or youth councils at regional, local and community level (Youth Policy Labs). Because of their wide reach and access to different youth groups, youth civil society organizations are useful partners for consultations about youth strategies and their implementation.

Youth policies also exist on a supranational level. For instance, the European Union issues a youth strategy that forms the framework for political youth cooperation on the basis of a European Council resolution. The youth strategy for 2019-2028 has the title und motto ‘Engage. Inform. Empower.’ (Council of the European Union 2018).

HART’S LADDER OF MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

Hart’s ladder of participation is a model that is frequently used to develop and evaluate mechanisms intended to enable youth participation. The conceptual ladder consists of eight rungs that are indicative of the level of inclusive participation of young people. The higher the rung, the more inclusive the participatory mechanism. The ladder is useful for quantifying and comparing various degrees of participation in formalized structures and processes of youth engagement (Hart 1992). The model highlights that even when participation processes seem very effective from the outside, the participating groups can be manipulated by the design and through internal processes of the practices.

The ladder is useful for scrutinizing the planning, implementation and output mechanisms of participatory tools and frameworks for youth. It works well for categorizing ideal types, but accurate application to real-life case studies may be challenging. Particularly with increasing institutional and procedural complexity, different elements of engagement might be detectable. Generally, the ladder of participation is a useful benchmark for analysing the effectiveness of participation.
HART’S LADDER OF MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

1. Manipulation
2. Decoration
3. Tokenism
4. Informing
5. Consultation
6. Partnership
7. Initiated action
8. Shared decision making
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rung</th>
<th>Way of engagement</th>
<th>How it works</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Manipulation</td>
<td>Adults manipulate young people. Youth are forced into a project without being granted ownership of the project. No attention is paid to young people’s demands and interests.</td>
<td>Young people are asked to hold banners that they did not write at a demonstration that adults organized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Decoration</td>
<td>Adult-planned activities are ‘decorated’ with young people without giving the youth room to engage with their own ideas.</td>
<td>At a rally, young people make speeches that others wrote for them. The speeches bear no relation to their actual demands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tokenism</td>
<td>Decision makers assign token roles to young people at events and create the illusion that young people are actively engaged.</td>
<td>Selected young people are invited to an event such as a youth assembly without having an actual impact on the outcome or follow-up decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Informing</td>
<td>Adult decision makers plan a project and young people volunteer for it. The youth involved in it understand the project but have no influence over its design. Throughout the project, young people get to inform decision makers about their political demands, but this does not guarantee influence or participation.</td>
<td>Young people present a policy paper to a politician. The politician listens to the demands but reserves the right to decide whether to take the suggestions into consideration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rung</td>
<td>Way of engagement</td>
<td>How it works</td>
<td>Example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>Adults facilitate a project in which young people are actively consulted. The positions of young people are given weight and they receive feedback on their demands.</td>
<td>A municipal council organizes consultations with young people to discuss their vision for a youth-friendly city. In the aftermath, the council feeds back to the young people whether and how their demands affected the decision-making process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Partnership</td>
<td>Adults have an initial idea. The youth involved in the project holds shared responsibility for planning, deciding and carrying out the project.</td>
<td>The mayor of the city decides to organize a youth day. Then he hands it over to an organizing team that consists of young people and members of the municipal administration to plan and run the project with shared responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Initiated action</td>
<td>Young people have an idea, decide on the project and finally carry it out. Adults take on a supportive role in the process.</td>
<td>Young people plan to organize an environmental awareness day at their school. With the permission and support of the principal and teachers, the event takes place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Shared decision making</td>
<td>Young people come up with an idea, set up a project and invite adults to join them as equal partners to make decisions throughout the project.</td>
<td>Young people decide to open a youth hub in their city. They partner with various youth and adult organizations and are provided with resources by the government.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CASE STUDIES

GOALS AND STRUCTURE

This analysis is intended to provide examples and inspiration for implementing various mechanisms and tools for youth participation. The examples were selected to highlight good practice that has been implemented for inclusive youth participation. None of the cases selected is an ideal blueprint for any context or institutional environment. Nevertheless, when adapting and implementing a participatory mechanism for youth, the various elements, ideas and practices of this desk review can serve as tools for enhancing the institutional design of the mechanism. Case by case, the review offers insights into effective and empowering youth participation. Each case study first highlights the general mechanism utilized, then explains the specific case scrutinized and finally states the benefits and makes recommendations for implementing the tool.

USE OF THE CASE STUDIES

To create effective instruments for youth participation, it is crucial to understand which approaches and mechanisms already exist. Within this process, one should analyse how the participatory mechanisms work and adapt them to the targeted political, social and civic environment. Taking differing cultural contexts into consideration is vital for the successful application of participatory mechanisms. Processes that work in one particular institutional environment may lead to unpremeditated results or even failure in another. Therefore, all mechanisms found suitable should be adapted to the specific environment before being implementing. The knowledge of different practices should not be used for copy-pasting, but rather to stimulate the creation of new and adapted participatory mechanisms and benefit from lessons learned.
## OVERVIEW OF THE MECHANISMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MECHANISM</th>
<th>CASE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participatory budget</td>
<td>Boston, USA: ‘Lead the Change’</td>
<td>Participatory budgeting is a democratic process that allows young citizens to discuss, deliberate and decide on the allocation of a public budget.</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voting age</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Lowering the voting age enables more young people to take in the formalized voting process. It affects the agendas of politicians and the outcome of elections.</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth delegates</td>
<td>German Youth Delegates to the United Nations</td>
<td>Youth delegates are the voice of their respective country’s youth at international commissions such as the General Assembly of the United Nations. They educate, advocate, negotiate and deliver speeches on youth rights.</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protest movements</td>
<td>Global Protest Movement “Fridays for Future”</td>
<td>Political protest involves attempts by individuals or groups to address problems perceived in the political system or political decision making. They are a powerful instrument when institutionalized pathways do not exist to influence decision making.</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MECHANISM</td>
<td>CASE</td>
<td>DESCRIPTION</td>
<td>PAGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth parliament</td>
<td>Berlin, Germany: Youth Parliament in Tempelhof-Schöneberg</td>
<td>Child and youth parliaments are an institutionalized instrument for giving young people a political body to engage in decision-making processes at different levels.</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring programme</td>
<td>Germany, Austria, Switzerland: ‘Rock Your Life’</td>
<td>Mentoring is an instrument that serves to transfer knowledge to support the mentee in his or her personal and professional development. Mentorship programmes are a powerful tool for civic empowerment of disadvantaged young people.</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth consultations</td>
<td>Germany, European Union: E-Participation &quot;Structured Dialogue&quot;</td>
<td>Youth consultations are mechanisms that create an exchange framework between governments and young people. They can channel young people’s demands into the political process and have an impact on governmental policies.</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local youth dialogue</td>
<td>Germany: decentralized “Youth Demography Dialogue”</td>
<td>Youth dialogues and consultations are multi-level processes that are conducted at local level to provide the government with expertise and suggestions to solve societal and political problems.</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MECHANISM</td>
<td>CASE</td>
<td>DESCRIPTION</td>
<td>PAGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth council</td>
<td>German National Youth Council</td>
<td>National youth councils are vehicles to draw more attention to youth issues in society and politics. They are platforms to exchange best practices, form coalitions and consolidate the objectives of youth organizations.</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth party</td>
<td>Germany: Young Socialists</td>
<td>Youth parties represent and voice the interests of their young members in politics and public. Parties have different political ideologies and serve as political bodies for grooming new young politically and socially active youngsters.</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participatory cities</td>
<td>Child Friendly Cities Initiative</td>
<td>The Child Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI) is a UNICEF-led initiative that supports municipal governments to realize the rights of children at local level.</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-Participation</td>
<td>U-Report</td>
<td>U-Report, developed by UNICEF, is a participatory program that uses free SMS and online messengers to engage young people and communities in e-participation.</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PARTICIPATORY BUDGET

MECHANISM

Participatory budgeting is a democratic process that allows citizens to discuss, deliberate and decide on the allocation of a public budget. The mechanism provides space and authority for young people to identify problems, debate possible solutions and finally prioritize and decide on public spending projects. It allows them to educate and familiarize themselves about the political process. It empowers youth to make actual decisions on how to spend public funds while being guided by the administrative and political system.

CASE STUDY: YOUTH LEAD THE CHANGE

Boston’s participatory youth budget was the first opportunity for many young people to make their voices count. In Boston (USA) ‘Youth Lead the Change’ (YLC) is a participatory budgeting programme for young people between the ages of 12 and 22. The Boston mayor’s office decided to implement the project in 2013. The municipal administration intended to add a civic youth component to a participatory budgeting process that was otherwise open for everyone. Since the programme began, US$1 million has been allocated from the city budget for the participatory budget. Throughout the process, young residents of Boston have developed ideas and decided where the public funds should go to best improve the living environment in their communities. The budget aims at empowering young people to participate in civic and governmental activities. It serves as a political channel to reflect the priorities and interests of young people. Furthermore, it is intended to develop young people’s capacities for municipal decision-making and budgeting. Young people learn to understand the benefits and challenges of implementing a project, while changing their cityscape.

According to the official rules, the projects qualifying for the budgetary process must serve as improvements to the physical property of the city of Boston (such as parks, schools and community centres), benefit the general public and last at least five years.

The projects decided on included the establishment a youth wifi Lounge, installing solar panels on city-owned property, informative resources for homeless youth, a job resource platform, a performing and visual arts studio, more recycling facilities, water bottle refill stations, gym renovations, new pavements, the improvement of public parks, children’s and youth facilities and city art walls. The participatory budget provided is only a fraction of Boston’s annual operating budget of $3.48 billion. Nevertheless, the participatory budget is a powerful tool to empower young people in participatory processes.
Every year, the project draws young people into municipal decision-making. The project follows the same stages of an annual policy cycle:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHASE</th>
<th>MEASURE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-planning</td>
<td>A multi-stakeholder Steering Committee brings together adult and youth representatives to decide on the rules of the project and plan out the process. The Committee plans out the exact timeline and work plan for each stage of the process. Organizations are free to apply for positions on the committee. They are selected by the Oversight Committee, consisting of staff from various relevant departments of the Boston Mayor’s office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idea collection</td>
<td>The general public, including youth and adults, submit ideas for spending US $1 million of Boston’s municipal budget. The ideas are collected in ‘Idea Assemblies’ in various neighbourhoods throughout Boston. An official goal of the process is the participation of as many underrepresented community members as possible to maximize their voices in the process. This requires making efforts to increase the outreach of the projects and include disadvantaged neighbourhoods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal development</td>
<td>Drawing from different ideas collected in the previous stage, young ‘change agents’ develop concrete project proposals from the ideas. Any young person that voluntarily signs up for it is eligible to work as a change agent. After being assigned to the role, the change agents are assigned to different working group committees to develop project proposals. The committees are divided by the topic they focus on. They work on matters such as health and the environment, culture, schools and education, libraries and traffic infrastructure. The ideas are concretized in consultative processes with representatives of different relevant municipal administration departments, and project proposals are written with cost estimations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voting</td>
<td>Ballots are created listing the proposals from the ‘change agent’ committees. Residents of Boston between the ages of 12 and 22 vote for the projects they would like to see funded and implemented. Each voter can select up to four proposals. The voting is conducted in different locations and at different times to increase turnout.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHASE</td>
<td>MEASURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>The votes are counted. The three projects that gain the most votes are selected and announced to receive funding and be implemented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation and monitoring</td>
<td>Young people and adults oversee, monitor and evaluate implementation of the different projects.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Increasing civic education:**
Participatory budgeting can serve as a school of democracy: young people learn to become political change-makers by advocating their goals, defending their positions, engaging in political discussions, building networks, learning about municipal project planning and decision-making practices, communicating with political authorities and taking part in the voting process.

**More awareness of community needs:**
Because youth is involved in the deliberation process, young people become more aware of community needs and the government process.

**Better youth engagement:**
By being involved in civic activities, young people become motivated to become more engaged in civil society. Being part of the political process makes young people feel empowered and more self-conscious.

**Better adjustment of politics to youth needs:**
Young people gain agency and ownership when deciding on concrete municipal development projects basing their decisions on their needs and priorities. Allocation of the budget through a democratic and deliberative decision-making process rather than a top-down solution from the municipality means it is better adjusted to the needs of the young participants.

**Inclusion of marginalized groups:**
Members of poor and marginalized communities are at risk of being generally or partially excluded from the project because of structural discrimination, insufficient communication and lower degrees of self-empowerment among those groups. Because of its open idea gathering process, the mechanism has the potential to engage young people from marginalized groups. Inclusion of disadvantaged groups has to be strategically addressed in participatory budget projects.
Improve the impact range of the programme:
Due to the format, range and budget of the programme, the adopted projects only change cities and communities on a micro-scale: they do not propose holistic or wide-ranging solutions to structural problems that persist on a larger scale, such as the deterioration of public infrastructure. In order to do so, the scope of the participatory budget project has to be widened.

Deflect clientelism through inclusion:
Participatory budgets could become dominated by clientelist structures unintentionally, if information about idea development and the voting process are only spread in token groups that already hold privileged positions in society and the political sphere. Therefore, the participation process has to be designed to be as inclusive as possible.

Encourage project outreach and voting in all neighbourhoods:
During the voting process, young people may favour projects in their neighbourhoods over others despite their usefulness for other municipal residents. Projects from different neighbourhoods should have chances to be implemented. Various measures should be provided to increase the probability of projects being implemented in a variety of neighbourhoods.

Clear rules and guidelines:
In order to be effective, participatory budgets not only have to provide transparent rules and criteria for idea development and the voting process, but also must allow youth to contribute to the implementation process by constant consultation, monitoring and evaluation.

SOURCES
https://nextcity.org/daily/entry/boston-young-people-participatory-budgeting-winners-youth-lead-change
https://thephiladelphiacitizen.org/ideas-we-should-steal-participatory-budgeting/
https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/mar/31/boston-pizza-teenagers-budget-youth-lead-change
MECHANISM

Lowering the voting age means that more young people can access to political elections at all levels. This can include municipal, regional, national and European elections. Lowering the election age enables more people who before were ineligible to vote to participate in elections, impact the political agenda by being a potential voter group and influence the outcomes of elections. It also reveals how engaged young people take part in political life (turnout) and which political parties, candidates and ideologies they prefer (voting behaviour).

HISTORY

The history of democracy is of the fight for active and passive political rights for marginalized groups of people. Voting rights cannot be taken for granted. In ancient Greece – one of the first democracies – women and slaves were deprived of political powers and the right to vote. Exclusion of people from the political process because of their gender, skin colour, social status, financial assets, profession, religion or age has continued throughout the history of humankind. When elections were introduced in the European age of enlightenment, people often had to be 25 years old to be elected and could only be elected when older than 30. Only in the 20th century the general voting age fell to 18 years and more people were granted political rights (Tremmel 2016). This still deprives people younger than 18 of one of the most effective tools to influence the political landscape and process: the right to vote.

CASE STUDY: LOWERING THE VOTING AGE IN AUSTRIA

In 2007, the Austrian parliament changed its country’s constitution to lower the voting age for elections and referenda from 18 to 16 years. In 2019, it remains to be the only European country that grants persons older than 16 the right to participate in all national elections. Parallel to the voting age reform, the government introduced “history and political” education as a nationwide subject to be taught in eighth grade in schools.

How did the election reform affect first-time voters? The parliamentary election in 2008 was the first to allow persons to participate from the age of 16. The turnout of first-time voters was 88 per cent and matched the general turnout in Austria that year (Perlot and Zandonella 2009). In 2013 turnout decreased among first-time voters to 63 per cent, while the general participation of the population was about 75 per cent (Kritzinger et al. 2013). Despite the low turnout of youth in 2013, their political interest doubled between 2013 and 2017. While 31 per cent of first-time voters expressed an interest in politics in 2013, this figure increased to 60 per cent in 2017 (Kritzinger et al. 2018).
BENEFITS

Increased youth engagement: Scientific studies show that early inclusion in the voting process leads to higher willingness to participate in elections (Bhatti et al. 2012). The first election participated in is decisive for young people and leaves an imprint in their “election biography” (Plutzer 2002). Young people’s decisions to participate in elections and their level of education and engagement with political life are highly likely to resonate in their future lives. To bring up new democratically conscious and responsible generations, it is important to engage youth as early as possible.

Creating incentives for civic education: Persons under the age of 18 often live with their families and attend educational facilities. School and family life can serve as hubs for active civic preparation in elections. When young people finish school and move out of home it is harder to target and reach them, because of the lack of overarching structures such as schools to engage them in politically.

Closing the gap between youth and politics: Parties and politicians have a blind spot concerning young people because they are unable to propel them into power. When granting young people the right to vote, political actors have to actively engage with them, as they are a potential electorate. This fuels the political engagement process of both youth and political actors. Drawing from this, political actors are incentivized to develop political offers and policy suggestions that attract young voters and meet their demands.

Raise the level of trust in political institutions: Lowering the voting age can increase the level of appreciation and trust of young people

RECOMMENDATIONS

Improve political education:
Lowering the voting age, in combination with quality civic and political literacy education, can help improve the disposition of young people towards elections. It is thus important to adequately prepare for young people to increase their level of political engagement and sense of responsibility as citizens.

Improve the inclusion of disadvantaged youth:
Young people who are systematically excluded from the political process are also less likely to become interested or engaged in political issues (Chan and Clayton 2006). Their inclusion through elections and with adequate educational preparation in schools and in non-formal formats is an effective instrument to increase their political literacy and level of engagement.

Decrease disparities in political education and engagement:
Scientific studies suggest that there is a strong correlation between young peoples’ participation in elections and the level of political discussion that they engage in with their families (Kritzinger et al. 2018, p. 190). To avoid disadvantages based on family background regarding exercise of political rights, it is important to provide an adequate amount of formal education in school and non-formal ways of engaging with the political system and learning about the political process. The higher the level of political education young people receive the more likely they will be to participate in elections (Kritzinger et al. 2018, p. 192).
YOUTH DELEGATES

MECHANISM

Youth delegates voice the interests of their countries’ youth at the United Nations and other international forums and institutions. Youth delegates make speeches on behalf of their country’s youth, take part in negotiation of resolutions, host side events at their countries’ missions, write collective declarations and conduct advocacy with politicians and diplomats on youth rights. In their respective countries, youth delegates are responsible for collecting the positions of their fellow youngsters, educating them about political participation and international institutions, and promoting youth participation through social and conventional media.

Every country has its own unique mechanism to select or elect youth delegates. Frequently member states have several youth delegate programmes. Youth delegates participate in various United Nations bodies such as the General Assembly, the Commission on Social Development, the Commission on the Status of Women and the High-Level Political Forum. Nowadays, more than 40 different countries have youth delegate programmes and send youth delegates to the United Nations.

CASE STUDY: YOUTH DELEGATES AT THE UNITED NATIONS

Youth delegate programmes are diverse and the way they are implemented depends on their countries’ political willingness to grant youth a political position in the institutional setup at the domestic and international levels.

In Germany, three different youth delegate programmes exist. They all address different issues and cover different commissions and forums. One programme concerns the Commission on the Status of Women and is responsible for women’s rights. Another covers the High-Level Political Forum and focusses on climate, the environment and sustainability. The third programme sends two young people to the General Assembly and the Commission on Social Development, and covers youth participation and inequality as thematic areas. This case study focuses on the latter programme.

In Germany, to prepare to voice German youth interests, youth delegates visit various young people in schools, universities, youth clubs and groups. In their tours of Germany, they also cover marginalized youth groups, visit youth prisons and refugee camps and engage with young people on the street. During their visits, they educate young people about politics and international engagement and solicit the young people’s political and social opinions and demands. Their mandate also includes regularly visiting ministries and their departments to develop links with people working in thematic fields important for their political advocacy work. At the United Nations, they voice their country’s youth interests through speeches and in the negotiation of youth resolutions, as well as through advocacy by hosting side events on youth-related topics at the country’s mission. During their mandate, youth delegates use social media and talk to the press to inform the public about their activities.
The youth delegate programme to the General Assembly is facilitated by the National Youth Council and the German United Nations Association. They are responsible for funding the programme, providing administrative resources to carry it out and connecting the youth delegates to other civil society organizations. The governmental partners of the programme are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Family and Youth. The Foreign Ministry establishes the link to the United Nations, issues the necessary accreditation, and provides youth delegates with information on meetings and negotiations. The representatives of the Foreign Ministry also yield the floor to the youth delegates at plenary sessions of the Third Committee of the General Assembly, so they can deliver their speech. The Ministry of Family and Youth is responsible for the implementation of international resolutions and national laws regarding youth. It therefore functions as the domestic political link of the programme.

The selection process of youth delegates in Germany entails a comprehensive application process for the candidates. The official requirements to become youth delegates are to be aged between 18 and 25, have a good command of English language, be experienced in working with children and youth (structures) and have a vital interest in international politics. The first application round requires letters of motivation, short essays and CVs; the second round is consists of telephone interviews; for the final round the applicants are invited to Berlin for an assessment session involving a group discussion, several simulations and a single interview in front of a jury. The jury includes representatives of the responsible ministries, civic organizations and current youth delegates. Other countries have established online voting processes for youth delegates, to ensure that youth delegates have to gather public support for the mandate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Grant youth delegates authority and independence:
The competences and powers of youth delegates are highly dependent on the level of political willingness of their respective countries. To truly represent their country’s youth, youth delegates must be able to have agency and ownership over their political agenda. For that, they should have the ability to write their own speeches, fully participate in the negotiation of the youth resolution and be able to act and advocate autonomously and regardless of their government’s position.

Be inclusive in their representative function:
Youth delegates should consciously include all of their country’s youth in their representative function and work. Youth delegates should not only represent their own interests or the interests of the country’s youth council, but the general demands of youth in their country. Therefore, they have to position themselves and advocate for the broader interest of young people.

Use public attention to create political clout:
Because of their single international mandate, youth delegates are very present in social, local and national media. It is therefore important that they use their public clout to advocate for the policies they desire and avoid being used by political actors as a form of decoration.
Utilize the global network:
Since youth delegate programmes exist globally, they have the potential to enable global campaigns and a global movement, and to mobilize young people from different places for the same political goals.

Take into consideration disadvantaged candidates:
Highly competitive and selective methods of choosing youth delegates bear the risk of leaving out potential applicants. Some applicants may have faced structural disadvantages such as not having been able to go on an exchange abroad to enhance their English skills. It is therefore important that the jury takes into consideration criteria or factors that may not work in favour of certain candidates. Including criteria like diversity and gender balance in mind helps to reduce the reproduction of certain elites. Increasing the diversity of youth delegates may create new role models for disadvantaged youth and increase their representation in political processes.

SOURCES
https://www.jugenddelegierte.de/
PROTEST MOVEMENT

Political protest involves attempts by individuals or groups to address problems perceived in the political system or political decision-making. Protest movements intend to point out problems and sometimes propose solutions, without overturning the system itself. Young people use protests and strikes to address issues that they perceive as important to them yet are overlooked by the political leadership. They are a powerful instrument, when institutionalized pathways to influence decision-making do not exist. However, protest movements cannot replace organizations, structures and rules aiming at advocacy and influencing politics. But they can point to ignored issues in democratic feedback loops.

CASE STUDY: FRIDAYS FOR FUTURE

Fridays for Future is an international youth-initiated and youth-led movement. It is mainly participated in by school and university students. Every Friday the students demonstrate during school hours against climate change. The protests take place around the world in a decentralized manner and are self-organized. When the movement launched the ‘Global Climate Strike for Future’ on 15 March 2019, at least 1.6 million strikers came together in 125 countries in over 200 places. The majority of the movement comprises 15-to-20 year-olds.

HISTORY

In August 2018 the 15-year-old climate activist Greta Thunberg refused to go to school. Instead she sat in front of the Swedish parliament holding a sign saying: “school strike for the climate”. She announced that she would strike until the Swedish government changed its climate policy to accord with the Paris Agreement. Thunberg received global attention with her protest that she named Fridays for Future. With the growing news coverage of Thunberg, young people joined her call for protests in different countries and cities throughout Europe. Every Friday, students went on strike during school hours to protest for climate protection. After she spoke at the United Nations Climate Conference in the Polish city of Katowice in December 2018, her prominence further increased and caused the protest movement to further spread around the world.

DEMANDS

The movement’s aim is to bring attention to the harm done by the lack of climate policies or their inefficiency. The protesters demand that governments protect the climate and adhere to the 2015 Paris Agreement. This entails ending fossil fuel use and increasing investment in renewable energy and public transportation. The demonstrators also call for a lowering of the minimum voting age to 16 years to expand the participatory rights of young people. In several countries, the movement has proposed domestic solutions that take into account the countries’ energy infrastructure.
ORGANIZATION

The movement uses highly accessible and transparent communication channels that are open for any interested individual. Publicly it communicates through a website, social media and spokespeople such as Greta Thunberg and others who have become known as the face of their movement on a global or national scale. To mobilize more young people and raise attention for the movement and its goals, Thunberg visited several countries to join demonstrations, spoke before parliaments and the European Union, actively shared information about the movement and climate change on social media, and gave interviews to the media.

The engagement of new people in the movement occurred with minimal resources and with a low threshold of accessibility. The local and national groups use group chats in communication messengers such as WhatsApp and Telegram to connect with each other. The movement’s financial and organizational processing is handled in various ways. In Germany, a civil society foundation takes care of finances, donations and the transfer of money and resources to local groups.

Every country and local group has developed its own ways of mobilizing, protesting, raising awareness and advocating for the protest movement. For example, in the German cities of Freiburg and Koblenz, the movement demonstrated together with the pro-European movement ‘Pulse of Europe’ (which organizes under the same umbrella, motto and aims of the Fridays for Future movement).

PUBLIC REACTIONS

Fridays for Future has gained support from various supporter groups from civil society and the scientific community. Scientists researching climate, biodiversity and the environment came together under the name ‘Scientists for Future’. They signed and published a declaration that expressed support for the concerns of the movement. Several directors of renowned research institutions were among the supporters. Furthermore, parents, artists and public figures formed networks to voice their support for the protest movement’s causes.

Many political leaders and government officials have declared their support for the movement as a way of bringing together civil support to protect the climate. However, those same leaders and their lack of action are responsible for the existence of the movement and are therefore faced with charges of hypocrisy.

Strikes taking place during school hours have created controversy among politicians, school directors, teachers and opinion leaders. Some school directors and teachers have shown support and a cooperative stance towards the movement. Spokespeople for the movement underlined that protest during school hours served to increase pressure on governments. Many of the students regard the protests as an act of civil disobedience, explaining their refusal to obey certain laws or obligations as a way to direct public attention to the problems that cause the demonstrations.
ANALYSIS

The protest has not been instrumentalized by parties or established structures, organizations and platforms. Therefore, it has kept its original shape of a movement of various young people. The protest movement can be classified as extra-parliamentary opposition. It has brought broad attention to the issue of climate change. As a result, climate change and governmental accountability have been debated nationally and internationally. The protests drew attention to the lack of effective participatory instruments for youth and other groups that are systematically sidelined from the political process.

The protest addresses the lack of political action regarding climate protection, but in a broader sense it emphasizes a shortage of political gateways to participation for young people. The movement illustrates the political division between the political establishment and a global youth movement. Many of the political elites have ignored the repercussions of climate change and failed to adhere to their own global commitments. On the other hand, youth has not been granted institutionalized political rights and corridors to express, advocate and pursue their political goals. The movement resulted from the deficit of democratic pathways of participation for young people and the lack of accountability of the political leadership regarding climate change.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Use protests as a tool for mobilization:
Protests are a highly accessible tool to mobilize people and increase their civic consciousness and knowledge of civil society’s political tools. It can therefore be used to integrate protesters into more stable and consolidated structures and use their engagement in further and alternative political activities that reach beyond protests.

Engage civic organizations and structures into the movements:
To create transformative power and change, protest movements need to invite and include organizations and structures that outlast the moments of mass mobilization. Ideally, they should be able to mobilize people whenever the window of opportunity for political change is open.

Form platforms for collaboration:
During protests, various organizations and fractions inside the movement can identify each other and launch partnerships on issues that they have an interest in. If a youth council (with regional branches) is available, it can serve as a facilitator for partnering different organizations through the movement.

Create sustainable structures from movements:
Protest movements are an effective tool for drawing public attention to a cause and pressuring the political leadership and system toward a desired change. However, protests can quickly lose their momentum and the attention that drives political change. It is therefore important to use movements to create sustainable structures that can escape short-term trends and channel the energy of their members into long-term political work.
Create an agenda and effective advocacy that goes beyond protest:
Civil disobedience and confrontation are an effective tool for attracting public interest. In order to drive political change, it is important to advocate for and seek other pathways of political engagement than just provocation and protest. A clear agenda combined with a call for institutionalized opportunities to voice young people’s demands can help to find compromises between the political elite and the interests of underrepresented youngsters.

Advocate for feedback mechanisms inside the political process:
Protest movements highlight deficiencies in democratic accountability and feedback mechanisms inside a political system. When people take to the streets, all the other ways to advocate for their interests and demands have failed or have been repelled by the formal political institutions and the persons that inhabit them. Therefore, it is necessary to create mechanisms and institutions that facilitate the exchange of political demands and lead to governments better supplying their citizens with their desired political action, needs and demanded outcomes. This entails institutionalized pathways for youth participation.

Use the momentum of pre-election or government creation periods.
Protests create a great amount of political clout and social awareness of an issue in a short period of time. For many political systems and constellations, it takes much longer to react to the social movement. Sometimes, only a new election cycle and a newly formed government can establish the prerequisites for compromise and the political change demanded by the protesters. Because political actors shape their positions before elections or during the government creation process, those moments are suitable for generating outside pressure and inside impact.

SOURCES
https://www.fridaysforfuture.org/
https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/14/world/europe/climate-action-strikes-youth.html
MECHANISM

Youth consultations are mechanisms to create exchange frameworks between governments and young people. They can channel young people's demands into the political process and have an impact on governmental policies. The consultations are sometimes organized by the governments themselves. In other cases they are handed down to civil society organizations to be the hosts and organizers of consultative meetings and dialogue with youth.

CASE STUDY: STRUCTURED DIALOGUE

The Structured Dialogue was a European Union-wide platform for exchange between young people, youth organizations, politicians, experts, researchers and administrative officers. The mechanism framework was part of the EU Youth Strategy covering the years 2010 to 2018. It was agreed by EU Youth Ministers. The mechanism was a forum for reflection and consultation on the priorities, implementation, monitoring and follow-up of the EU’s cooperation in the field of youth.

The Structured Dialogue was divided into several 18-month long work cycles. Each cycle was dedicated to a different topic decided on by the Council of Youth Ministers. During each consultation cycle, each EU country conducted a national consultation of young people and youth organizations. The participatory mechanism itself was organized and facilitated by national working groups through representatives of youth ministries, national youth councils, youth organizations, youth workers, researchers and young people from various backgrounds. The process aimed to work bottom-up and to facilitate contact between young people and decision makers at local, regional, national and European levels.

The results of the discussions served as a foundation for debates between young people and ministry representatives from all EU member states. This debate took place every six months at EU youth conferences. The final results of the Structured Dialogue were intended to influence the design of youth policies. The EU youth strategy for the years 2019-2028 renewed the mechanism and renamed it ‘EU Youth Dialogue’.
IMPLEMENTATION IN GERMANY

The consultation process of the Structured Dialogue in Germany was facilitated by the German Federal Youth Council. The Youth Council provided an online participation tool to gather suggestions for the various issues open for discussion and consultation. Generally, the process was handed down in a bottom-up manner. All the dialogue rounds took place at regional and local level. The roundtable organizers were able to freely choose their participatory approach and methodology. In addition to the regional discussion forums, a national dialogue was organized regularly. All suggestions and demands gathered at the regional forums were submitted to the German Website of the Structured Dialogue. Through the consultative online tool, the participants voted online on the demands that they found the most adequate. The highest ranked demands were passed on to the EU Youth Conference. The website enables tracking of suggestions, voting results and feedback from decision-makers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHASE</th>
<th>MEASURE</th>
<th>CASE STUDY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>The tool introduces the user to the most important information on the consultation topic and its definition, and provides facts and statistics.</td>
<td>One of the consultative phases of the Structured Dialogue was on “participation of youth with migration backgrounds”. The phase was intended to generate debate on which factors create hindrances for young migrants and how to increase young migrants’ inclusion in political and social environments. The consultative process took place in 2012.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation phase</td>
<td>The participants answer questions posed to address the consultation topic.</td>
<td>The questions young people responded to were:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• What makes it difficult for young people with migrant backgrounds to participate politically and socially?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• What can politics and society do to improve the participation of young migrants?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• What is paramount for improving friendly social relations among young people?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• How can youth organizations improve the participation of young people with migrant backgrounds?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Are there best practices concerning inclusion of young people with migration backgrounds?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHASE</td>
<td>MEASURE</td>
<td>CASE STUDY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voting</td>
<td>After having submitted their answers, young people have opportunities to vote on the answers, demands and suggestions they found the most effective and plausible. The highest ranked suggestions are passed on to the EU Youth conference.</td>
<td>The participants diagnosed that migrants and their distinctive needs were often a blind spot for politics, society and youth organizations, highlighted discrimination in the education system and called into question whether equal opportunities truly exist for migrants. The suggestions on how to better integrate migrants included granting them the right to vote on local level regardless of their citizenship. They also demanded financial support for engagement of young migrants in youth organizations and improved cooperation with migrant-led organizations and structures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Representatives of the governments and youth ministries of all EU member states discuss the results of the participatory consultation cycle. The discussion results in the formulation of several recommendations that are passed to the European Commission and the other EU member states.</td>
<td>The discussions resulted in 14 collective recommendations. They included demands to improve information services, embed intercultural learning inside the learning agendas of schools and extend the active and passive voting rights of foreigners living in the EU.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHASE</td>
<td>MEASURE</td>
<td>CASE STUDY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up</td>
<td>The national government and the EU Youth Minister Council react to the</td>
<td>The recommendations were recognized by the ‘EU Youth Minister Council’ and the ‘German governmental federal working group for the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy’. The German working group provided feedback, predominantly listing examples of how the German state was already addressing the young peoples’ demands without setting new political goals. The EU Youth Minister Council drew conclusions from the suggestions of the young people in an official EU document but omitted some of the suggestions. The suggestions did not push for concrete political actions and reaffirmed many measures that are already in place in many EU countries, including Germany.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

*Increase interaction between decision-makers and young people:*
The exchange with decision-makers should not only include exchange of documents, position papers and suggestions, but also personal interaction. The facilitators of participatory projects should ensure – or at least encourage – personal exchanges between youth representatives and decision-makers to further discuss the feasibility of the suggestions made through the participatory process. The decision-makers drawn into the dialogues should come from all levels of decision-making.

*Ensure transparent and accessible participatory processes:*
The participatory process, from the suggestions to the reaction of decision-makers, should be transparent, traceable and easily accessible. Any interested individual should be able to understand the various steps in the process. Especially when suggestions are commented on or acted upon by decision-makers, it should be clear why certain suggestions are declined and others are supported or endorsed.

*Agree clear rules and timelines:*
Young people often expect quick feedback and political movement, while decision-making bodies and their bureaucratic procedures take time. Thus, it is important to set clear and comprehensive guidelines and deadlines for the process as a whole.
Create real and traceable outcomes:
The political reaction in the case in question was limited to rhetoric avowals and did not set the stage for political action. A participatory process has to produce outcomes other than documents that restate the already-existing positions of politicians, ministries and councils. For the fulfilment of the political opinions and demands of young people, decision-makers have to commit to concrete political action.

Enable youth to lead agenda setting:
Young people should not only be able to consult politicians on topics that were prescribed by the body facilitating the participatory process, but they should also be able to set the agenda and select the topics for discussion in the consultative process.

Increase outreach of participatory measures:
Overall, few local projects and individuals participated in the various phases of the Structured Dialogue. Therefore, it is important to increase the outreach of the survey and further investigate what incentivizes young people and youth organizations to participate in participatory platforms and projects like the Structured Dialogue. More participants would mean greater publicity for the platform. Greater publicity can mobilize more young people to pressure decision-makers to follow up on the recommendations.

Increase the diversity of the participants:
The facilitators of the participatory project should ensure that different youth groups and individuals are reached through the project. This way the recommendations and the voting process will be representative of the community’s youth population as a whole.

Select appealing titles for participatory processes:
It is questionable whether the term ‘Structured Dialogue’ makes young people more willing to participate in a political process as it sounds bureaucratic. ‘EU Youth Dialogue’ is a more accessible term. When participatory processes are being named and their consultative design being developed, it is important to include young people in the process in order to find names, methods and topics that are appealing to them.

SOURCES
https://www.unhcr.org/573484967.pdf
https://mitwirkung.dijr.de/mitmachen/
YOUTH PARLIAMENT

MECHANISM

Child and youth parliaments are an institutionalized instrument for giving young people a political body to engage in decision-making processes at various levels. Usually, youth parliaments are set up at local level and are associated with the municipal government. Youth parliaments convene on a regular basis to discuss issues important to young people. They provide them with a space to actively develop solutions and suggestions for political decision-makers. Some youth parliaments include commissions that focus on different issues. The selection process for members of youth parliaments varies from case to case. Sometimes the members are elected by all eligible young people in a county, while in other cases participation in parliament is an open space for interested youth. In some youth parliaments, the members are granted power over certain (budgetary) decisions, while others have to pass on all of their suggestions to the city council.

CASE STUDY: YOUTH PARLIAMENT IN BERLIN

The children’s and youth parliament in Berlin’s Tempelhof-Schöneberg district is one building block of a participatory system that encompasses youth conventions in various neighbourhoods, a youth budget competition for project funding and a student committee representing school students.

HISTORY

In 2005, a non-partisan, all-party working group of the district assembly in Tempelhof-Schöneberg started working on a proposal to set up a youth parliament. At first it was criticized by various local politicians, who doubted that children and youth would be interested in this form of participation and feared the body would turn into a decorative event. In Berlin’s Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf district a youth parliament already existed. The young chair of the parliament met the working group responsible for setting up the new youth parliament. The chair convincingly reported on the positive experiences that young people and politicians had had with the parliament. After putting together a legal framework for the children’s and youth parliament, the district assembly unanimously passed a motion to establish the participatory body.
## WORKING PROCEDURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROCESS</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment</td>
<td>Each year all students at primary, secondary and professional schools, as well as children and youth centres, elect their representatives to the youth parliament. Every school or facility is asked to send between two and four representatives. The eligibility requirement for the election is to be younger than 21 years old and attending a school or facility in the parliamentary district.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural elections</td>
<td>At the beginning of every legislative period, the youth parliament convenes and elects its board. The board manages the content-related work and is responsible for external representation of the parliament.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working groups</td>
<td>To develop and prepare petitions for the larger conventions, three regional working groups meet several times a month. Their petitions are developed through on-site inspections of different parts of the district and the spaces that are allocated for young people, such as youth centres and playgrounds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convention</td>
<td>The convention of the parliament takes place in the official district assembly hall. The full parliament convenes at least four times a year. During the convention, children and young people introduce their political ideas, discuss them and vote on the petitions and approve or decline them. The petitions include improvements to traffic, playground, school and sports infrastructure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROCESS</td>
<td>DESCRIPTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer to municipal assembly</td>
<td>All the adopted petitions are passed down to the decision-making district assembly, which is obliged to discuss them. Then the petitions are voted on and either passed or declined by a majority. In the adult district assembly, petitions from the youth parliament are treated in the same way as motions from the political fractions and assembly committees. According to the district assembly rules of procedure, petitions from the children's and youth parliament have to be worked on at the beginning of any committee or plenary session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up</td>
<td>The youth parliament's board controls the subsequent processing of the motions. The decision over the petition and the reasoning behind it are then reported back to the young people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>Among many other successes, the youth parliament has successfully petitioned for more affordable public transportation, internet access at school, security measures in schools, bus stops and train stations and better and healthier food in schools.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The youth parliament is financed through the district assembly budget. Its work is supported by an administrative officer, who is responsible for preparing for the working group meetings of the regional groups, ensuring organizational and administrative matters during parliamentary work, designing the participatory process to be educational and creating motivational experience for the young parliamentarians, and enhancing the participatory structures and mechanisms within the youth parliament.

The work of the youth parliament has expanded over the years. The young representatives have been included in various other consultative processes. Some young parliamentarians represent it in the council of the German child welfare organization and the national conference for the rights of the child, and parliamentarians have started to cooperate with youth parliaments in neighbouring districts.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Ensure an applied educational experience:
Youth parliaments provide a space for young people to actively take part in the political decision-making in their municipalities. They learn about the rules and procedures of political processes and gain applied knowledge about politics. Young people become more motivated when they see their suggestions translated into measures and actions taken by the government. It is therefore important to accompany the young people’s learning process with adequate information and education materials and training.

Enable personal exchange between youth and politicians:
The municipal assemblies and their politicians should not only receive and vote on the proposed motions of the youth parliament, they should also foster active and personal exchange between youth and decision-makers. Representatives from the youth parliament should be invited to committee and plenary meetings of the city council in order to introduce, advocate and defend their motions. Active exchange between youth and politicians will improve mutual understanding and awareness of the perspectives of youth representatives and adult politicians.

Set in place clear rules and obligatory affiliation to decision-making bodies:
To avoid youth parliaments becoming decorative bodies without any political impact, clear rules and guidelines have to be formulated. The youth parliament has to be associated with, linked with or integrated into the city council to influence decision-making processes. It should be required that all petitions are handed over and voted on by the district assembly.

Increase decision-making powers:
To achieve more participatory justice, city councils should discuss whether youth parliaments should be granted direct decision-making power on youth-related issues and have spending power over the participatory youth budget that is allocated to the youth parliament.

Improve diversity:
The election or selection process of the youth assembly must take into account the district’s or city’s diversity of youth population. Special attention should be given to minority, marginalized and disadvantaged youth. It is also important to ensure gender parity in the youth decision bodies. The parliamentary principles should include mechanisms that safeguard adequate representation for all the diverse groups within a community.

SOURCES
MENTORING PROGRAMME

MECHANISM

Mentoring is an instrument that serves to transfer knowledge from an experienced person (mentor) to an unexperienced person (mentee). The goal of mentorship programmes is to support the mentee in his or her personal and professional development. Mentorship programmes are a powerful tool to enhance the abilities of disadvantaged youngsters. They serve to provide them with useful resources to become active citizens themselves. Mentoring decreases barriers to the civic participation of disadvantaged groups and can serve as a driver to engage young people in social, civic and political life in their communities. Finally, mentoring can give different young people equal access to skills and opportunities, and increase social mobility for disadvantaged younger groups. It therefore serves as a meaningful and inclusive tool to increase active citizenship and decrease disadvantage.

CASE STUDY: ROCK YOUR LIFE

The non-formal Rock your Life education and mentoring programme was founded by German university students in 2008. They got into a discussion with the German Finance Minister when he visited their private university in Friedrichshafen. The Finance Minister argued that the lack of opportunities in socially disadvantaged groups of society was hereditary. This provoked a motivated group of students to prove him wrong. They founded an initiative to bring university students and youngsters from disadvantaged and migrant backgrounds together in a mentoring programme.

The idea of the mentoring programme stemmed from the observation that education is the key to social inclusion and participation of any individuals. For many individuals in Germany, successful transition into professional life depends on the social and economic situation of the family. Social mobility – the process of moving from one socioeconomic class to another – is still fairly restricted in many societies. Rock your Life operates to the assumption that many youngsters who are disadvantaged do not find apprenticeships or jobs after finishing school, while many companies have open positions that lack applicants.

PROGRAMME

The Rock your Life student-founded and student-led initiative is a one-on-one mentoring programme that brings together disadvantaged young people and engaged university students for at least a year. Its goal is to create equal opportunities for young people and enable social mobility.
Since the programme was founded over 8,000 people have been engaged. Rock your Life has partnered about 90 schools and has expanded from Germany to Switzerland and the Netherlands: it now operates in more than 50 different locations. The initiative employs almost 200 trainers that qualify mentors for their tasks and help the students with their training.

As mentors, university students meet up with their mentees on a regular basis, supporting them to set goals and achieve them. The mentorship activities include tutoring, language practice, exchanges over life experiences, writing applications and simply passing time with them, going to the park or playing football. Alternatively, students can become active in the organizational team to ink mentors with mentees. Because of its open structure, engaged students can set up a Rock your Life structure at their university to increase the reach of the programme and enable more mentorship programmes. Furthermore, the non-profit initiative has partnered up with various companies to broker internships for the mentees and mentors taking part in the programme. This serves to increase their professional opportunities and give them perspectives on the job market.

The project was initially financed by winning a competition for prize money from a private foundation financing social projects. After gaining more publicity, it was funded through public and private funds and foundations and through crowdfunding. All of the mentors serve as volunteers, while staff are also employed in paid positions.

**STRUCTURES**

The non-profit has high-ranking sponsors, including a politician from the German Green party with a migrant background and the president of the school of governance of a German university. The board of trustees responsible for overseeing the non-profit includes some of the programme’s financial partners. The advisory board is the initiative’s central supervisory body and oversees its goals, activities and organizational structure. Various regional branches exist in the north, east, south and west of the country and elect up to two representatives each for the regional council. The regional council acts as a link between the centre of the organization and its structures.

**BENEFITS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

*Use mentoring programmes as a model for youth structures:*

Mentoring programmes provide an opportunity for privileged and knowledgeable persons to share their experience with less fortunate youngsters. This creates room to groom youth decision bodies that are more diverse and promote people that could contribute to society and political processes with their unique experiences. Passing on knowledge to less experienced and less advantaged groups should be a mechanism in any youth structure.
Grooming new generations of engaged youngsters:
Mentoring programmes can also pass on knowledge and experience on political processes and work in structured organizations. This helps to groom new generations of active citizens who are engaged in their communities, and can help address the problem of the relatively high turnover within youth organizations because of decisions to enter new professions or move to other cities.

Reach out to improve the diversity of representation:
Reaching out to disadvantaged youngsters can help to increase the diversity of participatory structures and increase the level of social inclusion within a community.

Improve skills:
Mentoring programmes are an important part of increasing access to education, social networks, participatory skills and personal development. Experienced and engaged people passing on knowledge to newcomers or disadvantaged youngsters helps make various structures, social positions and professions more accessible.

Decentralized programme design:
Mentoring programmes should be designed in a decentralized way, so the outreach does not limit itself to large, university cities and wealthy neighbourhoods, but also reaches into rural and neglected areas.

Pair diligently:
When pairing mentors with mentees, close attention should be paid to their profiles in order to provide each mentee with a mentor who can advise in the area that the mentee would like to improve on or learn about. Leisure interests should also play a role in this, as social bonds are created when sharing experiences with each other.

SOURCES
https://rockyourlife.de/
https://www.spiegel.de/lebenundlernen/university/rock-your-life-studenten-coachen-hauptschueler-a-895728.html
MECHANISM

Youth dialogues and consultations are multi-level processes that follow a series of consecutive steps. Consultation forums for young people are created around a certain challenge or problem. Young people gather ideas on potential solutions, giving feedback about their individual obstacles and recommendations to address them. After a reciprocal discussion process, the young people prioritize their proposed solutions and develop more concrete action plans to implement them. Experts, politicians and civil servants are included in the elaboration of the implementation plan to make the ideas more feasible. Finally, recommendations and action plans are proposed to the general public and politicians. Ideally, the solutions proposed are transformed into actions and implemented in the proposed community and young people are included throughout the whole process.

CASE STUDY: YOUTH-DEMOGRAPHY-DIALOGUE

Germany’s society is confronting demographic challenges. On the one hand Germany is an aging society meaning an increase in the median population age due to declining birth rates and rising life expectancy. On the other hand, the total population in Germany is decreasing. The effects of demographic change in the country are already occurring and creating problems and opportunities in rural regions. Young people leave their rural home regions because of a lack of prospects. The German Federal Government’s ‘Demography Report’ laid the basis for the ‘Demography Strategy’. To meet the challenges of demographic change, ten working groups were formed in the framework of the Strategy. In October 2014, the Ministry for Family and Youth launched the ‘Youth shapes future’ working group that focused on rural areas. Its main responsibility was to develop recommendations for actions, including young people in the work of the group. Besides the expertise of the working group members, many of the contributions came from participatory projects all around the country. One of the projects was the Youth-Demography-Dialogue developed by the German Leuphana University.

The Youth-Demography-Dialogue was conducted from 2015 to 2018. It used a specific methodological and conceptual framework to implement participatory projects in four rural reference communities in various German regions. During the dialogue, young people developed their own ideas and solutions to the demographic transformation in their local and regional communities. The conferences saw 1,200 young people taking part and developing 3,600 ideas for solutions. After clustering the ideas, young people discussed, prioritized and further developed the ideas.
The suggestions that resulted from the dialogue were included in the ‘Youth shapes future’ working group recommendations, and serve as reference points for youth-adjusted demography policies that are part the long-term “Demography Strategy” of the German Federal Government. Many of the young people’s suggestions were included in local government policies. The suggestions for rural areas proposed by youth included: a structural support programme for the economy in rural areas, better and more affordable public transportation services, digitized administrations or administrative terminals in villages, mobile doctors’ consultation rooms, a civic engagement platform, offline-education resources, and developing opportunities for tourism.

The Youth-Demography-Discussion was organized through various demography-workshops using the following scheme:

**PREPARATION**

Preparatory activities
A planning and steering committee made up of the persons responsible for the project meets up to discuss the goals and the working structure. The committee also conducts preliminary analysis of the social indicators of the locality and estimates the resources needed to implement the participatory project. Young people are informed and invited to the activities.

Participatory training
To conduct the participatory training, interested individuals or public servants are trained to become facilitators and moderators of participatory mechanisms. The capacity building helps to prepare communities for participatory measures in the present and future.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

Providing information
The dialogue starts. Young people get an informational introduction to the main points of the topic of the workshop (e.g. the economy, work, education, mobility, family, health, age, civil society, infrastructure, living conditions, migration, democracy, public administration, culture). This methodical approach enables levelling of the thematic knowledge of each participant.

Idea development
The participants brainstorm ideas and come up with different solutions. As a follow up, they discuss and evaluate comparing them to ready-made solutions proposed by the facilitators of the workshop.
Structuring the ideas
The results of the workshops are documented and clustered together in different categories. This is done by the facilitators.

Prioritizing solutions
The participants or a focus group prioritize the final and clustered results of all the workshops. The group works out the ideas in a more concrete way, to develop projects and concrete implementation measures.

Feedback and review
During a consultative dialogue young people discuss their results with civil servants from local and regional administrations. Their feedback is processed into the proposed solutions.

Presentation to politicians
The results of the workshops are presented to the municipal government or the committee on youth. The feasibility of implementing the proposed ideas is discussed.

Youth conference
At a public youth conference, representatives of the participatory process present the results a wider public audience and media. (This can be carried out together with the previous step of presentation to politicians).

Implementation
The outcomes of the consultations with the administration are put into practice and potentially passed. The results from the participatory process are implemented by project or working groups and committees. Action plans are developed and realized for the various projects.

SUGGESTIONS

Alternative approaches to the project implementation
Instead of conducting the idea development online, virtual working groups could work on ideas. This can be helpful to overcome distance and mobility issues in rural communities.

Instead of the workshops a “citizens jury” can be introduced. There, a group of about 25 youngsters are delegated to craft out solutions to certain problems.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Involve decision-makers in the process:
When organizing the youth conferences, politicians should be actively invited to and involved in the different stages of the consultative process to get acquainted with and used to this form of youth political participation. Their active involvement strengthens the legitimacy of the consultative forum and increases transparency and the trust of decision-makers in the process itself.

Involve different actors to increase feasibility:
Active engagement of decision-makers, community leaders, civil society organizations, youth structures and public administrative servants increases the chances of adopting the recommendations and action plans. They are crucial to implementing the ideas, thus their involvement from an early stage is helpful to create a supportive environment for the proposed solutions.

Create transparency:
The process should be transparent to young people, so they do not feel frustrated about certain mechanics or methods. By transparently laying out the process to them, they develop a feeling of ownership and responsibility and stay engaged throughout the implementation process.

Pay attention to diversity and the inclusion of disadvantaged groups:
The reach of the project has to be wide to be fully representative in its participatory form. Therefore, it is important to include disadvantaged youngsters in the consultative process to avoid proposed solutions that only cater to privileged youngsters and their needs. The dialogue process’s facilitators should pay attention not only to attracting already engaged and active youngsters but also marginalized and minority youth. Disadvantaged youth groups may not yet be aware of consultative processes and could lack the level of engagement and motivation of more privileged youngsters. Including them into the process can be triggered through advocacy and information campaigns prior to the consultative forum.

SOURCES

https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/22044/dbbefe04cad50744f7c68267fe55fdb/jugend-demografie-dialog-broschue-data.pdf
https://www.dji.de/fileadmin/user_upload/jugendblick/Weibusch.pdf
MECHANISM

Youth parties or political youth organizations represent and voice the interests of their young members in politics and public. Parties hold different political ideologies and serve as political bodies for grooming new politically and socially active youngsters. They are active at various levels of government and often have complex political structures. Parties for youth are often attached to mother parties that hold seats in representative political institutions such as parliaments or city halls.

CASE STUDY: YOUNG SOCIALISTS IN GERMANY

The Young Socialists ("Jusos") is a political youth party in Germany. Its main goals are to represent young people sharing a socialist ideology and impact politics. There are over 70,000 youngsters between the ages of 14 and 35 active in the party. The party describes its basic values as liberty, justice and solidarity. Its aim is to create a society free of discrimination and level out social and economic inequalities. The party intends to overcome capitalism and establish socialism as an emancipatory order. The Young Socialists are a youth organization within the structures of the mother party, the Social Democratic Party (SPD). Any member of the SPD who is younger than 36 years automatically becomes a member of the Young Socialists Youth Party. Membership is not required to participate in local Young Socialists work, though to take part in political work party membership is necessary. The practical work of the Young Socialists includes activities in schools, university and engagement initiatives. They organize discussions and cultural events, inform citizens about the party’s work and demonstrate for its causes.

STRUCTURE

The structures of the Young Socialists mirror those of their mother party, the SPD. As an organization, their legal position within their mother party is rather weak compared to other German youth parties. The Young Socialists can introduce petitions to the federal congress of their mother party, but this does not guarantee that their petitions will be passed. In a broader international context, the Young Socialists are part of the Young European Socialists and the International Union of Socialist Youth. The Youth Party cooperates with organizations with similar goals including social movements and unionist youth organizations.
More concretely, the Young Socialist youth party has a comprehensive multi-level structure:

**BOARD**

The Board is responsible for executing the decisions of the federal congress, oversees party business and represents the party publicly. The chair and secretary general are joined by eight deputy chairs who are elected for two years by the Federal Congress.

**FEDERAL CONGRESS**

The Federal Congress is the highest decision-making body. It decides on petitions and controls the work of the Board and Federal Committee. The Federal Congress comprises 300 elected delegates elected by district and state conferences. Each entity gets four mandates while the other mandates are distributed according to the number of SPD members who are younger than 35.

**FEDERAL COMMITTEE**

The Federal Committee is the consultative body associated with the Board. It is tasked to concretize the general decisions of the Federal Congress. The Federal Committee comprises at least one elected representative from each district and state conference.

**DISTRICT AND STATE BOARD**

The district and state board implements decisions made by the district and state conferences, has equivalent tasks to the main board at local and regional level and coordinates the work between the different levels. The district and state conference is the local and regional equivalent if the Federal Congress. The district and state committee mirror the work of the federal committee. This structure continues down to local level.

**WORKING GROUPS**

Working groups are the smallest unit of the Young Socialists in Germany. They implement the youth party’s work at local level.

**UNIVERSITY GROUPS**

The Young Socialists operate in over 350 different locations. There are also student, vocational and university groups. More than 80 groups are active at university level, contributing to the work of student councils, actively engaging in social counselling and advising educational organizations with their expertise. Because of Germany’s federal structure, education is overseen at state rather than national level. Therefore, university groups from the same states meet several times a semester to exchange experiences and plan joint projects. At national level, the university groups meet once a semester to decide on political positions. Moreover, regular political educational training at national level increases the methodological qualifications and expertise of active students at university.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Build structures following democratic principles:
Youth parties should build democratic and inclusive participatory structures within their own organizations, promoting constructive exchanges. Inclusive structures create competition for the best concepts and policy ideas. This way, the best ideas can be voted on and decided upon, ideally to become official political positions and recommendations of the youth party. Democratic structures also help to promote talent within the youth party and ensure that the highest positions are occupied by capable party representatives. Equally, democratic principles ensure that all the necessary checks and balances are in place to prevent the accumulation of power by a group or individual.

Develop fact-based policies:
The youth policies a party decides upon should be based on reliable research, evidence and data. A fact-based approach to youth policy is useful to gain argumentative reliability and serves as a powerful tool to influence policy making.

Exert political influence:
Youth parties have to ensure that they have enough channels to pressure and influence their mother party and the general political landscape. They should have formal pathways to get their own decisions and petitions voted on by their political mother organization in order to influence its policies. Furthermore, youth parties should make use of informal gateways to advocate for their political agenda, such as demonstrations, information campaigns and dissemination of information through conventional and social media.

Communicate efficiently:
Youth parties should transparently communicate information on their work, engagement and meet-up times through youth media, especially social media. This way they can ensure that they attract interested members and equally make their work and endeavours visible.

Increase diversity in membership:
Youth parties should ensure that they have broad outreach and clear guidelines of being welcoming to new and interested members. Youth parties should not reinforce structures or reproduce the inner culture through code-based inclusion and exclusion depending on social status, language, background and style of clothing. Instead, youth parties should strive to engage with a diverse group of young people to increase their basis in society.

SOURCES
https://www.jusos.de
MECHANISM

National youth councils are vehicles to draw more attention to youth and youth issues in society and politics. They are umbrella structures for youth civil society actors, such as children’s and youth organizations. Youth councils are representative bodies formed by coalitions of partnered civil society youth organizations, and represent their interests in local, regional and national matters. National youth councils serve as networks to exchange best practices, form coalitions and consolidate the political positions and objectives of youth organizations. As the focal point of the interests of structured youth organizations, they advocate and voice the interests of young people for the public and in politics. Furthermore, youth councils are responsible for implementing a variety of nation-wide projects on children and youth engagement and participation. Depending on their level of connectedness, youth councils often work hand in hand with youth ministries to craft youth policy, conduct participatory projects and support the implementation of youth policies. National youth councils are also responsible for representing their members abroad and building partnerships with other youth councils or entering international alliances of civil society organizations.

CASE STUDY: NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL OF GERMANY

The German Federal Youth Council is an association of German youth organizations, founded in 1949 with its headquarters in Berlin. Its main function is to represent the interests and demands of young people to the German government and parliament, and European institutions. The Youth Council influences youth policy and youth legislation. Furthermore, it makes the positions of young people visible publicly and in sciences.

MEMBERS

The German Youth Council has more than 50 member organizations, including regional youth councils and national youth organizations. Because Germany is a federal republic and delegates political powers to its 16 states, each state also has a regional youth council to represent the regional interests of young people. Thus, the member organizations of the federal Youth Council comprises 16 regional youth councils and over 30 youth organizations, ranging from Youth Scouts to Young European Federalists to Youth Firefighters. Member organizations include environmental, cultural, trade union, humanitarian, political, vocational and religious youth organizations. In total, the German Federal Youth Council represents over six million young people.
INTERNATIONAL YOUTH WORK

The German Youth Council is not the only organization responsible for international partnerships with other organizations. With the German Sports Youth and the Union of Political Youth (both separate youth organizations) it forms the German National Committee for International Youth Work. Together, these organizations represent German youth organizations in European and international contexts, organizations and institutions. The National Committee is a member of the European Youth Forum, the Europe-wide platform for national youth councils and international non-governmental youth organizations. The National Committee is also responsible for agreements for the international work of German youth organizations.

STRUCTURE

The German Federal Youth Council's office is responsible for implementing the decisions and operative work of the youth council. The Secretary General oversees the various departments including staff and finances, public relations, national youth policy, international youth policy and the project bureau. The political positions and operative work of the Youth Council are decided on by the Board, which comprises a gender-balanced chair held by two representatives and six vice chairs delegated by the various member organizations. Each member organization can send delegates to a general assembly, the number of which is determined by the size of that organization's membership. The general assembly meets at least once a year and decides on the board and budget, plans the working focus of the youth council, votes on the inclusion or exclusion of member organizations and can change the Council's statute. To monitor youth participation, the German National Youth Council has developed a strategy to monitor and evaluate effective youth participation. This approach can be applied to different projects and endeavours that aim to increase youth participation.

PROJECTS

Projects implemented by the German Federal Youth Council and the National Committee for International Youth Work include:

- campaigns to lower the voting age
- the Structured Dialogue of the European Union
- the United Nations Youth Delegate Programme
- the under-18 election, where young people conduct a mock election to learn about democratic practice
- facilitating participatory youth dialogues
- issuing official licences for youth volunteers certifying their qualifications
- lobbying politicians for more funding for the work of youth organizations
- exchanges with international or other national youth organizations and councils
- facilitating digital participation tools
RECOMMENDATIONS

Have clear democratic rules and principles:
National Youth Councils should set clear rules, values and principles that are in line with democratic, inclusive and non-discriminatory practices for themselves and their member organizations. Only organizations that comply with these democratic standards should be allowed to join national youth councils. Close attention should be paid to whether the member organizations of youth councils follow the same democratic and egalitarian principles internally and function as generally inclusive organizations.

Increase outside participation:
Because of their claim to represent young people’s interests in institutionalized politics, national youth councils and youth organizations should make efforts to encourage young people outside the structures to join them or to encourage participation of young people regardless of whether they belong to structured youth in order to improve representation. Socially disadvantaged youth should be engaged to assist with enhancing the social and engagement networks of youth organizations.

Train for non-formal education and community engagement:
Youth councils and youth organizations have to reach out and attract young people by being appealing to them. It is important that youth organizations provide engaged youth and the implementers of participatory projects with training on engaging forms of non-formal education and effective strategies for diverse community engagement.

Manage diversity:
National youth councils, their member organizations and their general assemblies are part of the process of elite creation by electing people onto boards or steering committees. It is important to pay attention to gender parity and the promotion of members of disadvantaged, marginalized and minority communities.

Increase representation:
To be representative of the whole country, youth councils have to strive to include member organizations that are active in the urban and rural areas of the country. Furthermore, they have to take efforts to represent the whole spectrum of civil society youth organizations, from environmental to cultural organizations.

SOURCES

https://www.dbjr.de/
https://www.dbjr.de/artikel/deutsches-nationalkomitee-fuer-internationale-jugendarbeit-dnk/
CHILD FRIENDLY CITIES INITIATIVE

The Child Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI) is a UNICEF-led initiative that supports municipal governments to realise the rights of children at the local level. The initiative was launched in 1996 by UNICEF and UN Habitat to make cities liveable places for all. The premise of the initiative is that the wellbeing of children is the decisive indicator of a healthy living environment, a democratic society and good governance. The CFCI is intended to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child at local level, supporting municipal governments to ensure the societal participation, safety and support of children and youth. Furthermore, the CFCI is a network that brings together governments and other stakeholders such as civil society organizations, the private sector, academia, media and young people.

In practice, a child-friendly city is a municipality in which the voices, needs, priorities and rights of children are an integral part of public policies, programmes and decisions. In child-friendly cities children generally:

- Are protected from exploitation, violence and abuse.
- Have a good start in life and grow up healthy and cared for.
- Have access to quality social services.
- Experience quality, inclusive and participatory education and skills development.
- Express their opinions and influence decisions that affect them.
- Participate in family, cultural, city, community and social life.
- Live in a safe secure and clean environment with access to green spaces.
- Meet friends and have places to play and enjoy themselves.
- Have a fair chance in life regardless of their ethnic origin, religion, income, gender or ability.

The strategies to achieve these goals are collecting data and comprehensive monitoring, advocacy, child-friendly laws and polices, city-wide strategic plans, child-specific budget allocations, cross-sectoral coordination, and child and youth participation.
The Child Friendly Cities programme supported by UNICEF Turkey was first piloted in 10 municipalities in Turkey and has now been extended to 150 cities. The establishment of child assemblies is an integral part of the programme. Children aged between 7 to 18 can participate in the assemblies. Child assemblies re a platform for children to express their opinions and concerns about child rights in general and municipal services in particular. The assemblies enable children to organize, be informed about their rights, identify their priorities and contribute to the full scope of municipal processes, including municipal development planning and budgeting.

Child assemblies consist of students, NGOs serving or working with children, volunteers, members of children’s sports clubs, and other experts working with children. The number of child participants varies by municipality, but on average each assembly has about 100 child members. A child assembly elects its own managing body and discussion committees. The managing body and committees list the activities they want to organize during the year ahead and set targets to implement them. Volunteers from the municipality and representatives of child-focused NGOs facilitate discussions. Child assembly members convene at least once a month to review and discuss the decisions and plans made. By law, the municipal council must consider proposals made by the child assembly.

In Ukraine, UNICEF successfully initiated implementation of the Child and Youth Friendly City Initiative (CYFMI) in 2018. Some 22 municipalities have thus far signed a Memorandum of Understanding and an additional 138 – including some from conflict-affected regions - have expressed interest in doing so. The initiative brings high hopes for accelerated implementation of the CRC and the localization of United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals through a prioritized agenda with and for children and youth to mainstream partnership as the best participatory level.

Each participating municipality analysed its child and youth rights situation and developed an action plan to address the gaps identified, and a budget to support implementation of the action plan. Half of them have allocated additional funds to implement their child and youth friendly action plans. In December 2018, UNICEF accredited 11 municipalities as Child and Youth Friendly City candidates.

Children and youth actively participated throughout the various stages of discussion with the municipalities. Thanks to UNICEF’s assistance to the process, a multi-stakeholder coalition was established consisting of government partners, national associations of municipalities, other United Nations organizations and an umbrella body of youth organizations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Conduct city-specific analysis of youth:
Each city and community struggles with different issues and challenges. Therefore it is important to conduct thorough problem analysis in order to identify which problems can be improved by which means. For this, surveys and focus group discussions should be conducted with young people.
Do not apply the same solutions to different communities:
Each city and community in the world has unique characteristics. Therefore, no one-size-fits-all solutions should be applied to different problems. Nevertheless, municipalities should consider using methods and tools that have proven to be effective best practice in other municipalities.

Develop municipality-specific action plans:
The findings, problems and solutions should be translated into a city-wide action plan that takes into consideration the different needs of various groups of children and different neighbourhoods, and studies the specificities of different localities and issues. The action plans should pay special attention to neighbourhoods with higher crime rates, higher unemployment rates and less developed infrastructure, and find solutions for them. The proposals of young people should be taken into account in the deliberations.

Actively include disadvantaged children:
Regarding the children assembly programme, the participatory inclusion should reach beyond the engagement of privileged youngsters. Participation and consultation of out-of-school children, homeless children and marginalized youth should be ensured in order to include their perspectives and opinions into finding social and political solutions for municipal challenges regarding youth.

Treat the initiative as an ongoing process:
Making a city child-friendly is a commitment that requires the establishment of permanent mechanisms. These mechanisms have to ensure that child-friendly programmes and reforms go hand in hand with development of the city, its infrastructure and population. Therefore, the municipality, children’s assemblies and all other actors involved have to work continuously to make their city more child friendly.

Ensure that the research, participation and implementation processes are cross-sectoral:
For successful realization of child-friendly city projects, it is crucial to work in a cross-sectoral way. Throughout the process of gathering data, consulting and including young people and implementing projects and reforms, all relevant political, administrative and civil society actors should be invited and included. In some cases, the private sector can play a helpful role in financing certain endeavours. This ensures that various perspectives and expertise are taken into consideration. Different actors can take on different roles in successfully developing and implementing strategies for youth-friendly cities and communities.

SOURCES
https://childfriendlycities.org/
U-Report is a youth participation tool developed by UNICEF. The free social messaging tool uses a real-time information system (RapidPro) to engage community e-participation. The system operates through SMS and social media messenger bots to engage with young people all over the world. In 2019, it was available in 55 countries and reached over 6.5 million users. The messenger tool is used for several purposes, including giving young people alerts in crisis situations and using individual messages and polls to gather information and data from young people. It relies on a community of members that voluntarily sign up to contribute to the process. Whenever a poll is initiated, the young U-reporters that signed up for the process have the opportunity to respond to it, if they are in the relevant national target group. The issues the poll covers include discrimination, health, education, water, sanitation, hygiene, youth unemployment, HIV/AIDS and social welfare. The programme was first launched in Uganda in 2011.

The instrument is intended to amplify the voices of young people by providing feedback, evidence and data to decision-makers. It also aims to engage youth organizations and overlooked or marginalized communities. Young people's attitudes and behaviour are measured through technology and contribute to monitoring, evaluation and research.

The U-Report entails four different forms of engagement that are employed in different situational and country-based contexts:

- **Feedback:** The U-Report polls serve UNICEF country offices, partner United Nations organizations, governments and NGOs to collect information from young people. The poll results are analysed in real time and are displayed on a public dashboard.

- **Live chats:** Occasionally, live chats are offered to engage with young people on issues that are specific or that they are otherwise afraid or embarrassed to speak out on. This includes topics such as protection from sexual exploitation and cholera prevention.

- **Self-skilling:** In some cases, the messenger bots allow young people to navigate content and information on specific issues to educate themselves on issues like children's rights, disaster risk, immunization, and basic education and protection.

- **Community action:** U-Report can serve as a tool to mobilize young people by communicating with them through social media.
**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Improve the inclusivity of the participatory design:**
When using e-participation tools, young people should be able to influence and suggest topics and priorities of the surveys. They should be included in development of survey design. While e-participation tools are often administered by adult-led organizations like UNICEF or ministries, it is crucial to include young people in the questionnaire design and transparently communicate how decisions on the design are being made. The organizing body should follow up on various requests concerning the thematic focus of the surveys, the questions and survey design in general.

**Understand the results through focus groups:**
Surveys are helpful ways to generate data about political issues and to develop fact-driven policies to improve living conditions. Nevertheless, it is important to understand and interpret survey data. This can be enabled, for instance, by qualitative additions to the research design and by conducting focus group interviews.
Inform young people about the process and results:
When designing e-participation tools, it is important to transparently communicate the way the instrument functions and includes young people. The participating youth should be engaged and informed about the follow-up processes of their contributions.

SOURCES
https://www.unicef.org/innovation/U-Report
https://ureport.in/story/332/
There is an array of effective participatory mechanisms to engage young people in civic and political processes. To build inclusive instruments to engage youth in politics it is important to take into consideration the political, social, educational and economic context of the target community or country. When aiming to establish a mechanism for participation it is important to follow some key principles to make it effective, sustainable and inclusive. The following recommendations cover areas ranging from civic education to closing the gap between youth, authorities and politicians to communications outreach. All the recommendations are intended to provide guidance according to the socio-political circumstances that young people encounter themselves in their communities. Each participatory project and mechanism design needs to be wired in its own way. Nevertheless, it is important to take into consideration the different elements and building blocks that make participatory mechanisms successful and cater to the needs of the targeted young people.

CIVIC EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Act as a school of democracy:
Participatory mechanisms serve as schools of democracy and civic education for young people. By actively taking part in decision making, young people learn about the rules and procedures of civic and political processes and gain applied knowledge about politics and policies.

Strengthen political education across different groups:
Young peoples' participation and engagement in politics and social life heavily correlates with the level of discussion with their families. If groups of youngsters grow up in less engaged families, their interests may be less represented in their future lives. Participation in political life and civic engagement in combination with civic education can substitute for a lack of political socialization. Through acquiring so many skills, all groups of young people learn to better engage in societal life.

Groom a new generation of politicized young people:
Engaging young people in the political process – and providing them with mentorship, guidance and motivating experiences – grooms new generations of engaged citizens. Engagement in communities and in the political system helps to maintain social stability and provide support and feedback to political decision-makers.
Increase trust in institutions:
By actively engaging with authorities, young people build trust in their institutions and the democratic political system.

Lower the voting age to accelerate participatory processes:
Political and civic participation from an early age resonates later in life. To develop new generations of democratically conscious and responsible people, it is important to engage youth as early as possible. Lowering the minimum voting age can accelerate the process of politicization. Young people acquire active citizenship skills and civic education quicker when they are actively engaged in the process.

PRINCIPLES, RULES AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Build participatory structures according to democratic principles:
Participatory tools should be designed following inclusive and democratic principles. Equally democratic principles ensure that all the necessary checks and balances are in place to distribute the participatory power of young people equally and make the mechanism itself accessible to different youth groups.

Create transparent processes:
Participatory processes should be transparent and accessible to young people, who should be informed about the purpose, scope and procedures of the mechanism they are taking part in. They should be informed about the potential impact of the procedure. Laying out the process to young people means they develop ownership and responsibility for the project and stay engaged throughout implementation. To decrease frustration over implementation, it is important to set clear timelines.

Follow clear guidelines:
To avoid inclusive mechanisms becoming decorative bodies without any political impact, clear rules and guidelines have to be formulated. Ideally, participatory instruments have to be linked or integrated into decision-making bodies.

Ensure accountability:
Participatory processes need to have follow-up mechanisms that ensures the implementation of youth’s decisions and creates accountability to youth constituencies.

Youth-led agenda setting:
To have full ownership over the process, young people should not only be able to consult politics on topics that were prescribed by the body facilitating the participatory process. They should also be able to set the agenda and select the topics for discussion within the consultative process.

Guarantee real and traceable outcomes:
Participatory mechanisms need to produce real outcomes that result from the planning projects. If a suggested project cannot be implemented, the authorities and politicians have to clearly articulate why it was hindered and suggest alternatives that are satisfactory for young people.
Involve different actors into the process:
Active engagement of decision-makers, community leaders, civil society organizations, youth structures and public administrative servants increases the chances of adoption of the youth decisions. Civil society organizations can be instrumental for implementing the participatory process and helping to advocate for implementation. Thus, their involvement from an early stage is helpful for creating an environment of support and sustainability for the mechanisms.

Form stable and sustainable structures:
Stable structures that outlast one participatory process are important for developing long-term engagement for young people. Therefore, it is important to maintain the structures created through the mechanisms and apply best practices gathered to new projects or maintain the instruments and tools through participatory cycles.

YOUTH, AUTHORITIES AND POLITICIANS

Close the gap between youth and authorities:
Political actors often treat young people as a blind spot because they do not belong to their electorate. Political actors should be incentivized to engage in active dialogue with young citizens and exchange opinions and positions with them. This active exchange between youth and authorities will improve mutual understanding and awareness of the perspectives of youth representatives and adult politicians.

Increase interactions between decision makers and young people:
The exchange with decision makers should include not only an exchange of documents, position papers and suggestions, but also personal interactions. The facilitators of participatory projects should ensure or at least encourage personal exchanges between youth representatives and decision makers to further discuss the feasibility of the suggestions made through the participatory process. The decision makers drawn into the dialogues should come from all levels of decision making.

Involve various political actors in the participatory mechanism:
When organizing youth conferences, politicians, public servants and decision-makers should be actively invited to and involved in the various stages of the consultative process to familiarize themselves with youth political participation. Their active involvement strengthens the legitimacy of the consultative forum and increases the transparency and trust of decision makers in the process itself.

Adjusting politics to youth needs:
Granting young people agency and ownership to influence decisions over their communities is a tool for empowerment. Using a bottom-up approach to participation, young people get to gear political decisions to appropriately adjust towards their own needs and priorities. Youth-led political decisions address youth issues from their own perspectives.

Use the momentum of election cycles:
Many political systems and decision makers are open for change and new approaches at certain times during the election cycle. Before the election, political parties and candidates are more open to new ideas and approaches for participation. During the formation of new governments, young people can have leverage and influence the outcome of political decisions and advocate for participatory platforms to be established.
Engage in participatory skill training for youth workers, civil servants and politicians:
A common understanding of participation should be developed among youth, politicians, civil servants and civil society representatives. On the basis of this understanding, the abovementioned individuals and groups should be trained to become facilitators and moderators of participatory mechanisms. Skill training at individual and organizational level fosters enabling environments. Increased capacities in the field of non-formal education helps communities to prepare for participative measures in the present and future. It also consolidates understanding of inclusion in political processes.

Set up reliable contact persons responsible for the mechanism:
To create sustainable participatory instruments, it is necessary to have binding arrangements and fixed contact persons that take on their responsibilities. The people responsible for participatory politics in political institutions, authorities, the administrations, educational institutions and enterprises should be trained to understand their role in setting up the participatory process and conducting it in a qualitative way. This requires preparatory capacity building and qualification measures.

Integrate existing political and civic structures into mechanisms:
To maintain sustainable structures for youth participation, available political and civil society structures should be integrated into the participatory mechanism to strengthen its institutional network design, its influence, sustainability and stability.

Create organizations from movements to keep them sustainable:
Movements and informal societal and political forms of organizations can be transformed to create sustainable structures that channel their members’ energy into long-term political work. Mechanisms and institutions can serve as a constant channel for desired political action and push for influence in the political system that goes beyond pressure through protests.

Better skills through knowledge transfer:
Mentoring programmes provide an opportunity for privileged and knowledgeable persons to share their experience with less fortunate youngsters. This provides for room to groom youth decision making bodies that are more diverse and promote people that could contribute to society and political processes with their unique experiences. Passing on knowledge to less experienced and less advantaged groups can empower them. And vice versa, knowledge transfers can lay the ground for valuable exchanges among young people and between youth and political decision makers.
METHODS AND APPROACHES

Use a respectful and rights-based approach:
Young people have political rights and should be approached with respect and appreciations. In their exchanges with political decision makers they should be recognized as active agents of legitimate interests that deserve to participate and be heard.

Take a holistic approach to participation:
Participation should be understood as a holistic process that takes into account the perspectives and needs of children and youth and chooses the adequate strategies and methods to engage them.

Ensure that activities and mechanisms are youth-friendly:
Activities that aim to enhance the political participation of young people should be youth-driven and designed in a youth-friendly way. Young people should have agency to decide on their priorities, methods and approaches themselves. The environment of a participatory mechanism should be adapted to the participants’ capacities and needs. Depending on the age and target group, the activities may focus on result-oriented projects, use simple language, be issue-driven, include game elements, and/or use interactive technologies or electronic forms of participation.

Encourage fact-based policy-making:
The policy suggestions and demands of youth should be supported by available scientific data. Young people should be encouraged to use available data and facts to strengthen their arguments and demands. A fact-based approach to youth policy is useful to gain more legitimacy, and serves as a powerful tool to influence policy making.

Consider different impact participatory influence ranges:
Depending on the format, range and budget of the participatory programme, many of the adopted projects only change the community on a micro-scale. Most mechanisms do not provide pathways to propose holistic or wide-ranging solutions to structural problems that persist on a larger scale. The scope of projects has to be adjusted and the range of political influence has to be taken into consideration to create participatory mechanisms that have a different range and scale of effect.
INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

Include marginalized groups:
Members of poor and marginalized communities are at risk of being largely or partially excluded from the project due to structural discrimination, insufficient communication and a lower degree of self-empowerment. If young people are systematically excluded socially, it is less likely that they become engaged in politics or civic activities. Marginalized groups can include young women, youth with migrant backgrounds, illiterate youth and young people with special needs. Appropriate methods should be applied to give marginalized groups of youth equal chances to participate.

Strengthen equal opportunities:
Youth participation should include all interested young people regardless of their roots, background, social status and level of education. It is especially desirable to reach young people who have not had experience of participation before. This has to be ensured through the choice of topics and the spaces that are created for participation. There should not be pressure to participate.

Strengthen the skills and rights of marginalized youth:
Access to education, digital media, financial security, personal help, residential status and equal opportunities are factors that enable or inhibit societal integration and participation. All of these factors have to be taken into consideration when educating young people and strengthening the rights of disadvantaged people through political and social measures.

Keep inclusion voluntary, while encouraging it:
Inclusion is voluntary and should be granted to all young people regardless of their socio-cultural backgrounds. In order to do so, the right measures should be taken to build inclusive participatory mechanisms.

Actively manage diversity:
Participatory youth structures and civil society organizations occasionally take part in the elite creation process by promoting and selecting people into decision-making bodies or elected positions. To adequately ensure the representation of society as a whole it is important to pay attention to gender parity and the promotion of members of disadvantaged, marginalized and minority communities.

Actively include disadvantaged youngsters in consultations:
Non-privileged youngsters should be included in the consultative process to avoid the proposal of solutions that only cater to privileged youngsters and their needs. Including them in the process can be triggered through information campaigns and personal contact prior to the participatory forum.
COMMUNICATIVE OUTREACH

Use youth-adequate communication channels:
Young people use different systems than adults to communicate with each other. These have to be taken into consideration when creating participatory programmes targeted at youth. To build inclusive and far-reaching participatory processes, youth-adequate communication and participation channels should be used.

Use digital tools:
Digitization expands the methodologies of participation. Digital tools and digital processes expand opportunities to include young people’s knowledge and expertise and thereby contribute to the political process. All young people should have the same possibilities to use digital tools. For this it should be taken into consideration that the digital literacy and use of young people can vary.

Ensure adequate environments for inclusive mechanisms:
The facilitator responsible for participatory projects has to take into consideration different youth groups. The inclusion of youth in political processes does not solely lie in the capacity of young individuals. The socio-political environment, youth organizations and government have to adapt to create participatory spaces that are inclusive for diverse youth groups with different needs.

Communicate efficiently:
The facilitators of participatory processes should transparently communicate about the process and progress of the mechanism, and the dates and times it takes places. For this purpose, the organizers should include youth and use youth-adequate communications forms such as social media. This way they can ensure that they attract interested members, while creating more publicity around the mechanism and making the endeavours visible.

Increase participation from youth outside of structures:
The organizers of participatory structures should encourage young people outside structures to join them. Better representation can be achieved by including a diverse group of people and actively seeking out participants that have not yet been reached by civil society organizations. Socially disadvantaged youth should be encouraged to engage with networks of participatory youth mechanisms.
## PROCESS-BASED RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations, based on the case studies, are intended to guide through the cycle of any participatory process and disclose some of the potential risks when carrying out the measures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHASE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>RISKS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Planning | The mechanism, process, rules and guidelines for the participation of young people are established, designed and decided upon. The participatory framework is structured, and the roles are distributed. The reach, goals and scope of the participatory process or structure are determined. The amount of competence and delegated decision-making power is set. It is decided, whether the participatory mechanism is a once-only project or a permanent instrument. | ● Young people are excluded from the preliminary process to set up the mechanism  
● The mechanism is designed in a top-down manner and does not foresee inclusive measures to influence political decision-making and hold true political influence for young people  
● The rules of the mechanism stay abstract or undefined, leaving room for arbitrary methods and measures |
| Invitation | Young people are actively invited to take part in the participatory process. The facilitators of the mechanism reach out to various groups of young people to find participants. | ● Disadvantaged youth groups that are not active in already-existing structures are not contacted  
● If certain youth groups are actively invited but others are not invited, the diversity of ideas and positions decreases  
● The invitation campaigns and tools are ineffective and are only applied in a timely manner in certain neighbourhoods or big city centres  
● The invitations are only disseminated over a few platforms, and not through different measures, spaces and media |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHASE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>RISKS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Consultation | The participatory process begins. Young people are able to actively discuss, contribute, consult and advise about their ideas for policies, measures and solutions to problems. The consultations can take place in different locations at different times, and can use different methods and technologies. Physical meetings of young people are possible, as well as forms of e-participation. | - The consultative process is unclear, non-transparent, unstructured and does not follow the predetermined rules  
- The facilitators of the consultative process display a top-down approach and do not leave enough space for innovative and different ideas  
- Different participants in the mechanism are not given enough space, time and attention to voice their opinions and interests |
| Concretization | The suggested ideas are transformed into concrete policy action suggestions. Action plans are concretized. Potentially, the participants in the mechanism vote on their priorities and favoured concretized demands, suggestions and measures. | - The process of concretization is dominated by certain interest groups, while other groups active in the consultation are excluded  
- Certain ideas suggested in the consultation process are dropped by the facilitators without proper explanation  
- The voting process is not sufficiently promoted and therefore excludes potential voting groups  
- The concretized measures no longer represent the original ideas |
| Decision-making | The suggested measures are discussed, taken into consideration and decided upon by political actors such as ministries, authorities, politicians or assemblies. They may have granted decision-making power to the mechanism while setting up the mechanism. Alternatively, authorities need to approve the suggested projects. | - The participatory mechanism is not properly integrated into the decision-making structures of political and social processes  
- The decision-making bodies are not prepared and informed about the participatory mechanism  
- The political culture in decision-making bodies is not sensitized to the participatory standards established for the mechanism and therefore reject all proposals  
- There is no meaningful exchange and dialogue between the participants of the participatory process and political decision-makers |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHASE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>RISKS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Decision-making | The adopted solutions are implemented and put into action by young people, administrative forces, politicians and the authorities or groups involved.                                                         | - The decision-making actors do not take any of the suggestions seriously and display a pejorative attitude  
- The young participants are not informed about the results of their suggested measures and recommendations |
| Implementation | Throughout the implementation process different actors monitor, observe, monitor and evaluate the actions.                                                                                                    | - The measures are not implemented as agreed in the decision-making process  
- The measures are put into practice in a non-transparent, ineffective incomplete way  
- The completion of implementation is never actively communicated to the young participants of the mechanism |
| Monitoring   | The feedback results are discussed and evaluated. The difficulties or deficits revealed in the participatory mechanism are discussed, addressed and resolved in future implementation processes of the mechanism. | - The implementers do not grant access to young people and civil society organizations who wish to monitor the process  
- Suggestions for changes to the implementation process are ignored or not taken into consideration |
| Follow-up    | After successful implementation of the measures, the participation mechanism is either renewed or established sustainably. Feedback is gathered about the participatory process and mechanism from participants, facilitators, authorities and civil servants. The feedback results are discussed and evaluated. The difficulties or deficits revealed in the participatory mechanism are discussed, addressed and resolved in future implementation processes of the mechanism. | - There are no mechanisms to include the feedback of all relevant actors involved in the mechanism  
- There are no forums, spaces and platforms to discuss lessons learned, best and worst practices of the participatory mechanism and process  
- The participatory process mechanism is not improved on the basis of the feedback of the participants, but is repeated in the same manner |
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Wilson, John; Musick, Marc (1998): The contribution of social resources to volunteering. In Social science quarterly, pp. 799–814.
