

WHY – We Hear You

Newsletter # 4

Presentation of the project's main results and future implementation opportunities

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Editorial by Ulrika Wennerholm, Project Coordinator, City of Vasteras (SE)

We saw a need to improve practice when it comes to democratic dialogue and the promotion of civic participation for young people, and in particular young people at risk of exclusion. With the support of Erasmus+, we therefore set out to collect, develop and create support material for teachers, social workers and youth workers, or indeed, any professional working with young people in Europe.

Have we reached our objectives? I think so; the intellectual outputs in the form of a database for good practice and two on-line courses have been produced, tested and disseminated by the partners. In addition to what we first set out to do, the courses have been translated to the partnership languages, thus making them more easily available for the practitioners. There has already been some impact, and more is expected as the support material is used and implemented. The partnership is strong and measures have been set up to ensure sustainability and continuous up-grading of the results.



Flash on the 2 days' final event

The low level of youth participation in the democratic process, as well as their distrust of democratic institutions and values, can lead to social marginalization and exclusion. The WHY project is addressed to Youth professionals with the final aim to create the basis for youth involvement in order to promote civic participation and democratic engagement, so as to prevent marginalization and negative effects and costs on individuals and society.

On the 16th and 17th of October the 2 days final event of the WHY project took place. They focused on the project results, the two on-line courses and the database of good practices.

The first day held at the Veneto Region Brussels' Office activated a productive dialogue with the European Institutions, European Parliament, Employment and Social Affairs Committee and European Commission, DG Employment Social Affairs and Inclusion and the Committee of Regions.

The invited representatives, Estrella Dura Ferrandis, Paolo Rizzo and Roberto Ciambetti reported on the policy framework and strategies in place, together with future upcoming initiatives, to counter the low level of youth democratic, civic and labour engagement.

The partners then took the floor to illustrate the WHY features developed in the years of work together. The *City of Rotterdam Youth Desk* introduced the opportunities offered by the WHY website that you can access at www.whywehearyou.eu.



The WHY website is the portal to both the **database of good practices** and the **two free online courses** on “Democratic Dialogue” (*Erasmus Hogeschool Brussels*), and on “Attitude and Self-respect” (*Double Helix Resources*).

The two online courses are available on the moodle platform whose interactive possibilities have been developed by *Anadrasis Initiative Information*.

Youth experts directly involved in the work with youngsters reported on their first hand experiences stressing the importance of always taking into account youngsters' opinion when drawing policies or initiatives aimed at them, This has been indeed the reason for which youth advisory boards have been set up in all partners countries.

Roberto Ciambetti, President of the Veneto Regional Council and member of the Committee of the Regions concluded outlining the existing synergies between the WHY project and the Veneto regional policies and initiatives.

The partnership moved then to city of Ghent where the event continued with a study visit to the local House of Youth, OverKop.

The day after was hosted by the TOPunt Vrij CLB. It was held in collaboration with the City Council of Ghent with the active participation of *Astrid de Bruycker, Ghent Alderman*. She gave an introductory speech about the City Council's new initiative to promote citizens' engagement: the participatory budget.

The two online courses and the Data Base have been introduced again to this new local audience, In addition remarkable contributions were brought by the youngsters themselves.



In the afternoon two workshops were held. One of them focused on identity in relations to one's own personal history, while the other offered the opportunity of an interactive presentation one of the selected good practices developed by the Swedish partner called "Unik" aimed at ensuring that all young persons regardless of political interest or awareness get to have a say in the process of local political decision making.

An additional WHY experience and rejoicing moment for the youngsters and for the project partners was made during a silent disco tour of the city of Ghent where participants shared what the WHY project has meant to them.



Focus on the WHY course “Promoting Democratic Dialogue and Civic Participation” by Arzu Yentur & Eef Cornelissen, Erasmus Hogeschool Brussels

On the last newsletter we gave the floor to Double Helix, Brian De Lord, for a personal introduction to the first on line course on reflections and self-awareness remember if you need more details to go on the WHY website. Now we turn to the other online Course produced by the project entitled “Promoting Democratic Dialogue and Civic Participation”. Eef Cornelissen and Arzu Yentur from the Erasmus Hogeschool Brussels have been coordinating its development.

Could you please give us both some highlights about it?

“The WHY project wants to support youth practitioners to respond constructively to new challenges with young people of divergent socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. The course focuses on the improvement of professional skills in order to enable them to use different communication models and skills to stimulate young people’s trust in democratic institutions and values. The different good practice and exercises in the course provide insight, knowledge and experience with basic dialogue structures to prepare the youth practitioner to facilitate a constructive dialogue based on mutual understanding”



What is a democratic dialogue?

“A democratic dialogue is a constructive and investigative dialogue. By means of this dialogue, we aim to promote an empathic attitude amongst every professional, which can lead to encounters that highlight common ground whilst maintaining respect for differences. An important initial step in dialogue is the creation of a safe environment where trust between persons is the key. Everyone should feel free to voice their opinion without fear of the consequences. Each opinion deserves recognition.

The democratic dialogue sparks curiosity about that which is different in a respectful way. If we show genuine interest in others in a respectful way, we can expect people to relate more easily and empathically to one another, permitting a real dialogue.

There are no winners or losers in a democratic dialogue. The goal is to build bridges, share points of view and discover new ways of building a brighter future”.

Interview with Estrella Dura Ferrandis, MEP

What are the highlights of the European Institutions' strategies in the field of youth social inclusion that could be of support to the aims of the WHY project enhancing the civic participation of vulnerable youth?

The general vision about youth participation is that young people are apathetic and disinterested in politics, and show resistance to active participation in governance. However, we must ask ourselves if it is really apathy and disinterest against political issues? or perhaps a critical attitude towards political institutions that they think do not respond to their concerns and interests.

Moreover, we know that young people express their political opinions through social media (such as social networks, Facebook, twitter, and so on) and engage socially and politically through volunteering or associationism; it is necessary to recognize young people are strong activists in different areas; just look at their activism against the climate change.

We must therefore reflect on the fact that perhaps the apathetic attitude of young people is not against social problems but it is against traditional institutions and political processes. Therefore, we need to make young people trust in institutions and in democratic processes. Important work must be carried out by the European institutions.

Both the 2030 Agenda and the European Pillar of Social Rights include among their objectives greater social inclusion of young people.

Ursula von der Leyer in her remarks at the European Parliament plenary session for her election as president of the European Commission last July said she wanted "more equality and fairness for our Young people. Youth unemployment is at 14.2 percent in Europe but ranges from 5 percent to 40 percent in some countries", and she added: "We can not accept this. Young people have aspirations, they want to work, they want to have a future –and it is our job to let them achieve this".

Certainly, if democratic institutions do not provide young people with working conditions, housing, health, education, and environment, that guarantee them a decent life, they will not believe in these institutions or participate in their governance.

The Youth Guarantee or Erasmus+ are some of the programs that European institutions have implemented to tackle young people's needs. However, they do not reach all young people nor do they respond to new needs. For instance, skills requirements in the labour market are changing rapidly, transitions from school to jobs are taking longer, and many young people start their career in temporary and atypical contracts; they often lack full social protection coverage during their early career. So, the Youth Guarantee needs to be more ambitious.

On the other hand, stakeholders call for more involvement of young people and social partners in designing and implementing youth employment policies and programmes. The Youth Guarantee could actively promote co-creation of Member States' youth employment measures with young people and youth organisations. It could also support national partnerships between trade unions, employers, youth organisations, education providers and public employment services to encourage the offer of apprenticeships and traineeships and promote labour market information campaigns to inform young people of their social rights.

In the same line, the European Youth Forum (EYF) considers that the EU and its Member States should include the Youth Guarantee as part of a “wider, comprehensive strategy to increase youth employment and promote social inclusion”. Member States should foster cross-sectoral cooperation and integrated approaches to supporting young people facing multiple barriers to social inclusion, beyond employment. The European Youth Forum wants to strengthen the involvement of youth organisations in the design, implementation and monitoring of the Youth Guarantee.

But, this ambition needs appropriate financial support, at the national and the European level. The Youth Employment Initiative, together with the new European Social Fund + are the key EU financial resource to support its implementation.



What do you think about the contents of this project and its outputs?

All European initiatives must be implemented from local and regional administrations. Collaboration at the European, State and Regional level is necessary to ensure that the European Pillar of Social Rights principles become tangible measures that have an impact on the well-being and quality of life of young people, thus restoring their confidence in governance processes and politics.

In this way, studies and research projects like this one in which methods and tools to promote democratic dialogue and participation are proposed, are of the utmost importance on this path. The active participation of young people in democratic processes is essential if we want to build more democratic, inclusive and fair societies.

Interview with Roberto Ciambetti, President of Veneto Regional Council

“As President of the Regional Council of the Veneto Region and Member of the Committee of the Regions, how do you think the two online courses produced by the WHY project could be used at the local and Regional levels? “

“Here is some data about my Region to understand how the objectives of the WHY project could respond to our needs and the way their products could be adapted to our local and Regional Context. In a population of 4.905.037 inhabitants, the Youth (between 15 and 28 years old) are 704.963. There are, in Veneto, 9 Local Health and Social Services Authorities, 21 Social Services Districts and 575 Municipalities. Our Region is at the present moment working on strategies, models and fields interventions to provide better opportunities for youth, orienting them around a new model whose defining key words are “community building” and “integrated approach”. Hence I would say the two WHY courses, can definitely support the innovative participative model we are working on. This does in fact foresee an integrated approach activating the local communities through intervention plans in the field of youth policies. The two training courses on reflections, self-awareness, attitudes and democratic dialogue are methods that could be made available to our of LHA’s-Social Services Department, municipalities, ONG’s, Schools and other public and private entities working presently with the youth to develop the “Local plans for youth”, they could also be used by social Cooperatives thanks to the active contribution of Equality Cooperative, partner of the WHY project and based in Padua (Veneto Region).

“How does the model presently in place in your Region work and how does it affect the chances of the youths?”

“The present model we have in place has been elaborated jointly by the Committees of the Mayors (Regional Law 19/2016) with the support of the Social Services of the Local Social and Health Unit, the Third sector and public and private stakeholders operating at local level. It is articulated into one year projects targeting young people between 15 and 29 years in areas corresponding to the so called “Districts”. The plans of interventions in the field of youth policies are made by single projects which are managed by the public or private stakeholders who have designed them in collaboration with the youths themselves. They are monitored through continuous evaluation and assessment of the interventions. Also regarding the resources a co-financing is implemented between the institutions involved.”

“as you know the WHY project has produced, beside the two online courses, also a database of selected practices. In what areas of intervention would you believe the WHY practices to be relevant?”

“I would consider the selected practices of the WHY project to be relevant for very many areas of interventions, but most of all they could provide inspiration for the professionals working with the youth on running projects in the areas of Inter-generational exchanges, prevention of youth distress and creativity workshops for the youths. With the Inter-generational exchanges the objective is to systematize interventions that could bring young people closer to employment with initiatives allowing them to develop jobs that, thanks to the abilities they require, are made gratifying (ex: give new life to occupations of the past, bringing closer students to the venetian cultural heritage, closing digital gaps of seniors..). In the field of Youths’ distress prevention the objective is offering future perspectives to the youths allowing them to build their life plans with shared, strong and continuous training. These are combined with education proposals based on the needs that have been observed and expressed by youth themselves through and with the involvement of local stakeholders: schools, municipalities, youth associations, community centers. More specifically the aim is to build bridges trying to integrate the promotion of well-being, community development and families’ empowerment. (open schools, active citizenship initiatives for school drop outs..). In the area of creativity Workshops for the youth, the aim is to give the youth, through laboratory experiences, the possibility to interact among themselves and with experts, to experiment different fields of interest in a process of “aggregative education” that enhances the value of being together orienting it to personal growth and building one owns future.



Interview with Astrid De Bruycker, Alderman of Ghent

As Deputy Mayor of Participation, what are the Council planned initiatives for the coming years to get involved with the people of Ghent?



Well, let me take you through one of the most important and exciting plans for the next five years: participatory budgeting.

We believe spending public money requires much thought, deliberation, wise and broadly consulted advice and a clear horizon for our city. Every six years, local elections bring about a new balance in the city governance. And new, renewed or altered accents are brought to the fore. This city council has decided to earmark a part of the city budget to be spent directly by the people of Ghent. Over the years, we have received signals, in the form of memoranda of civil society, complaints of individual citizens, praise about projects with great impact, worries that are passed on via outreaching civil servants, etc.

With all these messages, we want to go back to the neighborhoods, and listen to the most urgent needs now, whether they be public green areas, safety issues, social activities or others.

So what's the plan? Can you give some example of the kind of initiatives this budget will support?

The plan is to start with a good discussion. What are the priorities for the area? Based on all the signals and the discussion, we plan to launch a project call for initiatives in the neighbourhood. Whoever has a great idea to improve the neighbourhood, can introduce a proposal. Sounds simple, right?

Last legislature Ghent already experimented with this concept. Mostly creative middle-classed wizards came up with great ideas. The experiment definitely resulted in ideas and projects that made Ghent interesting and fun.

For example, we have the Bostorie, an initiative to turn some greenery into a social meeting place, playground and an outdoor classroom. Today it's become a great place for children to discover and learn about nature, but the area has also turned into a meeting place and brings about a new dynamic.

Another example is helpr, a social platform that matches people who want to help, with people who are in need of support. Of course this is only complimentary to the structural activities of relief work, but it definitely highlights a need and turns out to be quite a good tool. Other example: in two of our public parks, there are kiosks that were mostly kept as monuments. Through the experiment, the sheds or kiosks could be used to organize activities, for the neighborhood or passers-by. In summer time, when you go to these parks, there is a welcoming atmosphere. And with a drink you can enjoy the setting and each other's company. And who knows, think of new plans for the neighborhood.

We see many good results from the experiment and many of these initiatives are outgrowing the project-base. But -of course- we want to do better.

As you know the WHY project aims at supporting practitioners in enhancing the democratic participation of youth at risk. As I understand, the participatory budget rest on wide democratic ideas that directly call for people not just to express their opinions, but most of all, it encourages them to formulate viable intervention' strategies to act upon those opinions. Do you see the WHY scope being incorporated into this initiative?

We could say that the scope of the WHY project is indirectly put forward also by the participatory budget, as we intended it to be for everyone in Ghent. In every part of the city, whether city centre, social housing areas or outskirts. It should be for the young and the elderly. For middle-class and for people who live in deprived conditions. That's quite an ambition. It means we have to go the extra mile to involve people who usually don't come to public hearings or know their way to the city hall. That is why we are currently looking into other ways to engage people, whether it be by balloting, neighbourhood panels or other experiments. We are aware that we also have to think about online and offline; and strong and light forms of engagement.

Yet, that won't suffice. We will need to join forces and that is why we engage with civil society organisations. They have an extended network and expertise in the neighbourhoods, especially with people who are structurally left out in society. By giving them a head start and time to think about what can be improved in their neighbourhood, we hope to come to refreshing ideas that are also tailor-made for their needs.

Related partners and EU news:

FILO - Fighting Loneliness- Invitation final conference. Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences. November 18 and 19 2019



Participatory mechanisms for a society of all ages provide education opportunities for vulnerable youth.

Society is challenged by a growing number of ageing people that live longer and age in place. A growing group of elderly is living alone and not receiving support. The lack of relationships combined with an increasing need of support leads not only to a decrease in empowerment, but also to loneliness. Many interventions have been developed to address loneliness. It is though hard to select a suitable one in an unique situation and to implement it. The Results of this project are conducting to an overview of interventions for alleviating loneliness, categorized in the typologies of loneliness. They will pave the way for first ideas of joint international education programs around loneliness among elderly.

Leader University of applied Sciences, Rotterdam
Invitation 18, 19 November 2019 Rotterdam

<https://www.rotterdamuas.com/research/projects-and-publications/innovations-in-care/integrated-care/fightingloneliness/project-group/>

Invitations:

Brussels 17 and 18 February 2020 ENSA and Youth Care Platform project development workshop and the A WAY HOME final conference, Kind & Gezin Academie, Hallepoortlaan 27 1060 Brussels

17 February 2020

The ENSA working groups Youth, Child & Family and the Youth Care Platform are organizing a project development workshop. This workshop aims to gather possible project partners around innovative project ideas for vulnerable children, youngsters and their families and networks. We will start with information on funding programs and open calls and then work in small project groups on concrete proposals. The topics will address social inclusion and participation in society, independence and quality of life, integration of services, prevention of addiction, inclusion through sports, social rights, homelessness and housing.

Contact: Youth Care Platform: Jos Sterckx, jos.sterckx@odisee.be

ENSA Youth, Child and Family: Elena Curtopassi, elena.curtopassi@regione.veneto.it and Rudy De Cock, rudy.decock@kindengezin.be

A Way Home 18 February 2020, Prevent and eradicate youth homelessness

How can the final results of the A Way Home project inspire other EU regions and countries to improve their after care policies and to end and prevent youth homelessness in their communities? Presentations, panel discussions and workshops on:

- Strength-based policy framework on care leaving / tools and methods to prepare youngsters for leaving care / training program to support youth care providers in after care trajectories
- Starting A Way Home movements in your local context / bringing together coalition partners dedicated to preventing and ending youth homelessness / using the collective impact model to achieve a real change in the lives of young adults

www.awayhome.eu

ENSA 2020 General Assembly and European Conference HIMSS & Health 2.0 - 25-29 May 2020, Helsinki



You are invited to contribute to the next Ensa General Assembly to be held in Helsinki at the end of May 2020, in collaboration with the European Conference HIMSS & Health 2.0 that will take place on the 27th and 28th May 2020. The conference will deal with the integration of social and health care, home care and ageing, the promotion of a safe and ethical flow of useful data on prevention, health and research.

Cognition & Inclusion Erasmus + funded project Invitation to the 7 Dissemination Seminars May and June 2020



The "Cognition & Inclusion" project addresses the issue of adaptive and transversal skills needed to become active citizens in society. Adults with cognitive disabilities and learning difficulties often did not develop these competences because they are not part of their educational curriculum. In general, for this target group, training focuses on practical skills and not - for example - problem solving skills. Programmes for learning transversal competences are not known or not successfully implemented, sometimes because the trainers or social workers involved are not really convinced that adults with disabilities can be able to learn such competences.

You are invited to participate in seven symposia organized as national dissemination events in the partner countries. These will be one-day seminars for professionals, national organizations and their networks involved in the inclusive support of adults with learning disabilities. The seven symposia will be held in Spain, Portugal, Sweden, Finland, Finland, Bulgaria and Italy in May and June 2020.

EU news:

2020 Erasmus+ Call and Programme Guide published!

<http://www.dualcareer.eu/2020-erasmus-call-and-programme-guide-published/>

A renewed EU Youth Strategy proposed by the European Commission for 2019-2027

https://ec.europa.eu/youth/news/eu-youth-strategy-adopted_en

How can the European Pillar of Social Rights support the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals?

Recommendations to the European Commission by the subgroup on “Equality, Justice, Inclusion and Decent work” of the Multi-Stakeholder Platform on the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the EU, June 2018 1 Equality, Justice, Inclusion and Decent Work: How can the European Pillar of Social Rights support the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals

https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/subgroup-equality-justice-inclusion-decent-work_recommendations_1.pdf

Funding 2021-2027

The Commission has proposed a simpler and more integrated European Social Fund (ESF+) and a revised European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF). They are part of the Commission’s proposals for the 2021-2027 multi-annual financial framework (MFF) adopted on 2 May 2018. The proposals are currently being discussed by the European Parliament and the Council of the EU.

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=86>

The Youth Guarantee

The Youth Guarantee is a commitment by all Member States to ensure that all **young people under the age of 25** years receive a good quality offer of: employment, continued education, apprenticeship and traineeship.

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079&langId=en>

Youth Employment Initiative (YEI)

The Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) is one of the **main EU financial resources** to support the implementation of Youth Guarantee schemes.

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1176&langId=en>

Combating violent radicalisation — the youth sector’s role

The role of the youth sector in an integrated and cross-sectoral approach to preventing and combating violent radicalisation of young people.

https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=legisum%3A150401_5

EU Youth Strategy

The EU Youth Strategy is the framework for EU youth policy cooperation for 2019-2027, based on the Council Resolution of 26 November 2018. EU youth cooperation shall make the most of youth policy's potential. It fosters youth participation in democratic life; it also supports social and civic engagement and aims to ensure that all young people have the necessary resources to take part in society.

https://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/youth-strategy_en

For further information
<https://www.whywehearyou.eu/>

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