

PROMISING PRACTICES

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PRESENTED AT THE 6TH INTERNATIONAL
MAYORS' CONFERENCE NOW

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CUCKOO'S NEST

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INITIATED BY
ASSOCIATION SAM (SOCIAL - ACTIVE - HUMAN)
ROHRSEN / HAMELN / GERMANY

AIM

The cuckoo's nest has existed since November 2010. It is located in an apartment in Rohrsen, a spatially isolated residential area on the outskirts of the city centre of Hameln. In Rohrsen mainly families with a migration background live. Most households are low-income, remote from education and dependent on transfer payments. Especially young families with children are dependent on support due to language barriers, cultural differences and structural disadvantages.

The aim of the cuckoo's nest should be to counteract exclusion and disadvantage due to financial or social impairment and to meet the need for to provide advice, support and assistance. What is important here is the optimal design of the accompanying, support, educational and care services. For families with children and neighbours as well as ensuring a high educational quality.

IMPLEMENTATION

The "cuckoo's nest" exists since 2010, since 2012 the integrative project is supported by the association SAM (social - active - human).

With the increased immigration of Roma population groups from Romania and Bulgaria, the need for integration increased. To this end, a round table was founded in which several social institutions participated. Since its foundation, the network of those involved has grown steadily and they meet regularly with the responsible leaders to exchange ideas.

There are different cooperation structures. There are own offers of the partners which can be used (project "Jugend stärken" of the city of Hameln) but also a closely networked cooperation, such as the offer of language support with the primary school Rohrsen or the clothing chamber of the German Red Cross Hameln.

By interviewing parents and evaluating the children's interests, it is ensured that the services offered are geared to the needs of the users. Through continuous observations, process documentation and documentation analysis, as well as regular direct exchange of information. Among the employees, network members and the SAM association, the quality of the cooperation and need orientation is regularly checked.

SUCSESSES

- The need for support for the project was very quickly perceived by other partners, and the large number of partners made the project a success.
- The level of awareness of the offers has grown steadily.
- Especially families who live in the surrounding area made use of the offers quite quickly.
- With the help of interpreters and flyers as well as posters on front doors and letters to parents, the project was made known.

CHALLENGES

- Not all new ways of integration have led to success, but were necessary to develop new plans.
- Parents are the most important partners in social work with children. We often wish for more intensive cooperation here, in which the parents are actively involved and support their children.
- Women (95%) are more interested in German language courses than men. The interest of these must be encouraged even more here

RECOMMENDATIONS

- What is always important is direct and personal contact through listening and appreciation with and from all people and cooperation partners.
- "Work can only succeed if we see the individual person and encourage him again and again. Today, numbers and statistics play such a large role that individual fates often remain on the fringes" (Quote from Gabriele Brakemeier, 2. chairwoman of SAM e.V.)

CONTACT

<http://sam-hamel.de/wp/kontakt>

EDUCATION FAIR

.....

INITIATED BY
LASSE PAETZ
ESSEN / GERMANY

AIM

The problem. The extent of injustice in the German education system is well-documented. Perhaps most striking is the strong effect of parental socio-economic status on whether parents and teachers advise that fourth-graders visit grammar school (German: "Gymnasium"). This effect is detrimental even amongst pupils' with the same academic competencies and cognitive skills. The German education system is one of the most unjust within member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Almost nowhere else is school performance better explained by students' and schools' socio-economic profile. Concomitantly, a lower secondary school (former German Hauptschule) graduation is devaluated within German society. Lack of a middle secondary school degree is found to be a stigma that decreases vocational prospects in addition to the disadvantages associated with lower academic capability per se.

The objective. Self-efficacy is the psychological concept describing the belief in one's own power to achieve goals. Most often, improved self-efficacy is the key for changing educational careers for the better. Regular school lessons are not designed to improve the self-efficacy of struggling students, resulting in a vicious circle. Voluntary commitment and unmarked project management, on the other hand, are effective activities to increase self-efficacy. The objective of the Bildungsfestival ("education fair") and its related activities is to enhance the self-efficacy of students in disadvantaged school contexts in order to improve their educational prospects and enable them to speak up for themselves.

The idea. A yearly 4-day network event empowering 100-130 students from disadvantaged schools who show commitment for voluntary work or unmarked project management and become engaged in project groups. Every single student attending the Bildungsfestival must contribute working in advance for either some part of the program schedule or some organizational issue. We would set the framework for students to prove to themselves and others that they are capable of taking over responsibility.

IMPLEMENTATION

We started with a group of four friends who worked together for the non-profit organization Teach First Deutschland. After finding ten more companions, we carried out the pilot project with more than 100 pupils from all over Germany in 2016. Now, in the preparation process of the fourth Bildungsfestival, we are a team of about 30 adults and 10 minors who are former participants. Most of the adults have experience in a teaching context involving our target group. We organize mostly online and meet in person for preparatory weekends about 5 times per year. The event itself consists of workshops, stage performances, a chaos quest with many hidden challenges, and socializing activities. The participants are responsible for about half of the program, the other half is carried out by external guests and ourselves. The daytime activities take place in the professional seminar rooms and art spaces of the oasis of creativity called Unperfekthaus ("imperfect house") in Essen, Germany. The participants and their teachers spend the night in a tent camp set up in a nearby school's sports hall. All participants must choose one out of three thematic tracks for the event: sustainability,

diversity, or personal growth. The minors of our team constitute "Team Future". Supporting them by having them as factual event management trainees is our second core activity besides the Bildungsfestival itself. We are continuously extending our network of project partners and our activities to promote youth engagement beyond the core event itself.

SUCSESSES

The concept of putting our participants in charge for many aspects of the event worked out even better than we expected. Being asked what they liked most about the Bildungsfestival, many of our students describe a situation where they were offered responsibility and they dared to take it on. Also, teachers and parents tell us about their surprise that the participation at the event had a positive impact on the students' behavior at school and at home. We are also very happy to see, that almost all our participants can develop strong political interest and enjoy discussing with the politicians we invite each year. The surveys we compile at the beginning and at the end of each event indicate, that we effectively improve the students' self-efficacy and open-mindedness. Finally, we think that the feedback of the participants speaks for itself:

"I was inspired by how well the students worked together. In my class this is totally different." - Madleine (13)

"The best part was when we gave our workshop. That atmosphere was just so awesome, because everybody just listened, all fulfilled their tasks, and they also gave as feedback later, how well we did." - Karim (14)

"I wanted to show, what I am capable of. I did it. Thank you. I am proud of myself." - Marwa (17)

CHALLENGES

Successful education programs need thoughtful didactical concepts and enough personal and logistical resources. We almost failed organizing the first Bildungsfestival, because we were lacking money, time, and people. Some concepts needed multiple years of revision to work out, because they did not receive enough attention and resources in the planning process, as we were busy solving more existential problems. Today, we would probably be less overambitious, taking one step at a time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

First, one of the best things you can do for the personal development of young people is letting them practice responsibility.

Second, one of the other best things is helping them understand and act on injustice.

Third, it is never the fact that some important societal issue is too complex or too boring for young people. There may only be a lack of resources or a lack of good didactical concepts to teach them.

CONTACT

www.bildungsfestival.org

ENGAGE.CH

.....

INITIATED BY
DACHVERBAND SCHWEIZER JUGENDPARLAMENTE (DSJ)
BERN / SWITZERLAND

AIM

With the project engage.ch we seek to promote the engagement of young people in their community. The whole idea turns around the digital platform engage.ch where young people can address their wishes and concerns towards their municipality. The aim behind this action is to reach the young population directly by their interest and through digital media. To support the implementation of these concerns we have developed a process. This ensures that the young people get the promised attention and that they are integrated into the municipality.

IMPLEMENTATION

The process consists of several stages. At the beginning, a project group is put together. Potential members are all the local actors who are in touch with young people or for whom youth participation is crucial as well as members of the actual target group. This group accompanies the whole project and helps to establish a network and opportunities at local level ("door-opener"). The next step is the inclusion of as many young people of the municipality as possible. Therefore, their wishes and concerns are collected with an online survey and by the digital tool itself. The submitted concerns are being discussed at a public event between local authorities and the young people. Besides getting to know better the political process in the municipality, a selection of the concerns will be implemented at local level during the next months by the young people. This discussion at the public event and the implementation of the concerns is supported by guidelines which pave the way. The results of the survey, the discussions with the young people at the public event as well as the local conditions of the municipality serve as base for the creation of sustainable structures in the field of political youth participation in the municipality. The whole process is supported by a staff member of engage.ch to ensure the overview and the timing of the different steps.

The local group takes a crucial role in the implementation of the process. Our experiences have shown that the cautious composition and the collaboration with the local groups were the groundwork for a successful process. The time spend on searching and mobilising local actors to take part in the local groups is paying off during the process. It facilitates the different steps of the process and it ensures that the young people actually get the attention needed and that their concerns are taken seriously. The information about the process spreads wider and reaches more young people who thus take part at the public event. This results in a better understanding of the process, on the side of the municipality as on the side of the young people. This commitment was also shown by the number of submitted concerns and wishes.

SUCCESSSES

We motivated a lot of young people to voice their concerns and wishes towards their municipality and even to discuss them with local authorities. Local authorities were amazed by the amount and the kind of proposals submitted and the conversations with the young people at the public event and supported them during the implementation of the selected concerns.

CHALLENGES

A common feedback concerned the length of the online survey which was rated to extensive. It took the young people too long to answer to the questions. It's unclear if young people were held of doing the survey but several submitted their response unfinished. As a consequence, we now only ask the essential questions for this process and are improving the usability of the online survey.

One difficulty concerns the implementation of the selected concerns. The process was constructed on the comprehension that – once the young people have discussed their concerns with the politicians and decided about the next steps – it's in the responsibility of the young people to take the first steps to implement their concern. For this purpose, we provided event with a guideline them during the public where they could add – in collaboration with the local authorities – additional information concerning the next steps. It emerged that the young people lost interest in the implementation of the concern, as it demanded their free time. We received this feedback from concerned young people and from the local authorities who wanted to help them with the condition that the young people do the first step towards them. There is a need of a wider support of the local group to accompany the young people towards a successful implementation of their concern.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The process reveals that it is crucial to combine online activities with work on the ground. We collect the wishes and aims mostly through our digital participation platform engage.ch and through an online survey (incorporated in the digital platform). The learning effects on the political process and their actual participation happens on the ground. Talking with the politicians, local actors and other young people they get to know how the political system works, what's the political framework in their municipality and the steps to implement successfully a concern. At the end they have the possibility to decide, if they want to follow the concern and implement it together with other young people.

Addressing the young people through their wishes and concerns allows to reach a lot of young people. This approach is important to make participation easier and more attractive asking them about their opinion. We mobilise also the young people who are not especially interested in politics: the results of the online survey have shown that a lot of young people submitted concerns even though they said in advance that they aren't interested in politics.

Finally, the process has to be supported by the local authorities. It is important that they make a commitment towards the project by taking part in the local group. As repletely said this local group takes a crucial role and ensures, that the process is supported on the ground. The local project group discusses the ongoing steps, represents the process in the municipality and facilitates the process through their personal contacts.

CONTACT

www.engage.ch

HOME FOR COOPERATION

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INITIATED BY
ASSOCIATION FOR HISTORICAL DIALOGUE AND RESEARCH
NICOSIA / CYPRUS

AIM / IMPLEMENTATION / SUCCESSES

The Home for Cooperation was created by the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research (AHDR) as an educational and research centre. AHDR is a multi-communal, non-governmental, non-profitable association, established in 2003. It is governed by a board comprising of Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot historians and educators, whilst its members come from various ethnic, linguistic and disciplinary backgrounds working at various educational levels in Cyprus and in Europe.

At the heart of every AHDR's activity lies the Association's overall mission; contributing to the advancement of historical understanding amongst the public and more specifically amongst children, youth and educators by providing access to learning opportunities for individuals of every ability and every ethnic, religious, cultural and social background, based on the respect for diversity.

In addition to the educational projects, the AHDR has undertaken a grand initiative to renovate a derelict building in the buffer zone into a "Home for Cooperation". This forms an integral part of its wider vision of transforming what is currently referred to as the Buffer Zone or Dead Zone into a zone of cooperation. The H4C has been aiming to break the common perception of the buffer zone by enabling young people, educators, historians, researchers and activists and other agents of change to develop knowledge and critical thinking through hosting programmes on education, training and research. Also, opportunities for Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and individuals to design and implement innovative projects for the empowerment of civil society and the enhancement of intercultural dialogue have been provided and Cypriots have been encouraged to demonstrate the benefits of cooperation across the existing divide. Furthermore, awareness of the complexity and diversity of history has been enhanced and the conservation of the cultural heritage of Cyprus has been supported.

The Home for Cooperation (H4C) has become a reality on 6 May 2011 and it has generated enthusiasm and endorsement in wide segments of the public in Cyprus – beginning with the two Leaders, the two mayors, the media, the leading civil society representations to the overall general public. The overwhelmingly positive reaction has shown that the H4C not only strikes a chord but that it is also poised to respond to the growing demand and need for dialogue across the divide.

Since then, the Home for Cooperation has managed to go beyond this initial vision, establishing itself in the core of intercommunal work in Cyprus. Over time, we revisited its vision several times to adapt to the needs of the community and the needs created by the political developments. In this way it has not only complemented AHDR's work but it has become one of the main locomotives of peace building, cooperation and dialogue in Cyprus. It literally has become The Home for Cooperation, envisioning a society based on equality without segregation; working towards positive social change and providing a safe space where human dignity is respected. At the same time it is nurturing a culture of peace, tolerance and nonviolence.

Its operations as a community center today serve and aim:

- To encourage important voices to be heard and to provide a platform for sharing knowledge and information.
- To support the work of other visionaries and organizations sharing the vision of the Home for Cooperation that seek to build a better tomorrow for all communities.
- To develop innovative projects that foster human rights deployment and awareness, and sustain an enabling working environment.
- To host and support other organizations and individuals who work towards the elimination of community segregation.
- To offer opportunities to local communities to express themselves and reconnect with one another.
- To provide a space for local community, public sector and civil society groups in order to enhance communication and participation.
- To use a variety of means - cultural, artistic, social and educational - to reach individuals and groups across Cyprus promoting its vision and mission.

The AHDR and H4C received the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage in 2014, the Max van der Stoep Award in 2016 and the Seán MacBride Peace Prize by The International Peace Bureau in 2018.

CHALLENGES

While trying to be sustainable we were more focused on financial sustainability rather than on social sustainability; later on we realized that securing fundings from donors was a mistake. We started building on social sustainability and noticed that the financial one came with it. Also, at the beginning we gave the cafe to tenants who were more focused on how to make money. After two unsuccessful collaborations we decided to run the cafe by our own and linked it with our activities. As the tenant was looking for a short-term financial benefit, our main effort was to invest in a long-term sustainability when we took over the operation of the cafe. At last, while the H4C was becoming one of the main locomotives of peace building, cooperation and dialogue in Cyprus, we noticed that we could develop more professional services for our visitors and users of the space such as event organization, proposal writing for non-formal groups and individuals who are interested in developing projects, interpretation services and more.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As already mentioned, The Home for Cooperation has managed to go beyond this initial vision, establishing itself in the core of intercommunal work in Cyprus. This happened because we learned to adapt to the needs of the community, to emphasize not only the financial sustainability but the social sustainability at the same time and attract a variety of groups of people who will engage through a variety of activities. This strategy gave us the access to more funding resources. Also, we learned that in conflict driven areas it sometimes is more effective to give people the opportunity to engage in activities irrelevant to the conflict but meaningful to the people. Not to deal with the conflict but engage by contact. Our work is supported by the "Intergroup contact theory"; according to the intergroup contact theory, under the right conditions contact helps to build trust and mutual respect between people in conflict. Our work lays the foundation for rebuilding our society by creating different opportunities for contact through promoting interconnectivity and common interests.

Contact theory has its successes and its constraints. So you may wonder how we managed to be where we are today. The answer is that we use strategic arts based on peacebuilding. We

develop and support projects and programs where artistic mediums are used to heal a personal and/or a collective trauma because the arts provide us unique tools for transforming difficult interpersonal or intercommunal conflicts.

To ensure inclusivity and encourage participation, all our activities and projects are free of entrance and all communication is provided in three languages – English, Turkish and Greek. Moreover, our informal, indirect approach and non-verbal ways of communication that I'll mention now, gives us the chance to work around possible miscommunications that stems from the language difference.

CONTACT

www.home4cooperation.info

IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURES

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INITIATED BY
CIVOCRACY
LYON / FRANCE

AIM

In 2017, Ville de Lyon took the opportunity to consult their citizens on educational structural change. They opened local education decisions to students, teachers and parents in order to encourage the city to change education policy based upon the experiences of the community. The key aims were as follows:

- To decide what kind of activities should be provided in schools outside of class.
- To establish the organisational needs of families and determine how the city can assist.
- To identify the school pattern that is best for pre-schoolers to follow.

IMPLEMENTATION

The city opted to run an ongoing consultation via the Civocracy platform, which included an open forum-style debate and a more closed survey approach. The online consultation supported and amplified the feedback collected in offline meetings.

SUCSESSES

- Very high participation that generated very creative and relevant ideas.
- Deep-data insights into priority differences across districts and between different demographics.
- The city actively read 99.5% of citizen comments on the platform.
- Six major structural changes were made as a result of the consultation.

CHALLENGES

With previous consultations on the Civocracy platform, we underestimated the importance of empowering civil servants with some communication and participation knowledge. As a result, we developed a set of training to ensure that those undertaking online consultations have a complete understanding of the processes required for online consultations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Citizens from all walks of life - including young people - do want to be involved in political decisions that affect their daily lives, but they need to see that it is easy to participate, they need to know that their participation can lead to a change and they need to have issues that affect their lives directly.

CONTACT

www.civocracy.org

INTRA-YOUTH DIALOGUE ON SOCIAL COHESION

.....
INITIATED BY

GLOBAL SHAPERS COMMUNITY'S ERBIL HUB
ERBIL / IRAQI KURDISTAN

AIM

The project "Intra-Youth Dialogue on Social Cohesion" being conducted as a teamwork was a collective idea of all the members of Global Shapers Community's Erbil Hub. It evolved under my supervision during the last term when I was the Curator (Head of the Hub), as we wanted to hold a sequence of dialogues to involve youth voices from diverse backgrounds in dialogues to speak their mind, be heard to prevent isolation, strengthen bonds, explore the similarities and overcome the stereotypes to foster social cohesion and coexistence at a critical time for the country and region after the ISIS wars and the influx of IDPs and refugees to the region.

We live in a technology age where dialogue is often replaced by the exchange of emails, facebook posts and comments or on the various messaging applications of our electronic devices. Despite the exciting inventions in the recent decades, to a great extent these technologies have encouraged us to lose the art of spending time together; of talking, listening, and understanding each other's perspective. The project aimed to gather speakers from diverse backgrounds living in Erbil to facilitate dialogue on coexistence between minorities living in Kurdistan region and the Kurdish people. Speakers from different backgrounds of Yazidi, Southern Iraqis/Arabs, Kurdish Diaspora, Christians and Muslims were invited to tackle and bring issues to the table, analyze them and find solutions for them.

As a Kurd, living in Erbil, I've grown up with different stories when it comes to cross cultural experiences. My grandmother has Alzheimer but still speaks of her time having Jewish neighbors. How kind and how helping they were. How beautiful the diversity was and how they used to live in peace with them. Also speaking of my mom, she knows so many Christian words by having Christian neighbors and friends and she still visits some of them. These stories show the cross cultural & religious bonds that have existed for so many generations that we shouldn't let extremism, discrimination or politics take it away from us. But the recent fights against ISIS, the influx of IDPs, and the economic decline have exacerbated the short-lived prosperity. The Islamic State's advances in 2014, paired with the political and economic crisis that have bedeviled the Kurdistan Region and Iraq, exacerbated communal relationships that have been living in the North of Iraq and may incite new tensions if left unchecked. Especially the youth are caught up in the crisis. While many have experienced displacement due to the conflict, others have lost years of education, and/or feel disempowered in the lack of employment in the middle of the economic crisis in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region.

IMPLEMENTATION

The project was implemented after introducing the idea and proposal to the whole team, a timeline of dialogue sessions was set and speakers from diverse backgrounds were selected to represent each minority group and religion. For the 2 dialogue sessions, venues were provided through our network. The dialogues consisted of organizers, speakers and observers. Moreover, in one of the follow up dialogues, which was on the day of referendum (Kurdish independence elections), the same topic was discussed with a broader perspective in addition to the effects of referendum on the minorities in Kurdistan. After polls shuttered

across Kurdistan, our group, guest speakers and international group of scholars and researchers from The Washington Institute gathered and began a dialogue about one of the most vital questions Kurdish society will face in the coming years: co-existence and social cohesion. The young attendees, with ink-stained forefingers showing their participation in the day's vote and wearing Kurdish clothes, discussed that a way must be figured out for all of us to live peacefully together in this new country.

The arrangements of this dialogue focused on having young voices, observers and the international community to closely witness the issue and exchange perspectives on the matter of cohesion and coexistence.

SUCCESSES

The outcome of the dialogues turned out to be effective due to introducing the youth from different backgrounds to each other, as reported by one of our Christian observers: She didn't feel comfortable as a minority living in an isolated neighborhood (which's by their own choice) of their own people; it makes them feel like they live in a box by not interacting with other people. The dialogue opened their eyes by understanding the views of other youth from different backgrounds by working with them, building trust and through strong communication. We also received valuable input and comments from participants who were willing to work on concrete solutions to the pressing issues after bringing them to the table. Our Kurdish diaspora group for example suggested tangible solutions, establishing social centers in the neighborhoods which welcome all communities, and which are not labeled by any political party, religious or ethnic groups. The group also discussed that capacity building programs can be carried out by those who have experience from abroad or been privileged to have an education system where they have been equipped with capacity building and leadership skills. The aim for those people who have knowledge is to deliver it, to do it in the language of the locals and broaden their focus to include the deeper divisions of society where people have been deprived of basic academic, social, and professional skills. The dialogues motivated us to go beyond speaking and start acting to improve our community.

The international guests and observers in one of our dialogues also suggested more of these kind of peaceful, eye to eye dialogues to be held involving all kinds of youth from all classes especially the underprivileged ones to build a more inclusive and diverse society.

CHALLENGES

I cannot possibly point out a problem while conducting the sessions or tell what didn't go well, but we could see that having the dialogue in English language limited the participation of most of our youth because only those who were skilled and educated attended. It was noticed during the dialogue because we heard almost similar perspectives having people from the well educated class. We have set our plans to hold these sessions in halls or parks in the underprivileged neighbourhoods with the youth there, as they are the ones whose ideas should be considered and exchanged.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I have learnt that:

- Why most of our youth do not contribute to strengthen Civil Society is because our civil society organizations and NGOs are mostly linked to political parties. So there is kind of a political control or dominance over this sector. Although some try their best to get the status quo shifted, it takes time and commitment.
- The Diaspora community feels a great responsibility for creating platforms of impact and change for the rest of the communities to partake. However, in order for any form of social cohesion to be brought about, there also needs to be a sense of belonging for all the communities living together. Youth can work together to create platforms which are inclusive for all the communities. Youth can also collaborate on putting forward constructive policy suggestions to the government which promote cohesion in society.
- Christian and Yazidi speaker's gave positive views on the Kurdish community when they stated that throughout history, the Kurdistan Region has welcomed, accepted and embraced all different cultures, religions and ethnicities. Their struggles are not about feeling included or welcome in the region, but it circles around labels and miscommunication.

I believe there's a lot that others can learn from our experience, such as performing more of activities and sessions where youth don't just listen or observe but get the chance to have a voice on a matter that concerns them the most.

The outcome, a write up, has become an evidence-based report enriched with practical recommendations for the local authorities, federal and Kurdish government and international stakeholders.

CONTACT

www.now-map.org/project/intra-youth_dialogue_on_social_cohesion

KHAIR AL-KOURA

PUBLIC-PRIVATE-PARTNERSHIP FOR LOCAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

.....

INITIATED BY
MINISTRY OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS
DEIR ABU SA'ID / JORDAN

AIM

- Enhance social cohesion between the local community and the refugees
- Create income opportunities for youth, women and refugees.

IMPLEMENTATION

- Partnerships between private sector NGOs and the municipalities, each partner providing resources and expertise related to their mandates
- Development of several local productions including a chemical-free farm, a food processing unit; a packaging entity, a soap and candle manufacturing operation; a country kitchen, using local produce to prepare fresh and healthy meals

SUCCESSSES

- Income opportunities for 17 women and youth, and more than 200 seasonal income opportunities for community members
- Project is considered as a pioneering public-private-partnership model for local sustainable development

CHALLENGES

- Resources provided to marketing of economic products of the project were not sufficient initially

KEY LEARNINGS

- Creating a common understanding amongst all stakeholders on any initiative is essential
- Regular communication amongst stakeholders ensures smooth implementation as well as prompt problem-solving

CONTACT

https://www.now-map.org/people/rakez_alkhalaileh

SOCIAL COHESION SUMMER CAMP

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INITIATED BY
MUNICIPALITY OF HABBARIYEH
HABBARIYEH / LEBANON

AIM

- Increase social integration between Lebanese citizens and Syrian refugee children
- Training children on self-reliance
- Raising awareness on children's rights and duties, customs and traditions

IMPLEMENTATION

- 7-day Summer Camp for 60 Lebanese and Syrian children
- Environmental activities as needed by the municipalities
- Educational activities including lectures on children's rights, social media and geography
- Sportive activities including football, table tennis and chess

SUCSESSES

- Lasting friendships between Lebanese and Syrian refugee children, resulting in mutual visits and joint ventures
- Creating connections not only between the children but also between their families visiting the camp
- Inspired other municipalities to do similar activities

CHALLENGES

- Lack of technical staff to manage the camp well
- Lack of financial resources to improve services and equipment

MOBILE IN THE VALLEY

.....

INITIATED BY

UDO WENZL, PAVLOS WACKER, PABLO REBHOLZ
ZWEITÄLERLAND, GERMANY

AIM

Making mobility attractive to young people living in rural areas. Approach: Ride share as public transport supplement. Solution: Introduction of a mobility platform called „TwoGo“.

IMPLEMENTATION

Leader → Youth Survey → Youth Forum → Council of Youth → professional support and consultancy → Mobility Conference → Stakeholders were identified → Cooperation with cities and companies

SUCCESSES

- Entire process until just before the end went very well.
- Long-term development of the project has been limited.
- Lots of positive feedback, coverage and community council meetings.
- Citizens, local councils, mayors, businesses leaders and initiatives have been reached far beyond the municipal boundaries.
- The active youths were speakers at various specialist events.
- Winner of the first prize of the 2016 youth education award of Baden-Württemberg.

CHALLENGES

- Sustainability of funding not guaranteed.
- Limited willingness of individual actors to continue to lead the project.
- Lack of marketing strategy and public relations

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Young people can make a difference and become experts
- Cooperations and networks are essential
- Sustainability and continuity must be ensured
- Through good participation you can inspire young people for politics

CONTACT

<http://mobil-im-tal.de/>

MY SCHOOL, MY VOTE!

.....

INITIATED BY
D21
KITWE / ZAMBIA

AIM

My School, My vote! is a school Participatory Budgeting (PB) project that allowed students to allocate money to a project of their choice. The process was designed in a way that allowed students to complement their theoretical knowledge with practical skills of citizenship such as campaigning, consuming campaign and public speaking. Moreover, this project aimed at providing students with an opportunity to voice their needs in a safe environment and at giving them the first positive experience of democracy. Altogether, practical skills and positive experience of democracy were supposed to encourage students to be more responsible and better-equipped participants in the political and social life of their communities.

IMPLEMENTATION

The project ran in High Schools in Nkana and Mukuba. The total number of students participating was 3 800. In June 2017, students started working on designing proposals. Each class about at least 80 students had to come up with the three best ideas to be taken to the next round of the process. All the students took the exercise seriously working on projects that would benefit a larger community i.e. buying new garbage bins and repairing windows.

At the end, a list of 17 projects for both schools was put together. However, only one project could win. So, students had to campaign for their preferred option. During the next stage—voting—students voted on paper ballot for their favorite project.

The winning projects focused on renewal of the school equipment to increase the quality of education, and at the end of July the celebration ceremony took place where the whole student community celebrated the winning projects.

Similar projects ran across the Czech Republic as well as in India, Ukraine, and the US.

SUCSESSES

The level of meaningful engagement of students was hard to miss by any observer—teacher, local coordinator, or international expert. Students took active part in all the stages of the process and did not make fun of it but taking each task seriously and putting a lot of effort into their work.

Contrary to the concerns about the content of the proposals, students did not ask for things with little communal value but focused on the ideas that would benefit a broader school community and that would tackle serious issues experienced by many rather than a few students. The problems identified and explored by students in their proposals included garbage collection, cleanliness, and insufficiency or poor state of study equipment.

Even though an average size of a class was 80 students, the group work was easy to manage, and other activities related to the project caused no disruptions to the study process either.

CHALLENGES

The main issue encountered was securing the budget for the school projects themselves. Due to certain changes, the budget had to be slimmed down. This change in the budget was done on the early stage of the process, during the design of the rules, and thus did not affect students' work and did not influence the level of their trust in the process. However, it must be noted that even though the final budget for each school was modest \$120, the project was still a success as it produced meaningful projects that were then successfully implemented. Moreover, for the school PB projects the process itself has an inherently high value that far surpasses the value of money being allocated.

However, a more sustainable model of delivering such projects must be developed in order to ensure proper funding for the coordination and delivery by experts as well as for implementation of the winning projects designed by students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Build local partnerships: partner with local NGOs that can help you better understand the local context and adjust methodology if necessary. Also build good relationship with local authorities to bring more legitimacy to the process and possibly include it in the broader context of educational and participatory citizen-oriented initiatives.
2. Treat students as equals: school PB process aims at empowering students and at providing them with an opportunity to improve the well-being of their community. Talking down to participants will discourage them and will give them a negative experience of democracy as they will associate it with not being treated as independent and knowledgeable subjects.
3. Engage teachers: teachers can make the process exciting and easy or block it by giving it little attention or time. So, communicate the educational value of the process, the positive impact it has on establishing relationships of trust, and the value of data about the needs of students one gets during the process.

CONTACT

<https://en.d21.me/>

POp UP ON VIVID STREET YOUTH EDITION

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INITIATED BY
MUNICIPALITY OF POSTOJNA
POSTOJNA / SLOVENIA

AIM

Our aim was (and still is) to give a clear and strong voice to the children in our local community, so they would be able to express their wishes and ideas and to make them come through (with a little help of the adults). We wanted to create such a supportive local environment, so they could fulfill their potential and to ensure that everyone feels welcomed and included in our municipality.

We also have a long-term aim to create and maintain an inclusive participation of children in the local community, which will result in future active young citizens who are innovative, curious, compassionate and kind humans. Our second long-term aim is to invest into capacity building of children and all stakeholders in the process of structural dialogue.

Children and youth participation is an all year activity in Postojna, while our special focus lies on the festival *PO-stoj-na živi ulici z mladimi* (word play in Slovenian language, a rough English translation would be »Stop on a Lively Street with Youth«). It started back in 2016 when Postojna joined the network of UNICEF's Child Friendly Cities. At that time the municipality of Postojna became obligated to start making changes and developing programs and activities intended for children and youth, taking their needs and wishes into account and paying more attention to their growing and learning processes. Since then the project *PO-stoj na živi ulici z mladimi* became an annual event taking place in Postojna every spring. This action was initiated by BOREO, a regional NGO support hub in the Primorsko-notranjska region, municipality of Postojna and UNICEF Child Friendly Cities Initiative.

IMPLEMENTATION

The project was designed as an inclusive and equal partnership between all relevant stakeholders in the local environment. The most important things were the support of the mayor and the municipal administration, and the willingness of all educational organizations (kindergartens, primary and high schools, NGO's) to engage. We have established a core coordinating group that divided the work by slots (activities), as well as the broader advisory group where we invited all who wanted to be part of our project (local artists, library, NGO's,...).

The whole set of activities encompasses the following events:

- Workshop on Connecting (Non-violent) communication
- Woodworking workshop and later an art installation about peace
- 4th Children's Municipal Council session
- Literary evening
- Postojna through the eyes of the children (children took the role of tourist guides)
- The letters of peace and friendship (sent to the twinned town of Supetar, Croatia)

POP UP ON VIVID STREET YOUTH EDITION

- Europe in school: where past meets the future (Contest finish and award give-away)
- The main event *PO-stani glas miru* (Eng. Become the voice of peace) with performance of Postojna's young talents, best-volunteer prize give-away, presentation of the UNICEF's dolls,...)
- Auction/exhibit of the UNICEF's dolls (special Postojna edition)
- Workshop on global sustainable goals in the local environment (for organizations)
- Birthday celebration in a park (games, charity concert)
- Little storytelling festival
- Presentation of the »Local Program for Youth in the Municipality of Postojna«
- Closing of the festival (conference with the media, closing of the auction)

SUCCESSES

It was absolutely delighting to see so many children and youngsters working together. A very big number of them participated on the project and that was the biggest indicator of our success. The youngsters were involved in all the phases of planning and implementing and the supporting organizations greatly contributed to the implementation with their cooperation. There were more than 15 different organizations involved. The local community embraced the project very well and grew quite fond of it, which could be seen from their attendance at the events. The regional media took interest in it too and provided us with coverage.

CHALLENGES

There was a lack of an operatively and strategically oriented coordinator at the municipality and besides the communication with the broader public, especially the youth, could be more effective. Also, there should have been a bit more mentoring and coaching provided for the children and youngsters who participated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From our experience these are the key elements needed for a successful implementation of a project:

- Involvement of all stakeholders
- Timely planning and early preparation
- Establishing an encouraging environment for children so that they can equally participate
- Taking into account the ideas of children and youth

CONTACT

<http://www.postoj.mcp.si/>

PROTECTING MYSELF, PROTECTING OTHERS

.....

INITIATED BY
COUNCIL FOR GENDER EQUALITY
SJENICA / ZLATIBOR / SERBIA

AIM

The idea of the project "Protecting Myself, Protecting Others" was aimed at informing and activating the community, especially young people, about reproductive health issues. Due to traditional taboos and inequalities in the understanding of reproductive health, as well as all the consequences coming along by neglecting health in middle-aged women, the project was created to inform and provide the opportunity for various social classes to gather around the same goal. Members of the Council defined the results and activities of the project and with support of the EU donor and the Municipality of Sjenica, they started the implementation of activities aimed at achieving the given idea.

IMPLEMENTATION

The group was composed of various professionals: doctors-specialists, psychologists, social workers, municipal employees, teachers in schools and young people and women. We organized visits to secondary schools in Sjenica, where the basic information and trainings on sexual and reproductive health was provided. During the implementation of this activity we mostly used discussion as a working technique whereas in activities aiming to raise the awareness of students and women about the importance of the issue, the used technique was the trainers' input. Thereafter, data collection was done for the database which was the first step in understanding this problem in our municipality. The second part of the activity was to provide a free full gynaecological examination for women who are at increased risk in the middle ages. We considered a routine gynaecological examination as a good screening and prevention instrument. This activity was implemented in the Health Centre.

SUCSESSES

By implementing the project we have managed to raise important issues of gender equality, such as the position of women and the importance of health care and furthermore to raise awareness among young people about the importance of reproductive health. It was very obvious that at the time of the project implementation, children and their parents talked more often about sexual and reproductive health, since they had similar experiences in a certain period of time. That's how the family's cohesion, as the foundation of society, has certainly enhanced. By having organized lectures for 500 high school students we managed to inform young people about reproductive health. Before the lectures, 54.4% of participants did not know what the term reproductive health itself meant. Also, the Gender Equality Council has become more visible to fellow citizens. By promoting preventive medical examinations for 9 months, 5640 examinations were made, which is a significant progress compared to the 12 months of the previous year when only 4168 examination were made – 1472 preventive examinations more. We have been able to motivate women to go to examinations and therefore take care of their health.

CHALLENGES

The potential mistake of this project was the non-participation of fathers. We came to this conclusion after the project's implementation in non-formal conversations between those who participated. We believe that if there also had been workshops for fathers, the inclusion would encompass all the necessary actors responsible for the prevention and care of physical health. The next similar action should include fathers as good models for men and reference points for girls and women.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Main things other could learn:

The importance of activating a wider community and maintaining focus groups on various topics in order to overcome traditional taboos.

Informing young people about topics that are very important for their mental and physical health.

The importance of protection and prevention when it comes to health.

Regarding the recommendations, future similar actions should be based on information from previous project activities involving fathers and teachers education. Thus, the cohesion of the key actors within this topic would be complete.

CONTACT

https://www.now-map.org/project/protecting_myself_protecting_others

RIGHTS 4U LIVE-IN

.....

INITIATED BY
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR CHILDREN IN MALTA
GOZO / MALTA

AIM

The Office of the Commissioner for Children in Malta forms part of the National Safer Internet Centre – BeSmartOnline! which aims to create awareness about the safe use of the internet amongst children, young people and other key stakeholders including parents/carers and educators. The Office is very much involved in awareness raising and is responsible for youth participation. One of the initiatives organized by the Office in collaboration with the Safer Internet Centre is the Rights 4U live-in, a three-day live-in for young people between the ages of 13 and 15. In 2018, two of these live-ins were held. Each group consisted of 35 young people.

The aim of this three-day live-in is to bring together groups of young people in order to empower them to engage in discussions about their rights, including digital rights. Various activities are organised which enable participants to develop critical thinking skills, build social ties and implement concepts such as respect, responsibility and inclusion.

Throughout the live-in members of staff from the Office of the Commissioner for Children are present to listen to the participants and to take note of the discussions and recommendations made by the young people. This feedback is then used to shape the work carried out by the Commissioner for Children and the Maltese Safer Internet Centre.

IMPLEMENTATION

This project is carried out every year and has been organised for a number of years with different groups of young people. The event is promoted in schools through school visits by members of staff within the Office of the Commissioner for Children. The live-in is also promoted amongst vulnerable groups through youth centres and residential homes. The young people between the ages of 13 and 15 are given a time frame in which to apply to attend.

If the need arises, the Office of the Commissioner for Children, uses clear criteria to select participants. These include a balance between girls and boys, a balance between the age groups, representation from Independent, Church and State schools, inclusion of vulnerable groups, youths under special care, special needs, migrant children and children with other specific needs.

In 2018, two live-ins were held, one in Malta and one on the island of Gozo, this made it more accessible to young people. The Rights 4U Programme consists of various games and activities which enable the participants to get to know each other as well as to empower them to engage in discussions, to share their ideas, experiences and views regarding online safety for children and young people.

The issues discussed during this year's edition of the live-in included cyber-bullying, sexting, grooming, privacy and recognizing signs of unhealthy relationships. A session was also held on peer pressure and finding the courage to say no. A session on the legal implications of sexting was also held in collaboration with the Malta Police Force.

SUCCESSSES

Most of the activities were a great success and both groups of young people seemed to have formed a bond and worked very well together. This could be noticed through the level of team work achieved as well as the new friendships formed throughout the three days. The young people also actively participated in most of the activities. Considering that most of the young people did not know each other beforehand and came from different backgrounds and managed to form such a bond in three days was a huge success.

The young participants also shared many ideas and experiences which helped shape the work carried out by the Office.

The young people also had fun, which is extremely important, apart from actually seeing them having fun, they expressed this through the anonymous evaluation form they were asked to fill out.

Members of the Maltese press were also asked to cover this initiative. As a result of this, the live-in received got widespread national recognition with many praising the successes of this initiative.

CHALLENGES

After asking the young people and group facilitators for their feedback regarding the improvement of the event, the Office feels that three main things could have been improved:

1. In an effort to promote the positive use of technology, a session on coding was organised for the young participants – the number of young people was too large for this session (only three experts were available to lead the session therefore participants could not be divided into smaller groups). Also, the session was considered boring by some of the participants since the coding learnt was too basic for them. For next year's edition a different session will be organised and will be discussed with previous participants in order to make sure the session works better.
2. Time management – due to a tight programme, there was one particular discussion which was cut short. For next year's edition the programme will be planned in a manner that will allow a bit more flexibility in order to allow for adjustments should the participants wish to continue with a particular session.
3. In one of the live-ins, 5 of the participants knew each other beforehand and did not make enough effort to integrate with the rest of the group. By the end of the live-in, following conscious efforts by the facilitators they did integrate with the rest of the group.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. All young people have a lot to contribute to the work carried out by entities such as the Office of the Commissioner for Children. It is up to the adults to provide the right tools, space and opportunity.
2. Working with children and young people is fun and inspiring.
3. Even though most of the young people did not know each other beforehand and came from different backgrounds, they worked very well together and became friends. This was highlighted by the young people themselves. One particular participant stated that making friends with other young people that they probably would not have met were it not for the live-in was one of the highlights of her participation.

Such activities and initiatives are crucial for young people as they focus on informal and non-formal learning. They provide young people with a platform where they can express themselves and be heard, learn more through fun and above all these initiatives promote respect, social inclusion and cohesion.

Three things that others can learn from our experiences are:

- Young people from different backgrounds should be encouraged to participate in such initiatives, including those who would not usually be empowered to participate in such initiatives. This can be done by promoting such initiatives in schools and specifically targeting vulnerable groups.
- Once the live-in is over the youth participation does not stop. The participants are encouraged to remain active in the work carried out by the Office by forming part of the Youth Panel or the Council for Children. Continuing the momentum generated from such an initiative is essential in making the most of the effort to put together such an initiative.
- Collaboration with other entities to implement the programme is essential and beneficial to the success of the initiative and the children's continuous engagement over the 3 days. Collaboration also makes the initiative more feasible. For example, the Education Ministry provided group facilitators to support the young people, the Malta Communications and the Malta Police Force provided some of the content.

CONTACT

<https://tfal.org.mt/en/News/Pages/Rights-4U-live-in-2018.aspx>

RISE

RESPONSIBLE INDIGENOUS STRATEGY FOR EMPOWERMENT

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INITIATED BY

ALIVE (ABORIGINAL LIFE IN VANCOUVER ENHANCEMENT SOCIETY) AND OUR PLACE
VANCOUVER / BRITISH COLUMBIA / CANADA

AIM

Context knowledge; in British Columbia, Canada youth and community social services are primarily delivered through non-profits and charities. This means that community and youth services are primarily delivered through a privatized service delivery system. Very few services are delivered through the public sector or through genuine partnerships between government and communities. The Vancouver community centre system is one of the few systems in place in which local government and community-based groups partner to deliver recreation and community services.

In recent decades, a neoliberal restructuring of the non-profit sector has also translated in non-profits becoming much more corporate and competitive with each other to attract funding, they have a more corporate/businesslike leadership model (more board members from the corporate sector) and they are serving larger areas rather than being connected to communities. There is a democracy deficit embedded in this service delivery format as these non-profits are not directly accountable to youth/family/communities, but their funders. The Our Place collective wants to address this democracy deficit by creating strategies and opportunities for accountability to community and youth and fostering their leadership within communities.

- Our Place is a collective impact collaboration of local and community-based organizations and service providers trying to boost grassroots involvement and community leadership and to address challenges through a place-based model. Our place started in 2009 as a response to the deprivation and challenges that children and youth and especially Indigenous youth in the inner City of Vancouver face. 70% of pre-school children in the inner city area were considered not school ready – this means the inner city has the highest percentage of vulnerable children in the Province of British Columbia.
- The RISE project (part of the Our Place strategy) was developed to help overcome the history of colonialization and help address the discrimination and marginalization that Indigenous Youth experience in Vancouver. Urban Indigenous youth are amongst the most disadvantaged youth populations, facing the ongoing negative impact of colonialism and displacement. They are also often distrusting of mainstream institutions. The RISE project aims to create employment opportunities for Indigenous youth in mainstream settings (community centres) and foster their leadership skills with the goal to help shape mainstream services to address their needs and issues and to educate and change mainstream service providers to make them more inclusive.

RISE RESPONSIBLE INDIGENOUS STRATEGY FOR EMPOWERMENT

IMPLEMENTATION

- R.I.S.E (Responsible Indigenous Strategy for Empowerment) leadership and development initiative is a partnership between ALIVE, five inner city Community Associations, MoreSports, and the Vancouver Park Board in the recruitment and development of a RISE Team of Indigenous youth. The program is designed to provide these youth with training in strategic approaches, program delivery, facilitation, listening and inclusion, and evaluation tools. The RISE Team develops their skills and capacities as community leaders, while working with RISE partner organizations to support Indigenous residents and other excluded members of the community to become meaningfully engaged in their local community centre and neighbourhood.
- RISE Leaders are employed as paid staff on the auxiliary part-time payroll of either the Community Association or the Vancouver Park Board. These positions offer youth union rates, which greatly assist many who are on their path of continuing education in addition to providing them with the connections to employers, and building their familiarity with mainstream systems, employee responsibilities, protocols, and practices.
- The RISE Initiative seeks to engage in strategic partnerships in the local communities and to connect and build on the local capacities and strengths already in place, rather than simply parachuting a young person into a centre and community without proper supports.

SUCCESES

- Most RISE leaders have continuous employment in the public sector (community centre system) in unionized jobs.
- More awareness of the needs of Indigenous youth and populations and a better understanding of the impact of colonialism. More Indigenous people on the boards of community centre associations.
- More and more partners and supporters are joining the collective (signing up ceremony).

CHALLENGES

- We are trying to de-colonize a system (community centre system). This is a huge undertaking and requires a commitment by all involved to address, acknowledge and tackle racism and practices of exclusion. It can be hard to address hidden and embedded racism.
- Our Place is often seen as an advocacy group which makes it harder to receive funding for project like RISE.
- We come from an inclusivity lens and want to create opportunities for urban Indigenous youth to shape and have a voice within mainstream services – this is different from the perspective of some other agencies who are focused on having Indigenous agencies run services for Indigenous people only. There is also a lot of competition between Indigenous agencies as they compete for funding.
- Many positions in community centres are precarious (auxiliary, temporary), so it can be challenging for these youth to get permanent positions.

RISE RESPONSIBLE INDIGENOUS STRATEGY FOR EMPOWERMENT

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The model (Our Place/RISE) is working through partnerships, collective actions and solidarity. Need for ongoing dialogue and bringing new partners on board
- Identify leaders and leadership opportunities and strategic opportunities to find champions in position of influence (in government, community partners etc.)
- Make sure the model and vision are rooted in community and based on community need. Community accountability is at the core.
- We had ceremonies to get larger organizations sign up to the pledges and to public acknowledge their commitment.

The text above is informed through an interview with founding members Lindsay and Erin Grant and is also based on research and published materials. Summarized by Diana Guenther

CONTACT

<http://alivesociety.ca/rise/>

SCHULE IM AUFBRUCH

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INITIATED BY
SCHULE IM AUFBRUCH AUSTRIA
AUSTRIA - PARTNER ORGANISATIONS IN GERMANY AND POLAND

AIM

Children should have the possibility to discover and grow their own individual capabilities and potential, rather than fulfilling given curricula or standards.

Short term aim: Transformation of a few schools to help children discover and grow their own capacities and potential.

Long term aim: Create a stronger and larger network of schools to break the pattern of old-school learning and teaching. Innovative schools should be the paradigm, not the exemption.

IMPLEMENTATION

We are not running a project. We are a grassroots initiative, supported by a small effective team and driven and expanded by active members of schools, school authorities, municipalities, regional communities, parent representatives, universities, etc.

SUCCESSSES

„Now“ at the beginning of 2019 about 10% of all schools in Austria are part of the movement or connected to the movement. Inspired and encouraged by our initiative in the last 4 years, many schools radically transformed their teaching/learning culture, program and organisation.

CHALLENGES

We did not experience major set-backs apart from a few people who misused our work for their personal career.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Walk the talk. We try to apply the principles of learning to the design of the initiative.
2. Team mix: A small complementary team with lots of experience in education and innovation.
3. Especially at the start of a similar initiative, collaborate with those who truly share your vision - don't waste your energy working against anybody.
4. Make use of the existing system: Try to inspire, encourage and connect engaged people within schools, universities and other relevant organisations and use existing infrastructure.
5. Test and trial everything before you grow it.

CONTACT

<https://www.schule-im-aufbruch.at/>

SOCIAL ACT

.....

INITIATED BY
PEER EDUCATORS NETWORK – PEN
8 MUNICIPALITIES IN KOSOVO

AIM

Based on our experience with building capacities of youth people in Kosovo, since 2008, we created the design of the project “Social Act”. The project was shaped as unique new innovative program based on previous PEN best practices and methodologies.

Through this idea we wanted to increase capacities of young women and men in critical thinking, advocacy, soft skills, designing and leading social innovations aimed at social inclusion in Kosovo, with emphasis on gender equality and minority inclusion.

IMPLEMENTATION

Social Act is a project implemented by NGO Peer Educators Network – PEN from January 2018 in 8 Municipalities in Kosovo. Our main goal is to work with marginalized groups which are one of the most vulnerable groups of local democracy, and it is therefore essential for us to ensure that all sections of local community have the opportunity to engage with PEN. PEN have identified the most vulnerable communities which are based in majority of RAE settlements with a larger youth number and ongoing social exclusion factors. This criteria links 8 municipalities which will be involved: Ferizaj, Fushe Kosove, Gjakova, Istog, Lipjan, Mitrovica, Peja and Prizren. The program is designed in three main phases:

- a. The soft skill building phase - a 3 day training where youth will develop critical thinking, understand key state stakeholders and their roles, gain information on the status of RAE communities and gender equality in Kosovo, and develop hands-on experience on competitive debating based on Karl Popper’s methodology.
- b. The informative, research and networking phase – a 2 month period where youth will meet with municipal representatives and use the newly gained soft skills to gather information on municipal projects and goals following this, youth will be engaged in a research related to the outcomes of the meetings with the municipal representatives in order to seek accountability and cross-check whether municipal goals meet citizen demands, and lastly they will participate in at least one municipal assembly during this period.
- c. The project/campaign design and implementation phase – a 3 day training on social project/campaign design will be held to enable youth to draft their own initiatives and lead them, where they will include the research and data that youth gather during the second phase to enable a thorough problem analysis. After the design of their projects/campaigns, young men and women will implement two initiatives per municipality within a period of three months – for which they will be granted 2500€ per municipality.

SUCSESSES

One of the success stories that we would like to share is the activities that we organized with one of the groups who met the Mayor of the Municipality of Mitrovica. During the meeting with the deputy mayor of Mitrovica, Faruk Mujka, on June 2018, one of the participants'

concerns that were addressed was the lack of access of people with disabilities in public spaces. This issue was considered very real and especially when we consider that the municipality is at the beginning of drafting the plan strategy for municipal development. Therefore, Mr. Mujka officially invited Ms. Djellza Breznica one of our participants (a student of Architecture in the University of Prishtina) to monitor the whole process, thus ensuring transparency and involvement of the people with disabilities in this process. Mrs. Breznica expressed the willingness to participate in the monitoring of the processes and eventually to propose the recommendations given from the "Create Ways" initiative of the youth group from Mitrovica that was a part of the Social Act project.

CHALLENGES

There wasn't any big problem till now during the implementation of the project. In this stage we can mention dynamics of the group because they came from different cultural, educational background. For the mentors of the group it was a bit challenging to keep the spirit of the group all together. If we would do something different will be the timeline of the implementation of the activities because sometimes there were some time gaps and the energy of the group went low. And sometimes Municipal Assembly Members do not support the local initiatives accordingly.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- a) Give them the space to share their ideas and support them in a systematic period;
- b) To have a positive and supportive approach with youngsters;
- c) Keep the trainings fun, entertaining and educative;
- d) Stay close and engaged with the youngsters even after they finish their trainings;
- e) Support them with the assets during the implementation of the projects
- f) Mentoring and monitoring them all the time
- g) Financial support for their ideas
- h) Help them build their professional network

CONTACT

https://www.now-map.org/project/social_act

STUDENTS AS EXPERTS 4 CHANGE

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INITIATED BY
REBEKKA DOBER
VIENNA / AUSTRIA

AIM

Students As Experts 4 Change is an Educational Design, aiming for school students to become change agents, develop their own strategies for having social impact and accompanying them in their journey of becoming.

Encourage. Empower. Enable.

Students are encouraged to view themselves as experts, they co-creatively identify social challenges, which are important to them and engage in possibility thinking with a sustainable output: Fostering their ideas. They are encouraged to produce their own videos and share them on social media with the aim to influence their peers to change their thinking, attitude and actions. From the roots of SaE4C grew the Youth Empowerment Project "YEP - Voice of the Youth".

Main Objectives of SaE4C:

- Students As Experts (Students as a potential)
- Give Students a Voice
- Possibility Thinking through Co-creativity
- Co-Creativity: Think outside the box - and do this together
- Transformative process: from passive (consumers) to active (creators, designers)
- Speak out for themselves!
- Digital Environment: Tie in the familiar digital environment for creating a safe space where
students feel confident and enabled to become the experts
- Daily Life Connection: Connect topics with students' everyday life to enhance motivation
- Sustainable output to share with peers (videos)
Students become knowledge multipliers

IMPLEMENTATION

Where: High schools (project days/project week), youth groups

- Most important part: What matters to the students?
- Possibility thinking: Let them think outside the box!
- Shifting the roles: Students ARE experts

- Methods: Theatre pedagogy (Theatre of the Oppressed), Storytelling & Gamification
- Finding paths to solve social challenges together in a playful way
- Methods: Digital tools (Videos)
- Focussing on the strengths and 'superpowers' of students
- Fostering Student Leadership
- Different topics can be approached with this Education Design: SDGs, Citizenship Education, conflict management, human rights, plurality, ...

By shifting the roles and making students the experts we encourage them to voice their own ideas, what can be achieved through giving them the space to think outside of the box and letting them work in the environment they know the best: Digital tools and social media. Students As Experts 4 Change is a design to create 'high possibility' classrooms by capitalizing on student's creativity and their ability to cope with social issues, which are important to them. Students are encouraged to view themselves as change agents and engage in possibility thinking with a sustainable output: Fostering their ideas. They are encouraged to produce their own videos and share them on social media with the aim to influence their peers to change their thinking, their attitude.

SUCCESSES

- Seeing students showing so much initiative, engaged in dialogue, co-creatively figuring out how to change the(ir) world, speaking out for themselves with raised self-efficacy - that is the biggest success!
- Pilot project for the Austrian Ministry of Education
- Implementation in various schools (e.g. with KulturKontakt), international youth groups
- Part of the European Initiative Creativity2Learn
- Cooperation with the University of Vienna (research)
- Cooperation with Amnesty International

Educational design for different project weeks (Refugees&Migration, Digital Empowerment,

Women Human Rights Defenders) in high schools, now fixed part of the Human Rights Education sector in Austria

- The findings through SaE4C led to the founding of the youth organisation: YEP (Youth Empowerment & Participation)

CHALLENGES

- **School surroundings:** Students think "school-like" - it is harder for them to think out of the box as if they were in a non-school environment.

- **Dedicated Community:** Students who are highly enthusiastic and committed to a project
they designed often miss dedicated fellows in their school class.
- **No Follow-Up:** There are many cool projects for schools, but the problem is the same everywhere: You inspire students, they are engaged - and then you leave. The projects end and there is no continuation for interested students. There is no time after the project for them to take action and realise their ideas.

Turning mistakes into successes:

- Perceiving those circumstances was laying the foundation for the **youth organisation YEP!**
- YEP is a youth empowerment organisation, which is also the bridge for NGOs or initiatives to overcome the lack of resources when it comes to accompanying students once they are excited about a project and help them to realise it in the next step.
- YEP offers inspiring surroundings, helpful tools and a dedicated community for young people who want to participate and realise their own ideas!

One of the main obstacles, when implementing the program within a group of students, was to defy the well learnt reflexes of the students to think "school-like". At school, young people are used to learn for exams, a practice that mutes creativity and can be characterised by the phrase "to think in boxes". A good way to overcome this is to take the activity out of the school or at least out of the usual classroom. Creating learning landscapes within a school is a rewarding task!

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Listen to young people! Contrary to what some 'adults' believe, they have lots of interests
besides Social Media, lots of fantastic ideas and they will surely surprise you!
- Let youth inspire you! They are not driven by egoistical desires, but empathise easily. Stories speak to them, through them they can connect to diverse realities of life. The superpower of youth is their intuitive social competence!
- Create spaces for big ideas! When young people get encouraged to think big and believe in
the potential of their dreams, they're baffled at first, because the way they normally learn at school mutes this natural instinct. Make them dream again!
- Don't give up! Young people often feel powerless. "My voice doesn't matter." As somebody working with young people, don't confuse this feeling of being powerless with indifference. Don't let yourself get discouraged, it might take a while, but remember to convey your message: "You matter!" You might be the first one to tell them, so stay patient, it's rewarding!
- Have trust! If you give students choice & responsibility, they will take ownership for their project, regulate themselves as a group and their skills and competences will thrive!
- Take your time to document everything and do the postprocessing, to tell others about your achievement and the dreams and projects of the youth!

CONTACT

- <http://StudentsAsExperts4Change.org/>
- <https://www.amnesty.at/academy/schule/workshops/projektwoche-flucht-und-asyl/>
- <https://www.amnesty.at/academy/schule/workshops/projektwoche-digital-empowerment/>
- <https://www.amnesty.at/academy/schule/briefmarathon-fuer-schulen/eine-woche-mit-den-menschenrechten-projektwochenangebot/>
- www.yep-austria.org

WE GIVE

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INITIATED BY
ALPINE PEACE CROSSING
KRIMML / SALZBURG / AUSTRIA

AIM

WIR GEBEN (meaning „we give“) offers the opportunity to donate articles of all kind online in favour of local social projects in cooperation with Austria's largest advertising portal willhaben.

If you want to give away articles you do not longer need, you can donate them for a good purpose and save taxes. The new non-profit online platform WIR GEBEN makes it possible: www.wir-geben.org.

The principle is very simple: If you want to donate a material value, offer it on wir-geben.org. The items posted at WIR GEBEN are visible on the portal of willhaben, too. Its more than 48,2 million visits per month guarantee that buyers find and purchase the donated items.

The donations are converted into money that way and the net income flows into social projects that sustainably integrate people into the labour market (in Austria). It supports initiatives like Volkshilfe / Wien Work, Diakonie or Trendwerk - more are to follow. Above all, long-term unemployed, mentally handicapped, asylum-seekers and people with disabilities should receive a new professional perspective.

Simple and meaningful

WIR GEBEN is run by the Austrian Social Initiative ALPINE PEACE CROSSING (APC), founded in 2007. The donation-favoured organization, which has been awarded the Austrian donation seal of approval, ensures that donations in kind are tax-deductible. The proceeds are automatically recorded in the donor's employee assessment, thus reducing their tax liability.

The "master mind" behind WIR GEBEN, APC chairman Ernst Löschner, was confident that it will be able to establish a new way of donating in Austria. "In-kind donations often cannot be used meaningfully by many social institutions for organizational reasons. That's why we've worked hard for many months to find a way to make donations in kind, which creates jobs for people on the margins of society", says Löschner.

IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation started with comprehensive planning of the website's programming and the building of a relationship with willhaben.at, the largest Austrian platform for online-business, who should place WE GIVE on its page. By crowdfunding and a first grant of the Karl Kahane Foundation, APC was able to finance the set-up of all technical preconditions to start. APC launched the project with a press conference, distributed newsletters, contacted media and provided material, identified a testimonial and launched a raffle to become known more widely.

SUCCESES

Whoever APC communicated the project idea to was impressed: What an innovative approach! Martin Grubinger offering himself as a testimonial and Stefan Sengl supporting the press releases on a pro bono-basis proves that the idea is good.

APC found partners for the technical implementation who felt great empathy with the visionary aim of funding measures of integration in the labour market for those who are disadvantaged in the run for jobs. So after just a few adjustments the site worked and the first APC members registered.

The press conference was followed by a satisfying media response. Later on, media representatives contacted APC as they took notice of WE GIVE (but did not report afterwards). Clients called and wanted to offer articles (but expected transport and storing or offered un-sellable goods).

CHALLENGES

First of all: APC trusted in people's desire to donate items selflessly for a good cause. This was far too optimistic.

The biggest challenge is to increase awareness of the product: an online platform cannot be handled with an analogue presentation and media work. Online marketing works over established networks or is costly and requires very specific skills. APC does not have the resources to advertise the platform accordingly, earning enough resources to pay for advertising and administration and to support labor market integration projects.

The second topic is the accompanying logistics: should WE GIVE only work between the seller (= donor) and the buyer (as we would like to) or should the operator offer transport and warehouse logistics? The latter could not be provided by APC (without a partner).

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Prepare a sound business plan before you start other activities and have it checked by professionals. You are emotional about your idea and thus not free of wishful thinking.
- Don't trust your friends, when they say, „Super idea!“. They just want to be friendly. Ask your enemies.
- Have an exit strategy in mind, in case it does not work out as wanted. There might be reasonable alternatives to give up / close down a project.

CONTACT

<https://alpinepeacecrossing.org/sozialhilfe/wir-geben/>

YOUTH COUNCIL OF OPATIJA

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INITIATED BY
CITY COUNCIL OF OPATIJA
OPATIJA / CROATIA

AIM

The idea of *Youth Council of Opatija* is to provide active inclusion of young people in Opatija who will become the leaders and contributors of public life in Opatija. To do that, we want to provide active contribution of young people in Opatija in decision making in the field of public affairs.

Our Youth Council reaches out to other people in the community as much as possible. Our partnerships play an important part in the Council's overall success. They are AIESEC Rijeka, Society „Our Children" Opatija, Silos Group, Red Cross Opatija with elders' group and youth group, Žmergo Association, Festival Opatija, Indoor football club Gorovo, Kulturni front Opatija, other Youth Councils in Croatia and Student Council members, schools, local business owners and local newspaper editors – List Opatija and poduckun.net.

They help us with activities, spreading information and offering advices.

IMPLEMENTATION

Youth Council of Opatija consists of 7 members and we are involving young people aged 15 to 30 into meaningful activities that help identify and solve community problems.

One of them is creating a partnership between Creative Tourism Lab and Silos Group.

The approach of arranging the public space was slightly different. Instead of deciding to invest the funds into creating the space that would then wait for its users, the City of Opatija decided to involve the users and youth themselves in the earliest stages of designing the future Lab.

According to the design thinking methodology of innovation, two sets of workshops were organized that included content in design thinking itself, start-ups, accelerators, visual identity, branding, marketing and application in reality. The participants of the programme designed the logo, developed activities and targeted the future users of *Creative Tourism Lab*.

SUCSESSES

Our previous work and analysis pointed out the problem of retaining young people from life and work in Opatija. We were (and still are) trying to solve this problem by participating in activities that awake the public and by creating opportunities for (self) employment, strengthening entrepreneurial competencies and linking the main actors of the local community.

The making of *Creative Tourism Lab* created a synergy within the local community and activated the youth. The best part of the project is that the Lab's design and execution is based on the input of the youth involved.

CHALLENGES

As the project finished, two main problems were identified – money for implementing ideas in the stage of designing the Lab what again caused a lack of continuity.

The worst part of everything that didn't go well is the fact that more than 30 participants of the workshops engaged very much but still were not able to see the results of their efforts by being realized in practice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Participating in the Youth Council is less likely to be successful if it is all work and no play – it should be fun as well. Our top 4 key learnings are:

1. Try to organize the Youth Council as a venue for people to make life-long friends – working together and committing on an activity to help the community can really bring people together.
2. Ensure sustainability – it takes a lot of work to make sure that the Youth Council operates for a long time. Key priorities should be financial sustainability, raising awareness and retaining members.
3. Keep energy levels and motivation high – as Youth Council you're only as good as the members who sit around your table. Ensure that those involved feel as though they're really gaining something from their participation.
4. Take time to reflect on activities and celebrate every success.