



**EUROPE GOES LOCAL**  
Supporting Youth Work at the Municipal Level

# Empower & Inspire

Good Practices  
in Local Youth Work



EUROPEAN UNION

**Erasmus+**  
Enriching lives, opening minds.

Youth



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## Hello from Europe Goes Local!

Dear youth work community,

We are a dynamic platform connecting local and European levels of youth work. Through Europe Goes Local (EGL), everyone involved in advocating, supporting, developing, and implementing local youth work is given a unique space to collaboratively strive for quality development of youth work.

Local youth work is the heartbeat of European youth policy. It's where real connections happen - where young people find guidance, empowerment, and opportunities to grow. Collecting and sharing local youth work practices not only celebrates the diversity of approaches across regions but also ensures that successful, hands-on initiatives can inspire others.. These stories and strategies reflect the unique needs and creativity of communities, making them powerful tools for mutual learning and innovation.

By collecting and sharing these experiences, Europe Goes Local elevates the voices of youth workers and young people, placing their insights at the center of European youth policy development. It creates a bridge between the local and European levels, ensuring policies are not just top-down but deeply rooted in the local realities. Through this exchange, we build a stronger, more connected European youth work community—one that values collaboration, inclusion, and long-term impact.

We take immense pride in being the curators of these local youth work practices, which are set to inspire and boost the local youth work landscape across Europe.

Enjoy the read,

The EGL Team



## A place of transformation and safety for young people

### Teslić Youth Center

The youth center in Teslić is a place of information, culture and education of young people and the development of civil society. It organizes events to update youth issues, provides support in the implementation of initiatives and ideas. The youth center is a space equipped for exhibitions, workshops etc. and is open to all young people without exception.

Here young people can participate in workshops, debates, discussions and lectures; learn various skills and additional knowledge; develop communication and other life skills; volunteer...

The work of the Youth Center is based on cooperation with other associations, relevant services, public institutions, professional individuals, and on the involvement of volunteers.

**Themes:** Participation of young people in activities - Arts and culture - Youth information and counselling - Youth work in urban areas - Volunteering/voluntarism - Non-formal education/-learning - Community work

**Categories:** A practice of processes and methods



## I giovani Contano

### Elda Mazzocchi Scarzella

"I giovani Contano" aims to empower responsible citizens ready to administer and change the world, starting by acting in their little village, called Domusnovas (Sardinia). The organisation Elda Mazzocchi Scarzella works every day to involve young people to know and to value their rural village, changing the point of view and changing threats into opportunities. Young people, thanks to specific workshops and youth exchanges are studying to become community activators and active citizens.

They are involved now in different activities with children of the little town, and they are disseminating what they have learnt by testimonials to the children. They are achieving a lot of results, because they can communicate to the children better than adults.

**Themes:** Participation of young people in activities - Active citizenship/activism - Youth work in rural areas

**Categories:** Concrete tool



## Participatory Budgeting with Youth

### City of Helsinki

With the Youth Budget, Helsinki tackles the issue of youth participation in municipal co-planning and decision making. Since the beginning, in 2013, the main goal of the Youth Budget has been to offer possibilities to participate for as many young people as possible.

The Youth Budget is an annual process in which young people in Helsinki come up with ideas, vote and negotiate on what kinds of activities and services young people need and how the City Youth Services' budget is to be spent. In order to give everyone the opportunity to participate, ideas are collected and refined throughout the city in several stages.

The Youth Budget enables the planning of services and leisure activities that genuinely cater to the needs of young people. At the same time, it serves as a way to implement democracy education and enhance young people's sense of belonging to their community. Although the process has scaled up significantly during 10 years, the main goal has remained the same: creating low-threshold, easy and solution-oriented, meaningful interaction with youth and the city.

**Themes:** Participation of young people in activities - Participation of young people in decision making

**Categories:** A practice of processes and methods



## Strategy for a childfriendly city

### Zwijndrecht municipality

Zwijndrecht wants to further develop a sustainable child-friendly policy, a policy that continually evolves with its residents. It wants to work demand-oriented by putting children and young people at the centre of policy.

To reach this vision, they made a child-friendly strategy for the next 6 years. Creating this strategy was a process of 3 years, involving a lot of children, young people, youth workers, adult residents and municipality services:

They got results through questionnaires from adults, young people and children in the municipality and three themes were picked. They carried out 29 in-depth studies, with every group using a method that fit their group. A report was made and all the actions and goals from the different services were written down in a strategy for the next 6 years. Twice a year, a meeting with internal services takes place to check the progress on the actions and their goals. For every action the youth service made a point that there has to be participation and input of young people. They presented this strategy to a national jury and got the label of child-friendly city from the Flemish minister of Youth.

**Themes:** Participation of young people in decision making - Active citizenship/activism - Policymaking - Lobbying/advocacy for youth work

**Categories:** A practice of processes and methods

# Lublin is the European Youth Capital 2023

## Lublin EYC 2023



**Lublin is the European Youth Capital in 2023! Can you share with us what led to Lublin becoming the first Polish city to carry this title?**

We've decided to apply for the European Youth Capital (EYC) title because of its goal. To empower young people, increase their participation in the decision-making processes in the city, and strengthen their European identity. But also to build involvement of city residents based on the energy and activity of young people. It's also about the promotion of young, broadly defined culture and the activity of young people in various fields.

The EYC title contributes to changing the approach of cities towards youth policy. Creating the image of a youth-friendly city that supports and encourages youth social activity. The title encourages the creation of new opportunities for youth-city cooperation, financial support for youth ideas and activities, the creation of new spaces, cultural or sports events that young people will create and inspire. We want to use this opportunity to transform the way of thinking about the city and the role of residents in it.

**Can you tell us more about the programme that the city has planned for 2023? What will be the focus?**

We've divided the celebration year into four seasons:

### 1. #SpotkajmySię / #Let'sMeet

Season one introduces the concept of the European Youth Capital and presents the ideas behind the celebrations of the title in Lublin. It also lets you get to know the city and people around it. The Opening Ceremony of the European Youth Capital Lublin 2023 and the events happening on the First Day of Spring mark the climax of the Season.

### 2. #LublinToTY / #LublinsYOU

Season two is about broadening civic awareness, getting involved in youth volunteering, and implementing one's own initiatives. These initiatives stem from young people's needs.

It was also a time to present the activities of Lublin pupils and students during two events. May Music Box and Youth Marathon The City is



Lublin (Poland) is the European Youth Capital (EYC) 2023. We interviewed Agnieszka Parol-Górna, the coordinator of Lublin EYC 2023 and youth worker, to tell us more.

Ours were held in June. This was the time of student festivals, Children's Day, fun, and learning. It's the time of school finals and exams at the end of the academic year.

### 3. #CziluujwLublin / #ChillInLublin

Season three is Summer chill & charge time! It's the time to charge batteries and have happy-go-lucky adventures. This Summer festival program is a great chance to spend some time in Lublin while enjoying artists and guests from all over the world. It's also an opportunity for young people to arrange a special Birthday Event for our City.

### 4. #FutureToMY / #WeAreTheFuture

Season four means the fulfillment of our European Youth Capital title commitment. During these weeks, Lublin will be the real Capital of Europe. It will be the venue of the most important social, political, sports, and cultural international events.

**How will Lublin use the title? What opportunities come with it, and how are young people and all other stakeholders more engaged this year?**

The European Youth Capital title is both a great honor and an extremely important commitment for us. It's a chance for us to change the way we think about Lublin and create a city that is friendlier to young people. It also provides a huge opportunity to tap the potential of young residents. This potential comes firstly from international youth cooperation and Lublin's strong position as an academic city. A city that is vibrant with life and energy coming from its residents.



It's a time for Lublin to rethink how to involve young people in all aspects of city life, from infrastructure to socio-cultural programs, education, and participation in local policymaking. Our program aims to bring a permanent change in youth policy by, among other things, empowering youth organizations. We want young residents to take responsibility for themselves and the city by treating it as their place to live, study, future careers, and personal happiness.

The initiative is expected to contribute to the development of new ideas and innovative projects that will increase the active participation of young people in society. It's also intended to set an example for the development of European cities with the needs of young people in mind.

Generational boundaries are fluid, and the people targeted by the EYC will soon be young adults. It will be up to them to have a voice in discussions and decisions about the shape of the present and the future. Children participating today in our Entrepreneurial Kids program, planning changes, and arranging votes in School Civic Budgets, learning the principles of city functioning in the City Academy, will grow up and shape the labor market. Perhaps they will become local government officials, doctors, teachers, ... They will become conscious citizens to whom the future of Lublin belongs.

### What type of impact do you expect for the city, municipality, and its citizens?

We expect that the number of young people involved in decision-making processes will increase thanks to the improved or newly developed co-decision-making structures. This

will result in the creation of a city which will be more responsive to the expectations of young people. It will also encourage young people to stay in the city and start their further activities, including professional activities, right here in Lublin.

### How is the European Youth Capital title and programs contributing to the quality development of local youth work in your opinion?

Thanks to the European Youth Capital, it was possible to launch important processes. Such as, first and foremost, the creation of a youth policy that will set the city's development directions for the coming years with the participation of young people.

We are creating, as well as improving, processes that include young people in co-deciding about the city. We're also involving them in activities. These are key tasks that would take much longer to implement under different conditions. The title of European Youth Capital has accelerated these processes.

### What messages can you send to other cities that might consider becoming a candidate in the future?

We strongly recommend making this effort. The European Youth Capital title supports cities on the road to being an open and welcoming city that identifies the needs and aspirations of young people. A place where, regardless of background, ideology, sexual orientation, or gender identity, young people have their own space, feel at home, and are heard and appreciated.

The European Youth Forum (EYF) awards the title of European Youth Capital. The EYF elects every year a city that has excelled in empowering their youth, boosted youth participation, and strengthened the European identity.

[Find out more](#)



## Agnieszka Parol-Gorna Coordinator of Lublin as the European Youth Capital 2023

Agnieszka comes from Tomaszów Lubelski. This town is located south from Lublin, only 20 km from the border with Ukraine. She arrived in Lublin to study Economics. After her studies, she stayed there to work.

Career wise, Agnieszka followed several paths. She spent some time at the Academy for Diplomacy and worked in the European Parliament for a while. From an early age she was already interested in diplomacy. Later on she worked in marketing in the non-profit sector. For the last 15 years she has been working for the municipality of Lublin. Agnieszka is currently the coordinator for Lublin European Youth Capital of 2023.

Agnieszka enjoys time with her family. Her two sons are active swimmers, and she loves taking them to practice, various competitions, and championships. Whenever she has the time, she enjoys reading books. She also loves sailing and is happy that there are nice lakes around the area where she lives. Besides sailing, Agnieszka is also a fan of skiing.

Agnieszka finds her work fulfilling, as what she loves the most is working directly with people and meeting people from all generations. She likes to hear their stories, ideas, and to get to know them. It gives her energy and enthusiasm for the work.



## What is the main focus of local youth work and field of activity for Žilina Youth Council?

Youth work in Žilina is working to engage and empower young people by providing opportunities to learn, grow, and participate in community activities. Our work involves a range of initiatives to support the social, educational, and emotional needs of young people. This also includes all sorts of community services. If we could summarize the activities of our office, they would include the following:

- Activities to support participation, volunteering, and inclusion.
- Activities aimed at identifying young people's needs and collecting data (focus groups, surveys, structured dialogue, e-consultations, etc.).
- Workshops, round tables, and negotiations with youth policy actors.
- Training activities, workshops, and seminars.
- Information seminars, webinars, public debates, and conferences.
- Activities aimed at developing communication and promotional tools.
- Campaigns and media projects aimed at communicating with young people.
- International activities (like partnership projects).

## Which issues and challenges in local youth work is the Žilina Youth Council addressing?

Like in many similar settings, our challenges are around getting the stakeholders together to address the needs and increase the levels of participation and engagement. For a start, we facilitate meetings. Young people can then express the good things in their communities and the needs and issues to solve. These discussions are about change. So we start from understanding the reality first. The typical challenges are:

- How to motivate young people to take an interest in public affairs.
- How to guide local and regional politicians to take young people as partners – and not just use them when planning to write a project to get financial support – while not genuinely working with them.
- To look for ways of guiding public and local government officials so they don't make decisions about young people without young people.
- Expanding the staffing of the executive branch of the organization.

From this process of outlining the challenges together with the youngsters, the young people are invited to work towards the aims of change. They define priorities, end

We interviewed Ivana Gabrišova from the Žilina Youth Council in Slovakia. Ivana tells us about what the organisation does, how they involve young people, how they increase youth participation in rural areas, and their strategic document, the Concept of Youth Work in the Municipality.

goals, and measures, which can be done to increase the quality of life for young people in their communities. This process serves to create a roadmap to help young people see how they want their community to look like in the near future. In our case, in 7 years' time.

## What are your methods for increasing youth participation in rural areas?

We've been leading the process of creating a strategic document, the Concept of Youth Work in the Municipality, in rural municipalities that are interested for a period of seven years. That includes a series of meetings with young people, local politicians, municipal leadership and also the general public. We gather information about the issues that need to be addressed in the lives of young people in face-to-face meetings. After this analysis, we set goals and activities together for two years in an action plan.

We then accompany young people and local politicians in implementing activities that eliminate the problems and challenges in the respective municipality. After two years, we set the next plan of activities together with them. We've been in contact with the local youth and politicians for several years this way, following the newly appointed people after the elections. This encourages youth participation in public affairs. The process of establishing rural community management is in the process of developing and

implementing a strategic document for promoting the livelihoods of young people: the Concept of Youth Work in the community.

### What tools and resources are used for the quality development of rural youth work?

We use a range of tools, such as roundtables, discussions, sometimes online questionnaires, and consultations on produced draft documents. The European Charter on Local Youth Work is also used as a motivational tool.

### How do you ensure the quality development of youth work in rural areas?

Young people in the countryside set up their own Youth Councils. These are groups where they organize their own activities. Sometimes they are also involved in the challenges of the municipal leadership.

As an organization, we offer these groups training. Some of the trainings we offer are methods and non-formal education aimed at personal development, knowledge of current legislation concerning young people, and the possibility of obtaining grants to support their activities, including Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps. We also offer regular consultations if young people need them.

### In your opinion, what is the impact of the programs you run and support so far on the rural youth, municipality,



### and broader?

It's motivational, especially when young people manage to get financial support from a program. In that case, they can stir up the lives of young people in the local and broader communities. Because young people living in the countryside have a keen sense of the local community and of their contribution to it. They are happy to carry out activities that involve not only young people but also other age groups.

### What interesting activities are coming up for Žilina Youth Council this year?

We plan to focus on training in the project development process and how to write a good project, especially in the Erasmus+ program. They will also be able to implement their own small project in the village.

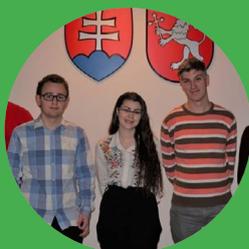
- We plan to motivate young people in a similar way in participation on the school grounds in school parliaments.
- A national exchange of ideas and activities of school parliaments in

the school territory.

- A national conference of youth parliaments of towns and villages.
- Appreciation of active citizenship by young people, local politicians, and engaged citizens in local communities.
- Regional conference – How to raise the profile of youth work and participation in the Žilina region.

All these activities are aimed at promoting the participation of young people in the different environments where they are active, networking with them and making examples of good practice visible.

You can also find this good practice on our website, along with many other inspiring stories from across Europe.



Ivana Gabrišová  
Project Manager at  
Žilina Youth Council  
in Slovakia

Ivana has been working at the Žilina Youth Council for almost four years now. Coming from Kysucké Nové Mesto, nearby Žilina, made it easy for Ivana to start her life in the bigger city. She's also studying Management, and participating in the city Council is a rich working experience for her.

She loves working with people. The project management department presents a great opportunity for her to apply her knowledge and skills from her studies. Meeting people, being able to write and implement projects,

and leading a variety of activities is what she likes most. It's a great symbiosis between her studies and her work.

Apart from work, Ivana loves reading and outdoor sports. She loves to ski and has lovely memories when she went to Finland as a part of Erasmus+ exchange. There she enjoyed the cold weather and plenty of skiing. She welcomes opportunities to meet other cultures and travel. Networking and socializing make her feel happy and fulfilled.



## Debate model of civic education

### Hrvatsko debatno društvo

The Croatian debate society wanted to establish debate clubs and deliberative democracy as a model for the development of democratic competences and participatory decision-making. They expanded debate clubs as a successful model of civic education (not mandatory in Croatia).

The main purpose of this model was to ensure the participation of young people in debating clubs which empowers them to act by developing key skills and acquiring knowledge. Second, by participating in deliberative activities, young people gained practical knowledge about democratic processes and the importance of the collaborative creation of quality solutions. T

The project included the training of teachers and local volunteers for the implementation of the debate model of the civic education and support for the work of new debate clubs, as well as the training of deliberation ambassadors who will be initiators and participants in the implementation of deliberative activities at the local level.

**Themes:** Participation of young people in decision making - Active citizenship/activism - Participation of young people in activities

**Categories:** A practice of processes and methods



## Development of boys in the suburb

### Kooperativet Fjället

Kooperativet Fjället, based in the suburb in north of Gothenburg, work on the social and personal development of boys in the area to challenge destructive masculinity norms, stereotypical gender roles and macho ideals.

They do this through a concept called 'Guy dinner' or 'Killmiddag'. This concept allows boys and young men to develop their ability to express feelings and reflect together in a safe environment through group discussions based on different themes such as friendship, sexuality, violence, crime, love, the future, equality.

During the gatherings, upcoming 'guy dinners' are also planned, where the young men plan the next dinner and come up with a theme and questions for group discussions. The boys have their own budget of SEK 7,000 SEK/semester to plan the dinners and make activities of their choice. To highlight the boys' learning and personal and social development, Kooperativet Fjället use the ELD method, Experience Learning Description.

**Themes:** Inclusion - Gender - Youth work in urban areas - Recognition/validation of learning - Segregation/integration

**Categories:** A practice of processes and methods



## Certificate Youth Friendly Municipality

### Inštitut za mladinsko politiko

The Youth Friendly Municipality certificate is a recognition of self-governing local communities that successfully implement measures in the field of vertical and horizontal youth policies. Such measures are aimed at the integration of ever new generations of young people into individual parts of society's life, and above all at promoting independence as quickly as possible.

The Youth Friendly Municipality certificate, valid for four years, is awarded annually to local communities that the expert commission recognizes as youth-friendly because they successfully implement at least one measure from all priority areas of youth policies.

By obtaining the certificate, the municipality, which has already proven to be successful in its work in the field of youth, undertakes to continue systematically regulating the field of youth and to raise or maintain the level of efficiency over a four-year period.

At the moment, 47 out of 212 municipalities in Slovenia, have a Youth Friendly certificate.

**Themes:** Participation of young people in decision making - Active citizenship/activism - Policymaking - Lobbying/advocacy for youth work

**Categories:** A practice of processes and methods



## emPOWER YOUTH: youth-led municipality strategy

### Asociatia GEYC

This project by Asociatia GEYC is a transformative initiative aimed at fostering active participation of young people in the government process in the town of Campina, while drafting a comprehensive youth strategy to be embraced by the municipality.

The project is centred around empowering youth to become co-creators of their community's future, instilling in them a sense of ownership, and strengthening democratic values. Through surveys, consultations, interviews, focus groups and collaborative workshops, all with the young people at the core, the project aspires to bridge the gap between the aspirations of the young people and the decisions taken at the municipal level. This initiative is also a case study for their organisation, as they are trying to develop a model of including young people in the decision-making process that can be replicated in other communities as well.

**Themes:** Participation of young people in decision making - Participation of young people in activities - Active citizenship/activism - Research

**Categories:** A practice of processes and methods

# Does youth participation create better citizens?

Dr. Georg Boldt



During a study visit in Finland, dr. Georg Boldt, working in the field of sociology, presented his doctoral dissertation titled *Citizens in Training: How institutional youth participation produces bystanders and active citizens in Finland*.

Encompassing the period of 2015-2018, the dissertation is based on more than 200 hours of participant observation of municipal processes for youth participation, conducted in both youth councils and in participatory budgeting events in the metropolitan area of Helsinki. Based on the practices of parliamentary decision-making, youth councils are the most typical forms of institutional youth participation. On the other hand, the process of participatory budgeting offered by the city of Helsinki provides young people with the opportunity to influence local budgetary allocations of the city's Youth Department.

In his dissertation, Dr. Boldt identified four individual level outcomes of youth participation, which depended on the style of interaction in the participation process and whether participants felt they were able to exert any influence over decision-making:

- A group of participants had a deep and fundamental experience of empowerment and transformation;
- A group of socially privileged participants strengthened their position by accumulating influence;
- Some participants left the process of participation to find different outlets for their civic engagement;
- For a group of participants, the position of being a bystander was further reinforced;

We sat down with Georg Boldt to learn more about his findings and their impact on better understanding the complexities of youth participation.

What is the relationship between (current) structures and young people participating in these structures?

Many of the institutional youth

participation structures that exist today are built on the model of representative democracy. Consequently, participation is open only to a group of elected

representatives. Forms of democracy that favour popular inclusion would reach many more and offer a platform for political socialization for a generation that are less likely to engage with the traditional stakeholders in civil society and politics.

Are we approaching the concept and practice of youth participation correctly and justly? Does its use as an umbrella term overlook important aspects and nuances?

A lot of times it seems that institutions are mixing up youth participation and participatory democracy. From a theoretical point of view participatory democracy signifies something quite different from most youth participation initiatives.

Are institutional approaches and practices adequate and reflective of the social, racial, economic and environmental landscape?

Different youth participation projects cater for different kinds of young people. Youth councils, a form of youth participation in which young people meet and make decisions following parliamentary procedures have been criticized for mainly attracting groups of young people that already have a high capacity for public functioning. Meanwhile, young people from outside the world of formal politics don't find the parliamentary method of political debate and decision-making in representative structures to be attractive.

I believe it is possible to engage all kinds of people in institutional initiatives for participation in decision-making but in order to achieve pluralism in participation there is a need for diversity in the ways people are offered to engage.

There is a clear intention of institutions and existing frameworks to include young people in decision

### making processes. What outcomes did you identify that bring a deeper understanding of the complexity of youth participation?

Offering all young people, the same opportunity for participation seriously misrecognizes the needs, skills and capacities of young people. An initiative that resonates with somebody might be completely dissonant for someone else. One reason for this is that people have different skills to start with. Some people need to develop efficacy and learn to justify their positions in a publicly acceptable way, whereas others are ready to debate the finer details of a law proposal for hours. There is also a need to consider the multitude of ways of imagining a different world. For some it is important to discuss issues like power, privilege and diversity, while others prefer to focus on ways to amend smaller everyday problems. Likewise, some people want to organize things rather than debate concepts and approaches.

### After carefully observing youth councils in Finland, what conclusions can you make about the efficacy and the limitations of youth councils?

Youth councils are organized in different ways and drawing any generally applicable conclusions is difficult. But I like to reiterate the need for more youth participation

initiatives founded on ideas of popular inclusion in order to avoid youth councils becoming a breeding ground just for elite groups and prospective politicians.

### How about participatory budgeting?

In theory participatory budgeting is a brilliant way to engage people in participatory democracy. Also, compared to many youth councils, participatory budgets have real economic power. Again, it is important to consider the needs of the target group and to avoid the creation of black boxes where decisions on youth proposals are taken without transparency.

### What needs to change in order to make youth councils and participatory budgeting inclusive, representational and reflective of the diverse needs of young people?

There needs to be more opportunities for young people to influence decisions that affect their everyday lives. The most common demand I heard during three years of fieldwork was a place for young people to spend time in, without a requirement to consume anything, in which they can feel safe and not be under the constant supervision of adults telling them what to do. Despite all kinds of youth participation initiatives, these spaces seem to be impossibly difficult to establish. I guess that as soon

as institutional youth participation processes turn out to actually be able to influence the everyday lives of young people in a meaningful way, the interest for them will increase. In terms of making them inclusive and representative, I think the best solution is popular inclusion, i.e. that anybody can join whenever they wish. Moreover, there should be facilitation available to guarantee civility in debates, that everybody can get their voice heard, and much more attention should be given on how decisions are reached. Deliberation without forced closure forces participants to listen and consider each issue from multiple perspectives, developing empathy for others and skills in finding compromises.

### Is the current approach to active youth democratic participation adequate to fulfilling its own mission and claim?

I think there are big differences from city to city and country to country. In general, I think our democratic institutions should become more inclusive of social diversity, that decisions should be taken closer to those affected by them, and that these processes should engage more people than they do now.

[Read the dissertation](#)

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**Dr. Georg Boldt**

Sociologist at the  
University of Helsinki

Dr. Georg Boldt: "I'm a sociologist working at the University of Helsinki. I am a founding member of the Centre for Sociology of Democracy and my research topics have ranged from institutional youth participation to synod debates and high-risk activism.

My methodological approach to study situated political cultures is based on ethnographic participant observation. Mostly this implies attending meetings and following group chats but recently fieldwork with Extinction Rebellion activists protesting logging operations in Lapland (Finland) required navigating by map and compass while skiing through the wilderness. The Northern Lights were unforgettable!

I have a background in European youth politics. I was a board member of the organizing bureau of European school student unions (OBESSU), the national youth council, and for a while I acted as the chairperson of the Council of Europe Advisory Council on Youth. I used to DJ regularly at clubs and parties during my graduate studies and I still enjoy crate digging and curating mixtapes. When I have time off I like to spend it with friends and family, preferably sailing, rock climbing or skiing."

# Youth Center 'Baze' in Gulbene

[Baze](#)



## How does the youth center 'Baze' support and develop the local youth work?

The main activities of the Gulbene district youth center "Baze", involve providing space and place for youth, as well as seeking resources for helping and carrying out youth initiatives. Besides these, the Center puts youngsters and their needs in the spotlight while ensuring the development of their life quality in the district. Every year we highlight the actual needs of district youngsters through three main directions of work. For example, this year, we singled out these three priorities:

1. Representing the interests of youngsters and their involvement in the decision-making process
2. Health – mental and physical well-being
3. Possibilities for everyone through mobile youth work

## Could you tell us more about the project Be Mobile, its aims, activities, and impact?

We created the project Be Mobile aiming to improve the knowledge, skills, and competencies of youth workers. It was important for us to find out more about types of mobile youth work, planning, and

implementation processes. Our additional intention is to share best practices of mobile youth work at the international level. Be Mobile is a collaborative project between municipalities and countries, enabling practice sharing and the possibility to see a bigger picture of how the mobile youth work can be done.

In this project through cooperation with two Romanian organizations and other partners in Latvia, we will build youth workers' understanding of mobile youth work, and how can the outreach youth work develop in quality. Within this project, we are creating a toolkit for every youth worker to use. This helps to improve or even to make the first steps at mobile youth work activation. We combine the online training and two online discussions on these topics, in which we will welcome every interested youth worker in Europe to join and gain some good practices and knowledge. With this project growing, we hope to develop mobile youth work processes not only in Latvia and Romania but also in other countries.

**The youth center 'Baze' is very active in community volunteering. How do you organize it and what are the benefits for the young people, community, and municipality?**

We interviewed Amanda Krišjāne from the youth center 'Baze' in Gulbene, Latvia. Amanda shared with us what the center does for the local community. We also talked about their priorities, inspiring good practices, and cooperation projects in the municipal youth work.



The volunteering work in the Gulbene existed before the first youth center was opened, but only several years ago we introduced an adequate structure and support system. We created the guidelines for volunteering work that takes place in the district. The youth center 'Baze' is now the main institution responsible for volunteering. This fits the reality, as the majority of volunteers are young people. Nevertheless, we also have and support our adult and senior volunteers.

If a person decides to volunteer, our youth center has a database of organizations and institutions with volunteering opportunities. So, the volunteers can find the perfect fit for their personal or professional interests and goals. The same goes for the organizations that seek volunteers. We are the first contact point for anyone seeking volunteering experience. It starts with the intake appointment in our youth center, finding the match, registering, and signing a written agreement.

Volunteering is a big part of our local community empowerment. It represents a chance to develop

different kinds of skills that will be either beneficial in the future work field or for personal development. The municipality also grows from the engagement of our volunteers.



### What tools and resources are used in your local youth work?

In the last years, youth workers in the Gulbene district started using the European Charter on Local Youth Work. We of course, still have space for improvement. Some dimensions of youth work are well-developed, and some at still work in progress. We are currently at our second policy for youth work in the Gulbene and one of the following steps now is to create one for the next planning cycle – 2025 to 2030. It's also the case with institutional cooperation. Professionals in every work field dedicated to youngsters are developing and learning new skills every year. This leads to a bigger understanding of youngsters, their needs, and how to develop more cooperation with them.

### How do you ensure quality development of youth work in the district?

The development of youth work in the Gulbene is measured by the youth policy result indicators. After every evaluation period, we know if we have reached the stated

goals, what went well, and what needs more attention. Also, each year, through different kinds of activities – worldwide policy updates, discussions, and questionnaires we follow trends in the local youth work. We also carry out focus groups, where we gather our youngsters' opinions and thoughts regarding their life quality in the district. This gives us not only the feedback of what has been done but also what would be the key points for development.

### What interesting activities are coming up for the youth center 'Baze'?

All year is filled with interesting activities and events. The biggest one is the project Be Mobile, in frames of which the mobile you work in the district is being developed. At the same time, diverse activities ensure continuous and new possibilities for youngsters. This year we are turning seventeen and it's a respectable anniversary. We value all our volunteers, which is why every year we organize a 'thank you' ceremony for them. Life for a young person in Gulbene is filled with interesting activities. We are happy when we can be the hosts and initiators of quality activities for the community. Everyone in 'Baze' can't wait for visitors to show them around so that they get to know our district and programs better.

You can also find this good practice on our website, along with many other inspiring stories from across Europe.



### Amanda Krišjāne Youth affairs specialist at youth center 'Baze'

Amanda works as a youth affairs specialist in the youth center 'Baze', Gulbene, Latvia. She is originally from this district. Life also took her to study and live in some other cities around the country, including Riga. One summer when she was back, a friend who was a youth worker asked her to join the municipality youth work. This is how the journey started, she was twenty years old.

From an early age, Amanda was into mathematics and politics. She has degrees in political sciences and accounting. A great experience for her was the Erasmus program. Through it, she discovered a love for meeting different people and learning about multiple cultures. Youth work in the municipality allowed her to develop new skills and step into the role of a youth worker. Helping young people like herself access opportunities, gain skills, and become active participants in their community is a very rewarding working experience for her. Diversity in her team is an additional inspiring factor. Working with senior youth workers motivates her to build her knowledge, and learn how to solve challenges in the youth work field. Amanda is looking forward to further progressing her career and contributing to Gulbene's social goals.



## How Detached Youth Work

### Can Make a Difference

#### Aġenzija Żgħażaġh

Through detached youth work, Aġenzija Żgħażaġh (Malta's National Youth Agency) wants to:

- make contact with young people in a range of settings,
- build beneficial relationships with them through dialogue and the effort to understand their situation and perspective,
- identify and respond to the needs and agendas of individuals and groups of young people by developing strategies for action which are both learning-oriented and fun, and to
- build bridges of understanding between adults and young people.

Discover the inspiring case study of Birżebbuġa, one of the localities where the AŽ youth workers would visit twice a week to establish contact with the different young people in the area. Learn how they responded to a prominent need from the young people there and how they made it a reality.

**Themes:** Youth work in urban areas - Community work - Participation of young people in decision making - Active citizenship/activism

**Categories:** A practice of processes and methods



## Deliberative committees

#### Parlement de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale

In order to respond to the 'democratic fatigue syndrome' (David Van Reybrouck) and to bridge the gap between representatives and represented, the Brussels Parliament decided in 2019 to open its doors to all inhabitants of the Brussels Region. Adopting the conclusions of a first panel, it decided to include the deliberative committees in its rules of procedure and immediately involved experts in participation in defining the terms of application of this new process. As youth were identified as one of the main target groups, organisations such as Plan, Unicef, the Forum des Jeunes and the General Delegate for Children's Rights were contacted.

Involving 45 citizens (including 12 aged between 16 and 29) chosen by lot and 15 parliamentarians, the deliberative committees are a new space for dialogue aimed at elaborating, together and on an equal footing, recommendations on a particular theme. The topic addressed by each deliberative committee comes either from a citizen's proposal supported by a minimum of 1,000 Brussels residents over the age of 16 ("citizen's suggestion" mechanism) or from a request from one or more political groups. The conditions for participation are therefore broader than those for voting: the public is wider, including foreigners and minors.

**Themes:** Participation of young people in decision making - Active citizenship/activism

**Categories:** A practice of processes and methods



## Sociocracy: All

### voices matter!

#### YUPI - Youth Union of People with Initiative

Democracy is a very broad concept, hard to grasp and make a reality in everyday school life. That is why schools and organisations from Portugal, Poland and Romania decided to implement a project called "Deepening Democracy!", testing a new method of decision-making, and bringing a different understanding of the concept of democracy into schools.

Sociocracy is a form of democracy where a group makes a decision based on everyone's consent, having no objections to the final decision that benefits the whole group (or working on the objections to make it possible for everyone to "live" with such decision). This method ensures a more collaborative, participatory, and inclusive democracy where "All Voices matter!".

Every national partnership in this project implemented the sociocratic method to improve the quality of democracy according to their own spaces and structures of participation: in Poland the context was the decision of the School Participatory Budget; in Romania it was the plan of activities for the Democracy Club and in Portugal it was the decision of the classroom representative in all secondary schools.

**Themes:** Participation of young people in decision making - Safe/secure youth work environment - Inclusion

**Categories:** Concrete tool



## Learn before you vote

#### Žinai, ką renku

The turnout of different elections in Lithuania usually is near 40-50%. However, young people are least likely to vote in elections compared to other age groups (only about 30% in different elections). Also, only 2 out of 10 young people (18-29 y.o) in Lithuania say that they are interested in politics (OECD data shows). Thus, young people tend to not participate in political activities and most of them do not vote. "Learn before you vote" main purpose is to help young people get interested and involved in politics and make politicians accountable by organising political debates between all candidates who want to be elected in various elections (municipal, national parliament, EP, presidential) and watchdogging. The activities aim to support democratic engagement among citizens by providing platforms to directly discuss issues that citizens are facing. To help young people gain different skills and knowledge (like public speaking, time management, how politics works at different levels, know the difference between institutions, etc.), and society to gain an understanding of candidates and then make a conscious decision when voting.

**Themes:** Active citizenship/activism - Community work - Research - Volunteering/voluntarism

**Categories:** A practice of processes and methods



What is the main field of activity of your organization? What issues and challenges in the local youth work is your organization helping to solve?

Eurodesk is a European youth information network created in 1990. The goal of Eurodesk is to make information on learning mobility comprehensive and accessible to both young people and youth workers. To do that, we operate with a network of 39 Eurodesk Centers connected to local information providers in 37 European countries and federating over 3000 so-called “multipliers and ambassadors”. Having local and regional organizations working on a daily basis with young people is essential for delivering youth information and creating bridges between Europe, the opportunities that arise from it, and young people. This relationship is based on shared values and on the commitment to make all young people aware of the available opportunities. At Eurodesk, together with our partner ERYICA, we are calling for a stronger recognition of youth information work, for example with the release of our Competence Framework for Youth Information Workers. It is essential to recognize the role played by the local youth information workers and to also

use the networking and learning opportunities offered by being part of a network like Eurodesk at the national and European levels.

What are your key network activities and partnerships? What are Eurodesk awards?

Eurodesk organizes several network activities. In line with the need for better recognition, the Eurodesk Awards is a good example. We launched the Eurodesk awards in 2011 with the aim of celebrating the day-to-day work of Eurodesk local Multipliers. The multipliers or ambassadors are those who are helping young people discover and seize the numerous opportunities Europe has to offer them. Multipliers are also collecting their most relevant, innovative, empowering, and impactful projects from the local level and highlighting them as a source of inspiration for their peers, and for decision-makers at national and European levels. Alongside the prizes they receive, they have the chance to represent their project at the Awards Ceremony held in Brussels in the presence of high-level representatives from EU institutions and Eurodesk partners.

We had the pleasure of interviewing Grazia Cannarsa, Research, and Information Manager from Eurodesk Brussels. With its EU spread network, Eurodesk cooperates with local-level youth organizations and contributes to good practices in the youth sector. Eurodesk has been committed to supporting youth work at the local level.

Could you tell us more about the Time to Move campaign, and related ‘card games’?

The Time to Move is an annual flagship campaign that aims to connect young people to the 3000 Eurodesk information points available across Europe through non-formal activities. Every October, the Eurodesk network organizes hundreds of joyful events across Europe and beyond to reach young people. The campaign is managed and supported by Eurodesk Brussels Link, the coordination office of Eurodesk. National Centers and Eurodesk Multipliers implement the campaign at the national level. The campaign has a thematic focus, for example, this year it addresses various topics, including the European Elections 2024, the European Year of Skills, Green Mobility and the DiscoverEU initiative, Mental health and Traveling abroad, and Volunteering and Solidarity. Eurodesk’s “Talkative Thursdays” sessions on Spotify feature podcasts with experts discussing these topics in more detail. The podcasts are published every Thursday in October.





### What are some specific projects to support the local youth workers?

For our national coordinators and multipliers, we offer a lot of training and support for their daily work. For example, once a year we organize and host a multipliers seminar in Brussels bringing together Eurodesk colleagues from all over Europe to work together on improving youth information services and to share best practices for reaching out to young Europeans. We have recently revamped our Euroclasses, a Eurodesk project aimed at raising awareness about European opportunities. All the classes are designed for young people, and they are based on non-formal methods. Different thematic modules are available: Euro-Volunteering, Euro-Participation, Euro-Activism and Euro-Working. The classes are run by our local multipliers, youth workers, and trainers in organizations that are members of Eurodesk. During the EU Elections, a specific Euroclass has been developed to inform young people about the EU and its functioning, and to make them reflect on their vision for Europe and how they can make a difference by voting. Over 200 Euroclasses are going to take place ahead of the elections, thanks to the financial support of the European Parliament. Eurodesk also offers Thematic Training Courses designed for Eurodesk coordinators and multipliers. These 2.5-day courses are usually organized in line with the mission and core tasks of the network and based on the Eurodesk

Qualifying Training Programme and Competence Framework. Twice per month, we organize webinars on specific topics where experts and participants can share their experiences, it's our Wednesday Webinars. We also have developed an eAcademy with resources related to the Eurodesk mission and network activities.

### What interesting activities are coming up for Eurodesk this year?

In 2024 Eurodesk will launch our European Elections campaign to reach and engage young people meaningfully in the EU elections. The campaign will consist of online and offline activities across EU countries, and we will also run Euro-elections classes across EU. We will also be involved in the promotion of the European Youth Week taking place in Spring 2024. Another interesting result is the Guide on Inclusion Communication which was launched in November 2023. The guide helps anyone interested in developing an inclusive communication plan, and video tips and resources for implementing and monitoring it as well as checklists and good practice examples. Mental health will also be an important topic for our network with different resources being developed in 2024. We would also like to further work on AI and how it impacts youth work and youth information work, in particular. This is a fundamental challenge to embrace, to have a clear vision and understanding of what it entails for our sector and young people.

You can also find this good practice [on our website](#), along with many other inspiring stories from across Europe.



### Grazia Cannarsa Research, and Information Manager at Eurodesk Brussels Link

From the cozy, small town of Termoli on the Adriatic Sea coast, Grazia ventured to western Europe and Brussels, Belgium.

Interested in different languages and cultures from a very young age, Grazia was happy to explore these interests further in the international environment of Brussels. It was like a dream come true.

Being the one who always liked traveling, foreign languages, and literature, her passion took her to visit her Belgian friend and meet her family. Staying over for work and life happened by chance. She started a traineeship in the EU Commission. A work opportunity opened its door in Eurodesk and Grazia got involved with an inspiring Youth Portal project. Grazia says she was lucky to enter a very inspiring project, and ever since then she's considered Eurodesk her second family.

When she's not busy with her research and information work in the youth field, Grazia takes time for her well-being. She enjoys sports, dance and music. She's been into classical dance for years and would love to transfer this passion to her daughter.

What she also values is the opportunity to grow personally and professionally. Her office in Brussels is an example of this, a lot of nationalities, a diverse team, and a melting pot that also exists within the whole city. Grazia is happy to be in a place where love for youth work and connection is what brings people together.



We interviewed Fien Morren, Project Officer from the Youth Service Globelink in Anderlecht, Brussels. Fien shared with us what the center does, more about their good practice project KRAS, and how they are making a difference in the local youth work.

### What is the project KRAS and how does it promote youth empowerment and participation?

KRAS is a discussion and role play for young people in the third grade of secondary education. KRAS works across schools and networks. And throughout Flanders and Brussels, we organize meetings for young people. At these sessions, they debate global themes with their peers. Youngsters get a chance to have their voices heard. Every school year a new annual theme with a global impact is used to introduce young people to the world of democracy and debate. And this year, the theme is conflict.

### What is the impact of the KRAS process and methodology?

### What is the main field of activity of Globelink?

Youth Service Globelink is a national youth service initiating and carrying out projects together with young people from a global, sustainable perspective. Globelink challenges young people to strive for a sustainable, inclusive, and just world. Our organization has a mission to develop young people's skills, knowledge, and desire to make conscious choices and actively promote them. Starting from the power of young people and focusing on Education for Sustainable Development, we want to make sure youth is well-skilled and included and valued as an important stakeholder. Youth service Globelink always had a positive outlook on the future. Young people are our most important partners and bear responsibility for the policy and operation of the Globelink youth service. Their opinion is important and matters.

### What issues and challenges in the local youth work is Globelink helping to solve?

Globelink gives voice to young people in Brussels and Flanders, regardless of their religion, background, or place of residence. So, we support youngsters in opening up and

discussing social issues, topics such as migration, resilience, and identity. With the education about these issues, we encourage and empower young people to have an opinion. Youngsters can realize they have a say in everything that affects them and their quality of life. We do this in a participatory way, as a more experimental form of youth work. This is not always the easiest way of working, but it's based on using the power and opinion of young people.



The impact of KRAS is that it empowers young people in many different ways. From chairing a committee room to taking part in the press team at the Plenum. From debating at a local final session to co-presenting the youth's decision at consultative bodies. In this project, the process and result have equal value. Above all, it is all about raising the importance of the young people's voices. This project's goal is that the youth can feel that they matter. And next to that, they can learn how to develop and defend their point of view.

### What interesting activities are coming up for the Globelink this year?

This year is of course a special one with all the elections coming up, so the KRAS project also has its timeline and set of activities. We start the

year with KRAS Deluxe, this is the day when will officially begin this year's project. It kicks off on Saturday, January 27 at the Globelink office. There we will bring together all young people who want to commit to the run-up to the Plenum (b)XL 2024. This starting day includes team building, a joint lunch, brainstorming sessions, and the opportunity to collect opinions about the project.

### Do you have a Europinion?

The next one is Europinion, which is for all curious about the important themes at the European level. For example, youngsters have an opportunity to participate in the discussion about what measures Europe should take to combat further global warming. They can tackle issues such as a smoking ban, or age limit for alcohol. And what can

and should the European Union do regarding pensions, minimum wages, and unemployment benefits. Another topic for them to discuss can be what should be the conditions for other countries to join the European Union. This activity serves to collectively engage young people into thinking and learning, and taking a well-considered stand when going to the polls this year.

### Come to Plenum!

Plenum will take place on Friday, April 26. The young people will take over the Senate, the House, and the Flemish Parliament for one day. Plenum is the peak of the KRAS project when there is a role and discussion game in which hundreds of young people from 26 different KRAS groups voluntarily debate for a year around one central theme – this year it is conflict. As a result of Plenum (b)XL 2023, the KRAS project gathered solutions, ideas, and recommendations from approximately 455 young people on the theme of identity, at a Flemish, national, and global level.



You can also find this good practice on our website, along with many other inspiring stories from across Europe.



**Fien Morren**  
Project Officer  
Youth Service Globelink

With an educational background in social work and pedagogical studies, Fien finds herself in the right place at the right time. Globelink provides the ideal home base for creating the social impact she was dreaming about. The themes she's passionate about are resilience, solidarity, and

connection.

She encounters dozens of young people with an opinion on social issues and sustainability. She often mentions the young people's honesty on sensitive social issues such as gender and resilience. The first thing to notice about Fien is her enthusiasm and positive energy. She is happy doing this meaningful work. Helping young people learn how to participate in important life issues and seeing them take full charge of their choices in life, is very rewarding for her.

Fien is a working mom who takes a train every day from Ghent to Brussels. In her free time, she takes up on Ghent's social life, enjoying the diversity and the offers in the city. She lives in a city which proves that the voices of youth are heard. For her, it's nice to witness

that this year Ghent is the European Youth Capital. The youth is included, respected, and participates in high numbers in all the issues related to the quality of life in the city. As a student, Fien had a chance to travel to Nepal and Zimbabwe, where she did her internship as a social worker. Working with local schools, teaching kids and also people with disabilities. Her experience was invaluable in her further development path of becoming a youth worker.

And so, youth work holds magic for Fien. Through the projects of youth service Globelink, Fien can actively work to support young people and empower them to become active citizens.

## To make strategy, takes strategy

### Piiriveere Liider

Not all young people have enough information on where, how and to whom to express their ideas about participation in the decision process. The proposals of young people sometimes don't reach decision-makers and it's not always easy for decision-makers to have a dialogue with young people, because of their lack of experience in dealing with youth.

The aim of this Estonian project by Piiriveere Liider was to involve young people in the decision-making processes (to introduce the decision-making processes to them, to establish the contacts between the young people and the decision-makers, to teach young people how to express their proposals so that they can feel self-confident when having this dialogue). More in general the aim of the project was to teach young people to learn, to analyse their learning outcomes and how to become aware of the whole learning process. The objective of the project was dialogue between the young-people and decision-makers, improving active decision making, informal learning, sustainability of the organisation and region.

**Themes:** Participation of young people in decision making

**Categories:** A practice of processes and methods

## The Big Debate

### Jeugdraad Stad Gent

"Het Groot Debat" is a project by the Youth Services of Ghent in collaboration with the Youth Council and organisations Larf, Kopergietery and Viervulvier. It aims to inform young people about elections and political decision making, involving them in debate with peers and politicians. With this project, they want to evoke the curiosity and enthusiasm of youngsters for social challenges.

750 young people of the 5th, 6th and 7th year of high school, of 23 different schools in Ghent, are participating in the project. The project wants to create dialogue between young people, who might never interact in other situations. This gives them the chance to learn other perspectives and reflect on their own views.

The youngsters of the Youth Council are involved in all important decisions about the project. Specifically, they take the lead in organizing the big final day of the project.

**Themes:** Participation of young people in decision making - Participation of young people in activities - Active citizenship/activism - Youth information and counselling

**Categories:** Concrete tool

## Let's meet in the square!

### Budapest Főváros VIII. kerület Józsefvárosi Önkormányzat

This good practice takes us to the streets of Budapest! "Tali a téren" or "Let's meet in the square!" in English is a regular meetup, organised under the Józsefváros's Child and Youth Participation Program, JóKer to create an inclusive community space for children and young people within the Józsefváros district.

This initiative addresses several key challenges: the lack of structured activities for youth outside of school in public areas, limited opportunities for socialization, and the need for a safe environment to engage and build relationships. JóKer seeks to empower young residents by involving them in program planning and decision-making, teaching valuable life skills, fostering a sense of community, and providing opportunities for recreation and socialization.

**Themes:** Non-formal education/-learning - Human rights - Volunteering/voluntarism - Outdoor activities

**Categories:** A practice of processes and methods



## Zugdidi Youth Council

### Youth Palace of Zugdidi municipality

Years ago, there was very low participation of young people in decision-making in the Zugdidi municipality (Georgia). Many youth projects were implemented, but all through non-governmental organizations, so young people were less aware of the decision-making process.

In 2021, a youth council was established under the umbrella of one of the non-governmental organizations in Zugdidi, and 12 young people were selected for its main board. Zugdidi City Hall allocated funding for the council. However, the council was not subordinate to the City Hall. As a result of the implementation of more than 70 activities by the end of 2021, the City Hall decided to double the funding. The focus was on activities that were valuable and important for the young people of Zugdidi.

In addition to the fact that the council carried out many activities and projects with the financial support of the City Hall, there is also an increase in the involvement of donors and businesses. In 2022 the youth council organised a youth forum, that was held for the first time in Zugdidi, where more than 200 young people participated and the recommendations received at the forum were presented to the City Hall.

**Themes:** Participation of young people in decision making

**Categories:** A practice of processes and methods



# Dypall Network – Empowering local youth councils

## Dypall Network



We enjoyed interviewing Marija Krstevska Taseva, Project Manager from Dypall Network. She told us more about the organization, its mission, and activities, and its good practice – Quality Charter on Participatory and Inclusive Local Youth Councils.

### How would you describe DYPALL's main field of activity?

DYPALL Network's primary focus is on fostering youth participation in decision-making processes at the local level. Comprising over 80 organizations and local authorities across more than 30 countries across Europe and the broader, the organization proactively engages young individuals in cooperative initiatives alongside municipal and regional authorities. By doing so, DYPALL addresses the challenges of bridging the gap between youth and local governance, on the one hand, by building the capacity of young people and, on the other hand, by enabling the authorities to effectively address the needs and interests of young individuals and cultivating sustainable youth policies within communities.

### What issues and challenges in the local youth work is the organization helping to solve?

DYPALL Network strategically tackles youth exclusion and disengagement issues, aiming to build trustful structures and encourage active participation in democratic processes. We offer training programs, research, and consultancy services, all aligned with empowering young people, enhancing the competencies of local

officers, and advocating for impactful changes in national and European youth policies.

### Why are Local Youth Councils important, and how do you help develop and promote them?

Local Youth Councils (LYCs) are one of the structures for meaningful youth participation that play a pivotal role in enhancing democracy at the local level. Their importance lies in empowering young people to share diverse youth perspectives, advocate for issues relevant to the community, and engage in the decision-making processes.

We believe that the local youth councils can have huge potential, especially in reaching out to marginalized youth who have something to say and can bring different perspectives on local issues but are usually not involved in such structures. One of the projects that we are currently implementing is 'Local Youth Councils at International Scale (LYCIS)'. This project aims to raise the capacity of youth organizations, youth workers, youth leaders, and young people to create sustainable, inclusive, quality local youth councils. It's based on the experience of different European and South-Mediterranean Countries. In

the framework of this project, the Quality Charter on participatory and inclusive local youth councils was created.

### Could you explain more about the Quality Charter tool and how it contributes to the quality of youth work?

The Quality Charter on participatory and inclusive local youth councils is an assessment tool designed to be used by the local youth council members, youth workers or municipality officers, The can use it when building, rebuilding, reforming or relaunching a local youth council. It provides concrete indicators for evaluating the youth council's structure and functioning to make it more participatory and inclusive, but also to increase its impact. Moreover, the Quality Charter aims to empower a long-term strategy for sustainable continuous improvement of the local youth councils and their impact on local, regional and international levels.



### What type of assessments does the Charter provide?

These are 3 areas of assessment (AoA): LYC for fair youth participation, LYC for meaningful and impactful youth participation, and LYC for sustainable youth participation. Then, each AoA has 3 criteria dimensions, and in each criteria, there is a number of specific indicators. Each indicator is specific enough to be clearly assessed but also general enough to be adaptable to the local specificities. That's why the rating scale of assessment has the option 'not applicable' besides 'not at all', 'partially', and 'fully'. An important feature is the 'Note to self' part of this assessment tool, which is a space where those who are using the Quality Charter can put notes to themselves on what they are doing well or what they still need to do so they use the tool as an inspiration for drafting their strategic improvement plan.

### And what are some new activities?

We have a brand new project, and it's tackling a similar topic. It's called 'Climbing the Ladder: Fostering a Culture of Youth Engagement', and it addresses the need for effective and meaningful structures, mechanisms, and spaces for the active engagement of young people in policy-making and decision-making processes at

local, regional, national, and European levels. Some of the key objectives of the project are to:

- Analyze and understand the key features of current models and mechanisms for youth engagement in Europe;
- Collect and share successful practices that encourage young people, policymakers, and practitioners to involve the youth perspective in policy-making;
- Create an accessible platform for implementing youth engagement mechanisms;
- Establish two networks (of young facilitators and counselors for democracy) to promote citizen participation and democratic engagement at the local and regional levels in Europe.

### What are the expected outcomes of this project?

One of the most interesting outcomes of this project is the digital platform, which will provide qualitative guidelines for the design and implementation of mechanisms of youth engagement. The whole process will be immersive and engaging. Users, including local authorities, young people, and youth workers, will enter the digital platform, register, and select their profile information first. Then they will draft a desired process, answer

questions about its purpose and target audience, and the platform will provide the best matching structure to these needs..

### What else is coming up at DYPALL in the coming year?

In the upcoming year, we'll be offering a diverse range of activities, as usual, with a primary emphasis on enhancing youth participation at the local level. We will be introducing a new initiative, "Phygital Youth Participation – Digital Innovation for Stronger Local Democracies." This innovative project is centered around the concept of 'phygital,' seamlessly blending digital tools with physical spaces. Through this project, we're pioneering a fresh approach to youth dialogue within communities. Currently, our focus lies on developing a cutting-edge phygital tool designed to engage young people in sharing their perspectives and opinions in a manner that's both accessible and youth-friendly. During this year, we'll be piloting this tool.

You can also find this good practice [on our website](#), along with many other inspiring stories from across Europe.



**Marija Krstevska Taseva**  
Project Manager  
Dypall Network

Marija is a dedicated youth worker and social activist hailing from North Macedonia, with over a decade of experience in the field of youth work. After a Master's degree in Law and completion of the Human Rights Advocates Program at Columbia

University in New York, she brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to her projects and team.

Having served as President of the National Youth Council of North Macedonia, the largest youth representative body in the country, Marija witnessed firsthand the transformative impact of youth involvement in decision-making processes. She firmly believes in empowering young people to play an active role at all levels of society.

Both as a project manager and a trainer at DYPALL Network, Marija finds fulfillment in building the capacities of youth in areas such as youth participation, advocacy against hate, and human rights. Her passion

lies in directly engaging with young people, and she takes pride in seeing the tangible results of her work. Witnessing young people utilize newly acquired skills, such as expressing their opinions confidently, engaging peers, and advocating for change, brings her immense joy.

Beyond her professional life, Marija's current interest is digital marketing. She also enjoys exploring new destinations and immersing herself in diverse cultures through her travels. Her commitment to youth empowerment and personal growth continue to drive her impactful work in the field.

# Youth Center Probishtip

## Probishtip



### What is the main field of activity of the center?

Since it was established, in January 2023, our youth center has created activities youth are interested in. We provide activities that serve young people and their needs on the local level. The central part of the work is preparing programs and activities that help youth reach their full personal, social, and professional potential. The Youth Center facilitates the organization of leisure activities for young people to foster non-formal and informal learning opportunities. We organize many diverse activities including Writing skills, English, Theater clubs, game nights, workshops, and events on various topics, such as mental health.

### What issues and challenges in the local community is the center solving?

We continuously help and support the local engagement of young people by creating opportunities and promoting youth participation. In our town, young people don't express a high level of interest in participating in decision-making processes. This is a reason why youngsters need to learn that they have the right to participate and be included. We have received a project grant to create a Local Youth Council and use it for this purpose. The council will be assessing

We had the pleasure of interviewing Martina Jachevska, a youth worker and coordinator of the Youth Center Probishtip. The municipality of Probishtip established this first youth center to provide services for the young people in the town. The center is a space where youngsters can develop their personal, social, and professional lives. Martina is also the president of Civic Association GRIT Probishtip, an organization managing the youth center. GRIT was chosen for this role through an open call by the municipality of Probishtip.

the needs of the young people and communicating about them with the decision-makers. This is how the youth will be able to become part of the decision-making processes. Our Youth Center's role will be to promote these activities among young people.

### How is the youth center helping youth empowerment and participation?

The Youth Center Probishtip offers various activities that help young people develop new skills and improve on a personal, social, and professional level. Through activities such as informative sessions, non-formal conversations, and counseling, we encourage young people to participate in processes and activities that directly or indirectly influence their development. Volunteers within

the youth center receive mentoring support that prepares them for their future careers. Through non-formal education programs for developing social skills, entrepreneurial and crafting skills, young people get a sense of the community where they live and the opportunities that are available to them. Most of the young people who visit the youth center feel empowered as they now have a designated space and resource center for what they need. Through regular polls on social media, questionnaires, focus groups, and collection of individual feedback, young people can share their needs and opinions on the activities. They can also participate in the creation of the programs.

### What were the challenges in starting up the youth center?



The main challenge involved grasping the essence of what the youth center's services are and effectively connecting the local government, youth, and other stakeholders. It proved challenging to convey that the youth center isn't merely an administrative office. We also needed to articulate why both young people and the wider community will benefit from its existence. Communicating the concept of non-formal education and its complementary value to formal education needs time and effort. Additionally, conveying the necessity and level of financial support essential for ensuring the effective operation of a youth center needs lobbying skills and resources.

**Could you tell us more about the initiative 'My Space' - its aims, activities and impact?**

The initiative "MySpace" was a part of the 'Support to Electoral Reforms in North Macedonia' project which was sponsored by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. The project was implemented by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES). The goal was to mobilize young people to ask for responsibility from the decision-makers. Through this project, we also wanted to find ways to take action toward ensuring young people's rights and keep politicians accountable for their pre-electoral promises.

The initiative itself consisted of 3 activities:

1. Workshops on Activism and Artivism with young people from the town of Probishtip;
2. Promo campaign for raising awareness for the need for a Youth Center in Probishtip;

3. Artistic installations that promote the needs of the Youth Center were designed and set up by the young people who participated in the workshops.

Successful implementation of these activities led to multiple meetings with the local government and national stakeholders. The result was the opening of the municipal Youth Center Probishtip, the first one in the eastern part of the country. We are overall the fifth youth center opened according to the law for youth policy and youth participation.

**What interesting activities are coming up in the youth center?**

We plan to implement three new programs suggested during the focus groups and the questionnaire. The youth identified mental health, activism, and career orientation as significant topics for them. These initiatives will be structured through a series of workshops. Upon program completion, participants will have the opportunity to obtain a certificate. Additionally, we intend to continue our existing Writing skills, English, and Theater clubs, led both by local and international volunteers. We will also introduce a new Film Club. Furthermore, we aim to host a summer camp centered around topics significant to young people.

**Themes:** Active citizenship/activism - Youth work in rural areas - Cross sectorial cooperation

**Categories:** Concrete tool



**Martina Jachevska**  
youth worker and coordinator  
Youth Center Probishtip

When thinking of civic engagement in North Macedonia, Martina is at the forefront of it. She is the life of the party in Probishtip's very first youth center. As the coordinator of the center and the president of the managing organization GRIT, Martina is driving the social changes in her hometown - a dream many youth workers would have. She completed a degree in design, yet life brought her to youth work and the management of youth-related initiatives. She spent nine months volunteering in Slovakia, helping a local youth organization. This is where she discovered what she liked to do - work with youth and for youth, create programs for the social and professional development of young people, design and deliver training, and drive changes in a local community.

Martina's passion is lobbying for youth, and their rights to participate and have a meaningful impact on the local level. What she likes the most is the ability to see the social impact - personal and professional growth of people, their skills, commitment, and confidence rising. She remembers all the young people who were not encouraged enough by their family or school system coming to the youth center Probishtip, developing their interests and skills, and gaining new confidence. With the help of the youth center's programs such as career orientation and counseling, Martina witnessed young people taking more responsibility and accountability for their lives, and things taking off for them.





## Watch Out the Youth 2: Making the Local Youth programme

### City of Pazin

The aim of the project was to empower and support young people in the local community and create a stimulating environment for their inclusion in social life and decision-making processes in the city, by improving the competencies of young people, youth workers and decision-makers, all for the purpose of adopting and implementing the Local Youth Program of the City of Pazin 2023 – 2027.

The project was implemented through 12 activities for young people, youth workers and decision makers, divided into 5 sets according to content and time and logical sequence. As a result of the project, a cooperative relationship was established and strengthened among different generations of young people in the local community, among youth workers and between young people and decision makers. The participants had the opportunity to express their opinion about the problems and needs of young people and also to make suggestions for improving the position of young people in the local community.

**Themes:** Participation of young people in activities - Participation of young people in decision making - Non-formal education/-learning

**Categories:** A practice of processes and methods



## Building Communities

### brick by brick

### Associazione IL VERGANTE

This good practice stems from the desire to encourage dialogue between young people, policymakers, public administration employees, and social stakeholders about the topics of sustainable development, active citizenship and the promotion of the territory and the geographical area.

Young people aren't sufficiently involved in the process of political decision-making, as they are not yet entitled to vote, or because they are not in direct contact with policymakers. This active citizenship workshop is based on the possibility of creating dialogue and open & direct debate between all the participants involved, and the physical construction (thanks to bricks) of an "ideal world".

The bricks allow users to build what they want to create, and talk about it with clearer ideas, generated from open dialogue. The debriefing phase is fundamental to plan the necessary next steps & changes.

**Themes:** Non-formal education/-learning - Active citizenship/activism - Policymaking - Volunteering/voluntarism - Community work - Youth work in urban areas - Youth work in rural areas - Participation of young people in decision making - Sustainable development

**Categories:** A practice of processes and methods



## Youth Democracy

### Academy

### DYPALL Network

The "Youth Democracy Academy" (YDA) programme is composed of "Educate for democracy", a series of training modules based on non-formal education methodology. This is supported by a board game appealing to young people so they can explore the concept and values of democracy in an innovative way, tackling it from a local, national, and European perspective, and an assessment tool.

The main objectives of the YDA programme:

- To bring the idea of democracy closer to young people by increasing their understanding of its concept, values and instruments
- To develop young people's sense of critical thinking and media literacy skills
- To rebuild trust in democracy by giving the space for young people to have a critical look at the existing democratic system in the EU and their own role in it.
- To support existing citizenship education programs in schools with a set of training modules and a board game that can help engage young people in a more innovative and youth-friendly manner.

**Themes:** Participation of young people in decision making - Non-formal education/-learning - Active citizenship/activism - Competence development of youth workers

**Categories:** A practice of processes and methods



## Co-creation:

### Artistic Creation with Children and Young People

### BRONKS theater

According to Bronks, co-creation sharpens the relationship between art and society, addressing issues vital not only to its own functioning but to the entire performing arts landscape. The value lies in participants not just being addressed on a rational level, as in education. Artists adopt a different strategy, fostering insights and experiences that generate a different kind of knowledge. Participants have the space to explore assumptions and shape new images or identities leading to valuable conversations between artists and young participants about shared questions concerning the world we live in—a captivating quest for artistic innovation. This encapsulates the essence of the organic symbiosis between the participatory and production facets of BRONKS.

They do this in various ways: through school projects and workshops outside of school (both short- and long-term).

**Themes:** Arts and culture

**Categories:** A practice of processes and methods

# Das geht! Youth and Politics in Dialogue

[Youth Participation Coordination office \(Aachen\)](#)



**What are the main activities of the Youth Participation Coordination Office of the city region of Aachen, Germany? What issues and challenges in the local youth work is the office solving?**

The coordination office serves as the interface between decision-makers, politicians, administrations, and young people. The main target group consists of teenagers from 12 years old up to young adults (25 years old). Through various actions, projects, and an established structure of participation opportunities for young people in the StädteRegion Aachen (city region of Aachen), the coordination office for youth participation has been able to consolidate valuable experiences in recent years and motivate many young people to engage in discourse at various political levels. The coordination office was established in 2011 following an initiative application by two young people. Since then, young volunteers („Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr“) at the coordination office for youth participation have been developing projects for other young people. In recent years, many interactive and empowering information and discussion events on various socially relevant topics and political elections have been offered.

**How is the project “Das geht! – Youth and Politics in Dialogue” developing youth participation?**

The Coordination Office for Youth Participation of the city region of Aachen has made it its mission to serve as an information and participation center for young people, students, politicians, and educational actors. It provides information about upcoming projects in the field of political education, and regional society, and encourages participation in socially relevant projects. Here, young people can contribute to the preparation, implementation, and follow-up of projects, thus making them as target group-oriented as possible. Adolescents should have the opportunity to engage in political events outside the school context. During the project-related activities of the Coordination Office for Youth Participation, young people and politicians are meant to meet on an equal footing. The aim is to take the ideas and attitudes of young people seriously and allow them to experience self-efficacy. Young people should not only be encouraged in their social and political understanding but also in their personal development through their participation, involvement, and the chance to actively change existing structures in society. In

We enjoyed interviewing Barbara van Rey and Dörthe Hofman, from the Youth Participation Coordination office in the city region of Aachen in Germany. Barbara and Dörthe told us more about the office's core activities, and its good practice – Das Geht! Youth and politics in dialogue. The office has developed projects to continuously support youth participation and engagement and raise awareness in youth on how they can become active citizens.

In addition to the existing goals, informal learning achievements are enabled for young people. In line with the EU Youth Strategy, the work of the Coordination Office improves the situation of young people and their involvement in social and political dialogue and decision-making processes. Das Geht! aims to provide all young people with more opportunities and equal chances in education and employment, regardless of social, cultural, or economic differences. The work partially builds on established participation formats and develops them according to the target groups' needs. The three core areas of information, motivation, and participation form the foundation of the objectives. This sets the framework for the structural and systematic development of the project „Das geht!“ (“That's Possible!“).

**What are the main challenges in the process of motivating youth to be part of the political life of the city/ community?**

In motivating youth to participate in the political life of their city or community, several challenges must be addressed. Many young people perceive politics as distant from or irrelevant to their daily lives, leading to a lack of understanding about how their involvement can directly impact issues that matter to them.

Additionally, there's often a lack of awareness about the political process itself and the available opportunities for engagement, including registering to vote, attending public meetings, or joining political organizations. Negative perceptions of politicians and the political process can breed cynicism and distrust among young people, hindering their willingness to participate. Moreover, time constraints due to balancing school, work, and other commitments can pose significant barriers to youth involvement.

**In your opinion, what are the results/ impact of the project so far?**

All actions planned, carried out, and evaluated within the project „Das geht! Dialog zwischen Jugend & Politik“ (“That's Possible! Dialogue between Youth and Politics”) target politically and democratically motivated and interested young citizens. In particular, first-time voters and young people were able to access general information about the upcoming European Parliament elections in 2024 to engage with the election and establish a foundation for lifelong active participation in elections.

**And what are the areas in which young people can further develop through this project?**

Young people can further develop their understanding of democracy and conscientiously engage with the topics and corresponding party positions. In dialogue formats with the respective candidates and politicians, young people can express their questions, ideas, and wishes. Throughout our project, the decision-makers can engage with

the questions and opinions of the youth. This way, young people can actively take responsibility for their environment and the decisions that affect them.

**What are some key activities coming up for the Das Geht! project this year?**

In the coming months, we plan to organize various events and activities in preparation for the upcoming EU elections in 2024, aimed at fostering interest and participation among students. One of our main events will be a creative workshop where students can craft creative projects with candidates representing key themes of the EU elections. This interactive event aims not only to strengthen understanding of the importance of the elections but also to provide students with an enjoyable opportunity to engage with political processes. Additionally, we will arrange educational activities related to the EU and its institutions, separate from the election itself. These activities will include informative sessions and discussions to deepen students' understanding of European politics and institutions. These events may include discussions, workshops, or other activities to raise awareness of the EU elections and encourage students to actively participate in democratic processes.

**Themes:** Participation of young people in activities - Non-formal education/-learning - Participation of young people in decision making - Policymaking

**Categories:** A practice of processes and methods



**Barbara van Rey & Dörthe Hofman, Youth Participation Coordination office, Aachen**

Before her role in the Coordination office for youth participation in the city region of Aachen, Dörthe was deeply engaged as a volunteer from a young age. Currently pursuing studies in Economics and Politics with aspirations to become a teacher, she brings four years of experience to her position in the youth participation office. Outside of work, Dörthe enjoys swimming and remains actively involved in her local community and politics. She is an inspiring example to the younger generation, embodying the values of active citizenship and taking responsibility to participate in local politics.

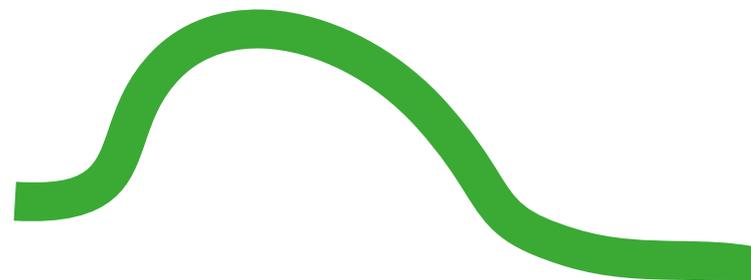
Barbara holds degrees in English and German literature. Before her current role in the city region of Aachen, she gained experience in public relations at the Education office. Barbara's passion for contributing to education and projects with social impact is evident. While at the Education office, she got involved in youth participation initiatives and was also part of the team that worked on establishing a comprehensive network across various educational domains. Barbara found inspiration in the collaborative approach of her team, which prioritized input from young people and fostered bottom-up engagement. In her leisure time, Barbara enjoys the company of her wife and their three dogs, indulging in reading, and socializing with friends.





# Youth Work/Ers Matter

## Umbrella



**What are the main activities of Umbrella? What issues and challenges in the local youth work is your organization solving?**

Umbrella is a Georgian youth value-based organization that aims to educate, motivate, and activate young people aged 13-30 in Georgia and beyond to empower and develop the communities that they come from. The organization’s mission is to support young people’s progress by creating educational initiatives to develop young people’s competence in civil society, the environment, human rights, and democracy in Georgian society. Our main activities consist of activities done on the local, national, and international levels.

On the local level, we support three youth centers in different regions of Georgia and implement grassroots initiatives, aiming to develop local youngsters as active citizens. On the national level, we gather youth workers from different youth centers and support their professional development. On the international level, we are active in organizing different mobility activities for youth workers and young people, successfully collaborating with the Erasmus+ program, and others as well. We are also active in supporting Georgian volunteers to volunteer abroad under ESC and on the other hand, we host the European volunteers in Georgia.

**What are the goals and milestones for your process of raising the competencies of youth workers in the NFE methods?**

We plan to keep developing the competencies of youth workers in running NFE (non-formal-education) activities with local young people. We strongly believe the development of youngsters starts with empowering the youth workers, which will have a multiplying effect on young people. For this to happen, we prioritized several goals, which will be our focus for the following years. A big one is gamification, and we already started gamifying youth work within this project “Youth Work/Ers Matter”. We want to develop this direction further and create a special platform for the youth workers, which can be used to track the progress of youngsters involved in local youth work activities. We are working on creating a tool to recognize the developed competencies of young people not only on the international level but also at the local level, which will be the additional motivation fostering their involvement.

**How is the project “Youth work/Ers matter” developing youth participation?**

Our main aim is to increase the level of youth participation at the local level. That’s why we put a big effort into developing local

We’ve interviewed Slava Mezhdoyan, president of Umbrella, a youth organization from Tbilisi, Georgia. Slava shared with us how Umbrella contributes to the quality development of youth work in Georgia and what are concrete initiatives and programs that help local communities.

youth work. By implementing the project “Youth Work/Ers Matter”, we develop competencies of youth workers. These youth workers work with Georgian youngsters in different municipalities, and they run the Grassroots Youth Work program and develop the key competencies of the youngsters. The topics and programs of those initiatives were carefully selected and tracked the most important parts of youth participation, human rights, environmentalism, healthy lifestyle and similar. These topics are important for youth and are needed to foster youth participation.



**In your opinion, what are the results/ impact of the project so far?**

The project had its immediate and medium impact at the local level and far going and expected long term.

**SHORT AND MEDIUM-TERM Participants:** Participants developed competencies and changed their behavior; during the training course, participants improved their competencies on the topic of NFE and youth work and existing e-tools, thus improving their ability to run

NFE activities with young people within the grassroots activities.

**Communities:** Right after the residential event, participants started implementing actions in their communities and bringing positive changes and impact in this direction. They are in a significant capacity in their local communities as agents of change. The grassroots program impacted the communities (youth) in the following way in the short term in terms of awareness (changed behavior) about the environment, human rights, youth participation, health, and other issues; in addition, they changed the behavior and became better in the aspects mentioned above than before.

**Organizations:** The project brought together representatives of various youth centers and organizations, and as a follow-up, these sectors started to cooperate, create links, and promote the youth work with NFE elements, something that was not the case before. This was the awareness-raising step, the leap forward in promoting grassroots youth work with NFE at the local level by involving more than 200 beneficiaries in total. Organizations also have the guidebook as a resource to promote NFE and youth work in their daily life with many valuable tools for their youth workers.

**LONG TERM:** The guidebook as a tool for future engagement is sustained on the website of the organisation (Umbrella) and will be used by the youth workers or any other actors to address various youth issues by involving young people in grassroots activities with NFE methods at the local level. Empowered youth workers will go deeper into the topic and become professionals not only in youth work but also as trainers or facilitators in youth projects.

**What are key activities coming up for your organization this year?**

This year we are working on establishing new youth centers and already started the kick-off program for the youth workers interested in starting their grassroots initiatives. We are planning to establish at least 2 youth centers at the end of this year and next years will be dedicated to supporting their development. We are also organizing the training course for center-based youth workers in June, from where we are expecting important outcomes to establish this goal. We will also start another edition of Grassroots Youth Work programs in our youth centers in September, which will give us the opportunity to involve more youngsters in this field. Besides the activities we are planning on the local level, we are also going to host

a few international events this year and empower Georgian youngsters by giving them the opportunity to be involved in different European projects and exchange the best practices.



**Themes:** Participation of young people in activities - Non-formal education/-learning - Recognition/validation of learning - Competence development of youth workers

**Categories:** Concrete tool



**Slava Mezhdoyan**

**President and Executive Director of Umbrella**

There are youth workers who are also pioneers in their vision, enthusiasm, and grassroots approach to developing local youth work. Slava Mezhdoyan is one of

them. The President and Executive Director of Umbrella - a youth organization from Tbilisi, Georgia, works hard to grow the foundations and network for quality development of local youth work in the country. Today, Umbrella is one of the biggest youth organizations in Georgia. It's the persistence and innovative approach of Slava and the team that made it happen. Inspired by the Council of Europe programs for youth workers, Slava decided to bring the ideas and concepts from these programs to his country.

In 2016 he founded Umbrella whose main goal was to bring positive changes in youth work on the local level. In 2019 and 2020, they piloted

the first youth center which due to a lack of support encountered many challenges.

Slava graduated from three universities. His first degree was in chemical engineering, the second one in Public Administration, and the third one in Human rights and Democracy. When not in Umbrella, Slava is still in the realm of youth. He is a father of three kids. Being a hard worker and a family person is what keeps him busy. Slava lives by the saying, "If you love your work, you don't see it as work." His primary motivation is witnessing societal changes. For him, it's almost addictive to see people grow and transform and communities thrive.

## Involving locally studying but unregistered youth

### Tartu linna noortevolikogu

Only 17 young people between the ages of 14-20 can be a part of the Tartu City Youth Council, but there are over 7000 youth in that same age group living in Tartu. The goal of this project was to involve and empower young people, and aimed to involve young people in decision-making processes that shape their future lives in Tartu.

It is crucial to use efficient communication methods to reach the young people and involve them in the activities. These two aspects have been the backbone of the organisation's work and are shown throughout.

Firstly, the youth council is chosen through local elections. In some municipalities, youth councils are an extension of student councils but not in Tartu. Only recently (2021) voting rights were expanded to young people who are not registered citizens of Tartu but study at a local school.

Since 2021 the same youth group can also vote for local participative budgeting and thus shape their living environment. Communicating these possibilities to youth has made them want to be active citizens.

**Themes:** Participation of young people in decision making - Inclusion - Digital youth work

**Categories:** A practice of processes and methods

## Network of Youth Centres

### Mestna občina Ljubljana

In 2016, Ljubljana introduced its very first youth strategy. A significant objective outlined in this strategy was to boost the participation of young people in leisure activities. During the development of this strategy, it became evident that there was a pressing need to create programmes that foster active involvement and creativity among youth while providing them with safe environments.

This was followed by an initial assessment that led to a proposal to establish a minimum standard for youth centers, allocate extra funding to support these centers, and enhance the accessibility of high-quality youth programs in districts where such opportunities were lacking.

The Strategy for Youth of the City of Ljubljana envisaged to build a Network of youth centres with common values, working on same basic principles, and representing physical spaces open for young people (primarily between 15 and 29). Since then it has grown and evolved, resulting in 16.297 activities, 50.666 programme hours, 160.000 visits, 13.547 hours facilitated by youth in 2022.

**Themes:** Non-formal education/-learning - Cross sectorial cooperation - Youth work in urban areas - Policymaking

**Categories:** A practice of processes and methods



## Youth Participatory Budgeting in Józsefváros – Budapest, District VIII.

### Budapest Főváros VIII. kerület Józsefvárosi Önkormányzat

The Youth participatory budgeting in Józsefváros program introduced by the Municipality is designed to engage children and youth in the decision-making process regarding the allocation of budgetary resources. This child-focused participatory budgeting initiative follows a similar model to the adult participatory budgeting process while being tailored to the unique needs and capabilities of young citizens. Children and youth can propose and prioritize the community projects and participate from early age in this process. The local impact is significant as it empowers youth to become well informed and active citizens.

**Themes:** Participation of young people in decision making - Active citizenship/activism - European/International cooperation/projects

**Categories:** Concrete tool

## Empowering girls in Brussels

### Molenbeek Rebels

The Molenbeek Rebels dream of a society where all girls and women are allowed, able and dare to claim their rights and actively participate in society. They combine a passion for basketball with social commitment and their main goal is not so much sporting success, but empowering girls. Especially girls who grow up in socially vulnerable environments.

They offer a framework within which girls support each other, learn from each other and therefore strengthen each other. They let the girls run the club themselves under the guidance of their peers and experienced coaches, and decide for themselves how much commitment they can and want to undertake. They also actively work on inclusion and equivalence.

Some results are an increase in self-confidence, openness, independence, positivity, and for some, self control but also the acquisition of skills.

**Themes:** Participation of young people in decision making - Inclusion - Diversity - Gender - Employability - Sports - Youth work in urban areas - Volunteering/voluntarism

**Categories:** A practice of processes and methods



# Municipal Youth Work in Slovenia

MOVIT



EGL has been present in Slovenia for some time, can you share with us how the national level feeds into supporting the youth work on the municipal level? What is your strategy and its main aims/goals?

Slovenian National Agency has been involved in Europe Goes Local since 2016. We had an active national committee until last year and are now connecting it to a national working group for implementing the Bonn process – the European Youth Work Agenda. There are over 25 active municipalities in Slovenia. We cooperate with the National Youth Council, the network of youth centers Mreža MaMa, and the Office for Youth of the Republic of Slovenia.

We aim to form support activities that address the different needs of municipalities while developing and strengthening quality youth work. Another important aim is to increase recognition of youth work and its impact on local communities.

Our specific goals are:

- Strengthening the competencies of municipal decision-makers in youth work
- Exchanging good practices and concepts for systemic support of youth work and youth organizations on local, national,

and European levels.

- Increasing the recognition and awareness of the importance and value of youth work
- Strengthening European and international dimensions of youth work as the core part of youth work on a local level.
- Encouraging collaboration of stakeholders in the youth field with stakeholders from other fields and sectors.
- Increasing the development of youth work is an important element of youth policies on local and national levels and in the field of youth policy in Europe.

How would you describe the impact and the value added to the local youth work?

The impact is visible on several levels. We measure and track all key data leading us in the right direction when it comes to the quality development of youth work in Slovenia. Municipalities have developed in various aspects. They have:

- established local committees for youth and/or youth centers
- prepared and accepted youth strategies
- changed relevant documents in favor of the youth
- received an opportunity to hold a Youth Friendly Municipality

MOVIT is one of the founding members of the EGL network, and year after year we enjoyed checking in with the team to learn more about how is municipal youth work developing in their country. This time we had the pleasure of interviewing Elizabeta Lakosil, Program Officer at MOVIT, the National Agency for Erasmus+: Youth and European Solidarity Corps in Slovenia. We talked about the strategy to enhance the skills of municipal youth workers and build a strong local and national network that can also cooperate successfully on the European level.

certificate

- implemented participatory budget, and participatory budget for youth
- an opportunity to be active in the Erasmus+ Programme (as an applicant, partner, or have shown support by writing a support letter)
- implemented Logbook methodology
- Established a public space with and for young people
- Employed additional people to work in the department for young people
- Increased awareness about the impact and power of the youth sector

What are some good practices in Slovenia we can learn from you in working with municipal youth workers?



In 2022, we started with individual support to six smaller municipalities for one year. Each got a mentor, who supported them in the processes needed to bring the awareness of youth work and cooperation with and for young people to a higher level. The results were promising, so we will start a new cycle next year.

Then we supported numerous study visits for municipal workers and decision-makers to other municipalities. Each time there was a different focus – for example, participation of young people in democratic processes, participatory budgeting, infrastructure for youth, implementing policies connected to the field of youth, etc.

We have developed a training course for municipal workers, educating them about the quality of youth work and its impact on communities. We had three editions so far and added the topic of advocacy to the last one, as it was expressed as a need by the municipal workers themselves. It is implemented annually.

Since 2019, we have hosted a national EGL conference once per year, where municipal workers can share good practices, their experiences from international study visits, and other activities that they took part in, we present relevant topics for that year. All these events

contribute significantly to their networking and lead in some cases to some form of further collaboration.



### What are some of the key tools and resources you use for quality development of youth work in the municipalities?

Our work with municipal workers is based on the European Charter on Local Youth Work. We always use it and promote it throughout our events. We also find the Changemakers kit very helpful and relevant, which was the case for municipal workers as well. We often work closely with the National Youth Council and the National network of youth centers MaMa, which have connections to different municipalities from a different perspective. We also always present a good practice example, which serves as inspiration, as we always try to bring someone they can relate to. These good practices help because they make what they hear more realistic.

### What activities have you had in Slovenia in youth work that involved municipal, or national cooperation?

Slovenia has 212 municipalities and based on its size, many are very small. Too often there is only one person responsible for the department for youth, and their position also has many other topics they need to work on.

The number one priority is to educate more people within their municipality on the importance and impact of youth work. Right after that, the priority is to work more hand-in-hand with young people, to establish a good and fruitful dialogue with them and mutual trust, to implement strategies for youth, and to work on infrastructure that young people need. Municipal workers also recognize the EGL national conference as a platform they would like to keep, as they find the sharing of experiences and networking valuable for their work.

You can also find this good practice [on our website](#), along with many other inspiring stories from across Europe.



**Elizabeta Lakosil**  
Program Officer at  
MOVIT, National Agency  
for Erasmus+, Youth and  
European Solidarity Corps in  
Slovenia

When not in the office, Elizabeta is dedicated to her family. She enjoys a life immersed in nature and all sorts of sports activities

they can get in the countryside. As a mother of four, there's never a dull moment. Her family lives on a small farm in central Slovenia, 30 km east of Ljubljana. Situated on a hilltop with a sunny outlook, they wake up to beautiful sunrises and enjoy being surrounded by nature. The family hosts a small bunch of animals on the farm and spends a lot of time outdoors, exploring the woods and playing in the fields.

Elizabeta loves reading and is delighted that her kids are also picking up the hobby. The family enjoys ice skating, being outdoors, and appreciating the peace, away from the noise and traffic of city life. During winter, the family can enjoy the best sledding slope, which stays frozen all season,

providing memorable moments of winter fun.

Elizabeta is with the Slovenian National Agency MOVIT since 2011. Her work activities focus on training, programs, events, and fairs. Two years ago, she began working on a project life-cycle in Volunteering and KA2 within Erasmus+ and ESC programs. She also works with training activities and is in charge of their NA's pool of trainers. Her favorite part of her job is connecting with people, whether directly or through training activities. She finds joy in supporting beneficiaries and witnessing the positive impact of the work, knowing they are changing lives for the better. This brings her happiness.

# Good practice aspects/themes of youth work

## Participation of young people in decision making

- [To make strategy, takes strategy](#)
- [Zugdidi Youth Council](#)
- [Debate model of civic education](#)
- [emPOWER YOUth: youth-led municipality strategy](#)
- [Certificate Youth Friendly Municipality](#)
- [Sociocracy: All voices matter!](#)
- [Building Communities brick by brick](#)
- [Involving locally studying but unregistered youth in university town of Tartu](#)
- [Het Groot Debat/The Big Debate](#)
- [Helsinki Youth Budget - Participatory Budgeting with Youth](#)
- [Youth Participatory Budgeting in Józsefváros - Budapest, District VIII.](#)
- [Youth Democracy Academy](#)
- [How Detached Youth Work Can Make a Difference: The Birzebuga Case Study](#)
- [Strategy childfriendly city](#)
- [Watch Out the Youth 2: Making the Local Youth program of the City of Pazin](#)
- [Deliberative committees](#)
- [Das geht! Dialog zwischen Jugend und Politik](#)
- [Empowering Brussels girls through identity development and shared leadership](#)

## Non-formal education/-learning

- [Building Communities brick by brick](#)
- [Let's meet in the square! - Budapest, District VIII.](#)
- [Youth Democracy Academy](#)
- [Youth Work/Ers Matter!](#)
- [Network of Youth Centres Ljubljana](#)
- [Watch Out the Youth 2: Making the Local Youth program of the City of Pazin](#)
- [Youth center - a place of transformation and safety for young people](#)
- [Das geht! Dialog zwischen Jugend und Politik](#)

## Active citizenship/activism

- [I giovani Contano](#)
- [Debate model of civic education](#)
- [emPOWER YOUth: youth-led municipality strategy](#)
- [Certificate Youth Friendly Municipality](#)
- [Building Communities brick by brick](#)
- [Het Groot Debat/The Big Debate](#)
- [Youth Participatory Budgeting in Józsefváros - Budapest, District VIII.](#)
- [Youth Democracy Academy](#)
- [Learn before you vote: how to organise a political debate marathon and watchdogging?](#)
- [How Detached Youth Work Can Make a Difference: The Birzebuga Case Study](#)
- [Strategy childfriendly city](#)
- [Youth Center Probishtip](#)
- [Deliberative committees](#)

## Youth work in urban areas

- [Building Communities brick by brick](#)
- [Development of boys in the suburb](#)
- [Network of Youth Centres Ljubljana](#)
- [How Detached Youth Work Can Make a Difference: The Birzebuga Case Study](#)
- [Youth center - a place of transformation and safety for young people](#)
- [Empowering Brussels girls through identity development and shared leadership](#)

## Participation of young people in activities (planning, preparing, carrying out, etc.)

- [I giovani Contano](#)
- [Debate model of civic education](#)
- [emPOWER YOUth: youth-led municipality strategy](#)
- [Het Groot Debat/The Big Debate](#)
- [Helsinki Youth Budget - Participatory Budgeting with Youth](#)
- [Youth Work/Ers Matter!](#)
- [Watch Out the Youth 2: Making the Local Youth program of the City of Pazin](#)
- [Youth center - a place of transformation and safety for young people](#)
- [Das geht! Dialog zwischen Jugend und Politik](#)

## Policymaking

- [Certificate Youth Friendly Municipality](#)
- [Building Communities brick by brick](#)
- [Network of Youth Centres Ljubljana](#)
- [Strategy childfriendly city](#)
- [Das geht! Dialog zwischen Jugend und Politik](#)

## Volunteering/voluntarism

- [Building Communities brick by brick](#)
- [Let's meet in the square! - Budapest, District VIII.](#)
- [Learn before you vote: how to organise a political debate marathon and watchdogging?](#)
- [Youth center - a place of transformation and safety for young people](#)
- [Empowering Brussels girls through identity development and shared leadership](#)

## Community work

- [Building Communities brick by brick](#)
- [Learn before you vote: how to organise a political debate marathon and watchdogging?](#)
- [How Detached Youth Work Can Make a Difference: The Birzebbuga Case Study](#)
- [Youth center - a place of transformation and safety for young people](#)

## Youth work in rural areas

- [Building Communities brick by brick](#)
- [Youth Center Probishtip](#)
- [I giovani Contano](#)

## Gender

- [Development of boys in the suburb](#)
- [Empowering Brussels girls through identity development and shared leadership](#)

## Safe/secure youth work environment

- [Sociocracy: All voices matter!](#)

## Human rights

- [Let's meet in the square! - Budapest, District VIII.](#)

## Segregation/integration

- [Development of boys in the suburb](#)

## Sports

- [Empowering Brussels girls through identity development and shared leadership](#)

## Inclusion

- [Sociocracy: All voices matter!](#)
- [Involving locally studying but unregistered youth in university town of Tartu](#)
- [Development of boys in the suburb](#)
- [Empowering Brussels girls through identity development and shared leadership](#)

## Research

- [emPOWER YOUth: youth-led municipality strategy](#)
- [Learn before you vote: how to organise a political debate marathon and watchdogging?](#)

## Youth information and counselling

- [Het Groot Debat/The Big Debate](#)
- [Youth center - a place of transformation and safety for young people](#)

## Recognition/validation of learning

- [Development of boys in the suburb](#)
- [Youth Work/Ers Matter!](#)

## Sustainable development

- [Building Communities brick by brick](#)

## Outdoor activities

- [Let's meet in the square! - Budapest, District VIII.](#)

## Diversity

- [Empowering Brussels girls through identity development and shared leadership](#)

## Lobbying/advocacy for youth work

- [Certificate Youth Friendly Municipality](#)
- [Strategy childfriendly city](#)

## Competence development of youth workers

- [Youth Democracy Academy](#)
- [Youth Work/Ers Matter!](#)

## Cross sectorial cooperation

- [Network of Youth Centres Ljubljana](#)
- [Youth Center Probishtip](#)

## Arts and culture

- [Youth center - a place of transformation and safety for young people](#)
- [Co-creation: Artistic Creation with Children and Young People](#)

## Digital youth work

- [Involving locally studying but unregistered youth in university town of Tartu](#)

## European/International cooperation/projects

- [Youth Participatory Budgeting in Józsefváros - Budapest, District VIII.](#)

## Employability

- [Empowering Brussels girls through identity development and shared leadership](#)

# Good practice categories

## A practice of processes and methods

- [To make strategy, takes strategy](#)
- [Zugdidi Youth Council](#)
- [Debate model of civic education](#)
- [emPOWER YOUth: youth-led municipality strategy](#)
- [Certificate Youth Friendly Municipality](#)
- [Building Communities brick by brick](#)
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- [Empowering Brussels girls through identity development and shared leadership](#)

## Concrete tool

- [I giovani Contano](#)
- [Sociocracy: All voices matter!](#)
- [Het Groot Debat/The Big Debate](#)
- [Youth Participatory Budgeting in Józsefváros – Budapest, District VIII.](#)
- [Youth Work/Ers Matter!](#)
- [Youth Center Probishtip](#)

## Editorial info

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