



Research project on participation and citizenship education and learning in European youth programmes (RAY PART)

CONCLUSIONS/OUTCOMES/RECOMMENDATIONS

from group discussions following the presentation of the interim findings of the RAY PART research project during the RAY PART Conference

Effective methods for participation and citizenship education and learning

Research findings show that using a variety of (non-formal learning) methods, providing for affective, interactive, experiential as well as cognitive learning, are effective for participation and citizenship education and learning. This includes discussions, role plays, artistic methods etc., but also inputs aimed at transfer of knowledge relevant for participation and citizenship.

At a more general level, reflection of what was experienced and learned during the project is considered to be an essential method contributing to the depth and sustainability of learning processes – it should be an integral element of any learning activity. In particular, reflection fosters an understanding of participation and of structures supporting or preventing it.

Overall, these findings were confirmed in the group discussions. Additionally, methods aimed at developing analytical skills – e.g., analysing power structures/relations in a learning setting/environment or assessing the reliability/quality of information are considered to be important.

Recommendation:

To use a mix of a variety of (non-formal learning) methods, providing for affective, interactive, experiential as well as cognitive learning, including periods of reflection as integral part of the methodology of European youth projects.

Methods using online communication in European youth projects

There is general agreement that methods using online communication can be very useful and effective in (European) youth projects but cannot replace face-to-face interactions. Furthermore, it can be difficult to involve young people with fewer opportunities in digital youth work formats.

Recommendation:

To further explore, how digital youth work formats can complement face-to-face interaction and actually create synergies between them, to develop respective methods and project designs, and to provide respective training opportunities for youth workers.



Project approaches and designs fostering participation and citizenship education and learning

The following elements of project approaches and designs are considered to be effective for participation and citizenship education and learning:

- Practicing participation and citizenship in the projects, either in real-life participation in civil society or democratic/political life or in simulations, which are as close as possible to current social and political topics and events (e.g., environmental issues and climate change, which are most urgent to be addressed); this approach would also foster a better understanding of participation and citizenship as such.
- Youth projects providing for real participation in democratic/political life, where policy makers actually discuss political issues with young people and actually incorporate the ideas and opinions of young people in their policy development.
- Youth projects providing for participation of participants in the project design, preparation, implementation and follow-up.
- Youth projects ensuring a follow-up in order to ensure the sustainability of their outcomes, in particular, this would be the case if participants develop their own projects to follow-up as part of the youth project they are participating in.
- Sufficient time for informal activities of participants, providing for something unplanned to happen.

Youth work competences for participation and citizenship education and learning

Recommendations:

- *to further elaborate youth work competences, which are important for fostering participation and citizenship education and learning;*
- *to provide opportunities for exchange of good practice of youth work aimed at participation and citizenship education and learning;*
- *to develop training opportunities focused on the promotion of participation and citizenship education and learning, including respective project designs, methodologies and (new/creative) methods, as well as their application/implementation and further development;*
- *to promote the concept that participation and citizenship education and learning is an integral element of youth work.*

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