

# PARTICIPATION ON



**Youth Participation  
Activities under  
KA154**



Co-funded by  
the European Union





## ABOUT THE PROJECT

The main aim of the project 'Participation On' is to raise awareness of youth participation in the communities where we work through a series of public debates in all countries with representatives of the non-governmental sector, local institutions including municipalities, and young people, including young people with fewer opportunities. The key input to public debates will bring video reportages prepared directly by teams of young people sharing their perspectives on youth participation. In the later stage of the project, the video reportages will be shared online to open up the debate on youth participation to a wider audience. Moreover, besides activities that will be organized at local level, the project will include one international activity with the aim to bring together young people and exchange perspectives and practices on youth participation.

Overall, the project 'Participation ON' is set to meet up following objectives:

1. To engage various stakeholders active in the community (representatives of local municipalities, youth organizations and various institutions, media, and young people themselves ) in the debate on the future active youth participation in the local communities of participating countries, at the international level;
2. To raise awareness of the public about the role of young people in the process of creating democratic and open society and the importance of active youth participation;

# WHAT IS YOUTH PARTICIPATION



According to the United Nations, there are 1.8 billion young people between the ages of 10 and 24 in the world, making up the largest youth population in history. This demographic is not just a statistic; it represents a vast reserve of potential, energy, and creativity that can drive positive change at the local level and beyond. However, to harness this potential, we must understand the impact of youth participation and the barriers they face.

Studies have shown that when young people actively engage in their communities, it leads to increased social cohesion, improved community well-being, and a sense of ownership and responsibility among them. Youth participation fosters a sense of belonging, instills leadership skills, and empowers individuals to take charge of their own lives. Moreover, it brings fresh perspectives, innovative solutions, and new ideas to the table, which are essential in addressing the complex challenges our communities face today.

As we delve deeper into the topic of youth participation in local communities, we will explore the myriad ways in which young people can make a difference, the obstacles they encounter, and the measures that can be taken to encourage their active involvement. Through a combination of research, personal stories, and collaborative efforts, we will aim to shed light on the path to creating inclusive and thriving local communities for the benefit of all.





# ROMANIA



# DO YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL HEARD?



Young people have indeed a problem of feeling like they are not heard. The only choice they have in making their voice louder is to group together under the umbrella of NGOs and Student Associations. Once they became a force that can't be ignored anymore by the politicians. They can make demands for certain things to be changed and/or improved.

Young people who are actively involved in politics, whether through youth organizations, student associations, or other forms of civic engagement, may feel more heard. Those who participate in protests or community initiatives may perceive a higher level of influence. The advent of social media and online platforms has provided Romanian youth with avenues to express their opinions and concerns. Social media can be a powerful tool for amplifying their voices and connecting with like-minded individuals. Satisfaction often hinges on whether the concerns of young people translate into concrete policy changes. If they see their issues being addressed by policymakers, they are more likely to feel heard and satisfied.



# DO YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL HEARD?



Challenges, such as unemployment, access to quality education, and economic prospects, can affect young people's overall satisfaction. If these challenges remain unaddressed, it can lead to frustration. It's important to note that young people in Romania, like in any society, have diverse opinions. Some may feel heard and satisfied, while others may feel marginalized or ignored. Socioeconomic background can also play a role. Youth from marginalized or underprivileged backgrounds may have different experiences compared to those from more privileged backgrounds.

It's important to keep in mind that public sentiment can change over time due to various factors, and the level of satisfaction among Romanian youth.




# DO YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL INVOLVED IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES?



Young people's experiences vary widely, so some may feel heard, while others might not. Factors like cultural background, social environment, and access to platforms for expression can influence how heard they feel. It's essential to foster environments where young people are encouraged to voice their thoughts and concerns to help them feel more heard. For the example in each university council, each faculty has to have a representant from each year. This rule is a good thing because they have the right to vote for their future in the domain of education. Sadly, most of them abstain from doing so to not be the target of the universiary teacher that they vote against.





## HOW DO YOUNG PEOPLE SEE THEMSELVES AND THEIR ROLE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES?

Young people in Romania are becoming more and more susceptible to youth work and getting involved in the activities that the local NGOs are creating. This is the result of great people's work that contributed for our city. These people went into school to raise the awareness about the possibilities that they have if they are getting involved in local/national/international projects. They became a great asset in organizing events. Furthermore, a lot of youth workers completed leadership trainings so they can coordinate different projects. Doing this, they felt like their involvement mattered for the city. Their sense of responsibility and their horizon for possibilities grew exponential. This is how our city ( Iași ) became one of the cities with the biggest local events in the Europe.

Young people's perceptions of themselves and their roles in their communities can vary widely based on their cultural background, socio-economic status, education, and personal experiences.



# WHAT ARE THE OBSTACLES OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION?



One obstacle for youth workers getting involved is the free time. Because the NGOs and student Associations rely so much on highschoolers and first year students, they have to find a good way to go around their school schedule. Currently, the education curriculum is becoming more and more useless. You are stuck in school without learning almost nothing by the end of the day, but you are forced to stay there. This time limitation is a hindrance for the one that have greater things they want to do and be apart of important projects.

The extent to which young people feel involved in the decision-making process varies widely depending on the cultural, social, and political context of their communities. In some places, young people are actively engaged in decision-making processes and have opportunities to participate in local governance, community projects, and policy discussions. They might be part of youth councils, community organizations, or school boards, providing input on issues that affect them directly.





# PORTUGAL



# DO YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL HEARD?



Young people in Portugal are increasingly feeling unheard and unseen by politicians and decision-makers. This is due to a number of factors, including a lack of communication platforms for young people to channel their opinions and contributions, and a rising number of youngsters who show little to no interest in civic and political participation.

One of the main challenges facing young people in Portugal is a lack of communication platforms to channel their opinions and contributions. While there are a number of youth organizations and NGOs that work to promote youth participation. These organizations often lack the resources and reach to reach all young people. Additionally, many young people feel that these organizations are not representative of their views and concerns.

EMPOWERING  
YOUTH



**Jubuk**



A 2022 study by the Portuguese Youth Council found that only 36% of young people felt that their voices were heard by politicians and decision-makers. The study also found that 60% of young people were not aware of any youth organizations or NGOs that worked to promote youth participation.

A 2021 study by the Portuguese Institute of Social Sciences found that only 45% of young people voted in the 2019 Portuguese parliamentary election. This is down from 54% in the 2015 election. The study also found that young people were more likely to be distrustful of political institutions and to feel that their voices did not matter than older generations.



# DO YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL INVOLVED IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES?

## Implications

The lack of communication platforms for young people to channel their opinions and contributions, as well as the rising number of youngsters who show little to no interest in civic and political participation have a number of implications for Portugal.

First, it means that the voices of young people are not being adequately represented in decision-making processes. This can lead to policies and programs that do not meet the needs of young people.

Second, it can lead to a decline in social and political engagement among young people. This can make it more difficult to address important social and political challenges, such as climate change and economic inequality.



## HOW DO YOUNG PEOPLE SEE THEMSELVES AND THEIR ROLE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES?

Young people in Portugal are increasingly demanding their rights and advocating for themselves. They are speaking up against discrimination and inequality, and they are working to create a more inclusive society. Usually, young portuguese tend to participate in various ways, like signing a petition, doing volunteer work, collaborating with an association, participating in a protest and funding a cause.

The Portuguese Youth Council has launched a campaign to promote the rights of young people in Portugal. The campaign is calling for the government to take action on issues such as access to education, employment, and housing.



Youth in Portugal are deeply concerned about the environment and climate change. They are taking action to reduce their own environmental impact and to pressure the government to take action on climate change. For example, the Portuguese youth organization Greve Climática Estudantil (Student Climate Strike) has organized regular protests to demand government action on climate change.

Mental health is another important issue for youth in Portugal. Many young people are struggling with mental health challenges, such as anxiety and depression. They are speaking out about the importance of mental health and advocating for better mental health services. For example, the Portuguese youth organization MindMatters Portugal has launched a campaign to raise awareness of mental health issues among young people. The campaign is also calling for the government to invest in mental health services for young people.



Young people in Portugal are committed to creating a more inclusive society. They are working to promote tolerance and understanding of all people, regardless of their race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. For example, the Portuguese youth organization Associação ILGA Portugal has launched a campaign to promote the rights of LGBTQ+ people. The campaign is calling for the government to take action to combat discrimination against LGBTQ+ people.

The Portuguese government has sought to respond to the participation of young people by developing structuring policies. For example, the government has launched a national youth strategy that outlines its priorities for supporting young people. The strategy includes a number of measures to promote youth participation, such as funding for youth organizations and training programs for young people.



# WHAT ARE THE OBSTACLES OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION?



The lack of communication platforms for young people to channel their opinions and contributions and the rising number of youngsters who show little to no interest in civic and political participation are serious challenges in Portugal. These challenges have a number of implications for the country, including a decline in the representation of young people's voices in decision-making processes and a decline in social and political engagement among young people.

Despite the government's efforts, there are still a number of challenges facing young people in Portugal. One challenge is that young people are often underrepresented in decision-making processes. Another challenge is that young people are facing increasing economic insecurity. This can make it difficult for them to participate in their communities and to make their voices heard.





Also, the inequality of social and economic opportunities tends to hinder youth participation. The lack of political literacy is also another obstacle to bring the decision-makers closer to young people. In current politics, the lack of trust between politicians and young people also hampers civic participation.

Youth in Portugal are passionate about making a difference in their communities. They are using their voices and their talents to advocate for the issues they care about. The Portuguese government should continue to support the participation of young people and to create an environment where young people feel empowered to make a difference.



# NORTH MACEDONIA



# DO YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL HEARD?



The majority of young people does not feel heard. There are many challenges for Youth participation in North Macedonia.

Youth participation can take many forms, such as voting, joining youth organizations, participating in protests, and engaging in volunteer work. The extent and effectiveness of youth participation in North Macedonia may vary and are influenced by factors like government policies, educational opportunities, and the engagement of youth themselves.

Youth participation is a vital aspect of any thriving democracy, allowing young individuals to voice their concerns, influence policies, and shape the future of their nation. In North Macedonia, as in many other countries, there are various challenges that can hinder the active involvement of young people in the political, social, and civic spheres. These challenges can manifest in a variety of ways, impacting the extent and effectiveness of youth participation in the country.

Limited Educational Opportunities:

One significant barrier to youth participation in North Macedonia is the limited access to quality education and civic education programs. A lack of proper education can hinder young people's understanding of their civic rights and responsibilities, making it more difficult for them to engage meaningfully in the political process.



# DO YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL INVOLVED IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES?

## Economic Challenges:

High youth unemployment rates and limited economic opportunities can dissuade young people from actively participating in political and civic activities. When struggling to secure basic necessities, the focus often shifts away from political engagement.

## Political Apathy:

There is a prevailing sense of political apathy among North Macedonia's youth population. They may feel disconnected from the political process, perceiving it as unresponsive to their needs and concerns. This apathy can result from a history of political turmoil, corruption, and a perceived lack of change.

## Limited Access to Information:

Adequate access to information and the ability to critically analyze it are crucial for effective participation. Young people may face challenges in accessing unbiased and comprehensive news sources, which can hinder their ability to make informed decisions and engage in meaningful discussions.

## Cultural and Societal Norms:

Cultural and societal norms can play a significant role in discouraging youth participation, particularly for young women. Gender stereotypes and traditional expectations may discourage young women from taking an active role in politics and public life.



## HOW DO YOUNG PEOPLE SEE THEMSELVES AND THEIR ROLE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES?

### Barriers to Political Representation:

Despite the potential and willingness of young people to participate in politics, they may face barriers when seeking political office. Age restrictions, lack of support from political parties, and a competitive political landscape can make it difficult for young candidates to enter the political arena.

Addressing these challenges and promoting youth participation in North Macedonia requires a concerted effort from government, civil society, and educational institutions. By providing better educational opportunities, creating youth-friendly policies, and fostering an environment of inclusivity and trust, North Macedonia can empower its youth to become active and engaged citizens, contributing to the nation's progress and development.

The NGO “Kraft Konekt Dubica” organized a comprehensive discussion took place during the meeting on how to reduce the gap in communication between young people and local institutions. The goal was to create a mechanism for cooperation and improve youth organization by integrating young people into the decision-making processes at the local level.



The organization, which operates in a rural environment, aims to provide young people with a space for creative and free expression and engage them to take on activities that will contribute to a change in the current state in which they are operating. However, it was noted that there is a problem of YOUTH PASSIVITY in the municipality of Chucher Sandevo, which is explained by several factors.

One of the main factors is the lack of transparency in local authorities and the absence of consultative processes. Additionally, the lack of youth workers and a youth council in the municipality creates another source of passivity.



# CZECH REPUBLIC





# DO YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL HEARD?



- Many young people feel that their voice is not being heard enough, especially in situations where they are trying to express their opinion or influence change in society. Some reasons may include limited access to power structures, or feeling that older generations are not taking seriously their perspective and experience.
- However, recent years show that thanks to social media and digital platforms, young people have more opportunities to convey their thoughts and opinions to a wider public. Youth activism and engagement is becoming an increasingly important tool for promoting social and political reforms.
- Even so, it is important for older generations to pay attention to the voices of the youngs and provide opportunities for them to share their perspectives and experiences. In this way, it can be ensured that the voice of young people is taken seriously and taken into account in shaping the future of society.
- Obviously, it depends on the exact age of the person, social status, meaning of life, people he is surrounded by and much more.
- Many youngsters feel frustrated by the situation and thus don't care about the participation.





# DO YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL INVOLVED IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES?

- Some young people may feel that they are not adequately represented in decision-making processes, especially in formal political structures.
- Many young Czechs engage in decision-making processes at the local level, such as participating in school councils, community organizations, and youth councils. In these settings, they have a more direct influence on issues that affect them.
- While progress can be seen in some areas, there are still challenges that young people face in participating in decision-making processes. Some of these challenges may include the under-representation of young people in government structures, a lack of funding to support their participation, or a lack of appropriate forums to allow young people to voice their views and concerns.
- Czech young people feel that engaging them to important decisions can contribute to creating a future that reflects their needs, wishes and perspectives.
- There is a generation gap between the decision makers, the decision makers often do decisions in favor of elderly people and doesn't think about future of current young generations.



## HOW DO YOUNG PEOPLE SEE THEMSELVES AND THEIR ROLE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES?

- Many young Czechs see themselves as active citizens who have a responsibility to contribute to their communities and society. They may participate in volunteer activities, community projects, engage in strikes for social and environmental reasons.
- Czech youth often consider themselves as Europeans, and they value their country's membership in the European Union.
- Many Czech young people aspire to higher education and successful careers. They see education as a means to achieve personal goals and contribute to society by acquiring knowledge and skills.



# WHAT ARE THE OBSTACLES OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION?

- In general, the biggest obstacle in youth participation in society and community decision-making, is the the fact that we are young, lacking the very needed experience and knowledge.
- Disillusionment with Politics, many young people may feel disillusioned with traditional politics due to perceived corruption, lack of transparency, and inefficiency, that leads to low youth representation in elections, also the political fractions are strongly biased towards the elderly people and tend to make decisions to apease this particular group on behalf of youth and their future.





**The answers addressed by Martin, student of law at Charles University in Prague**

Q. Do you feel like being heard?

A. In my opinion young people have many possibilities to express their opinion and I only think some of them just don't think about politics and problems at their communities.

Q. Do you feel involved in decision-making processes?

A. I do, but currently i don't feel the need to change anything.

Q. How do you see yourself and your role in the communities and society?

A. I want to be well educated in order to bring the best for the society

Q. What are the obstacles to youth participation?

A. It is absolutely the inexperience of young people, also the lack of education for some and ignorance.



## The answers addressed by Denisa, 18 years old student of Grammar school

Q. Do you feel like being heard?

A. I think that a lot of people feel like they are not taken seriously by adults on most occasions. However, it depends on the main point that young generation is trying to say and demonstrate. Speaking about me personally, I don't think my thoughts are taking any seriously, but many of my friends would deserve to be heard more because of their opinions.

Q. Do you feel involved in decision-making processes?

A. Sometimes it is more difficult to break into, but in some cases it was a chance for me to be involved and participated in the final decision.

Q. How do you see yourself and your role in the communities and society?

A. I would say most of us feel pressure coming from society, because it is hard to know what you wanna do and be in the future. I don't consider myself as any important part of the society, but it is really individual.

Q. What are the obstacles to youth participation?

A. The basic obstacles may be not having that much knowledge and experience, like the older generation does, to be involved.



# GERMANY



# DO YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL HEARD?



**Young Voices:** In Germany, young people are increasingly utilizing various platforms and avenues to ensure their voices are heard. Youth forums, online platforms, and social media are becoming vital channels for expressing opinions, raising concerns, and demanding change. School councils and student associations are further tangible platforms for youth to voice their concerns and suggestions, leading to change within the educational system.

**Institutional Engagement:** Local governments and municipalities in Germany have shown commitment to youth participation through initiatives like youth advisory committees and community engagement programs. In addition, educational institutions, from schools to universities, are fostering an environment that encourages dialogue between students and educators. This nurturing of student-teacher relationships encourages young voices to be heard.

**Challenges:** Despite these positive developments, several challenges persist. Many young people still face limited access to decision-makers at the national and regional levels, often finding themselves on the periphery of the political sphere. There remains a lack of awareness among youth about the available platforms for participation. Furthermore, adult skepticism towards the credibility and value of youth input can be a significant hurdle.





# DO YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL INVOLVED IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES?

**Participatory Processes:** Youth involvement in decision-making processes can be witnessed in Germany through numerous avenues. Young individuals actively participate in local community projects, advocacy campaigns, and initiatives. They find representation in school boards and university committees, giving them a direct role in educational policies. Moreover, the proliferation of youth-led initiatives and campaigns across various social and political issues demonstrates their enthusiasm and involvement.

**Barriers to Participation:** Despite these encouraging signs, there are significant barriers to participation at the national and regional levels. Youth representation in the higher echelons of government and politics remains limited. Bureaucratic hurdles, complex legislative structures, and political apathy among youth can hinder their effective involvement in decision-making processes. Furthermore, the influence of young people in economic and business decisions is often minimal.



# HOW DO YOUNG PEOPLE SEE THEMSELVES AND THEIR ROLE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES?

**Youth Identity:** In Germany, young people are actively shaping their identity as dynamic participants in the society and communities. They engage in activism, advocacy, and volunteerism to bring about positive change. Many young individuals are at the forefront of cultural and social initiatives, which not only showcase their creativity but also instill a sense of responsibility in community development.

**Community Perception:** The perception of young people by the wider community plays a significant role in their self-identity and roles. While there are numerous supportive and inclusive adults who value youth contributions, there are also stereotypes and biases that can be challenging to overcome. The presence of role models and mentorship opportunities can significantly influence how young individuals see themselves in society.

**Challenges:** Balancing educational commitments with participation in community and societal affairs can be a challenge. Peer pressure and the desire to conform to social norms sometimes divert young people from active engagement. Age-related biases can also hinder their full participation.

# WHAT ARE THE OBSTACLES OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION?



**Structural Barriers:** Germany faces structural barriers to youth participation, including limited access to resources and funding for youth-led initiatives. The formal educational system can sometimes inadvertently constrain students, leaving little room for extracurricular or community involvement. Additionally, there is an ongoing issue of political apathy among young people, which can result in a lack of motivation to participate in the democratic process.

**Societal Challenges:** Age-related stereotypes and biases persist in German society, which can hinder the effective participation of young people. Limited understanding of youth perspectives and their unique needs also poses challenges. Socioeconomic disparities can further exacerbate the difficulties young people face in participating actively in their communities and society.

**Recommendations:** To address these obstacles, there is a need for enhanced educational support that allows students to balance their academic commitments with community engagement. Germany can benefit from fostering diverse and inclusive representation across various sectors, ensuring that young voices are present at the decision-making table. Advocacy for youth-friendly policies and initiatives should be a priority, aiming to create an environment that encourages and supports youth participation.





# TURKEY



# DO YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL HEARD?



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# DO YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL INVOLVED IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES?



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# WHAT ARE THE OBSTACLES OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION?



## Project Name

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## Project Name

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# Participation ON

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