

The Charter Workshop

During our workshop discussions we came to many conclusions. Some of them were theoretical others were practical. We concluded that the most effective way to participate is in groups of people who share the same interests. It must also be remembered that different countries have evolved differently (politically, historically, socially, economically...), creating a situation in which there isn't just one general solution for everyone. We all agreed that organized youth structures are the way to encourage youth participation, but there are different examples in different countries. Some local youth councils in Europe are formed by young people who are interested in local development, others have a representative system where the youth council is formed through youth organizations.

Why is it important to participate? What motivates young people to participate?

There are several reasons why young people are motivated to participate in social life. Some of them can be found in the individual person, others in society. We all agree that one of the most important things to encourage participation is to be listened to and to feel that it is possible to change things. Motivation is very important so the authorities must support youth ideas and initiatives so that young people will feel they can succeed. They will then continue fighting for what they see as a better future and, eventually, a better world.

Here is a list of reasons and motivations to encourage young people to participate:

- an important part of "growing up"
- fun
- to change local/regional/national/international policies at different levels
- to develop personal skills
- to have more and better leisure facilities for young people
- to fight for their rights
- to learn
- to find it easier to find a job /part of "growing up"/
- to live in peace
- to consider the interests of all young people who live in towns, not only individuals
- to create active possibilities for young people to participate in cultural events
- to find solutions to everyday problems
- to be able to express oneself and to change things
- to meet people and share ideas and opinions

- to give one's opinion and to listen to others
- to make people aware of existing problems and dangers
- to give feedback to the authorities in order to improve things
- we see that our governments are ruled by elderly people and we think they should consider the opinions of young people
- to help others (altruism and kindness)
- to fight for signs of local identity

YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN GIVE YOUR OWN OPINION... JUST DO IT!

IF YOU DON'T LIKE THINGS AS THEY ARE, YOU CAN CHANGE THEM

How To Participate?

After our discussions we listed the different ways we could participate. We considered passive/active participation, but thought that it wasn't very positive to call it 'passive participation' so we decided to change it to 'consumer participation' and 'creative participation'.

Consumer participation is taking part in actions and activities that other people had previously organized or suggested. (ex. going to a cultural event or music concert...)

Creative participation is to organize and realize projects (either from our own ideas or from other people's) (ex. organizing a cultural event or music concert...)

Sometimes, young people need to express themselves in different ways that might not be legal because certain countries and laws might not be adapted to their needs. We called this Illegal participation.

Here is our list of the different ways we can participate:

- Creating new organizations or participating in existing ones
 - Students organizations
 - Religious organizations
 - Political organizations
 - Non-governmental organizations
 - Youth clubs
 - Sports organizations
 - Cultural organizations
 - Social organizations
 - Informal organizations
- Voting in elections

- Taking part in demonstrations or protests
- Taking part in activities organized by others
- Organizing activities (cultural, social, sportive, musical...)
- Helping others
- Expressing ourselves in different ways (graffiti, music, art...)
- Taking part in public debates
- International projects/activities

What are the governments' commitments towards young people?

The governments are responsible for the welfare of young people, so they must look after us. We consider that they should know what they have to do in order to increase our participation, but sometimes it seems they don't. That's why we have written some recommendations in order to help them.

- Create youth information centers
- Have youth workers who can encourage participation
- Listen actively to what young people have to say
- Ask young people what they want (do not just wait for them to ask)
- Support (money and resources) youth initiatives (a special budget for youth activities)
- Take young people seriously
- Create a good system of peer-education
- Give material rewards for participation (cinema tickets, price reductions, small presents...)
- Give young people the possibility to speak to important people about their problems, not just to youth workers
- Create training courses to help young people develop their skills
- Create a friendly atmosphere and good relationships
- Promote international activities
- Create a diploma of participation (an official document, with official recognition)
- Have a database to inform young people of all organized activities
- Create a special law for young people and youth participation
- Facilitate the creation of youth organizations and youth councils
- Open doors and shorten distances between young people and governments
- Make political systems more transparent and easier to understand

What are the commitments of young people?

- To be critical of things, and not just to accept everything as it is
- To know how systems works (to facilitate change)
- To be active and well informed
- To think globally but to act locally
- To open their eyes
- To form groups and organize themselves in order to be stronger
- To care about the problems of others
- To make their work and thoughts visible to society (press, TV...)
- To show governments that they are necessary for them and that eventually they will depend on them
- To be active and influence governments at all times
- To provide a permanent participation
- To have young people in the government and institutions
- To give a good image of young people