



Høgskolen
i Innlandet



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Youth's participation in society – examples of initiatives implemented to improve participation



WEXFO
WORLD
EXPRESSION
FORUM

Skriftserien 26 - 2022



østlandsforskning
Eastern Norway Research Institute

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ISBN elektronisk versjon: 978-82-8380-381-5

ISSN trykt/elektronisk versjon: 2535-5678

Oppdragsgiver: World Expression Forum (WEXFO)
gjennom prosjektet Youth's Participation in Society
(YPiS) Prosjektleder: Line Marie Tholstrup

Emneord: demokrati, ytringsfrihet, medborgerskap,
ungdom, wexfo

Dato: Oktober 2022

PREFACE

This report explores the current state of knowledge regarding young people’s participation in society, while also exploring implemented initiatives aimed at improving youth participation in both Norway and other countries.

Eastern Norway Research Institute (ENRI) has been commissioned by The Word Expression Forum (WEXFO) to develop this report as a part of their project “Youth’s Participation in Society” (YPiS).

This report presents a theoretical framework for understanding youth participation, provides examples of challenges and opportunities experienced by young people in connection to their participation in society, and presents examples of projects aimed at facilitating youth participation in different countries across the globe. The report also includes a discussion on how Norwegian and international projects address the opportunities and challenges facing young people seeking to make use of their right to express themselves and participate in society.

Work on this report commenced in March 2022 and was completed in October 2022. On behalf of the Eastern Norway Research Institute, the project leader and the project team would like to thank WEXFO for the assignment and the fruitful collaboration.

Lillehammer, October 21 2022

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1 INTRODUCTION

The right to freedom of expression and participation in society for children and youth is anchored in various international agreements. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948 affirms, in Article 19, everyone's right to freedom of opinion and expression (United Nations, 1948). Articles 12 and 13 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, furthermore, state that children have the right to express their opinion in every matter that concerns them, and that the child's opinions must be given weight. The child shall have the right to freedom of expression, whether it occurs orally, in writing or print, in artistic form, or through any form of expression the child may choose (Ministry of Children and Families, 2003). The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the UN in 1989 and ratified by Norway in 1991.

There are, however, several different contextual conditions that impact whether children and youth have a real opportunity to participate in and influence society.

World Expression Forum (WEXFO) works explicitly with strengthening the freedom of expression and organizes an annual conference in Lillehammer, Norway, for the purpose of both using and discussing the right to express oneself. WEXFO also leads the project Youth's Participation in Society (YPiS), funded by Sparebankstiftelsen DNB, which *“aims to increase young people's participation in democracy through the sharing of knowledge about challenges and successful measures that can be taken”*. WEXFO wants to *“inspire to start new projects and share best practices, and help to ensure that action is taken”* (World Expression Forum, 2022).

In June 2020, the two organizations PEN Norway and the Fritt Ord Foundation announced a plan to establish a youth council, whose purpose would be to discuss, describe, and assess trends, opportunities, and challenges that foster and limit young people's and young adults' freedom of expression. Young people between the ages of 16 and 26 years were invited to apply to join the council and a total of 16 young people were selected to join the council titled: "The youth Council for Freedom of expression". Members of the council were selected to ensure broad representation in regard to gender, age, functional ability, geography, background, and experience. The council's work resulted in the publication of the report: «What is the status of freedom of expression for youths and young adults in Norway?» published in April 2021 (The Freedom of Expression Youth Council, 2021). In addition to describing the current state of the freedom of expression for youth and young people in Norway, the report also contained suggestions for actions and initiatives that can help young people use their voices and engage in the public debate.

Eastern Norway Research Institute has been commissioned by WEXFO to explore the current state of knowledge regarding young people's participation in society, as well as what measures have been implemented or have been planned to improve youth participation in Norway and other countries. We have used the report from The Freedom of Expression Youth Council as a starting point for our research. The challenges and proposed policy recommendations and actions described in the report have, to some extent, guided us when we have been searching for relevant projects to present in this report. A determining factor for us has been mapping projects that address challenges described by the youth council, as well as other projects that focus on youth participation in a broader sense.

1.1 Purpose and research questions

The purpose of the report is to explore the current state of knowledge regarding young people's participation in society, as well as what measures have been implemented or have been planned to improve youth participation in Norway and other countries.

The report will answer the following three questions:

1. What challenges and opportunities do young people experience in connection to their participation in society?
2. What initiatives have been implemented or planned to facilitate youth participation in Norway and in other parts of the world?
3. How do Norwegian and international projects address challenges and opportunities met by young people in connection with their participation in society?

1.2. Report structure – guide to the reader

In addition to this introduction, the report consists of six chapters (2-7).

First we present a theoretical framework where we discuss different perspectives on youth participation, and how to understand participation as a concept that has relevance in multiple contexts (chapter 2).

In chapter 3 we outline the method used to search for relevant literature and to seek out relevant projects to present in this report.

In chapter 4 we present the challenges and opportunities for youth participation according to The Freedom of Expression Youth Council. These perspectives are supplemented with other relevant research perspectives.

This leads us to chapter 5 where we present a large number of initiatives that work to improve youth participation.

In chapter 6 we address commonalities and interesting variations between the presented projects.

Finally, we present a summary, a conclusion and our suggestions for further research in chapter 7.

2 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON YOUTH PARTICIPATION

In this section, we focus on the concept of *'participation'*. Both how the concept is used and understood in this report, but also how the concept is developing.

2.1 Participation: A multidimensional concept

Youth participation can be defined as *"a process of involving young people in the institutions and decisions that affect their lives. It includes initiatives that emphasize educational reform, juvenile justice, environmental quality, and other issues; that involve populations distinguished by class, gender, and other characteristics; and that operate in rural areas, small towns, suburbs, and neighbourhoods of large cities in developing areas and industrial nations worldwide"* (Checkoway and Gutierrez, 2006:2).

Participation is multidimensional, and the process of sharing decisions can refer to both means and outcomes. As a means, participation can be seen as a tool to achieve better results. As an outcome, participation can be considered a state of increased and long-lasting engagement. Democratic processes are bound to citizen participation and dialogue.

Youth and children participation is considered a vital component of democratic processes for many reasons. First, participation fosters a sense of citizenship for young people by making decision-making processes more transparent to them. Secondly, it can be empowering, as it enhances the skills and competencies of young people who can be agents of social change and innovative thinking (Checkoway, 2011, Cammaerts et al., 2013).

Children and young people, however, have for a long time been excluded from citizen participation. In this regard, earlier studies focusing on diverse forms of citizen involvement and participation in public affairs, have gradually been reconsidered to assess their applicability to young people and children (Head, 2011). One of the most influential texts in this regard has been Roger Hart's *"Children's Participation: from Tokenism to Citizenship"* (1992). In this work, Hart introduces his ladder of youth participation which draws upon the previously developed ladder of citizen participation (Arnstein, 1969). The ladder represents a model for categorizing different degrees of children and youth participation based on the power they exercise (Checkoway & Gutierrez, 2006).

In his work, Hart defines participation as: «*the process of sharing decisions which affect one's life and the life of the community in which one lives. It is the means by which a democracy is built, and it is a standard against which democracies should be measured. Participation is the fundamental right of citizenship*» (Hart, 1992:5)

Hart's ladder of participation identifies eight levels of children's participation in projects. The further up the ladder, the higher the degree of participation. The three lower rungs of the ladder are regarded as inauthentic participation of children and youth, described as manipulation, decoration, and tokenism. The remaining five rungs on the ladder describe forms of participation where youth are assigned specific roles and consulted about projects devised by others; through adult-initiated shared discussion and decision-making; and ultimately children/youth-initiated shared discussion and decision-making (see figure 1) (Hart, 1992; Head, 2011).

The full ladder reads as follows:

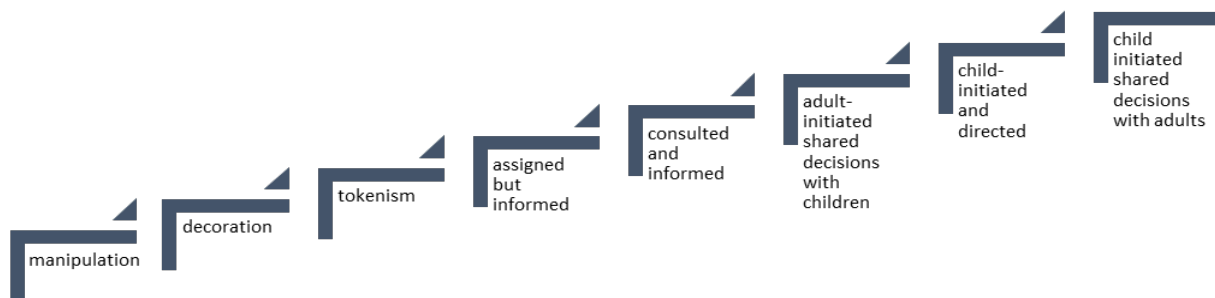


Figure 1 Ladder of child/youth participation, based on Hart (1992)

Here, it is important to mention that the ladder was not created to suggest that every project involving youth should be at the top rung of the ladder, but rather, that we should aim to get out of the lower rungs of non-participation and develop ways of genuinely engaging children and young people. Checkoway and Gutierrez also specify that youth participation occurs both when young people plan initiatives of their own choosing, when adults involve young people in their agencies or when projects are created in intergenerational partnerships. It is crucial in this understanding of youth participation that it does not need to be led by young people.

“(...) the issue is not whether the effort is youth-led or adult-led, or intergenerational, but rather whether young people have actual effect”

(Checkoway and Gutierrez, 2006:2)

Hart's (1992) model can be a helpful tool to assist those who want to assess and reflect on how they involve children and youth in the design and delivery of projects. Hart's model has, however, been criticized for being hierarchical and simplistic, overlooking the complexity of children's and youths's participation. Various studies underline that participation can be

affected by the interplay between socioeconomic status, age, and the mutual respect, trust, and encouragement between young people and their families, teachers, and other adults (Gal, 2017, Kellet, 2009). In this sense, a circular model is suggested as an alternative way of thinking of the «ladder» metaphor, arguing that a circular way of thinking about participation helps us move away from the assumption that there is an ideal level of youth participation (Kellet, 2009).

Both the hierarchical and the circular models of participation are widely used in the evaluation of youth participation today, and practitioners and researchers tend to employ the methods that best fit the scope and goals of their projects.

2.2 Participation in context

As both Checkoway (2011) and Cammaerts et al. (2013) have pointed out, participation fosters a sense of citizenship for young people. In the following, we pursue this perspective and focus on the understanding of participation as one dimension of citizenship. This is based on a generalized model of citizenship (figure 2) aiming to capture multiple perspectives that include citizenship as a legal, political, social, and cultural concept, without privileging any of the perspectives over the others. While this report focuses on participation, the other dimensions are still relevant as they shape and impact the content and form of participation. Participation understood in this broad context of a generalized model of citizenship allows this report to engage with participation across and within different contexts whether local, national, or even transnational.

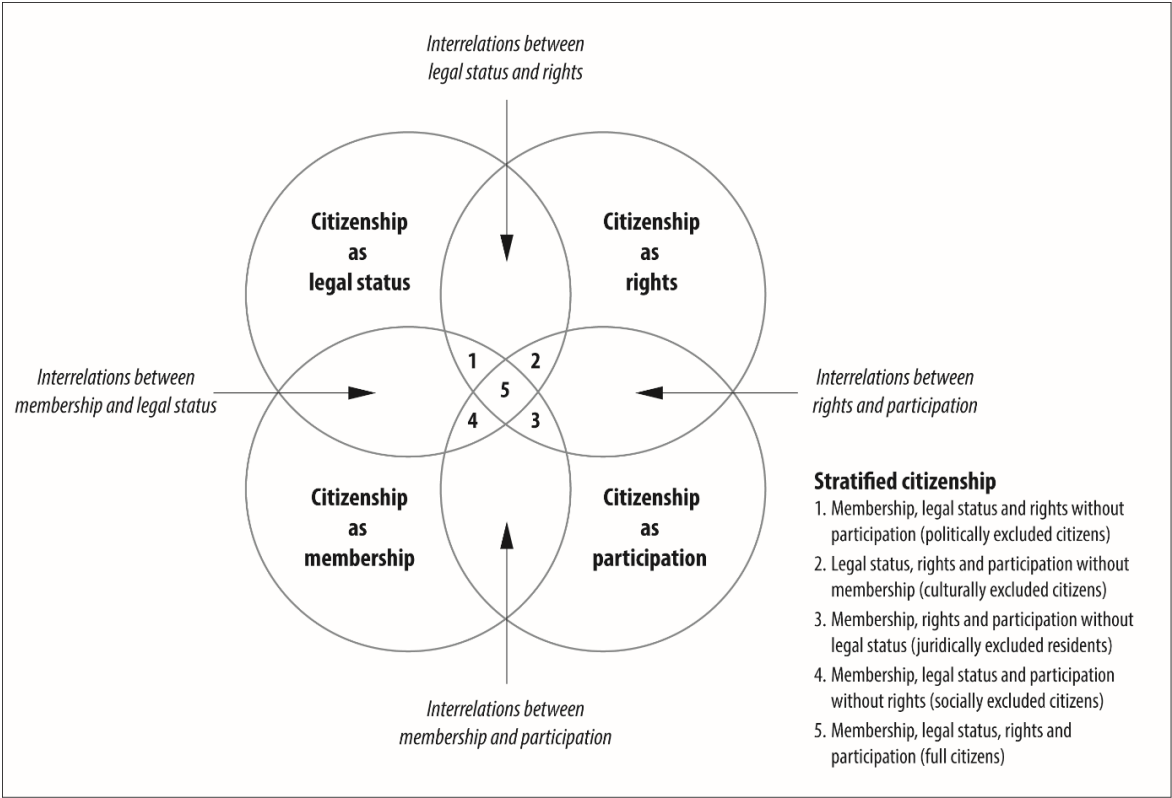


Figure 2 The Generalized Citizenship Model (Stokke, 2017)

Emphasizing participation underlines that citizenship is a matter of taking an active part in the community of citizens, and the active function of participation is drawing people out of their private sphere and into an active public life. Participation in this sense encompasses both taking part in the community and in the governance of public affairs.

Participation in governance has become part of mainstream theory and practice within both neoliberal governance in general and in interventionist development programs in the Global South. Participation in local democracy has, however, also received increased attention in the last few years through initiatives such as participatory budgeting for city and municipal governments in Brazil (Legard, 2017).

Important theories about participation, like the ladder of participation, have been developed in a primarily western context of liberal democracies. But if we keep in mind the variations of citizenship illustrated in the generalized model, and view any example of participation in the context of the actual type of citizenship on which participation is based, we might alleviate some of this bias and provide a theoretical understanding that invites a broader analysis

During our search and review of projects, we approach participation as both multidimensional and contextual. That is, we aim to capture a variety of engagements geared towards the participation of young people both nationally and internationally. In the subsequent chapter, we describe how we conducted this study.

3 METHOD

This project has the broad task of identifying and mapping projects and initiatives that aim to improve young people's participation in society in both Norway and other countries. The first stage of the project was used to narrow the focus down to a manageable size by finding a relevant starting point for our research, and by developing criterias for the selection of relevant projects and initiatives to present.

We used the report "What is the status of freedom of expression for youths and young adults in Norway" (The Freedom of Expression Youth Council, 2021) as a starting point to gather perspectives on the challenges and opportunities experienced by young people in connection to their participation in society. Using this as a point of departure, we conducted a systemic search on the Norwegian search portal Oria, to identify literature describing challenges and opportunities in youth participation.

As the main purpose of the project was to identify and describe relevant projects and programs to exemplify how youth participation is facilitated in Norway and other parts of the world, we developed a set of inclusion and exclusion criteria for potential projects. These criteria (listed below) were developed in close cooperation with WEXFO to ensure that included projects were relevant for the purpose of the report:

- Projects and initiatives must be with and for young people aged 13 to 26.
- Projects and initiatives must be either in the concrete planning phase, ongoing, or have been completed within the last 5 years.
- Objectives, target groups, and results must be clearly stated in the available information about the project.

We aimed to gather a broad set of cases representing variation in terms of geographical location, methods applied, and the subject of focus.

The next step in finding relevant projects and initiatives was to identify key terms and concepts, as well as the synonyms that are often used to describe young people's engagement in participatory processes, and conduct a systemic search in Google Scholar and Scopus. The following search terms were employed in different combinations in the search for relevant projects:

- Youth/teen/young/adolescence/juvenile/child/children/kid/underage/new generation/next generation/coming generation

and

- Participant/involvement/engagement/democracy/democratic, and project/pilot.

This systemic search mainly worked as a starting point for further research by pointing to relevant organizations and foundations working with these issues, rather than yielding a final set of projects directly. This systemic search was thus followed by a search for projects and programs using the snowball method. We used identified projects, reports, and websites of funding schemes/grants to point us toward new, potentially relevant projects. As a supplement to these searches, we also utilized WEXFO's network, encouraging them to send us their suggestion for potentially relevant projects they were familiar with (see attachment).

Based on the project group's language skills, we could look into projects described in Norwegian, Danish, Swedish, English, German, and Turkish.

It has been central to our search to be able to explore material, read different sources, and pursue new leads (Jesson et al., 2011). The aim has not been to carry out comprehensive searches to identify all potentially relevant publications but to conduct an open, qualitative review.

It has also been important to present a wide selection of projects and programs which in different ways facilitate young people's active participation in society. The collection is not exhaustive, but has been prepared based on a desire to present a breadth of project types with a certain geographical spread. To highlight some of these differences, the identified projects and programs were categorized into one of the following categories based on their stated purpose and aim:

- School-based projects and programs
- Local politics or local community focused projects and programs
- Tools for participation
- Empowerment, practice, and leadership

Since the overview of initiatives cannot be said to be representative of all initiatives that exist globally, the collection of examples should not be used to uncover shortcomings in the work with youth participation. The report should instead be used as a contribution to gain insight into how you can work with youth participation in many different organizational and geographical contexts, and get inspired by the great variety in how youth participation can be facilitated by both the young people themselves and by adults.

4 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE IN SOCIETY

The rights of children and young people in connection to freedom of expression, influence in matters that concern them, and in society, in general, are formalized in both The Convention on Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Despite the formalized status of their rights, many children and young people find it difficult to participate in society. There are several reasons for that, as we will get into in this chapter.

Here, we will take a closer look at the reasons The Freedom of Expression Youth Council highlights in its 2021 report. While supplementing their findings with perspectives from international research on youth participation in broader terms, focusing on both challenges and opportunities for young people to participate in society.

This chapter aims to answer the first research question of this report: *What challenges and opportunities do young people experience in connection with their participation in society?*

4.1 The Freedom of Expression Youth Council

The Freedom of Expression Youth Council (2021) has in their work described challenges that restrict the freedom of expression for young people and young adults and have purposed measures that can make it easier for them to make their voices heard.

The council's work is based on discussions of the following questions:

- What opportunities do youths and young adults have to influence debates and discussion in public?
- What are the challenges that youths and young adults face?
- Who gets heard?
- Who is subject to techniques of suppression? How widespread are these techniques and how do they affect the scope that youth and young adults have to express themselves?
- Who is the subject to hate speech? How widespread is it and how does it affect youths and young adults?
- What would it take to bolster the participation of youths and young adults in the public debate?
- What should the rules of play for public debate be?

(The Freedom of Expression Youth Council, 2021)

The youth council's discussions have resulted in the description of ten challenges that face youth and young adults and that limit this group's participation in discussions and public debates:

1. Too high threshold for self-expression

Using one's voice in public can be perceived as new and unfamiliar for many young people. One fears that one does not have the knowledge or experience to participate, and may experience being rejected due to young age. These expectations make the threshold for young people to participate in public debates very high.

2. Lack of skills

Young people feel that they lack both knowledge and training in debate techniques and in writing contributions to newspapers. An exception is young people who participate in youth politics for example. They gain both knowledge and training in debate and writing techniques, which reinforce the differences between various groups of young people. Some have skills that make it easier to express themselves in public arenas while others do not.

3. Predictable patterns and structural challenges

The youth council report that minorities to a lesser extent express themselves in the public debate due to both discrimination and limited access to institutions.

4. Harassment and hate speech deter young people from debating

Harassment and hate speech frighten young people from participating in public debates. Young people increasingly experience being ridiculed or criticized not only because of their opinions but because of who they are, their age, gender, disabilities, sexual orientation and/or ethnicity.

5. What is posted online remains there "forever"

The knowledge that a post on social media or a contribution to a newspaper is available "forever" deter young people from expressing their opinions. They experience that there is little room for changing opinions or making mistakes and they fear that this can have negative consequences for their reputation later on, for example when they have finished their education and start looking for a job.

6. Too little scope for healthy debate

Young people feel that there is not enough time for discussion and debates in their classrooms. They experience that it is challenging to express their opinions in a class where they know the other students as they worry that they might get stigmatized if their opinion diverges from the opinion of the majority. They, therefore, consider it extremely important that the teacher succeeds in creating a safe environment around the debate, which requires that the teacher has both the time and the tools to handle difficult conversations.

7. Concerns about statements being taken out of context

Young people fear that their statements and arguments can be taken out of context and consequently be misunderstood or used in the wrong way. They fear that their opinions can be shared by others on social media and that they will lose control of their own statements.

8. Lack of access to art and culture

It is experienced as problematic that youths and young adults do not see themselves represented in arts and therefore do not experience art as a way of expressing themselves. Art is experienced as accessible to only a very limited number of people, and they thus consider art as a tool that is largely unavailable to many groups in society.

9. Being portrayed as representative of a group

That an individual can be portrayed as a representative of an entire group is experienced as challenging. Often individuals belonging to a minority experience being perceived as representatives of an entire group. This leads to stereotyping and unwanted simplifications.

10. Negative cultures within organizations

Unhealthy organizational culture can be experienced as a challenge. In some organizations, it can be hard to express disagreement, and hierarchical structures within the organizations make it difficult to report unhealthy culture or harassment.

Based on the presented challenges, The Freedom of Expression Youth Council also presents several opportunities through the initiatives they recommend to mitigate the described challenges. The measures are systematized within the categories of school and education, art and culture in school, civil society, political and religious organizations, advice for media outlets, and advice for youths and young adults who want their voices to be heard.

School and education

Teachers should to a larger extent facilitate discussions in a safe classroom environment where all opinions are given respect and space. Students need to gain experience with accepting disagreement and it is of great importance that the students are taught to reflect critically on sensitive topics. Students should also be given training in writing contributions to debates, which could be published for example in student newspapers or other media channels.

Art and culture in school

There should be more focus on art and cultural expressions that young people experience to be relevant to them. Students should be introduced to a wide range of artistic and cultural expressions, including cultural expressions from indigenous peoples and minorities.

Civil society, political and religious organizations

Organizations should invite people with a broad variety of backgrounds to join their community. This will give more people access to arenas for exercising and learning debate techniques, and experiencing what it is like to have an organization to support them. Organizations should work consciously with their culture to ensure that there is room for and respect for divergent opinions. Furthermore, organizations should develop and make visible their internal channels and routines for following up on inappropriate behavior in the organization. This, it is believed, will make it easier for members to speak up about unhealthy organizational culture.

Advice for media outlets

Young and inexperienced debate contributors should be closely monitored in connection with participation in public discussions, both to provide support and to prepare the debater for the potential public response that might come from their contribution. Furthermore, a greater diversity of young people should be encouraged to participate in public debate. The media should furthermore continue to edit online comments and remove the ones that are purely provocative.

Advice for youths and young adults wanting their voices to be heard

It is important that in a debate one tries to understand the position of one's opponent, and in discussions focus on the topic of the discussion rather than the person. Furthermore, it is important that you fact-check your arguments and prepare well for debates. Young people should consider finding organizations that they share an interest with, to gain support and share a commitment to their cause.

4.2 Further perspectives on challenges and opportunities

Several of the points made by the Freedom of Expression Youth Council are also made in the research literature, although the literature also provides some new perspectives:

Challenges

In their study, Checkoway & Gutierrez (2006) confirm that age discrimination is common and frequently used as a strategy for the suppression of youth. Adults, might for example point out the age of young activists and advise them to go back to school and wait until they are older to join the political debate. Checkoway & Gutierrez (2006) also find that focus is often what young people's problems are, rather than focusing on the strength and assets they possess. There is a tendency that young people are portrayed in media as either problems or victims of society. This portrayal might impact the public's expectations of young people as well as young people's understanding of themselves as agents of change.

In this regard, it is also crucial to mention hierarchical structures in organizations that challenge young people's participation in society (Moura, 2020). These structures make it hard for young people to be heard and acknowledged for their insights. Furthermore, the hierarchical structures might prevent young people from capturing opportunities to use their voice and front their opinions both in the organization and in the public discourse.

Schools are also described as arenas that can shape how the youth learn and practice both their freedom of expression and participation in society. In some contexts, these arenas can fail to foster youth participation, as Jenkins argues:

“School culture has been shaped by older models of politics (ones which emphasize governmental structures rather than grassroots social movement) and culture (ones which stress traditional high culture rather than popular culture).(…) They seem progressively out of touch with a world where young people are finding their voice and fostering change through their meaningful

engagement with networked communications and their creative remixing of popular culture resources”

(Jenkins in Moura 2020;194-195)

Jenkins argues that a school that does not recognize the young people's arenas for inspiration and debate *“can be profoundly disempowering since young people are taught to feel guilty about strategies that are successful for them outside the classroom, to distrust their own judgement and devalue their own participation under the withering eyes of their teachers”* (Jenkins in Moura, 2020:195)

Opportunities

A main focus in the literature has been on how youth participation gives young people important experience and confidence in using their voice and organizing and mobilizing others (Jenkins in Moura, 2020). Checkoway & Gutierrez (2006) point out that there are few systematic studies of youth participation outcomes, but they argue that *“the research with other populations suggests that studies with youth will find positive effects on such measures as personal confidence, social connectedness, civic competencies, and leadership development”* (Checkoway & Gutierrez, 2006, p.2).

Active participation in online communities amplifies their individual voices and makes it easier to raise collective action (Jenkins in Moura, 2020). Online communities can therefore be an important arena for young people to hone their communication and networking skills. The question is, what are the conditions that allow young people to translate these skills, knowledge, and experiences from informal networks to assets that can be used in school, work, and elsewhere? Jenkins finds that an adult mentor can be important. The recognition and support of an adult can help young people get the confidence to use their voices (Jenkins in Moura, 2020).

5 FACILITATING YOUTH PARTICIPATION - INITIATIVES

Having presented insight into young people's right to participate in society, the challenges they face practicing this right, and the opportunities that have been identified to better facilitate participation, it is natural to turn to an exploration of our second research question: *What initiatives have been implemented or planned to facilitate youth participation in Norway and in other parts of the world?*

We identified a large number of projects that in various ways facilitate young people's active participation in society. In the following presentation of these projects, we have systematized our examples into a set of categories. This categorisation is not absolute, and several projects could fit in multiple categories. However, we have sought to bring order to the diverse collection of projects and organizations identified in this project. We have aimed to gather a broad set of cases both geographically, in terms of methods used, and in subjects. The goals, however, are common and constant. To create more youth participation and engagement in some sector of society.

The categories are:

School-based projects and programs

A common way to implement programs for youth is to approach them through school. Here we include projects that involve teaching and practicing participation methods in the school context. This includes programs implemented as part of the class curriculum, after-school programs, or other forms of programs for pupils or students.

Local politics or local community focused projects and programs

While the projects categorized into this group is not necessarily very different from the programs in the first group in terms of aims and scopes, the projects in this group are organized independently of the school context. These are projects that aim to get the youth involved in their local community through either politics or community engagement. Projects in this category aim to have the youth take part in political processes at the local level, such as in urban or community planning.

Tools for participation

The projects in this category are geared toward developing tools for increased youth participation. These tools can be both actual products or it can be packaged and structured processes or procedures. Several of these projects aim to leverage information technology or different modes of gamification to facilitate youth participation in some way.

Empowerment, practice, and leadership

The four categories we have used here are not mutually exclusive, as many of the projects categorized into the three categories described above also build youth empowerment. What makes this category different is a focus on empowerment, often of disadvantaged or marginalized youth groups. The use of practical activities beyond those of active learning, such as direct participation in research, or diverse forms of activism is also a feature of many of the cases presented in this category. They also often have a direct and explicit focus on developing a new generation of leaders, both in politics, civic life, and in business.

5.1 Teaching and practicing participation methods in the school context

Before presenting the initiatives in this category we should take a moment and consider the context for the Norwegian cases as most of the cases in this category are Norwegian. The core curriculum for the Norwegian school requires that the school facilitate education in three interdisciplinary topics:

- Health and life skills
- Democracy and citizenship
- Sustainable development

The topic “democracy and citizenship” have knowledge about the basic tenets, values, and rules of democracy, as well as diversity issues as specific educational objectives.

Furthermore, the topic aims to prepare students for participation in democratic processes and for understanding the relationship between democracy and human rights (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2022).

The school’s mandate is both to teach children and youth about democracy and to train the students to become active citizens with an awareness of their opportunities to participate in democratic processes. Moving from this general mandate to actual teaching this can be a challenge. Yet, teachers have the opportunity to get inspired by a great number of teaching programs developed by a large number of organizations that work with democratic processes, participation, freedom of expression, peace and conflict, etc.

Schools are generally a well-suited arena for interventions that seek to reach youth and develop the necessary knowledge, competencies, and capacities for participation: Because firstly, it is the main arena for the secondary socialization of children and youth. Secondly, it makes it easier to tailor projects or programs to the local community context and the relevant age group. Thirdly, when working as intended it is also a safe space for youth to learn through active participation.

In this section, we present five different programs developed for the Norwegian school system. Two projects “*It has never been easier to express oneself, but ...*” and “*What is freedom of expression*” are mainly focused on freedom of expression as a human right. While the project “*Human Rights and Democracy*” is about human rights more broadly. The project “*Active Citizenship*”, developed by the Nobel Peace Centre uses the stories of Nobel Prize winners to teach about citizenship. “*Can young people save the climate?*” focuses on

climate change and youth as agents of change. From Germany, we present two cases *“Infinite growth and its limits”* which has a dual focus on debate training and sustainable development. While the program *“Youth debated”* focuses mainly on teaching debate and communication skills. In Singapore, The *“Majulah Community”* run different programs affiliated with schools, including after-school programs. Their general focus is empowerment and youth leadership in community engagement. Similarly, the *“Youth in Action”* in Providence in the USA also runs after-school programs aimed at empowering students, particularly those from underserved communities. From Denmark, we present *“The Democracy Initiative”* from Aarhus Public Library. This is a broad initiative with a wide variety in activities aiming to engage citizens. The library offers high school student to visit the library for a three-hour course focusing on the understanding of democracy, democratic rights and national and local political dilemmas.

Title	It has never been easier to express oneself, but... (Norway)
Project-owner	<p>PEN-Norway.</p> <p>PEN-Norway is a non-profit and independent organization that works for freedom of expression. PEN-Norway is the Norwegian branch of PEN International, the world's largest writing and freedom of expression organization.</p>
Background	<p>This teaching program is based on the report from the Youth Council for Freedom of Expression which points out that many young people perceive the public debate to be polarizing. The program addresses this experience by facilitating dialogue among youth in the classroom. The class represents a community of disagreement and the breadth of society, which makes it possible to exchange a diverse range of perspectives in the debates.</p>
Aim	<p>The program aims to strengthen young people's understanding of their freedom of expression, and by that hopefully increase the participation of young people in the public debate.</p>
Target group	<p>Youth aged 15 to 19.</p>
Activities	<p>The program both introduces the term freedom of expression and facilitates a discussion among the students concerning how to practice the right to express themselves.</p> <p>The program is divided into three parts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An introduction to the term «freedom of expression». 2. A discussion based on five claims. For example: «I have the right to say whatever I want», «I am not responsible for how others react to my expressions» and «Some expressions should be forbidden». These claims address central dilemmas concerning freedom of expression. Dilemmas that are important to discuss and reflect upon. The students get inspired to reflect upon how freedom of expression can be practiced and the responsibility the right to express oneself demands. 3. Finally, the program suggests a number of different assignments related to the subject.
Reference/website	<p>https://norskpen.no/skoleopplegg/</p>

Title	What is freedom of expression? (Norway)
Project-owner	<p>Dembra.</p> <p>Dembra is a Norwegian program for professional development amongst teachers, school leaders, and other school staff. Dembra has been implemented in 52 schools across the country.</p> <p>Dembra was developed by the Norwegian Centre for Holocaust and Minority Studies, the European Wergeland Centre, and the Department of Teacher Education and School Research at the University of Oslo. The Centre for Studies of the Holocaust and Religious Minorities, the Rafto Foundation, the Falstad Centre, and the Arkivet Foundation are tasked with implementing Dembra in different parts of Norway.</p>
Background	<p>Dembra is a program for the prevention of racism, group-based hostility, and anti-democratic attitudes. Dembra aims to strengthen the school's work on participation and critical thinking and offers a systematic approach to critical thinking, democratic development, and inclusion. Furthermore, Dembra has a focus on schools that have challenges or may come to experience particular challenges relating to group-based hostility.</p> <p>Dembra has a great variety of learning resources; one of the programs that Dembra offers is a philosophical conversation about the question "what is freedom of expression".</p>
Aim	<p>The program "<i>What is freedom of expression</i>" aims to practice respectful and open dialogue on an important and controversial topic. The program also aims to expand the pupils' understanding of freedom of expression by listening to others and seeing the issue from several perspectives.</p>
Target group	<p>Secondary school and upper secondary school pupils.</p>
Activities	<p>Dembra has suggestions for reflective questions teachers can ask their students. The teacher is recommended to adapt the questions to the group's level and to remember to let the students' input and thoughts be at the center of the discussion. The questions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do you think freedom of expression is described as a fundamental human right? Is it important for people, and if so, why? • When we have freedom of expression, do we also have a responsibility to speak? What does it mean to use one's freedom of expression responsibly? <p>The questions address three main perspectives in the conversation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The importance of freedom of expression 2. The responsibility for expression

	3. The limits of freedom of expression
Funding	The Nordic initiative is funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers' program for Democracy, Inclusion, and Safety (DIS).
Reference/website	https://dembra.no/en/om-dembra/

Title	Human rights and democracy (Norway)
Project-owner	<p>Unites Nations Association of Norway.</p> <p>The UN Association is a Norwegian organization whose main task is to inform about the UN and the UN's work with children and young people as the main target group. The UN association is independent of the UN and has no political affiliation. The United Nations Association of Norway is a member of the World Federation of United Nations Associations.</p>
Background	<p>The teaching program “Human rights and democracy” is one of many available programs developed by United Nations Association of Norway.</p> <p>The objective of the program is to show how human rights and democracy complement and reinforce one another. To realize this objective, it is crucial that the students get a basic understanding of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The program also seeks to enable the students to act in accordance with sustainable development goals.</p>
Aim	<p>The program aims to clarify how human rights and democracy complement and reinforce one another.</p> <p>The program’s objective is to increase the students’ understanding of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its’ 30 articles.</p> <p>The program should, furthermore, enable the students to act in accordance with the UN sustainable development goals.</p>
Target group	Secondary school and upper secondary school pupils.
Activities	<p>The teaching program has differentiated tasks that deal with the topic of human rights and democracy in different ways.</p> <p>An example is a task that focuses on the Universal declaration of human rights. The students will get the chance to read the declaration and discuss and prioritize the human rights. Students also get to reflect on how the human rights are protected in today’s society. The students will start by familiarizing themselves with the 30 articles in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The facilitator will then have the students work together in pairs and ask them to choose the five most important human right. Afterward, it will be discussed in a plenary session to see if the class can make a prioritized list.</p> <p>In another task, the students will focus on conflicting rights. The student will be divided into groups to discuss 5 different claims concerning freedom of religion, freedom to love, freedom of expression, and the right to life. The claims are:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom of religion is a central human right. Therefore, in a democracy, one cannot ban full-covering garments such as the burka. • It is a human right to love whomever you want. In a democracy, therefore, same-sex marriage cannot be banned. • Freedom of expression is a central human right. If you send me a private photo, I can use it as I wish, or even pass it on. • Parties with neo-Nazi sympathies stand for an extremely anti-human ideology and should therefore be refused to participate in elections. • The right to life is a fundamental human right and we can therefore not allow abortion. <p>The program will facilitate important discussions regarding both abortion and anti-human ideologies.</p>
Funding	The UN Association receives financial support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
Reference/website	https://www.fn.no/undervisning/undervisningsopplegg/8-10-trinn/menneskerettigheter-og-demokrati

Title	Active citizenship (Norway)
Project-owner	<p>Nobel Peace Centre.</p> <p>The Nobel Peace Centre is an independent foundation, that works closely with the other institutions in the Nobel system.</p>
Background	<p>The Nobel Peace Centre has developed a wide range of teaching resources for schools, based on the belief that the Nobel Peace Prize and the ideas of the peace prize winners have the power to change people's thoughts and actions.</p> <p>The Peace Centre has developed an innovative teaching program where the student, in a fictive Minecraft-world, are challenged to deal with the same problems as former peace prize winners and learn how their choices and actions affected their own lives, their communities, and even the world.</p>
Aim	By using the stories of the Peace Prize winners, The Nobel Peace Centre aims to facilitate reflections about citizenship and the courage needed to make a change.
Target group	Pupils – the grade level is not specified
Activities	<p>The stories of the Peace Prize winners are used as background for the student to work with democracy, human rights, poverty, climate change, etc.</p> <p>The Minecraft game of active citizenship is inspired by the Nobel Peace Prize and four Peace Prize winners. When the students play, they go straight into the same situations that the peace prize winners had to deal with. They are challenged to deal with the same problems and learn how their choices and actions affected their own lives, their communities, and even the world.</p> <p>In addition to the Minecraft game, the Nobel Peace Centre has developed three teaching programs. For each Peace Prize winner, students meet in the Minecraft game, they will find a PowerPoint-presentation, a lesson plan, and design tasks. This material allows students to immerse themselves in the peace prize winners' method as active citizens, while also challenging them to create solutions that can change something in the society that surrounds them.</p>
Funding	The Nobel Peace Centre is financed through a combination of private and public resources.
Reference/website	https://www.nobelpeacecenter.org/utdanning/minecraft

Title	Can young people save the climate? (Norway)
Project-owner	The National Digital Learning Arena/ Nasjonal Digital læringsarena (NDLA). The National Digital Learning Arena is a collaboration between ten counties that offer open digital learning resources for use in upper secondary education.
Background	The Norwegian website from NDLA offers teachers a wide variety of teaching resources. When it comes to the interdisciplinary topic of democracy and citizenship NDLA offers an assignment where the goal is to make the students reflect on their possibilities and potential as agents of change.
Aim	The objective of the assignment is to make students reflect on their potential as agents of change.
Target group	Upper secondary school pupils.
Activities	<p>The starting point for the discussion is Greta Thunberg and the worldwide climate strikes #fridaysforfuture. The students are asked to discuss reasons to participate or not participate in climate strikes.</p> <p>The students are given the opportunity to reflect upon their choices as citizens and their opportunity to demand change by using their freedom of expression. The students are asked to discuss the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What could be the reason why some students participate in climate strikes while others do not? <p>Those of you who have joined a climate strike:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What made you choose to join? <p>Those of you who have not joined a climate strike:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did you choose not to join?
Reference/website	https://ndla.no/nb/subject:d1fe9d0a-a54d-49db-a4c2-fd5463a7c9e7/topic:a2f5aaa0-ab52-49d5-aabf-e7ffeac47fa2/topic:b7eae136-0978-4167-be0d-2903374fc6ca/topic:65ecae7c-ffc4-40a6-82bf-a1e570680704

Title	Infinite growth and its limits (Germany)
Project-owner	<p>Haus-Rissen.</p> <p>Haus- Rissen is a German institute for international politics and economics that was established in 1954 and located in Hamburg. Haus Rissen offers a youth education program with seminars on political, socio-political, and economic topics to young people with a wide range of social, religious, or ethnic backgrounds.</p> <p>Haus Rissen is a non-profit and independent institute.</p>
Background	<p>Haus Rissen teaches a wide range of political, economic, and social issues to broaden young people's understanding of the complex challenges of the 21st century and prepare them to deal with them.</p> <p>One of the youth teaching programs is called “Infinite growth and its limits” which focuses on debating sustainability, green growth, and degrowth.</p>
Aim	<p>The overall aim of Haus Rissen is to inspire young people and enable them to form an independent and well-founded opinions and to act accordingly.</p>
Target group	<p>Each seminar is put together to ensure its relevance to the pupils from both secondary school and upper secondary school.</p>
Activities	<p>In the teaching program “Infinite growth and its limits”, the participants will gain insight into the UN sustainable development goals, as well as the arguments for and against further growth. Based on this background, the participants are given the opportunity to form their own judgement.</p> <p>The main focus is on the ideas of green growth and de-growth.</p> <p>In a final debate game, all the arguments developed throughout the activities are compiled and the young people are given the opportunity to form their own judgement.</p>
Reference/ website	<p>https://www.hausrissen.org/</p>

Title	Youth debated (Jugend debattiert) (Germany)
Project-owner	Youth debated/Jugend debattiert is an initiative of the federal president with the Hertie Foundation, the Heinz Nixdorf Foundation as well as the standing conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs, the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs, and the parliaments of the federal states as partners.
Background	A living democracy relies on a population that is capable of reflection and judgement. The Hertie Foundation argue that those who have learned to respect other opinions, present their own positions in a well-founded manner, and analyse and weigh arguments, are more capable to participate in society. However, this type of “citizen competence” does not arise by itself and must be learned and practiced.
Aim	The program aims to build “citizen competence” that enables young people to participate in democracy and democratic processes.
Target group	The program can be adapted to pupils in the 5 th grade and older, but it is usually conducted among pupils in the 8 th grade or older.
Activities	In the program pupils learn to develop basic skills for debating: Asking questions, listening, and naming points of contention. The exercises are carried out in the classroom with adapted educational tools.
Results	The youth debated program is being used in an increasing number of schools both in Germany and internationally. For example, there are youth debates in schools in Spain, Portugal, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Peru, USA, and China.
Reference/website	https://www.ghst.de/jugend-debattiert/ https://www.jugend-debattiert.de/

Title	Majulah Community (Singapore)
Project-owner	The Majulah Community is a non-profit organization established in October 2010 to strengthen and empower the youth of Singapore to make a positive difference in their community.
Background	Majulah is a Malay word often translated to “onwards”. The organization believes that every single youth deserves a platform to make a positive difference in the world.
Aim	Majulah’s goal is to inspire, empower and foster changemakers that will help lead meaningful change in communities in Singapore and the world. The organization runs two student centres and does outreach to secondary schools across Singapore. The programs developed and run by Majulah focus on different stages in what they call the changemakers journey. From self-discovery (be.majulah), to volunteering and developing skills (make.majulah) to creating and driving change through their own initiatives and projects (lead.majulah).
Target group	Majulah targets youth in Singapore but also partners with educators and mentors that can contribute and support the different youth lead and youth-serving elements of their programs.
Activities	<p>Among the programs run by the Majulah Community is Project Peduli. This program involves youths as task force members or volunteers and involves them in planning and executing projects that benefit the society around them. The goal is for the youth to feel empowered to serve society and for beneficiaries to have their needs heard and assisted sustainably.</p> <p>The Majulah Academy helps youths develop the necessary skills and knowledge to change the world through workshops and experimental learning. The skills developed includes facilitation, mentoring and design-thinking.</p>
Results	The Majulah Community has, by August 2021, worked with 39.995 changemakers (Mentees, Mentors, and Volunteers) and conducted 117 programs in partnership with 67 schools, youth groups, and social services agencies.
Reference/ website	https://majulah.sg/

Title	Youth in Action – Share. Lead. Change. (USA)
Project-owner	Youth in Action
Background	Youth in action was founded in 1997 in Providence (Rhode Island, USA) by a group of young people motivated to make changes in their community. Their first major program was the creation of the YEAH team (Youth Educating About Health) a program to counteract the rising STD/HIV rates in the city. They have since run several different campaigns such as the “Students Design for Education” project, where high school students took part in designing their own school (2013-2016), and a city-wide student walkout in 2017 in protest of the policies of the Trump administration.
Aim	Youth in Action wants to create opportunities for youth to become their best selves. Working with youth from diverse backgrounds and identities many of their participants come from communities that face social, economic, and environmental challenges. Along with resource scarcity in schools and geographically isolated poverty, this situation can easily create a false narrative of social-worth and youth potential. YIA seeks to counteract and undo these internalizations by building power, leadership, and action among youth. The work of the YIA helps youth challenge systems and social structures to create more caring and fair public institutions and systems.
Target group	High-School aged youth in Providence, Rhode Island, with a particular focus on underserved communities.
Activities	<p>Youth in Action’s main work today is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After School Programming <p>YIA’s programming provides a space where youth can find themselves, grow, and make a change in their lives and communities by sharing stories, learning leadership skills, and taking action.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth-Led workshops, Talks, and Exhibits <p>Since 2017 Youth in Action has offered youth-led workshops to non-profit organizations, schools, and businesses. The workshops are designed and facilitated by young people but are meant to reach a broad audience. Sessions are tailored to clients and many different topics are offered in what serves as an earned income revenue stream, while at the same time providing leadership opportunities for youth.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools in Action: In-School Programming <p>In partnership with Providence Public Schools YIA provides in-school programs with a curriculum rooted in identity, youth voice, and social change. The program seeks to have the youth develop wisdom, ethics, and empathy as they advocate for positive changes and social justice.</p>
Results	<p>750 students currently take part in the after-school programming. More than 4000 youth have passed through YIA programming since 1997. 100% of students participating YIA graduate High School in 4 years (state average 75%).</p>
Reference/ website	<p>https://youthinactionri.org/</p>

Title	The Democracy Initiative (Denmark)
Project-owner	Aarhus Public Library
Background	Since August 2020 the public libraries in the city of Aarhus have had dedicated resources to work with activities to strengthen the democratic conversations, dialogues and debates.
Aim	The initiative aims to broadly engage the citizens in democratic activities and thereby contribute to strengthening social cohesion, local communities, and the democratic self-confidence.
Target group	The initiative has different activities with different target groups.
Activities	<p>The initiative tries to contribute to the following challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we engage those who never or rarely participate in democracy activities? • How do we create democracy activities that inspire to commitment and active participation? • How can we integrate democratic elements in the everyday activities at the libraries? • How can we create relevant and engaging touchpoints between the local library and ongoing local politics? <p>This is done through different activities for example democracy training for high school youth. The library offers school classes to visit the library for a three-hour course focusing on the following themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democracy as a form of government and different understandings of democracy • The library as a democratic institution including dilemmas about e.g. freedom of expression, representation and misinformation • Elections in Denmark: How are they held, who votes and why? • What makes Danish elections the most secure, inclusive and transparent in the world? • Current, local political dilemmas: How can we create change ourselves
Reference/website	<p>https://www.nextlibrary.net/the-democracy-initiative-at-arhus-public-libraries/</p> <p>https://www.aakb.dk/nyheder/laering/demokrati-i-praksis-nyt-undervisningstilbud-for-gymnasier-og-ungdomsuddannelser</p>

5.2 Local politics or local community focused programs

When young people participate in their local community either directly through local politics or other kinds of community involvement, their participation can differ in regard to how often they participate and how much influence they have on the decision-making processes. In 2021 Oxford Research carried out a survey for the Danish Children's Council on how children and young people participate in the municipalities' broad task portfolio. They identified four different ways of involving children and young people:

- Children (and youth) as informants
- Children (and youth) as advisors
- Children (and youth) as practice developers
- Children (and youth) as policy developers

(Oxford Research 2021;13)

When children and young people are given the roles of informants in the participation work, their involvement will often be ad hoc and only take place in connection with certain initiatives or projects. In other words, children and young people do not participate in the project beyond sharing experiences and providing inputs for further work. This gives children and young people little direct influence on the decision-making processes (Oxford Research 2021).

When children and young people are given the role of advisors, they are continuously involved in relevant topics, and their involvement is, to a large degree, structured. Children and young people have little influence on the decision-making process itself, but are included in ongoing discussions in matters that concern them (Oxford Research 2021).

When children and young people act as practice developers, their involvement is typically linked to a single cause and is thus ad hoc based. Typically, children or young people as practice developers will have a great influence on decisions and accompanying actions for the specific matter in which they are involved (Oxford Research 2021).

When children and young people are involved as policy developers the participation is structured and continuous. Children and young people typically have direct dialogue with decision-makers, and therefore potentially have increased opportunity to influence the decision-making processes (Oxford Research 2021).

This categorization is particularly relevant for projects aimed at participation in local politics or local communities and can be useful as a background for the presentation of the Norwegian and international youth participation projects in this report.

In this section, we present eight different programs that facilitate youth participation in local politics and community change. The Norwegian "*Mosjø model for participation*" presents a formal structure for youth participation, where the young people have the role of both advisors and policy developers in the municipality. While the American program "*Y-Plan*" and the German "*Bavarian Youth Council*" give young participants an opportunity to develop policies for their community and share their insights as advisors.

Another German program *“Youth moves politics”* helps municipalities in structuring their work with youth participation and also funds local projects where young people typically have a role as practice developers. *“The Municipal Seal of Approval Program”* from Brazil, the *“Child Advisory Body”* from Belize, and the *“Child-Friendly City Initiative”* in Finland have increased the influence of young people’s ideas in local governance and decision-making.

The project *“Making online participation local”* from Belgium meets young people in their arenas and asks their opinion on different themes relevant to ongoing projects. The young people have a role as both informants and advisors in this program.

“The Democracy Project” at the Missoula Public Library (USA) is a teen-led six-month program with the aim to help young people find their civic voice and engage in the local community. The young people have a role as practice developers in their work with designing and implementing projects in the new Missoula Public Library

Title	The Mosjø model for participation (Norway)
Project-owner	Vefsn municipality, Norway.
Background	Vefsn municipality has had a well-functioning youth council for 15 years, and in 2021 the municipality was awarded “Youth Municipality of the Year 2021” in Norway. They were granted the award because of their work to strengthen democracy and develop a systematic approach to youth participation in the municipality. The model is called "Mosjømodellen".
Aim	The model aims to improve the dialogue between politicians and young people and make a positive change for youth in the municipality, not as a single happening but as a continuous process of improvement.
Target group	Young people aged 13-19, the youth council, municipal council, and municipal administration.
Activities	<p>The model is divided into two sections: The political and administrative zone and the youth zone. The key feature is understanding the connection and equal importance of both zones: You need a free and inspiring space like the “youth zone” to collect inputs and create awareness and safety, in order to make an impact and have relevance in the formal/political zone.</p> <p>The core of the model is the activities in the youth political day, political workshops, and the work in the youth council and the municipal council. The youth zone allows the young to develop their own policies, have fun, and socialize.</p>
Results	The youth council has practiced this systematic process since 2017. In January 2021, the Mosjø model was adopted by the municipal council.
Reference/website	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eMSJeNccVyk

Figure 3 The Mosjø Model

Title	Youth, Plan, Learn, Act, Now – Y-Plan (USA)
Project-owner	UC Berkeley, Center for Cities + Schools.
Background	<p>Y-plan, Youth Plan, Learn, Act, Now started around 20 years ago. It is developed and run by the University of California Berkeley’s Center for Cities + Schools.</p> <p>Their slogan is "Planning more just and joyful cities with and for young people". It is a program that partners young people, particularly from minority or low-income communities, with civic leaders to tackle real-world problems in their community.</p>
Aim	<p>The program aims to plan more just and joyful cities with and for young people.</p> <p>The program lets students develop their capacity to be agents of change for themselves and their communities, while also enabling adult professionals and civic leaders to develop their capacity to respect and value the youths’ insights. This, in turn, leads to more equitable policies and communities.</p>
Target group	Young people, particularly from minority or low-income communities.
Activities	The Y-plan program is based on a process without experts. Rather, all participants contribute important insights into their unique areas of expertise. Such collective work and shared practice lead to the development of better solutions that benefit everyone. Y-PLAN does not need to be initiated in a school or a classroom, but experience shows that this is a very good arena as it creates a better social mix. It does not necessarily only involve civic, social science, or humanities. It can also be a very effective way of showing the real everyday usefulness of multiple fields within science, technology, engineering, arts, and maths.
Results	<p>Materials are freely available online for teachers and others who want to implement the program.</p> <p>Centering the generative potential of adults and young people working together as intergenerational communities of practice, particularly within the context of the traditional school day, supports young people to be active in shaping schools, neighborhoods, and cities. In the process, these young people begin to identify themselves with a new sense of agency - as planners. They recognize this field as a place with great potential for transforming the environments in which they live, work, and learn.</p>
Reference/website	https://y-plan.berkeley.edu/

Title	The Bavarian youth council (Bayerischer Jugendring) (Germany)
Project-owner	Bayerischer Jugendring.
Background	Bayerischer Jugendring (the Bavarian Youth Council) is the standing conference of youth organizations and youth initiatives in Bavaria. With 103 district and regional youth councils as members, Bayerischer Jugendring is represented across Bavaria.
Aim	The main aim of the Bayerischer Jugendring is to represent the interests of young people in Bavaria. This is done by developing youth policies that meet young people's needs in the region, while also promoting youth work in general.
Target group	There is a great variety in the youth organizations that joins the program, including religious, environmental, and cultural organizations, as well as sports clubs and scouting groups.
Activities	<p>The various groups that engage in the Bayerischer Jugendring elect delegates that join the city and district youth councils. They organize themselves as working groups that represent the interests of all children and young people in the region.</p> <p>The structure of the youth council is analogous to the municipal structure in Bavaria.</p> <p>The Bavarian youth council has a wide range of tasks within the themes of inclusion, European youth policy, and youth participation. Bavarian Jugendring describes their contributions as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to the empowerment of young people • Empowers young people to actively shape a free and democratic society, by promoting responsible and independent action, critical thinking, and social and solidarity-based behaviour • Promotes mutual understanding and the willingness to cooperate within society and in the fields of education, especially among the young generation • Public representation of the interests of young people and the common interests of the member organizations especially towards parliaments, governments, and authorities. • Supports the autonomy and performance of youth organizations • Promotes international encounters and cooperation • Counteracts a resurgence of militaristic, nationalist, racist, and totalitarian tendencies • Is committed to the preservation of the natural environment and helps young people to learn to live

	<p>environmentally consciously and to avoid damage to the environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is committed to reducing gender inequalities, equal opportunities and equal participation for girls, young women, boys, and young men• Promotes young people in their individual and social development through youth work and offers support to disadvantaged groups and disadvantaged children and young people• Integrates young people with a migrant background into youth work and is committed to their equal participation and equal opportunities as well as to the reduction of disadvantages in society
Reference/website	https://www.bjr.de/en/about-us.html

Title	Youth moves politics. Concrete, local, effective, networked (Jugend BEWEGT – Politik KONKRET: lokal, wirksam, vernetzt) (Germany)
Project-owner	<p>Demokratiezentrum Baden-Württemberg.</p> <p>The Democracy Centre Baden-Württemberg is an education, service, and networking centre thematically focusing on extremism, preventive education, and human rights education.</p>
Background	<p>The initiative is based on the assumption that young people, who participate in the community, get the experience of being taken seriously and learn that they are capable of realizing their own projects. This experience results in important insight into democratic rules, processes, and values which counteract radicalization.</p>
Aim	<p>The overall aim of the program is to ensure that young people are being adequately involved in planning projects that affect their interests.</p> <p>To reach this aim, municipalities can join the program and get support in their work on establishing sustainable structures for youth participation.</p>
Target group	<p>The target groups are both administration and politicians from the municipalities, teachers, and other professionals within education, as well as young people living in the municipalities that have joined the program.</p>
Activities	<p>The central component of the project is the support and coaching of municipal participation processes on-site. Municipalities who join the program, engage in a two-year project period. During this period, consulting costs will be covered by the program. Youth, who have a local project idea, can also receive initial project funding for smaller projects. Training for young people to develop skills that support future participatory processes in the community is also funded.</p> <p>Through "Jugend BEWEGT" municipalities are offered professional coaching and financial support in the further development of their structures for youth participation. The program has annual network meetings and skilled coaches that supervise the municipalities in which participation activities may be appropriate to use in their projects. The program also offers financial support for local projects that young people want to immerse themselves in and realize.</p> <p>An example of a local project is from the German city of Heitersheim. With the help of "Jugend BEWEGT" a youth advisory board was established. The municipality invited young people between the ages of 14 and 18 to join the board. This resulted in at youth advisory</p>

	<p>board with 18 members. They decided to focus on creating a place for hanging out and barbecuing. The youth barbecue area project idea was presented to the municipal council, which supported its establishment. The youth council organized the construction of seating furniture and a barbecue area, and also organized the maintenance of the area by setting up a clean-up service.</p>
Funding	<p>Jugendstiftung Baden-Württemberg in cooperation with the Landesjugendring Baden-Württemberg.</p> <p>The Democracy Center Baden-Württemberg is also funded by the Ministry of Social Affairs, Health and Integration Baden-Württemberg from state funds decided by the state parliament of Baden-Württemberg, and by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth as part of the federal program "Living Democracy!".</p>
Reference/ website	<p>https://jugendbeteiligung-bw.de</p>

Title	Municipal Seal of Approval Program (Brazil)
Project-owner	UNICEF
Background	The UNICEF Municipal Seal of Approval (Selo UNICEF) is an initiative to encourage municipalities in the Brazilian Semi-arid and Amazon regions to implement public policies that will reduce inequalities experienced by many children and adolescents living in these two particularly vulnerable regions of Brazil.
Aim	Supporting the meaningful civic engagement of adolescents in local governance is foundational to a democratic society. Since ratifying the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990, Brazil has updated its laws to promote and protect the rights of adolescents. This has included the adoption of the Brazilian Child and Adolescent Statute, and the Statute of Youth. Though these legal mechanisms are promising, it has proven challenging to ensure equal participation among adolescents in practice, due to social, economic, cultural, environmental, and geographic factors that constrict the space for participation. To address these challenges, UNICEF Brazil is supporting formal civic engagement programs tailored to the most vulnerable adolescents and to the diverse contexts in which these adolescents live.
Target group	Children and adolescents.
Results	<p>The Municipal Seal of Approval and the Urban Centers Platform programs have helped to showcase the value of adolescent input in local governance, promoting the legitimization of adolescent voices in decision-making processes, and increasing the influence of their ideas on local planning, programs, and policies. For example, in Recife, girls' perspectives were included in the municipal plan to combat gender-based violence, which previously focused only on adults. In Vitória, the city mayor adopted a municipal policy to foster students' participation in public policies and a protocol to better assist pregnant adolescents.</p> <p>In the Amazon and Semi-Arid regions, more than 900 municipalities supported 16- and 17-year-old adolescents to have their voting cards, and more than 700 municipalities improved services relating to sexual and reproductive rights for adolescents.</p>
Reference/website	https://www.unicef.org/media/108961/file/Advancing%20Child-Centered%20Public%20Policy%20in%20Brazil.pdf

Title	Child Advisory Body (CAB) (Belize)
Project-owner	Government of Belize (in collaboration with UNICEF, UNDP, and the Belize Mayor's Association).
Background	Belize has a large population of young people who are under 25. Investing in young people and addressing various challenges they encounter are therefore considered crucial.
Aim	<p>The aims of the program are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bringing a child/adolescent perspective to issues affecting children in municipalities to ensure that their rights and needs are reflected in and promoted by municipal plans • facilitating knowledge sharing about best practices and lessons learned for agendas relating to child/adolescent rights, gender equality, and sexual and reproductive health within municipal plans • improving child/adolescent understanding of the principles behind municipal plans and their role in improving young people's lives • strengthening the skills of children/adolescents (especially vulnerable and disadvantaged young people) in areas such as leadership, decision-making, communication, problem-solving, and advocacy, to facilitate their effective participation in municipal development planning.
Target group	Young people.
Activities	A CAB has been created in each of the municipalities involved in the Sustainable and Child-Friendly Municipalities (SCFM) initiative in Belize. They provide children/adolescents with a consultative space, through which they can review municipal plans and budgets. Each CAB consists of a group of children/adolescents selected from existing organizations and structures, such as student groups, churches, non-governmental organizations, and scout groups.
Results	Overall, the CAB platform has helped to voice children's interests in Belize, by making it possible for children and adolescents be involved in decision-making.
Funding	The Ministry of Labour, Local Government and Rural Development (MLLGRD), Belize Mayors' Association, UNDP, and UNICEF.
Reference/website	https://s25924.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Child-Participation-Case-Studies-Final-1.pdf

Title	The Child-Friendly City Initiative (Finland)
Project-owner	Finnish National Committee for UNICEF.
Background	The Child Friendly City Initiative in Finland has been in place since 2012. It is the city of Hämeenlinna where the Child Friendly City Initiative was first piloted.
Aim	To aim is to expand the opportunities for children and young people to be included in local decision making.
Target group	Young people.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The “Language Project” was developed and has been taken on by teachers in schools. This project aims to simplify the complex language used by decision makers. This has resulted in a children-developed, lengthy dictionary, which includes various terms often used at the municipal level, for example, ‘action plan’, ‘strategy’, ‘budget’, etc. The dictionary entries provide short expressions in easy language, plus more detailed explanations when an easy expression cannot be found. The dictionary is available online. • An online discussion platform is established providing young people and children opportunity to share their ideas. • Children’s parliament is created accommodating representatives from elementary schools.
Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child and youth participation has gained more visibility within the municipalities. • Child impact assessment has gained more visibility and new practices have been proposed and/or piloted. • Overall awareness of the CRC within the municipal organizations has increased. • The difficulties concerning the organizational culture have been identified (i.e., cross-sector cooperation). • There is a need to carry out further evaluations of the situation of children, especially concerning equality and nondiscrimination-related issues.
Funding	National Committee has covered most of the funding since the beginning of the initiative.
Reference/website	https://s25924.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/CFCI-Case-Study-Finland.pdf

Title	Making online participation local (Belgium)
Project-owner	Antwerp Municipality.
Background	Online tools are often considered as a low-threshold means of youth participation. However, these approaches tend to reach a less diverse group of young people than expected. The project addresses this, aiming to reach a broader range of young people.
Aim	The main goal is to give young people a voice and ensure their inclusion within policy structures, through a combination of digital participation and location-oriented work.
Target group	Young people.
Activities	For each public participation project, the Youth Service of the City of Antwerp maps out the spots where their target groups spend time: Schools, youth clubs, and public locations. Based on this, they select locations where they will go to let young people fill out participation forms on tablets.
Results	Within six years the voices of 20,000 children and youngsters in Antwerp were heard in 120 projects.
Evaluation	It is easier to boost young people's participation if you meet them in person, according to the project owner. They report good results.
Reference/website	https://innovationinpolitics.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/316_NOW_Promising-Practices_Poster_Making-online-participation-local.pdf

Title	The Democracy Project (USA)
Project-owner	The program is a partnership between the Missoula Public Library and the nonprofit Humanities Montana.
Aim	The Democracy Project is a teen-led program with the aim of empowering young people in Missoula to take action and improve their community.
Target group	Young people
Activities	<p>The Democracy Project is a six-month program with the ambition to help youth finding their civic voice. The young people who are interested in joining the project, will have to submit a letter of commitment to the library to join the project</p> <p>The young people joining the project will get the chance to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learn to exercise their democratic rights and take responsibility for the community. • design and implement a project in the new Missoula Public Library. • get hands-on experience working with local government, business and nonprofit leaders.
Funding	Supported by the Charles Englehard Foundation and the L.A. Library Foundation.
Reference/website	https://www.missoulapubliclibrary.org/home/programs-events/ongoing-programs-for-youth/the-democracy-project/

5.3 Tools for participation

Many of the projects described here are long-term programs developed by organizations that have long histories or newer ones that seek to build lasting institutions. Others are more limited programs, and this category contains some of these. The projects in this group aim to develop a type of tool that youth and youth organizations, or those working with youths, can use to aid or enhance their work.

In this category, the *“Give opinion”* application is presented. A mobile app that was pilot tested in some Norwegian Youth Council and Student Boards at the high school level. The aim was to strengthen their position relative to school leadership and municipal councils. We also present the *“Childpress”* project, a news site that publishes journalistic news written by children and young people for other children and young people, which also offers guidance for its young contributors. It was started in the Netherlands but has international reach. The *“Child friendly information”* project sought to develop good ways of sharing information with migrating children. From Switzerland, we present the project *“Engage.ch”*, a multimedia platform allowing youth to use text, images, or videos to present issues and demands to politicians who can also choose to engage with the youth on the platform. And finally, we have the *“Demogames project”*, an Erasmus+ collaboration that developed a box of games (cards, dice, boardgame, etc.) that teaches important competencies for democracy. Game materials are freely available for download and printing - so as a bonus, it is also an arts and crafts project.

Title	Give opinion (Gi mening) (Norway)
Project-owner	Postlocal AS.
Background	The idea behind the platform is to lower the existing threshold for engaging in political discussions online. Many find it uncomfortable to express their political opinions on social media although they would like to be heard and seen. 'Give opinion' is based on the goal to make the internet a safer place to share opinions.
Aim	Gi mening (in English: Give opinion) is a digital platform that aims to lower the threshold for democratic participation by making the dialogue between citizens and elected representatives easier and more accessible. By doing so, the app's goal is to contribute to democratic processes and strengthen citizen engagement.
Target group	All citizens.
Activities	The application was used by students and youth council to gather opinions systematically through mini-surveys that community members participated in on their mobile devices. These mini-surveys could then be used to demonstrate that certain issues or opinions were important to the larger population of students or youth, and in this way increase the impact of student democracy and youth representatives in the municipal government.
Results	All municipalities and democratic organizations can use GiMening™. The senders of the dialogue need a license, while residents and members download the app for free.
Evaluation	A research project is currently being carried out in five municipalities, schools, and youth councils, exploring how, why and to what extent the tool and methods in GiMening™ engage young people, and how the dialogue with young people works in democratic contexts.
Reference/website	http://www.gimening.org

Title	ChildPress
Project-owner	Fysio Educatief publishing house.
Background	ChildPress is a global organization first established in The Netherlands, offering a digital platform where children and youth can publish their journalistic content. As a news agency ChildPress delivers news content made by children worldwide, every day.
Aim	ChildPress is an organization that supports children in using their voices by publishing their content. ChildPress aims to give children and youth a platform for publishing their own content.
Target group	Children and youth.
Activities	<p>On the ChildPress website, the junior reporters can establish their own private press room and receive guidance in their work with their content. They will learn journalistic skills, technical skills (for example video recording and editing, sound design and vlogging).</p> <p>ChildPress also offers guidance to schools and others who want to support children in their journalistic work.</p> <p>Childpress prioritizes topics on safety, climate, and access to education.</p>
Results	Daily digital news is developed and disseminated by children and youth.
Reference/website	https://www.childpress.org/

Title	Child-friendly information for children in migration: What do children think?
Project-owner	Council of Europe.
Background	There is an identified need for empowering children within the migration context. In this sense, the way information is provided to children is of great importance. Children have a right to information, and this information should be provided to them in a way that takes their age, maturity, and cultural background into account so that the information is understood.
Aim	To ensure that children's views and recommendations on the topic of immigration and asylum are heard.
Target group	Children with migration/asylum backgrounds.
Activities	The Council of Europe held several consultations with children affected by migration in Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, and Hungary to gather the views and recommendations of children regarding the information they receive concerning the immigration and asylum-seeking process.
Results	<p>Children's views and recommendations collected from workshops were shared during the Council of Europe roundtable on child-friendly information for children in migration which took place in Strasbourg on 29-30 November 2017 in the context of the Council of Europe Action Plan on Protecting Refugee and Migrant Children (2017-2019).</p> <p>There is a study of the findings and recommendations made by children who took part in the workshops. This study contributes to the work of the Children's Rights Division on a handbook on promoting child-friendly information for refugee and migrant children.</p>
Funding	Council of Europe.
Reference/website	https://rm.coe.int/child-friendly-information-for-children-in-migration-what-do-children-/16808af7e2

Title	ENGAGE.CH (Switzerland)
Project-owner	DSJ FSPJ FSPG - The umbrella organisation for Swiss Youth Parliaments, (Dachverband Schweizer Jugendparlamente, Fédération Suisse des Parlements des Jeune, federazione svizzera dei parlamenti dei giovani)
Background	The multimedia platform engage.ch connects with young users in their everyday life. They can use text, images, and videos to communicate their concerns and demands, as well as post, discuss, and vote online. Politicians and youth parliamentarians can view these concerns and address them.
Aim	To enhance the perception of young people that they can achieve something, and that politics is something relevant to their life. The aim is also to make them aware of political processes so that they can become engaged citizens.
Target group	Youth in Switzerland.
Results	Almost 3,500 concerns were submitted by young people via the platform. More than 100 politicians took up the concerns and 120 projects or political demands were implemented.
Reference/website	https://www.engage.ch/

Title	Demogames: Democracy and Games – Analog and Digital Game-Based-Learning Tools for Youth Work
Project-owner	The Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union (2019-2-DE04-KA205-018330). Partners included: The German institute for Global and Area Studies, Demokrative – initiative for civic education, Dare Democracy and Human Rights Education in Europe, CGE Erfurt E.V, DA2 Trucados, Intercultural Institute of Timisoara.
Background	DEMOGAMES is a collaborative project that seeks to develop a game-based didactic approach to learning and applies it to teaching young citizen democracy. It is based on the Reference Framework for Democratic Culture published by the Council of Europe.
Aim	Games can be used to convey highly complex information in an activating, participative, and engaging manner. DEMOGAMES seeks to advance the players’ understanding of democracy by learning about it through games. Promoting curiosity and experiential learning.
Target group	Teachers and youth (students).
Activities	DEMOGAMES developed 8 different games. They are all printable, but two are also available as online applications. The accompanying material shows the importance of a game facilitator. The facilitators are needed to lead a session so that it becomes a structured learning experience. The games vary in duration and complexity, with the shortest taking about 5 minutes to learn and 15-20 minutes to play and the longest being a full board game taking 5-6 hours.
Results	The project’s main outcome is a “democracy game box” (D-Box), a facilitator's manual, and a Massive Open Online Course. The course provides background information about democracy, competencies for democratic culture, practical tips about education and facilitation, as well as presenting different ways to get to know the games, materials, and rules. The games are free, and users make the game materials from provided printer templates. Everything needed to play, and all the output of the project is available online at www.demogames.eu
Reference/website	www.demogames.eu

5.4 Empowerment, practice, and leadership

Empowerment is a term used on the individual, collective, or even community level. As a theory, it can be traced back to the Pedagogy of the Oppressed by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire and his belief in liberating oppressed people through education (Freire, 2017). From the individual perspective, it is about taking control of our own life through developing knowledge, skills, self-esteem, and competency. At the community level, it means having the ability to identify and solve problems, working together to change lives and change political realities (Wallerstein, 1993). When it comes to leadership it is a way to develop leaders, but it's also a way of leadership. Empowerment as leadership is about empowering the ones you lead, your team or organization. Some of the projects included in this category have this as a throughline, where the goal is to empower youth while also turning them into leaders that can contribute to the empowerment of their communities and others.

In this section, the first project we present is another Erasmus+ program; *“Participatory Europe”* which is a project involving 12 countries with the main objective of giving young people the tools they need to participate in politics. Next, is the *“Kosovo Youth Participation Project”*, a project that seeks to make disadvantaged youth become active participants in their community. In Ghana, the Library Authority with UNICEF as a partner, plans to establish ten *“Youth Engagement Centres”* in local libraries to make knowledge resources available for young people in Ghana. *“The Youth Festival”* in Denmark is a festival about democracy and learning the democratic mindset. Also, in Denmark, *“The House of The City”* was a project where youths between 13 and 25 co-created their own youth house. In neighbouring Sweden, the city of Piteå has established a program called *“Young people as municipal developers”* where a group of young people is hired each summer to be city planners. *“The Youth Café”* is a pan-African organization that works towards positive social change through empowerment and collaboration. *“Youth Day of Service”* is another pan-African effort where participants across several countries engage in weeklong projects to create positive change in their communities showing themselves and others that the youth is an important and positive resource. Rounding of this section is the *“Cambodian Youth Network”* and their *“Youth Organisation and Empowerment”* program that has, since 2010, empowered youth through knowledge and skills, personal improvement, and community participation.

Title	Participatory Europe (Estonia)
Project-owner	Mittetulundusühing Discovering Opportunities (Coordinator).
Background	This international project involves 12 countries. The main objective is to equip young people with tools that will enable their integration into political decision-making.
Aim	To encourage young people to engage in politics and become more active as citizens.
Target group	Young people
Activities	A training program/course, targeting youth leaders, educators, and social workers, is arranged in Estonia. The participants of this course are considered to be role models for their peers. The course involves topics related to policy-making, democracy, citizenship, and so forth. Through the course, participants received the skills to encourage and involve young people in politics.
Funding	Erasmus + / Mobility of Youth Workers.
Reference/website	https://participationpool.eu/project/bringing-young-people-and-politics-together-participatory-europe/

Title	KYP - Kosovo Youth Participation Project (Kosovo)
Project-owner	Care International Balkans office in Kosovo.
Background	Start Date: January 15, 2022. End Date: January 14, 2024.
Aim	To contribute to the active inclusion of civil society in Kosovo in promoting democratic values, inclusive governance, and achievement of human rights and fundamental freedoms.
Target group	Youth
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local actions for improving the position of youth and raising general awareness on the necessity of youth participation. • Fostering the development of employment skills and opportunities, through the use of the Financial Support to Third Parties. • Internship for at least 50 student graduates in local firms. • Support to youth entrepreneurial activities (creative start-ups and similar business ideas). • Support to volunteering among the disadvantaged youth from rural areas and smaller towns. As well as planning and implementing volunteering initiatives, which will include seeking partnerships with European youth volunteering agencies. • Supporting the creation of youth “debate clubs” in selected rural and small town areas, focusing on raising awareness, raising and facilitating debates on topics of inter-cultural dialogue, combating disinformation, and gender or ethnic stereotypes. • Peer exchange among debate clubs from different areas, including gatherings among debate clubs, study visits, etc.
Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased participation of disadvantaged youth in decision-making in local communities and on the central level. • Enhanced engagement and employability of marginalized youth, particularly young women, through skill development and involvement in volunteering initiatives. • Democratic dialogue between Kosovo’s youth fostered through raised awareness and promotion of gender equality, solidarity, inter-cultural relations, and countering stereotypes and disinformation.
Funding	European Union.
Reference/website	https://kosovoprojects.eu/project/kyp-kosovo-youth-participation-project/

Title	Youth Engagement Centres (Ghana)
Project-owner	<p>Ghana Library Authority in partnership with UNICEF.</p> <p>The Ghana Library Authority is a state agency with the mandate to establish, equip, maintain, and manage public libraries in Ghana.</p>
Background	<p>Ghana has a young population and on that background it is important to empower the youth by giving them access to knowledge resources. In collaboration with UNICEF, the Ghana Library Authority will establish ten youth engagement centers in the existing libraries as a pilot project.</p>
Aim	<p>The pilot program aims to improve young people's access to quality learning and empowerment opportunities by giving the young people tools to train their advocacy skills.</p>
Target group	<p>Young people aged 14-24 years</p>
Activities	<p>The pilot will be implemented over a year in eight regions in Ghana.</p> <p>It is an overall ambition that the Youth Engament Centres will be safe and inclusive environments where young people (including disadvantaged groups) create and work together on entrepreneurial ideas.</p> <p>The Youth Engagement Centres will develop digital and entrepreneurial skills through online courses, peer-to-peer learning sessions, career guidance and mentorship, and accessing tools to build young people's advocacy skills.</p>
Reference/website	<p>https://www.unicef.org/ghana/press-releases/ghana-library-authority-and-unicef-announce-launch-10-youth-engagement-centers</p>

Title	The youth festival (Ungdommens folkemøde) (Denmark)
Project-owner	Ungdommens folkemøde.
Background	Since 2016 Ungdommens Folkemøde has been an annual democratic meeting place for Danish youth. Every year the festival gathers up to 30.000 young participants for a two-day event with the overall ambition to strengthen young peoples' participation in democracy. The initiative is based on an understanding of democracy as a mindset that must be passed on to new generations.
Aim	The festival aims to be a link between young people and decision-makers and to strengthen young people's self-confidence. Through workshops, stage performances, and dialogue "Ungdommens Folkemøde" wants to strengthen young people's democratic self-confidence.
Target group	A wide variety of organizations are represented at the festival.
Activities	In 2022, more than 50 different organizations were organized in 13 different tents at the festival. Each tent had a specific theme to focus on, for example, media, diversity & people, globality, citizenship, sustainability & climate, and animals & nature. The organizations all work together on a specific theme. The festival also has workshops, a "maker-zone" to exemplify how craftsmanship can be used in democratic processes of change and areas for appeals.
Results	The festival has been held annually since 2016, but with necessary adjustments in 2020 due to the corona pandemic.
Funding	The festival is financed by Bevica fonden, Nordea Fonden, LauritzenFonden, Københavns commune, Spar Nord Fonden, Vanførefonden, Elsass fonden, Københavns professionshøjskole, Østifterne støtter omtanke, Europa-kommissionen, Knud Højgaards Fond, Ungdomsbureauet, Fogs Fond, TrygFonden, and UFM'22.
Evaluation	The festival has been evaluated annually since 2016. https://www.ungdommensfolkemoede.dk/viden .
Reference/ website	https://www.ungdommensfolkemoede.dk/

Title	The house of the city (Byens hus) (Denmark)
Project-owner	Gentofte municipality.
Background	Gentofte municipality had learned that the activities at the existing youth club did not match the young people's wishes. With the establishment of "Byens hus" in 2017, an opportunity opened to invite the young people themselves to participate in a co-creation process related to the form and content of the new youth club.
Aim	The aim of "Byens hus", is to co-create the physical surroundings and the content of the house with the inhabitants in Gentofte municipality and thereby ensure that the house offers activities and areas that are attractive to the municipality's residents.
Target group	Young people between the age of 13 and 25.
Activities	<p>It has been crucial for the municipality that the involvement of the young people happened right from the beginning of the project, and the young people have therefore been involved both in the development of the concept and in designing the physical surroundings.</p> <p>The schools nearby "Byens hus" were invited to join two workshops, and in total 150 young people were involved in the process of developing the new meeting point for young people in the municipality.</p> <p>The first workshop was about visualizing wishes for the youth club through creative processes. Following this workshop, the young people were presented with prototypes designed on the basis of their ideas and wishes, and they were then given the opportunity to assess and adjust these prototypes.</p> <p>In the second workshop, the young people were involved in building and decorating the rooms.</p>
Results	The young people in Gentofte express that they use "Byens hus" more than they did before.
Funding	The project is initiated and owned by Gentofte municipality.
Reference/ website	<p>Gentofte Municipality: https://byenshus.gentofte.dk/da</p> <p>The National Council for Children: https://www.boerneraadet.dk/nyheder/nyheder-2021/hoer-godt-efter,-naar-boernene-taler</p>

Title	Young people as municipal developers (Sweden)
Project-owner	Piteå municipality.
Background	Piteå has the ambition to be Sweden's most child-friendly municipality, where children and young people have a real influence on the decisions that concern them. Therefore, every summer since 2018, Piteå municipality has been hiring a group of young people as municipal developers.
Aim	The aim of the project is both to highlight the perspectives of children and young people in the municipality, as well as to give young people experience in how they can influence current societal issues
Target group	Young people between the age of 12 and 19.
Activities	During an employment period of 3 weeks, the young municipal developers will immerse themselves in a topic that they perceive to be particularly important for the municipality's future. At the beginning of the employment period, the young people are presented with various cases in the municipality, which they immerse themselves in during the last two weeks of the employment period. When the employment period ends, the young municipal developers present their assessments and advice both to each other and to the municipality.
Results	The municipal developers have, among other things, been involved in establishing a public square in Piteå. The young developers have influenced both the design and use of the square.
Reference/ website	The National Council for Children: https://www.boerneraadet.dk/nyheder/nyheder-2021/hoer-godt-efter,-naar-boernene-taler

Title	The Youth Café
Project-owner	The Youth Café
Background	The Youth Café is a not-for-profit youth organization that has grown out of the UN Post 2015-Agenda and was formally launched in 2012. The vision of the Youth Café is to work “Towards an equitable and fair society in which young people enjoy full social, economic, and political rights through the collective principles of solidarity, justice, equity, inclusion, human rights and the integrity of the planet”.
Aim	The goal is to act as a bridge between young people and their organizations to the international system and through this bridge ensure their right to meaningful participation.
Target group	Any formal or informal child or youth-led and child-and-youth-serving entities (unions, councils, clubs, associations, networks, etc.) can become part of the Youth Café. Any individual under the age of 35 can also become a direct member.
Activities	<p>The Youth Café organizes their work in eight different action-driven progressive activities and adopts a multidisciplinary and multi-perspective approach to them. The activities are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Culture, Arts, and Sports 2. Governance and Political Inclusion: Accountability 3. Governance and Political Inclusion: Remittances 4. Peace and Security 5. Education and Vocational Skills 6. Business, Job Creation, and Entrepreneurship 7. Universal Health Coverage 8. Environmental Preservation and Climate Change. <p>All eight activities are seen as playing a crucial role in reducing youth deprivation and contributing to the socio-economic empowerment of young people across Africa.</p> <p>The Youth Café advances youth-led and rights-based approaches to foster young peoples' civic community engagement. With their partners, the Youth Café acts as a mobilizer and convener that facilitates opportunities for learning, organizational building, and leadership training. From training workshops to developing digital platforms and organizing workshops and cultural festivals, the Youth Café engages in a wide variety of activities. They also conduct research, data gathering, information dissemination, and educational programs.</p>

Results	The Youth Café has existed in 13 years and collaborated with more than 120 organizations. More than 50 projects are completed and over 52 countries have been involved.
Financing	USAID, UNESCO, Ford Foundation, Global Challenges Fund, Google, and others.
Reference/ website	https://www.theyouthcafe.com/

Title	Youth Day of Service
Project-owner	<p>LEAP Africa – A non-profit organization based in Nigeria.</p> <p>It describes itself as a youth-focused leadership development organization. The main focus is on secondary education and the actualization of the Sustainable Development Goals. The organization have over 1 million direct and indirect beneficiaries, across 8 African countries. LEAP Africa was established more than 20 years ago, but the Youth Day of Service Program was started in 2020.</p>
Background	<p>Young people are essential to the actualization of the sustainable development goals and the African population is young. LEAP Africa sees this as a huge opportunity for achieving transformation and sustainable development on the continent. It was started in Nigeria in 2020 engaging 500 volunteers. In 2021, Youth Day of Service extended to become a pan-African initiative.</p>
Aim	<p>Youth Day of Service is a week-long, pan-African youth-led social impact campaign that begins on ‘International Youth Day’ (August 12th) every year. Youth Day of Service aims to foster the agency and creativity of young people across Africa to work for sustainable and community development.</p> <p>It is an attempt to pull together engagement and interventions from across Africa building an ecosystem of young people that can fuel Africa’s transformation. In their 2021 evaluation report, they define their 4 main objectives to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build an ecosystem to encourage youth participation in the mobilization of youth-led community actions • Create awareness about the agency of youth and their impact on the community • Activate the youth’s agency in policy dialogs and in influencing such dialogues • Foster multisectoral partnerships to support youth-led initiatives and advocacy.
Target group	<p>Participants are aged 15-35, must be in Africa.</p>
Activities	<p>A diverse mix of activities. In 2021, in adaptation to the pandemic, there was a mix of physical (64 %) and virtual projects (16 %), as well as several mixed activities (21 %).</p> <p>Projects encompassed at least 12 of the 17 development goals. Projects were able to work towards development goals by localizing and contextualizing them in accordance with the lived</p>

	realities of project leaders and volunteers. Several of the projects have the potential to be social enterprises that may have a lifespan beyond the Youth Day of Service week.
Results	In 2021, about 300 projects were organized under the campaign theme 'Youthful and Useful' across 22 African countries involving 1.503 volunteers. A fairly even gender breakdown with 57 % female participants and 43 % male. 28 % of volunteers were first time volunteers.
Financing	Leap Africa, African Union, Ford Foundation, and several other organizations.
Reference/ website	https://youthdayofservice.org/

Title	Cambodian Youth Network (Cambodia)
Project-owner	Cambodian Youth Network (CYN)
Background	Founded as a student and rural youth network in 2009. CYN’s aim is to increase youth participation and civic engagement in Cambodia. The organization works with university students and the youth in local communities and provides skills-sharing and knowledge-building opportunities for youth groups and their members.
Aim	CYN’s goal is to increase youth participation in communities and advocacy for social justice, respect for human rights, and sustainable natural resource management.
Target group	Youth and students.
Activities	<p>Cambodian Youth Network runs two sets of programs: Youth Organization and Empowerment and Research and Advocacy.</p> <p>The Youth Organisation and Empowerment have been running since 2010 and provides training for young people and students in Phnom Pehn and other communities across the country. The program seeks to empower and equip youth with knowledge and skills for citizen participation, personal improvement, and employability. They organize training and activities to improve skills in areas as varied as basic computer literacy, human rights democracy, and civic engagement. The Cambodian Youth Network also works to mobilize youth and works to include existing and potential new members in peaceful activism for environmental protection and human rights.</p> <p>The Research and Advocacy program is based on the belief that the voice of the youth can contribute to the promotion of sustainable and inclusive development, democracy, human rights, social justice, and equality. Through this program, CYN works to address the issues of natural resources and the environment, freedom of expression, free association, and peaceful assembly, along with social injustice and inequality as key issues.</p>
Results	In 2020 The Cambodian Youth Network worked in partnership with the Ecology Program of Jesuit Service Cambodia and released a report documenting how the Prey Lang Wildlife Sanctuary had lost more than 100.000 hectares of land to agricultural expansion and resettlement areas in the period 2000-2019. In the same year, they also co-authored the report “Smoke on the Water” assessing the

	social and human rights impact of ING City and other development projects in the Tompoun and Cheung Ek wetlands.
Financing	Donations and fundraising.
Reference/ website	https://www.cyncambodia.org/

6 ADDRESSING CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN YOUTH PARTICIPATION

The projects and programs presented in chapter 5 show a variety of approaches towards facilitating young people's participation in society. Young people's use of their freedom of expression is central in this context. Young people expressing their thoughts, opinions, and experiences orally, in writing, through art and culture, or through practical work are crucial for creating societies that reflect the perspectives of children and youth.

In this section, we now turn to a discussion on what ways the presented projects and programs in this report address the challenges and opportunities that the Norwegian Freedom of Expression Youth Council presented in their 2021 report. The council's findings are summarized in chapter 4. Perspectives from international research on challenges and opportunities related to youth participation are also discussed.

This chapter answers the third research question posed in this report: *How do Norwegian and international projects address challenges and opportunities met by young people in connection to their participation in society?*

6.1 Addressing challenges, utilizing opportunities

The Freedom of Expression Youth Council (2021) and Checkoway & Gutierrez (2006) highlighted how young people can **experience discrimination due to their age** when they participate actively in society. Several of the projects mentioned in this report work purposefully to create formal frameworks around young people's participation in society. If youth participation is formalized, it should be expected that fewer questions will be raised as to whether young people should participate in the public discourse at all.

The programs *“Youth councils in Bayern”* by Bayerischer Jugendring and *“Mosjømodellen”* from Vefsn Municipality are both projects that give youth a formalized role as both advisors and policy developers in the local community. *“Mosjømodellen”* presents a framework where the youth zone and the connections between this zone and the political and administrative zone are visualized. This systematic approach to youth participation makes it clear what role young people have in decision-making processes, and what opportunities they have to develop and communicate their own wishes and projects to the decision-makers. This is expected to provide support and security for the young people in their participation work. Similarly, *“Child Advisory Body”* (CAB) from Belize, gives children/adolescents a role in local politics as CABs participants get to have their perspectives concerning municipal plans be heard.

The Freedom of Expression Youth Council (2021) emphasizes that several young people experience it as both new and unfamiliar to use their voice in the public discourse. Their report also highlights that young people feel they have limited experience with and lack basic oral debate techniques and are unfamiliar with how to prepare written debate submissions. In other words, **the threshold for self-expression is too high** and a **lack of skills** are central hindrances for the youth to make use of their freedom of expression.

Several programs described in the report specifically address this challenge. The projects "*It has never been easier to express oneself, but...*" by PEN Norway, "*Human rights and democracy*" by UN Association Norway, "*What is freedom of expression*" by DEMBRA, "*Can young people save the climate*" by NDLA, "*Active citizenship*" by Nobel Peace Centre, and "*Jugend debattiert*" by Hertie Foundation are all examples of how to both facilitate dialogue in the school context, discuss the responsibility connected to the freedom of expression, and practice debate techniques. "*The Democracy Initiative*" moves the activities to the library and invites high school students to immerse themselves in democracy and democratic rights during a three-hour course at the local library. Also, the "*Majulah Academy*", a part of the Majulah community in Singapore, and "*The Democracy Project*" from the Missoula Public Library in USA aim to help youth develop the necessary skills and knowledge to become change agents through workshops and experimental learning. The skills developed by programs that seek to empower the youth, both collectively and individually can contribute to a lower the threshold for the youth's self-expression and empower the young people to become change agents.

The Freedom of Expression Youth Council (2021) also suggests that an important approach to overcome these challenges is to set aside time and **create a safe discussion space** where all opinions are given respect and space. The programs mentioned can help teachers to put freedom of speech on the school's agenda, not only to facilitate discussions and help the pupils to handle differences, but also to give the young people relevant tools to express themselves. Several projects have, in their teaching plans, devoted attention to discussions around various claims - claims that challenge the pupils' understanding of their human rights, inspire responsible management of their rights, and in this way also work as a preventative measure against hate speech and negative reactions to differences of opinion. The pilot program "*Youth Engagement Centres*" from Ghana focus on creating a safe space for young people to build their advocacy skills. The libraries can be an arena for young people to freely develop entrepreneurial ideas and get support by a mentor.

Another challenge highlighted by The Freedom of Expression Youth Council (2021) is that **minorities to a lesser extent express themselves in the public debate due to both discrimination and limited access to institutions**. The American program "*Youth in Action*" meets this challenge through its focus on the empowerment of minorities and socio-economically marginalized groups. This program offers activities after school that both build a sense of community and teach young people leadership skills. Another relevant project is the "*Kosovo Youth Project*" which has clear goals about including disadvantaged youth in decision-making. This project has also contributed to enhancing the involvement of marginalized youth.

The Freedom of Expression Youth Council (2021) also focus on the **lack of access to art and culture** as a way to express oneself. The program “*Youth Café*” organizes activities related to culture, arts, and sports. These activities are seen as a tool for the empowerment of young people. This project prioritizes and gives space to the use of art and culture as part of young people's way of expressing themselves, and it actively uses art and culture in the young people's participation and visibility in society at large.

“*Childpress*” by Fysio Educatief Publishing House works to give young people guidance on how to express themselves in writing in a publishable format. “*Childpress*” is an example of how young and often inexperienced **debaters can be closely followed up** in connection with participation in public discussions. “*Childpress*” provides every young writer with a mentor that guides them in their work with their articles and in the publishing process. The importance of an adult mentor is also emphasized in literature about youth participation (see Jenkins in Moura 2020).

Another key point from Jenkins is that **participation in online networks** can be an important part of young people's participation in society and that this activity should be recognized as a source of experience in communication, exchange of ideas, and networking (Jenkins in Moura 2020). The program “*Active citizens*” by the Nobel Peace Centre uses gaming and the Minecraft universe to create a virtual world where players can test different strategies as agents of change. The game works as a stimulant for starting discussions among students about democracy, human rights, poverty, climate change, etc. In using Minecraft as a tool, the Nobel Peace Centre as well as the teacher who uses the program gives pupils an opportunity to engage in the topic by giving their gaming experience a new framing. Online networks and multimedia platforms are also used as the main means of participation in a project from Switzerland. The platform “*engage.ch*” provides young users with the opportunity to communicate their political concerns and demands. Hence, the platform functions as a tool for lowering the threshold for political engagement among young people.

6.2 Commonalities and variations across projects

The broad scope and diversity of the projects presented above make it difficult to give an all-encompassing and succinct summary of them. Their different legal, cultural, and political contexts make the projects particularly hard to compare. In the closing section of this chapter, however, we try to offer some perspectives based on what these projects have in common, as well as present the dimensions along which these programs represent variation.

Starting off with a comparison of the similarities between projects, we can use a word cloud (figure 4) to illustrate frequently cited keywords in the presented cases, such as “rights”, “democracy”, “schools”, “municipality” and “community”.

variations in figure 5. While placed opposite of each other neither category in figure 5 is mutually exclusive, nor are they each other’s negatives or opposites. Projects, and in particular organizations, can seek to include all four points, but they are emphasized to different degrees. The two categories placed vertically illustrates how projects can aim towards specific issues or causes, seeking a more specific change. Projects may at the same time reach upward vertically towards a more general goal of empowerment aimed at developing individuals’ capabilities, skills, and leadership. The horizontal orientation illustrates how projects can reach for both formal and established procedures of participation as they exist in any given context. At the same time projects may seek alternative paths towards change through activism or direct action. The figure is an attempt to illustrate the space that these projects collectively constitute, a space of youth participation.



Figure 5 Observed aspects of youth participation among presented projects.

The variation within this space is related to variations in how citizenship is constituted in different contexts. This variation in citizenship was discussed earlier in this report as a variation in legal status, rights, membership, and participation. These dimensions of citizenship shape what modes of participation are available. For instance, whether or not one has rights or legal status will shape how youth can participate. This, of course, requires knowledge of one’s own context, which is why most of our examples contain an element of knowledge building and empowerment. Understanding the relevant mode of citizenship is central to making youth believe in their capacity and their right to shape our society. Or in other words, to see themselves as citizens and understand how citizenship can be used and leveraged for positive change.

Just like citizenship, participation varies across different contexts and youth participation is adapted to the form of citizenship that is available. This is also true in cases where the

content of citizenship is challenged by youth seeking systemic changes. Where there are well-established, official, and legitimate ways for youth participation, there are programs that focus on having the youth participate and succeed in these established processes.

Hart's (1992) ladder of participation, discussed in chapter 2, is most relevant when applied to the projects that are oriented toward formal and established processes. The ladder has the most explanatory power when used to understand participation in such formal, institutionalized processes. The ladder, however, holds less explanatory power if we try to apply it to the diverse set of projects included in this report, which also include several projects aimed at developing youth participation beyond or on the side of formal, institutionalized processes. We did, however, intentionally seek out projects that were youth-oriented or even youth-led, which would place them in the top rungs of the ladder.

7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this report has been twofold: 1) to present insight into what is known about young people's participation in society, in Norway and in other countries, and 2) to present examples of projects that aim to improve youth participation.

In this report, we have sought to answer the following three research questions:

1. What challenges and opportunities do young people experience in connection with their participation in society?
2. What initiatives have been implemented or planned to facilitate youth participation in Norway and in other parts of the world?
3. How do Norwegian and international projects address challenges and opportunities met by young people in connection with their participation in society?

Based on a literature review, an inquiry sent through the WEXFO network, and the snowball method we have been able to identify several relevant projects and programs from around the world. In section 7.1, we summarize the main points related to each of the three research questions, starting with the first question, concerning what challenges and opportunities young people experience in connection to their participation in society. In section 7.2 we conclude by presenting relevant perspectives and tentative lessons on the basis on our findings in the report.

7.1 Summary

Challenges to participation

The general model of citizenship (figure 2) shows how legal status, membership, and rights will create both barriers and opportunities for different forms of participation among youth. Rules governing voting rights and representation, including voting age and the age of candidacy are important formal barriers to youth participation. Legal status and standing, or rather, the lack thereof, also create formal limits to how the youth may participate in governmental structures, by for example limiting participation in both lawmaking and executive governance. Identifying the details of these formal barriers was defined as being outside of the scope of this report but it is important to keep in mind that youth participation happens in a governmental and legal context that varies between countries.

Youth participation is also influenced by less formal, cultural issues. In the report "What is the status of freedom of expression for youths and young adults in Norway" (Youth Freedom

of Expression Council, 2021) ten main challenges limiting young people's participation in discussions and public debate were identified:

1. Too high a threshold for self-expression
2. Lack of skills
3. Predictable patterns and structural challenges
4. Harassment and hate speech deter young people from debating
5. What is posted online remains there "forever"
6. Too little scope for healthy debate
7. Concerns about statements being taken out of context
8. Lack of access to art and culture
9. Being portrayed as representative of a group
10. Negative cultures within organisations

In their study, Checkoway & Gutierrez (2006) highlight that age discrimination is common and used as a suppression strategy towards youth. Furthermore, Checkoway & Gutierrez point out that young people are often positioned within a framework of problems they carry, rather than the strength and assets they have. This portrayal might have an impact on the public's expectations of young people as well as young people's understanding of themselves as agents of change. Schools and school culture are also described as arenas that can shape learning and practising both freedom of expression and participation in society. In some contexts, these arenas can fail to foster youth participation by not recognising the young people's arenas for inspiration and debate.

How to increase youth participation

The Freedom of Expression Youth Council also presents measures that they recommend in order to mitigate the challenges described.

- Teachers should to a larger extent facilitate discussions in a safe classroom environment where all utterances are given respect and space
- There should be more focus on cultural expressions and art that young people experience as relevant to them, and the students should be introduced to a wide range of artistic and cultural expressions
- Organizations should invite people with a broad variety of backgrounds to join their community
- Young and unexperienced debaters should be closely monitored in connection with participation in public discussions or written debate and given input both to provide support and to prepare the debater for any public interest
- The media should continue the work of editing online comments and remove them if they have the character of provocation
- It is important that in a debate one tries to understand the position of one's opponent, and in discussions focus on topic rather than person

With the insight into the challenges young people face when they participate in the public discussion, and the opportunities that have been identified to better facilitate participation in society, we have explored a selection of initiatives that have been implemented or

planned to improve youth participation in Norway and in other parts of the world (research question 2).

The programs are categorized in four groups:

- School-based programs
- Local politics or local community focused programs
- Tools for participation
- Empowerment

In the analysis of how Norwegian and international projects address challenges and opportunities experienced by young people in connection with their participation in society (research question 3), we found that several of the projects presented in this report work purposefully to create formal frameworks around young people's participation in society. There are programs that seek to give youth a formalized role as advisors and policy developers in the local community or to secure a role in local politics for children and adolescents.

Several young people experience it as both new and unfamiliar to use their voice in public. Furthermore, it is also highlighted that young people feel they have little experience with and competence in both oral debate techniques and the preparation of written debate submissions. Several programs described in the report address this challenge by facilitating dialogue in the school context, discussing the responsibility connected to the freedom of expression and practising debate techniques. One project works to give young people guidance in how to express themselves in writing in a format for publishing. Other projects deal with similar concerns through strategies of empowerment, which means both learning the necessary skills and knowledge but also the confidence and self-efficacy to be engaged in public life.

Empowerment is also used as a strategy to deal with the fact that minorities to a lesser extent express themselves in public because of limited access to institutions and due to discrimination. Some programs focus their work on the empowerment of minorities, socio-economically marginalized groups and other groups of disadvantaged youth. The goal is to create better communities by empowering its members to organize, mobilize and to actively engage in public discourse, politics or activism.

A few programs organize activities related to culture, arts and sports. These activities are seen as a tool to the empowerment of young people. Central in these initiatives is the use of art and culture as part of young people's way of expressing themselves, and the active use of art and culture in young people's participation and visibility in society at large.

Participation in online networks can be an important part of young people's participation in society. Programs vary in how interactive they are and what online technologies they deploy. Some of these programs focus on communication and others on information gathering. They all seek to lower the barriers of communication and information gathering. A few projects try to leverage computer games, or other types of games like card and board games as a mode of active and creative teaching of participation or democracy.

In the projects gathered and presented in this report, a major emphasis is placed upon the local context, and objectives are largely defined in relation to their local impact. Even in

programs that are international and organizations that operate in multiple countries, the main focus is set on what is local to its members and participants. Furthermore, all projects are geared towards youth action, which means that the programs have an element of activity, and that the young people are actively engaged in some way.

7.2 Conclusion

Our analysis shows that the initiatives presented in this report have differences in what type of empowerment they focus on, and what participatory processes and tools they use to increase youth participation. There is a great variety in ways these programs seek to realize their aims.

Our analysis does not lead to best practice recommendations. Firstly, because it is beyond the scope of this project. Secondly, it is highly unlikely, that any “most efficient” method could be found. Rather, we think that the appropriate way to learn from these examples is to understand the common space occupied by the different projects, observing the projects’ contextual variations, and appreciating the variation they represent in terms of applied tools, methods, and strategies. Citizenship varies. Cultural, legal, and economic context varies. But the importance of youth participation, of their voices, and the perspectives they bring rings true across all societies.

Moving forward

Through the process of writing this report, we can draw a few tentative lessons: First of all, there seems to be a lack of platforms or forums where organizations and activists working on shared issues can meet, exchange experiences, and learn from each other. There are however projects underway. The Participedia project is one such project, which was run by the Centre for the study of democracy at the University of Westminster. It aimed to develop an open global knowledge community for researchers and practitioners in the field of democratic innovation and public engagement. But the project seems to have stalled after the initial rounds of funding ran out, and at the time of writing their webpage is not available. At a national level we know that the WEXFO conference has been a meeting point for Norwegian organizations working with freedom of expression and youth participation.

Secondly, there seems to be few external evaluations and reports on projects, both peer-reviewed and otherwise. While most programs can provide numbers on partners, participants, and other types of metrics, questions about the impact of projects and their ability to facilitate meaningful youth participation remain largely undocumented. This might partially be explained by the difficulties in obtaining funds to conduct such evaluations and, particularly if one wishes to use external reviewers, which can be costly. It does, however, seem clear that there is a need for more evaluation and research into how these programs work and the impact they have.

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9 ATTACHEMENTS

Inquiry to the WEXFO-network

E-mail sent to WEXFO partners and supporters February 22nd, 2022, from Kristenn Einarsson, Managing director at WEXFO World Expression Forum.

Dear WEXFO-partners and supporters

As a part of our project, Youth's participation in democracy, we have commissioned a report about projects that aim to increase young people's participation in democracy. This report will be used to both gather and to share what we know about successful measures and challenges in programs that seek the active participation of young people in democratic processes.

We want the report to have a global scope and therefore we need the help of our partners and supporters to suggest projects for inclusion in this report.

We are looking for projects that aim to increase the participation or the influence of young people in democratic processes. The project can be on any scale (local, regional, national, transnational) or subject, and both projects that are ongoing or completed within the last 3-5 years are relevant. What is most important is that it seeks to have young people actively engage in some form of democratic practice.

We are not asking you to vouch for or guarantee the relevance or quality of projects. We are casting a wide net and welcome any suggestions from the wider WEXFO network of partners and supporters.

The report will be researched and written by the Eastern Norway Research Institute (Østlandsforskning) at Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences. **Please send your suggestion directly to researcher Line Tholstrup, email: line.tholstrup@inn.no , if possible before 02.05.2022.**

Any questions about the report may also be directed to Line Tholstrup.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards/ Med vennlig hilsen

Kristenn Einarsson

MANAGING DIRECTOR

WEXFO WORLD EXPRESSION FORUM





Høgskolen
i Innlandet

This report is commissioned by World Expression Forum, WEXFO, as a part of their project “Youth’s Participation in Society”. “Youth’s Participation in Society” aims to increase young people’s participation in democracy through the sharing of knowledge about the challenges and successful measures that can be taken.

This report presents a theoretical framework for understanding youth participation. It provides examples of challenges and opportunities experienced by young people in connection to their participation in society. It also presents examples of projects aimed at facilitating youth participation in different countries across the globe. The report also includes a discussion on how Norwegian and international projects address the opportunities and challenges facing young people seeking to make use of their right to express themselves and participate in society.

Work on this report commenced in March 2022 and was completed in October 2022.