Youth and student participation

Information

Objectives of the Session
To reflect the situation of youth participation in participant’s local context and explore the situation of youth participation in Europe. To learn about the different levels of participation and reflect on them. Analyse whether all participation is equal.

Participants’ Learning Objectives
Reflecting on one’s own participation level.

Risks
The aim of the activity “Steps forward” is not to compare in which countries youth participation is most developed, as in some sort of a competition, but to give the participants the chance to reflect their situation and see how it can be improved.

Tips / things to take into consideration
Adjust the statements and debriefing in the activity “Steps forward” to your group, for example if your participants are all from the same country or aren’t actual student representatives (anymore).

Requirements

Time required
90 minutes

Space required
Plenary room with a big wall.

Group Info
The session is planned for a group of international student representatives.

Materials required
Post-its. Markers. Flipchart paper / colourful paper (for each level) to visualize the ladder of participation.

Preparation needed before starting
Inform about the ladder of participation and be able to explain it to the participants: (Manual "Compasito" from the Council of Europe, p. 263). Visualise a really big ladder of participation and hang it on the wall.

Activities step by step

Step 1: Steps forward: Personal experience with participation
20 Minutes

The participants should stand in a line, facilitator reads different statements. If the participants can affirm, they take a step forward.

- When I have a problem in my school I know who to talk to and I am listened to
- When the government in my country makes a decision about young people they make sure we are involved in the process
- If I have any idea on how to improve something my ideas are taken seriously
- An institution asked me to take part in a conference/meeting but I didn't have any active role
- In my country people aged 16 are allowed to vote
- In my country information about politics is provided in a youth friendly way

Afterwards debrief the activity with the participants:

- How do we experience participation?
- Is it the same in all countries?

In a plenary discussion the group shall define participation then.

Step 2: Input: Ladder of participation
10 Minutes

Introduce the ladder of participation to the participants, with the visualisation that you drew earlier. Give examples for the different levels.

Step 3: Working with the ladder of participation
25 Minutes

Ask the participants to write their personal experiences for the different levels of the ladder down on post-its and add them to the big ladder. Read out the outcomes of this process loudly and try to summarize.

Step 4: Plenary discussion

Discuss the outcomes of the ladder of participation:

- "How high do you climb the ladder usually?" How much can you participate?
- How can we move away from the steps of non-participation?
- How can participation be improved?
- What are enabling factors and obstacles for participation?