

A list of Recommendations – Let’s strengthen active citizenship together! Recommendations for youth civil society, local authorities and governments

International study seminar: “Yalah, let’s open the circle and join our hands in stormy times”
Ceuta, March 2019

“It is important to open young people low-threshold possibilities to participate: If you want to learn football, go to the field – if you want to learn active citizenship you have to participate! Somebody has said: to be able to learn, you have to hear something seven times. To be able to participate, you have to collect awareness and experience, before to be able to fully use your voice and reach what you want.”

Hamze, 22, Finland



Civil Society:

- * Yes, Active Citizenship and getting active is important – but it needs to be connected with a vision, which supports humanity and dignity!
- * Small steps are what count! The change can only be initiated as a chain of moments and actions.
- * Civil society organisations should be able to cooperate with democratic governments and authorities but at the same time they should continue to increase the pressure on governments and local authorities in order to claim their rights - stay loud and cheeky!
- * There is a big need for Capacity Building in youth and civil society organisations in order to increase the impacts for active citizenship education and human rights work.
- * Together we are strong – let’s create platforms, networks and coalitions for civil society, unit our power and widen and create together new spaces as an answer to “shrinking spaces of democracy”
- * We should talk with our families, neighbors and friends about politics and not wait for a speech on a big stage. Every human encounter can change awareness and acting.
- * Exchanging on local and international level is our biggest base to understand other people’s experiences and views. We need more listening and understanding.
- * Don’t forget the reflection: evaluate and reflect every step of your project to see if we are on the right way.

Local authorities:

Local authorities should provide money, space and place to use and work and flexible support with legal permissions in order to protect NGOs and to avoid illegality.

Governments:

- * Governments in all countries should invite more regularly to an “Open day in a parliament”, when ordinary citizens can go and talk with politicians and with each others about the problems they face
- * Governments should initiate and provide educational programs of Civil/citizenship education for young people, youth workers, teachers etc. (as it does for other subjects i.e. mathematics and languages..)
- * Governments should provide money for local authorities for youth and human rights work, so they can become reliable partners for civil society in their regions. Dependence from external foreign donators in many countries is high, which causes insecurity and hinders commitment. Stable national and local support and grants would give more continuity and help to find regional solutions in cooperation.
- *** Good and trustful cooperation between civil society, local authorities and governments at eye level and with low hierarchies is the basis for the success!

Council of Europe/ European Youth Foundation:

The CoE/EYF should support more easily projects, which arise as Follow-up- ideas and result of awareness education in the formerly supported projects. After successful projects young people feel motivated and capable to become active – but there is a lack of finances and structures to implement these ideas.

Motto: CoE supports minds and projects!

A draft for “a product” to work on together with different stakeholders to face the challenges:

Tool: A holistic program for Citizenship education, to be developed and implemented together with governments, local authorities and civil society initiatives, activities taking place in schools and in youth organisations

Objectives of the program: learning and experiencing European culture, testing different forms of participation (debates, workshops, voting, getting to know associations...), learning about the role of civil society for the democracy, exchanging with different groups of people (international, intercultural, interreligious, intergenerational, between neighborhoods...) debating about current politics in different countries, showing links between past and current developments...

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