

Youth – Actor of Social Change

“Youth council in Borny’s area”

This document is part of a larger collection of examples of current policies for young people in Europe. The collection is an outcome of a European research project called “UP2YOUTH – Youth: actor of social change?”

The basic idea of the “current practice” collection is to see how current practices and policies relate to young people as active agents in shaping their lives. Therefore, our intention is not a collection of “good” or “best” practices. Rather, it includes also practices, which are interesting because of their relation to young people’s agency but which involve problematic aspects, such as restricted financial resources, a very thin spread, or no clear evaluation criteria. We have applied a searching pattern which asked for “strengths” and “weaknesses”. This explicitly opens space for your own evaluation, because also policies are included, which definitely do have weaknesses, but are highly interesting for specific reasons. Therefore we have to stress that the researchers did not evaluate these practices themselves.

The whole collection can be found at <http://www.up2youth.org/content/view/192/60/>

Section	Indications of contents
Title of programme/ practice	The Youth council in Borny’s area (Metz’s suburb)
Location	Borny – Metz’s suburb
Main theme	Youth participation and inner city policy
Practice/Programme-related keywords	decision making process; youth association; youth agency; youth council; young people
Summary of programme/ practice	Metz has no real tradition of intervention toward young people except a local conception based on repression and struggle against delinquency. Whereas the situation of this population seems to be particularly worrying in Borny (unemployment, segregation, poverty, exclusion ...) policies are really limited even in this suburb. Thus, the creation of a youth council in Borny in 2001 constituted a major rupture in a local context dominated by a negative picture of the youth. A locally elected representative decided to launch this council in order to radically change the previous methods of addressing people’s issues. Whereas youth associations were slightly institutionalised and youth organisation often felt they were compensating for the lack of public intervention, a large number of youth leaders are involved in the youth council.
Target	1) Target areas: To improve life conditions in Borny area. 2) Target groups/issues/problems addressed:

	Young people between 16 and 25 years old, in particular young with a migrant backgrounds.
Objectives of programme/ practice	According to the locally elected representative who decided to launch this young council, objectives are to involve young people in decision making process in order to decrease violence and delinquency in Borny's area. At the same time, young people expect that their involvement may change their bad image and reassure the population.
Content of programme/ practice	The selection of young people for the youth council was based on a preparatory fieldwork led by youth workers with the help of youth associations. Youth council is a part of the Area council. This Area council is competent to express its recommendations on any issue concerning the area. This meant that young people are in a position to be consulted on subjects such as the housing policy, the urban developmental and policy of struggle against unemployment. The city council expects the recommendations. The interviews with young people revealed they had the feeling of being a part of a bargaining process; they agreed to participate in the council with the common objective of combating violence but, in return, they expect that their involvement may have an impact on the way the young people were integrated in the area and on the representation of the population toward young people.
Time scale	The youth council was created in 2001.
Programme/ practice design	Management and leadership of programme: Local inner city policy
Resources involved	A professional is dedicated to the management of the youth council (chargée de mission at the Mission locale)
Evaluation	1) Evaluation process: No national evaluation program yet.
	2) Results / impact of programme : - Young people have the feeling to be listened. - Youth issues are no longer limited to delinquency or violence.
Lessons to be drawn from programme or practice implemented	Young people in the youth council are prepared to develop their recommendations on youth issues and far beyond. This could be one way to consider youth issues.
Contact information	No information
Other doc related to the programme/ practice	See : Loncle, P. (2008) Pourquoi faire participer les jeunes?, Paris, L'Harmattan