

Youth – Actor of Social Change

“Local youth policy”

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	Local youth policy in Rennes
Location	Rennes – Capital of Brittany
Main theme	Youth participation and inner city policy
Practice/Programme-related keywords	youth associations; youth representation; youth council; young people; youth workers; local youth policy
Summary of programme/ practice	<p>Rennes is a left-wing city. It is a dynamic and wealthy city characterized by a relatively fluid social context.</p> <p>The Municipality have a “Youth mission” that is integrated in the Education, sports and areas departments. It is thus linked with the urban/inner-city policy and with the community life policy.</p> <p>The Youth mission implements programs specifically addressed to young people in order to mainly encourage their participation. It also supports local actors in their formulation of youth issues. Moreover, it has a function of referent and expertise on everything related to the youth field in the urban policy.</p> <p>The creation of the Youth mission in 1995 resulted from a questioning led by the Municipality on the relationships with young people. It was based on the acknowledgment that the previous youth policies were unable to establish a constructive dialogue with this part of the population.</p> <p>More recently, the question of youth health has taken on more importance, in particular through concerns about suicides and alcohol consumption. The city is usually peaceful if one considers the question of delinquency but it is also prompt to organise</p>

	protests.
Target	<p>1) Target groups/issues/problems addressed:</p> <p>Young people (a broad definition that includes students, young inhabitants and young people with a migrant backgrounds)</p> <p>No clear definition of the age boundaries.</p>
Objectives of programme/ practice	Municipality aims at establishing a constructive dialogue with young people .The actions of the Youth mission also aim at organising youth leisure time, however to also encourage youth expression “in the public place”.
Content of programme/ practice	<p>Municipality tries to encourage youth expression through Youth mission's implementation, but also with other way like Youth Information Centre of Brittany (CRIJB) which is the central structure of participation in Rennes.</p> <p>Its first mission consists in information actions toward young people but it also promotes a lot of initiatives toward young people. Since the 1980s, the CRIJB has developed a lot of transversal and partnership experimentations. It works, for instance, with the Mission locale on questions of employment or with the DDASS (decentralised public administrative body of the Minister of Health and Social Affairs) in the field of public health (contraception, aids, drug addiction etc.). For ten years, the Municipality has delegated to the CRIJB the task of supporting youth initiatives and young people's expectations. The strong links existing between the CRIJB and the Youth mission (they have shared the same director) and the legitimization of the intervention of this association in the field of youth participation may explain the prominence given to the CRIJB.</p> <p>Moreover, youth associations and youth clubs are very developed in Rennes. Most of the youth workers in youth clubs are socio-cultural animators. They work primarily on youth socialisation within leisure time and group-related activities. They perform in associations founded by the local State administrations and by the Municipality.</p> <p>Although youth associations are very developed they are not recognised as public actors by the local authorities. In order to overcome to the lack of visibility of the youth associations and to give them representation, the CRIJB coordinates a network of the youth associations (young people under 30 years old) in Rennes, RÈA-J. This network exists since 2006 and it represents 33 associations acting in the fields of culture, local and international solidarity, sports, environment, arts and media and so on. For the moment it seems to be chiefly made up of the first type of associations.</p> <p>A youth council was created in Rennes in 2001. The implementation of the youth council was the latest stage in the renewal of the dialogue between young people and the Municipality. The selection of the young councillors was based on multiple criteria. The list of criteria was transmitted to a large number of organisations working with young people throughout the city. In reality these strong demands may have contributed to the introduction of a bias in the features of the youngsters selected. The Municipality appeared to be in search of a kind of ideal young person, both representative of youth as a whole and able to understand quickly and wisely the political stakes of the experimentation. So, from the beginning, a certain lack of confidence existed between the Youth council</p>

	members and the Municipality representatives. Considering the assessment of this policy-making process, the young councillors were really not likely to have their voices heard. As a result, after one year of functioning, only five young persons were still involved in the process.
Time scale	The Municipality has a long and consensual tradition of intervention toward young people. Since the end of the 19th Century, and more institutionally since the 1960's, it has introduced stable functioning rules with the associative sector giving the latter a delegation of power in the youth caring field whilst keeping a constant control on implementation. The creation of the Youth mission in 1995 resulted from the awareness of the failure of the previous youth policies to establish a dialogue with young people.
Programme/ practice design	Development of programme/practice: Local youth policy
Resources involved	A youth worker
Evaluation	<p>Evaluation process: No official assessment</p> <p>Difficulties encountered: After one year of functioning, only five persons were still involved in the process. They were extraordinarily bitter and felt they had been manipulated. This failure led to a conference of consensus on youth participation and to the experimentation of new methods in the framework of the Agenda 21 of the Municipality.</p>
Lessons to be drawn from programme or practice implemented	<p>The youth council appeared rather weak : it was not really supported by the city council (except the locally elected in charge of youth); it had no real budget, no clear rules and an isolated youth worker was not enough to support this experience.</p> <p>In addition, nothing was done to integrate young people recommendations in the decision making process</p>
Contact information	No information
Other doc related to the programme/ practice	See Loncle, P. (2008), Pourquoi faire participer les jeunes? Paris, L'Harmattan