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# SparkYWWorkers

*SparkYWWorkers* makes part of the set of results developed in the frame of the project **SparkSEEDs – Empowering Youth Learning Communities** and intends to be open, free, and fully distributed to any third parties interested in project learnings



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## PROJECT PARTNERSHIP

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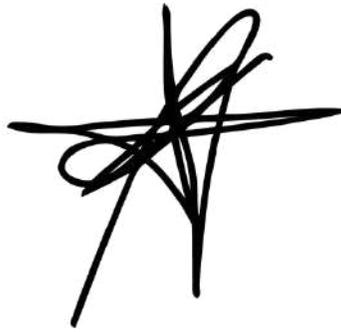
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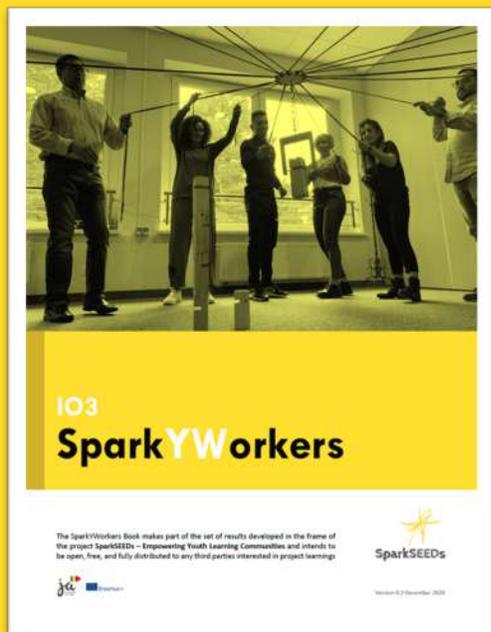
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# About the guide

## Why?

*SparkSEEDs* project envisioned a strong dissemination dimension, considered at the time as one its main pillars. The goals and issues addressed throughout its development, besides being strictly aligned with EU and global trends and recommendations on youth and education policies, are strongly representative of the needs and challenges from many other educational ecosystems and communities all over Europe, facts that justify the usefulness and pertinence of project dissemination.

Throughout the project it was intended to record and monitor the most relevant phases, critical points, successes, obstacles and learnings, feeding the assembly of relevant dissemination guides. These guides, where the present one is included, should help now any interested parties to replicate, adapt or implement the *SparkSEEDs* model in other geographies, communities or institutional contexts.

The present guide is oriented first of all to youth workers. They are the primary target of dissemination for the present guidelines.

Nevertheless, the guide intends to serve the purposes of any kind of institutions working for youth (schools, municipalities, learning communities, vocational training entities, parents' associations, youth associations, among any other that may seek the same type of goals pursued by the *SparkSEEDs* project.

## For Whom?



# About SparkSEEDs

Understanding the context. A brief summary about SparkSEEDs project, its objectives and relevant results

## Rationale

The importance of education is unquestioned in today's world, being considered one of the biggest challenges of the actual society. Indeed, high-quality and inclusive education for all is effectively considered by EU, and by many other important international organisations, one of the most effective defenses against the risks of social marginalisation, poverty and exclusion, especially at times of crisis.

Throughout the last centuries, a considerable investment has been made in education, namely focusing and strongly based in formal education processes. Although, in the last years, worldwide, a new trend on education practices, more informal, has been proving higher, solid and more sustainable results when it comes to the learning outcomes and youth personal development. By means of the opportunities made available through the non-formal and informal sector and through youth work, children and young people had now the chance to develop their personal potential, acquire basic skills and qualifications, and become integrated into own communities and in society at large.

According the recommendations extracted from the Youth Report 2015, from the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, from UNICEF's key recommendations for youth, and lately as discussed on May 2018 in the EU Youth Conference (Youth Strategy for 2019-2027), the actual education approach must be updated and aligned with the fast-changing society and with today's youth needs and interests. It should:

- ▶ prioritize social inclusion, participation and engagement of adolescents in their communities and society – especially the most vulnerable young people;
- ▶ prepare all adolescents with quality inclusive education and the skills they need to prosper in the 21st century;
- ▶ renew the education methods and contents (which are still too much knowledge based – teachings from the past, and few updated to the present and to the future – which are, nowadays, mainly assured by “machines” and by the digital era tools).

According to World Economic Forum, robots will replace 800 million jobs by 2030, pointing that education agents should not teach youth to compete with “machines”, once they are “smarter” in terms of knowledge-based learnings. To prepare youth for the jobs of the future, we have to teach them to master skills that machines will never master. To this extent, new investments on education should be made as way to teach something unique, human based, such as soft skills: social and personal values, independent thinking, teamwork, care for others, sports, music, painting, arts, and creative thinking.

## The objectives

Having in mind the challenges underlined in the introductory section, the SparkSEEDs project followed one main objective:

“Building and developing a community based non-formal educational ecosystem with the aim to promote and support the regular offer of extra-school high quality and enriching activities, dedicated to and participated by youth, by capitalizing important endogenous resources (human, intergenerational, cultural, natural, material, traditional, among other) in a crossed approach between youth main interests & needs and actual societal challenges. A concrete “learning community” is created, powered by a local network of public, private and civil society representatives, capacitated and oriented by the main actual and future needs of youth.”

To address the needs of the target groups, a set of specific objectives were defined:

- ▶ Young people (12-16) soft skills, abilities, ingenuity, genius, creativity, interests and vision are coherently supported, promoted and developed, through a set of activities held under a community based educational ecosystem.
- ▶ Generation of a solid and proactive “Learning Community”. Community (and its main agents) is involved and promotes youth educational contexts and development, and youth is enrolled and empowered to participate in community development.
- ▶ Youth Citizenship, participation, community awareness, initiative, collaboration, solidarity and social entrepreneurial attitudes are promoted and supported.
- ▶ Youth workers skills and methodologies are increased and developed, as way to assist regular & consistent non-formal learnings and to transfer society fundamental values to young people, preventing the main phenomena actually affecting young people.

It is precisely on the first and last specific objectives and respective target groups that the present Book tries to focus, sharing the relevant learnings and giving clues on the role of the youth workers in the whole ecosystem.

*“Building and developing a  
community based non-formal  
educational ecosystem”*

## The main results

The project predicted the concretization and achievement of several results, subsidiary and complementary, which would be contributing jointly for the general and specific goals of the project. The main results, considered here as structuring pillars of the project, were:

- ▶ **SparkCOMMUNITY:** Building and developing a “Community Based Educational Ecosystem” with the aim to promote school and extra school high quality and enriching activities, dedicated to and participated by youth. This educational ecosystem capitalizes important endogenous resources (human, cultural, natural, material, traditional, intergenerational, among other) as tools for learning and education, always focusing a crossed approach between youth main interests and societal challenges.
- ▶ **SparkYWORKERS:** The skills of Youth Workers (trainers, facilitators, volunteers and NEETs) from the community and from its agents were increased and developed, as way to gain capacity to develop and assist regular and consistent non-formal learnings and activities for youth, but also to transfer societal fundamental values, thus preventing the main phenomena actually affecting young people. Youth work was purposefully adjusted towards young people's needs through the development of comprehensive training programme and adequate job shadowing actions.

*Youth work is purposefully adjusted  
towards young people's needs*

- ▶ **SparkCLUBS:** Constituting the practical activities addressed to youth, these “clubs” recreate different “spaces”, entirely participatory (by all, community agents, youth workers, schools and youth), providing regular extra-school and free time activities for the integrated education and learnings of young people. The SparkCLUBS followed different thematic approaches, being generally dedicated to: Arts & Culture; Nature & Sports; Science & Technology; Citizenship & Entrepreneurship. The tools, methods and contents produced and applied in the frame of the SparkCLUBS can be compiled envisaging the creation of vacation camps (programs of enriching activities for occupation of free time during school vacation times), facilitating an additional important result: safe and quality alternative/solution for families and educators for the "positive" occupation of the free time of their youngsters.



# Youth clubs

Youth clubs and their role in the development of an inclusive society

## Introduction

Youth work aims to promote young people's personal and social development. It tries to reach them outside of their schools and to support them in non-formal settings. The term youth work is gaining popularity and it is used in different contexts to describe diverse activities provided by a range of actors. According to European Commission youth work from other activities can be distinguished by its focus on young people's needs, their personal development and voluntary character of participation. One of the popular forms of youth work is via youth clubs, places that respond to the needs of young people.

At a first glance youth clubs can be defined as institutions where young people are provided with various activities in their leisure time, such as workshops, trips, sport, art classes, etc. Obviously, that is true, however youth clubs play a much more important role, and it is not limited just to complement the school curriculum. For many young people youth clubs provide a crucial space where they can develop their skills, express creativity, spend time, but also in some cases receive psychological and material support. Youth clubs offer young people a safe space to come together to meet with their peers, to take part in activities or to organize their own events. Contributing to a group, being able to help other members, having something valuable to offer can help young people to gain better self-esteem and self-confidence. Taking part in youth clubs' activities can help youngsters to understand the world around them and to make well-informed decisions in the future.

### ► How to distinguish youth clubs from other institutions that provide cultural or sport activities?

The fundamental difference is in the hierarchy of objectives. Art or sport activities are focused on improving performance, gaining excellence, learning facts and developing particular skills needed to perform better. Youth clubs and in general youth work, are focused on holistic development of young people. Main aims are to involve them in positive activities, develop interpersonal skills, self-expression, learn to express themselves and simply to be themselves. In the same time sport or art activities can be very effective methods of delivering youth work, but the performance aspect plays a secondary role.

Youth clubs can be established, managed and run by nongovernmental organizations, religious groups, sport clubs, local authorities or youth by themselves. Therefore, they can visibly vary, i.e. having different legal status, structures, sources of funding, internal rules and the way of organizing their activities. Regardless of the type, common sense is to

## Youth clubs and their role in the development of an inclusive society

provide young people with new opportunities to develop and to spend their free time in a sensible way.

Usually, youth clubs are open in the time free from school classes, i.e. evenings, weekends and during holidays. They provide meeting places and exist as hubs for various initiatives and activities. Clubs are located throughout cities, towns, rural areas and they are open for all young people, usually the target age group is 15-25 years old. However, sometimes youth clubs can be dedicated to a particular disadvantaged group or they are having specific locations. For instance, youth clubs can act as catalysts of development and positive social change in post-industrial areas, districts affected by gentrification processes or support specific groups such as youth with migration background, LGBT+ communities or from ethnic minorities. The first case, establishing youth clubs in districts undergoing revitalization processes became a good practice in some Polish cities. In Nowa Huta – a post-industrial part of Krakow, there are several youth clubs and young people are regularly invited to various projects related to their district. In Praga Północ – an old district of Warsaw, there is also number of youth clubs, their members were included in planning revitalization of their neighbourhoods. Thanks to such experiences young people with disadvantaged background could develop a sense of belonging to local communities and have impact on the shape of their districts.

There are thousands of youth clubs working across the entire Europe. Since in a number of countries youth work is not clearly recognized, also youth clubs do not have any special legal status. Often youth clubs work as regular associations, foundations, state institutions or non-formal groups without using the name “youth club”, that’s why it is challenging to estimate their exact number. Figures seem to be the most precise in the case of Scandinavian countries, for example in Sweden, a country with 9 million population, in 2014 there were 1109 youth clubs, in Finland, with 5,5 million population, there are about 1000. On the other hand, in Poland (38 million inhabitants), where there is no official definition of youth work, according to estimations from 2014 there are 1748 places, but that figure includes only sociotherapeutic children & youth clubs.

Even though the number of youth work measures is constantly increasing, lack of coordination, poor networks of youth clubs and a mismatch between measures offered by the traditional institutions and the actual needs of youngsters remains challenging.

## Participatory model for managing a youth club

Many complain about low levels of social and civic involvement among young people, but how often do youngsters have opportunities for authentic participation? Experts agree that giving young people a real place to the decision-making process builds their citizen involvement, creates inclusive communities and strengthens civil society.

All people, not only the young one, learn about participation by doing it. Youth participation understood as an active involvement of young people in decision-making processes, especially in the case of issues that affect them, can be very empowering. Giving ground to young people for taking action can be beneficial both for their communities and themselves. They can foster transferrable skills and competences such as critical thinking, teamwork, adaptability, problem solving, leadership, etc. On the other hand, youth participation balances young people's social rights with their responsibilities. Last but not least young people are more eager to get involved in projects or activities if they can have a real impact on them.

Often youth groups such as youth clubs are created without identifying needs of young people and without space neither for their feedback/suggestions nor for taking real actions. According to Roger Hart's "Ladder of Youth Participation" the scale of young people participation has a gradual character. Participation starts with assigning them tasks and providing them with information, through consulting and involving them into the decision-making process, to finally passing them initiative and leadership [7]. The highest level of participation is not equal with excluding adults but sharing decisions with them or limiting their role to support. Eventually it is up to each youth club to decide which form the best fits with their needs and it is always possible to revise that decision in the future.

Participatory model of management aims to empower all members of a group. The central idea is that each person, no matter of age, gender and whatsoever, has equal voice and right to take part in making decisions. Youth clubs can be successfully managed in a very democratic way based on peer relationships, co-management of adults and young people, consensus decision-making and with limited hierarchy.

Several ideas to implement in youth club (or any other group) helpful to strengthen participation of young people:

- ▶ **Each voice is important.** Nobody can be forced to participate and to speak, but during meetings and discussions there should be a floor for each member of the group to express his or her

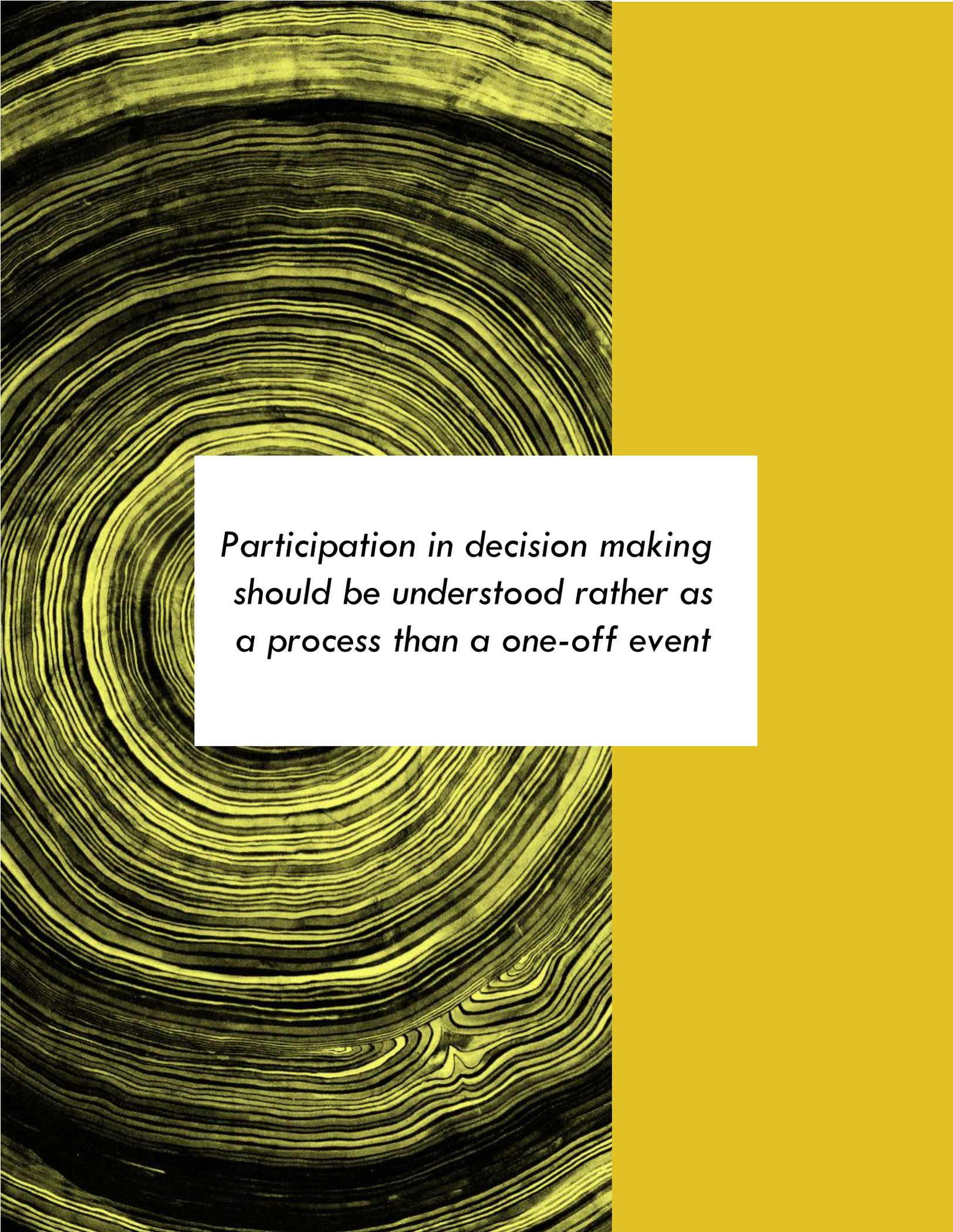
opinions and to propose their own activities. In order to make sure that each person could present his or her opinion group members should speak one after another and in some cases set up a time limit. In order to structured discussion a **facilitator** should be chosen. His/her role is also to pay attention and to make sure more introverted members have an equal chance to present their views. Sometimes it is important to stay a while with silence, which gives the time to gather courage and speak up for those who are not the most brave and talkative.

- ▶ **Co-management.** Young people and adults can jointly take decisions about running their youth club or any other project, to work collaboratively and to share the power. In order to encourage young people to take part adults should be patient, positive and sometimes step away.
- ▶ **Consensus decision-making.** Instead of a simple majority voting or taking decisions by the legal representative a group can find a solution which is acceptable by all. Using consensus gives a chance for all opinions, ideas and concerns to be taken into account. Consensus protects minority needs and enables to share the control over the decisions that affect all members of the group. Looking for new solutions can be a very creative process [8].
- ▶ **Compromise.** Consensus aims for 'win-win' solutions, but not always it can be achieved. Compromise, when everybody makes some concessions in order to make a decision, is still far more inclusive than majority voting that frames decision-making in a win/lose dichotomy.
- ▶ **Roles and responsibilities rotation.** Each organization has a set of tasks to be done on the daily base, such as checking email, cleaning common space, administrating social media, facilitating meetings, etc. In order to keep all members involved in the youth club a good practice is to exchange functions, for example each 3 months. If roles and responsibilities are rotated among group members, people can develop different skills and on the other hand development of informal hierarchy can be limited.

Participation in decision making should be understood rather as a process than a one-off event. It means that this way making decisions might be challenging, time consuming and not always successful from the very first time. However, in the end of the day it is worth trying it not only in non-formal grass-roots groups, but also within well-established organizations. Youth clubs can be a good venue for fostering young people's understanding and experience of democratic participation.

<b>Participation</b>	<b>Young people initiated, shared decisions with adults</b>	Projects are initiated by young people. Decision-making is shared between young people and adults.
	<b>Young people-initiated and directed</b>	Adults may only observe and assist young people, but they do not interfere within the process.
	<b>Adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people</b>	Adults initiate participatory projects, but they share decision-making authority and management with young people.
	<b>Consulted and informed</b>	The project is designed and run by adults, but children understand the process and their opinions are treated seriously.
	<b>Assigned but informed</b>	Young people are informed and understand the intentions, know who made the decisions about their involvement, why and they have a meaningful role.
<b>non-participation</b>	<b>Tokenism</b>	When young people are given a voice, but in fact have little or no choice about the subject or the style of communicating it.
	<b>Decoration</b>	Young people are put on public display during activities organized for a specific purpose, but they do not understand the meaning of their involvement.
	<b>Manipulation</b>	Adults use young people to support their aims and pretend that they are inspired by young people.

*Roger Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation.*



*Participation in decision making  
should be understood rather as  
a process than a one-off event*



## The primary focus of youth work is young people

## The youth worker

Youth work is professional practice with young people based on certain core values and principles requiring the establishment of voluntary relationships with young people, links with communities and other relevant organisations, and professional supervision from experienced practitioners. Youth worker guides and supports young people in their personal, social and educational development to help them reach their full potential. S/he not only shares the knowledge, but even more important, through own behaviours and attitudes models behaviours and attitudes of young people. Youth worker should be coherent - keep the unity between shared knowledge and values and own attitude every day. This can be developed by:

- ▶ conscious and constant developing of own knowledge, skills, sensitivity and respect to others.
- ▶ awareness of any special responsibilities resulting from the specificities of the youth work being developed.
- ▶ awareness about the fact that its own behaviour influences and somehow models' youth's attitudes and behaviours during and after the works or activities.

Respect for young people with a positive, participative and anti-oppressive approach is at the heart of youth work values. Through engaging in open and honest dialogue with young people, youth workers aim to value different perspectives and address expressed needs and interests. Attempts are made to recognize young people's rights to be treated with dignity as individuals, reject negative labelling and challenge negative stereotypes, whether based on ageism or other oppressive attitudes, by promoting positive images and examples of young people's lives. The process involves careful listening to young people about their understanding of themselves and their situations.

The primary focus of youth work is young people. Youth work is more than a community or societal provider of services to unwilling or passive recipients and is not just a 'helping profession' that defines the problems and controls the solutions. The differences between youth work and other professions lie in how help is defined and offered. In particular, a youth worker allows young people to have a genuine say in whether to accept any help. When youth workers offer specific assistance to an individual who is experiencing difficulties or blocks to progress, and that assistance is accepted as a genuinely useful resource, mutual respect is retained.



## Youth worker tasks and duties

Building relationships	Networking and partnerships building	Project management	Service oriented work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Establish contact with young people</li> <li>▶ Bring young people together in groups and shared activities</li> <li>▶ Involve young people in assessment of interests, planning, monitoring and developing, as well as participating themselves in relevant activities, projects or services</li> <li>▶ Facilitate discussions, arts-based activities, community &amp; environmental projects, open days, residential, outdoor education &amp; sports.</li> <li>▶ Raise topics related to personal and social education</li> <li>▶ Address issues related to anti-oppressive practice, such as racism, sexism, heterosexism, disablism, classism, ageism, sex trafficking, child labour and domestic abuse</li> <li>▶ Act as an advocate for young people's interests, for example, representation in decision making, improvements in resources and services for young people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Find out about community stakeholders, resources and potential partnership</li> <li>▶ Carry out research to identify local, regional, national and global community interests, issues and links</li> <li>▶ Develop cross-generational activities and projects</li> <li>▶ Work with other agencies to develop services and facilities across communities</li> <li>▶ Work with parents and other community groups to address issues and improve services and facilities</li> <li>▶ Work with others as a member or leader of a staff team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Design and produce information, publicity and recruitment material, such as leaflets, posters and presentations</li> <li>▶ Recruit, induct, supervise and train paid and unpaid staff and volunteers</li> <li>▶ Involve young people and other members of the community in the management of projects and the organisation</li> <li>▶ Manage and coordinate activities, projects and resources</li> <li>▶ Deal with administrative and office tasks; maintain records of finance and budget control</li> <li>▶ Identify and procure resources and funding for projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Advise and guide young people, their parents and other professionals and service providers</li> <li>▶ Provide personal and social education, mentoring, support and careers guidance</li> <li>▶ Provide instruction in skills and knowledge related to sports, outdoor activities, keeping fit, martial arts, drama, art, funding applications and committee management</li> </ul>

Source: Essential Guidelines for Good Youth Work Practice

## The importance of the contract in youth work

Youth work is a professional practice with young people based on certain core values and principles requiring the establishment of voluntary relationships with young people, links with communities and other relevant organisations, and professional supervision from experienced practitioners. Respect for young people is at the heart of youth work values in a profession that works 'where young people are' with a positive, participative and anti-oppressive approach.

The participative nature of youth work recognises young people's rights to choose whether to be involved and to make decisions about issues that affect them. Recognising, valuing and building on participants' contributions and experiences means that young people are 'at the centre' of youth work practice. Participative practice brings young people together in groups to gain support and learn from each other and encourages them to 'keep it real' by exploring genuine and realistic options. In the building of a supportive and inclusive learning environment it's helpful to agree for common rules - called contract, agreement, rules of work.

### **The contract builds the trust in the group and supports the group process**

The contract is an agreement between the group and the facilitator, but, above all, between youth regarding the rules that are applied during the work in, for instance, a youth club. The contract reduces the level of anxiety, makes youth less afraid and more open to interaction and joining the activities and discussion, which may expose their weaknesses and incompetence. The contract builds the trust in the group and supports the group process. It's also a tool used to transmit values and principles, which are important to youth worker and to the new group. It's important to agree to the contract in the very first steps of the work with the group, because it will define future relations, attitudes and activities. This is the best moment, as the daily work has not started yet, and everyone has already appeared in the group individually. Then youth worker makes an appointment not with the group, but with each participant separately.

There are different methods to agree for joint rules - from announcement made by facilitator, through short discussion, to written rules on the paper through the longer process of conducting the contract. A chosen way depends on the group and time. It's youth worker's decision how much time s/he is ready to dedicate to making a contract. When during the 4-hours training it's not productive to spend half an hour to discuss the rules, then when it's about long-term work, like in the youth club, it seems to be important to provide enough time to discuss and create the contract. The definition of 'enough' will be up to the group - it can be few hours, or a few days. During the process it's worth taking care about the functionality of the contract, because it fulfills its role only, when the participants actually respect it and see for themselves the benefits of complying with it. Providing enough time and space for conducting the contract helps to embed the norms into the group.

**The participative nature of youth work recognises young people's rights to choose whether to be involved and to make decisions about issues that affect them.**

The more time we spend on this process, the bigger chance of actually applying the proposed rules to the group. It's important to provide safe space to each person to share own opinion about the rules and add own proposals. Conducting the contract should be the process not only listing the important rules, but also explaining its understanding and providing arguments for or against it, in case of no consensus in the group. When it is possible to agree on a joint choice, youth worker asks each participant individually to confirm acceptance of agreed rules.

The contract should be reviewed once a while, by the whole group and for sure in case of joining a new person or breaking the rules. That situation needs deeper discussion about the contract itself, feeling of participants in the group and expectations from it in the further work. Youth worker should not be afraid or not to avoid this situation, if it happened, but face it with openness to find new way of dealing with things. See the chance in the crisis to make the group stronger and more integrated.

There is no list of rules which are suitable every time to every group. The process of conducting the contract depends on the background and experience of participants, their needs and expectations, local environment, values and principles of youth worker, the aim of the work. Youth worker should remember that the rules worked in one group can be useless in another and not try to copy 'the working rules' from past experience. Also, the rules should be adequate to the activities and the aim of the work, for example if the main focus are outdoor activities, maybe it's not necessary to start the discussion about the rules from keeping in secret everything what will be said during the meetings, because it can make youth confused and even scared about the upcoming activities.

Here are some examples of rules, which can be an inspiration or starting point in the discussion about contract:

- ▶ We are all equal.
- ▶ We treat each other with respect in words, attitude, and intent.
- ▶ We address issues and speak with each other directly.
- ▶ We tell the truth as we see it, without blame.
- ▶ We speak on your own behalf. We use the pronoun "I", not "we".
- ▶ It's okay to be wrong, okay to be vulnerable, okay to ask for help.
- ▶ It is own responsibility to leave every conversation with absolute clarity. Everyone takes the initiative to clarify and understand if I am at first unclear.
- ▶ We have the right to refuse to participate in an exercise.
- ▶ We are talking to a person, not "about a person".
- ▶ We do not judge.
- ▶ We relate to the behavior of others - not to who they are.



## International activities, as support for local ones

As already mentioned, youth clubs can create learning opportunities for young people to develop new skills, support developing young people's ability to manage personal and social relationships, help to discover professional potential and predispositions, strengthen self-esteem values and providing positive patterns of behavior, ensuring safe forms of spending free time.

Out of school activities give access to young people of different ages and backgrounds providing opportunities to make new friendships and build on existing ones. By attending youth club, young people develop a 'world view' which widens horizons and invites social commitment. Local activities provided in the youth club can be a perfect starting point for international cooperation. With the time, when youth developed their own competences of group work, project management, built self-esteem and self-confidence youth worker can open the box with the possibilities of international cooperation and meetings, which will give the new perspective for many issues. In civic education it's important to develop not only national citizenship, but also the global one.

Exchange programs, both online and offline, bring together groups of young people from two or more countries, providing them with an opportunity to discuss and confront various themes while learning about each other's countries and cultures; they help to learn new skills used in the private and professional life.

For youth workers, the international programs are the way to get to know good practices from other countries or regions, new approach, methods of work, or people dealing with the same issues. From the local point of view, it's the great opportunity to build the cooperation with the partners cities and global community at the local level.

The international programs don't have to be only adventure or additional projects made occasionally but can be permanently included in the youth club program. Example of this kind of approach can be the program *Generation Europe* developed by *International Association for Education and Exchange* (IBB e.V.) from Germany aimed at reaching youths, who, for different reasons, have been excluded from political participation processes until now.

The program connects local and international work with the group of youth. Youth from different countries have educational activities in their hometown, organize local events and online meetings and once a year attend the international camp to share and discuss results of local work in an international environment. This can be a new way of learning and shaping global citizens.

## Forms of youth club management

From small local places managed in a participatory way, through institutions organised by local authority, to big scale chain of day-care facilities supported by big business. Youth clubs might have different structures, scale, financing sources, but in the end of the day all of them aim to support the development of young people. Taking a closer look at examples of more hierarchic and on the other hand more democratic youth clubs shows advantages of both models. Here some examples:

- ▶ **"Siemacha" Association** is a non-profit organization established in 2003, but its history began in 1886, when Father Kazimierz Siemaszko organised "a house of shelter and volunteer work for poor and orphaned boys" in the building purchased for the purpose at ul. Długa 42 in Krakow. Until today the association's main address remains the same. "Siemacha" provides help to children and young people in education, therapy and physical development in 35 locations across the entire Poland. Some of their youth centres are located in shopping malls. Its 5 statutory values are: transparency, durability, system, leadership and quality. Association hires 257 employees. Siemacha has three sources of financing: subsidies from local governments, donations from private enterprises and its own economic activity [12].
- ▶ **Community Mental Health Service Society called "MROWISKO"** (en. Anthill) - established in Gdansk in 1993 in the area belonged to MONAR - an association aims to prevent drug addiction and work with drug addicted. As a first they used good practices from abroad, like: street work in the work with youth. Now the association have three centers in Gdansk and Sopot and street bus. They work with youth and the whole families. The main focus of their work evolved from prevention of drug addiction to strength youth and local communities. They are supported by local administrations, regional institutions and some business companies.
- ▶ **Youth Center for Social Innovation and Design** **"WYMIENNIKOWNIA"** (en. EXCHANGER) - the space given by City Hall of Gdynia for youth to support grassroots initiatives of young people and help in the implementation of their ideas, thanks to which they exchange interests, pursue their passions or spend their free time in an interesting way. The essence of this place is that the participants have a real influence on its functioning, because they decide what activities they want to participate in and help to organize them. It is one spot in the reconstructed heater exchanger in Gdynia. Wymiennikowonia is mainly financed by the city hall and belongs to the local government units.

**Youth clubs have great role in the development of an inclusive society**

## *Youth participation in management*

	Hierarchical	Partly participatory	Participatory
<b>Youth took part in establishing</b>	No	No	Yes
<b>Youth decide about programme</b>	Partly	Partly	Yes
<b>Involving youth in budgeting process</b>	No	Partly	Yes
<b>Role of adults</b>	Teacher	Educator	Facilitator
<b>Area of work</b>	National	Regional	Local
<b>Main financing</b>	CSR, grants	Local administration support, grants	Grants, voluntary work



## TIP: How to open a youth club, step by step

Setting up a new youth club can be a challenging and long process, but in the end of the day you can improve conditions for young people and also strengthen your local community. The following steps are worth to consider before setting it up:

- ▶ **Is there a need for a youth club in the area?** Identify needs of youth in the area. What type of youth group needs to be established? What activities might be interesting for them? Explore ideas for your youth club by discussing it with youngsters, invite them to plan and if you get positive responses start to build contacts with them.
- ▶ **Find a home for your club.** You need to have a place where your group can meet. Speak to the local council, school, library, or community center to see if there would be room for your youth club. Do not give up if from the very beginning it will be not possible to have your own place, you can always use public spaces and in the warm season meet in the park.
- ▶ **Consider funding and resources for the youth club.** Who can support your group? Speak with local council, businesses from your area and foundations that often provide small grants. Consider members' fee and possibility of getting donations from the local community.
- ▶ **Legal frame.** Read about possibilities of registering youth clubs in your country. Speak with people from other experienced local NGOs and ask them for advice. Finally decide if you need to be registered or maybe you can stay as a non-formal group. In case you are minors invite adults who will commit their time and energies when it comes to legal issues.
- ▶ **Identify potential members.** Try to target young people and other members of the local community (potential members and volunteers) and ask them to invite people along too. Plan your first meeting with them and discuss their potential involvement in setting up a youth club.
- ▶ **Run the first meeting of the youth club.** In order to help people to get to know each other, you can use ice breaker activity. Don't forget to take common decisions about:
  - The structure of your youth club: who will be in charge of what and how decisions will be taken.
  - Name to your youth club (it might be obvious or take some time).
  - The program of activities and events before that club actually begins its action.
  - The plan for the first activity or event.
  - The way of communication accessible for all members.
  - **Good luck!**

## Example of a weekly schedule

(reference Youth Club MROWISKO)

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<b>14:00 - 16:00</b> Individual meetings / tutoring (support in homework)	<b>14:00 - 16:00</b> Individual meetings / tutoring (support in homework)	<b>14:00 - 16:00</b> Individual meetings / tutoring (support in homework)	<b>14:00 - 16:00</b> Individual meetings / tutoring (support in homework)	<b>14:00 - 16:00</b> Individual meetings / tutoring (support in homework)
<b>16:00 - 16:30</b> Welcoming / organisation issues				
<b>16:30 - 17:00</b> Joint meal				
<b>16:00 - 18:00</b> Psychological therapy	<b>17:00 - 18:00</b> Photography workshops	<b>17:00 - 19:00</b> Sport activities	<b>15:00 - 17:00</b> Pedagogical therapy	<b>16:00 - 18:00</b> Music activities
<b>17:00 - 18:00</b> Development activities for the older group	<b>18:00 - 19:00</b> Psychoeducational activities / project planning	...	<b>17:00 - 18:00</b> Technical work activities	<b>18:00 - 19:00</b> Theater workshops
...	...	...	<b>18:00 - 19:00</b> Art workshops	...

Image: SparkClubs in action (SparkCAMP July 2019, Cuba, Portugal)



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# SparkSEEDs

