

DECLARATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

This declaration of recommendations has been drawn by 50 delegates of the YEPP International Community Conference “Dream Machine: Towards Social Change” which took place in Kristinestad on 12-17 June 2015. Young people, policy makers and youth coaches from Bosnia & Herzegovina, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland and Slovakia discussed together how social change can be created in their communities using their “Dream Machine” projects - local youth initiatives with community impact and involvement of stakeholders from public, private and independent sector. Here is the set of recommendations approved by the delegates for local, national and European level. They are directed at public authorities, municipalities and all those with decision-making power to help us implement them.

LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL

1. Set up position of youth officers in the municipalities.
2. Provide incentives for young people to take decision-making positions in the municipalities, e.g. youth councillor.
3. Have commitment of policy makers to participate in YEPP / Youth meetings.
4. Apply the “YEPP” approach and methodology in policies towards young people.
5. Lower the voting age to 16.
6. Invest in capacity building of youth.
7. Support “YEPP” or other youth programmes and structures e.g. Youth Councils, Youth Parliament which empower youth in advocacy.
8. Make politicians “dream” with young people.
9. Show your respect by actions, not words.
10. Involve politicians in young people’s activities, also in earlier stages.
Foster asset-based community development, e.g. help communities to co-produce and serve their needs using existing assets to create change.
11. Set up youth fund to give grants to local youth initiatives.
12. Provide meeting spaces for youth for free.
13. Support the forms of self-organizations of young people.
14. Foster entrepreneurial thinking of young people.

EUROPEAN LEVEL

15. Fund more youth exchanges - an important way for youth to develop intercultural awareness, tolerance and European identity.
16. Focus on “Europe of Citizens” vs. Europe of economy.
17. Define youth policies, directions, criteria & competences, together with young people
18. Invest in training and capacity building for staff of municipality.
19. Advocate for more local politicians at European level.
20. Engage with the YEPP Community Network for youth policy and advocacy work at European level.