

A toolbox to better involve the youth in mountain governance

Many young people leave mountain regions because they see few opportunities on the labour market and have no prospects for the future. Moreover, most policy makers are not aware of the benefits of a young and active population for society. The EU-funded project [Alpine Space GaYA](#) (Governance and Youth in the Alps) decided to tackle the issue by strengthening the involvement of young people in local governance and developing new approaches for decision-makers. A toolkit was published in 6 languages to support mountain policy makers in better including the youth in public life.

Inspiring inclusive governance models to replicate

GaYA's [Youth Participation toolbox](#) showcases different examples of participatory governance implemented in the Alpine Space. From rural models to initiatives in cities like Villeurbanne, France, these examples illustrate possibilities to better consider the needs and ideas of young people. These models were ranked on a participation scale, from listening to youth's desires (level 1) and considering the views of young people (level 3) to sharing power and responsibilities (level 5).

In the Grisons County, Switzerland, most of the equipment dedicated to the youth is in towns whereas remote valleys lack of facilities. JugendMobil is a mobile, fully-equipped youth centre that is parked for a defined period of time in a community which has no specific youth facility and offers young people the opportunity to come together, play games, and get involved in creative activities. JugendMobil (level 1) can be a starting point for the participation process and public expression.

MORE INFO

Interreg
Alpine Space
GaYA



LEVEL 1: LISTENING TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Information Day
Informing and gathering feedback



LEVEL 2: SUPPORTING EXPRESSIONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS

Mediation
Resolving conflicts



Community Platform
Exchanging information and ideas



LEVEL 3: TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE VIEWS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Scenario Workshop
Anticipating challenges



Open Space Conference / Unconference
Discussing relevant topics



Deliberative Polling
Predicting public opinion



Appreciative Inquiry
Engaging stakeholders in self-determined change



LEVEL 4: INVOLVEMENT IN MAKING DECISIONS

Planning for Real
Prioritizing urban planning topics



Design thinking method
Designing novel products and services with users



Hackathon
Hacking the system by creating new solutions



LEVEL 5: SHARING POWER AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Participative Budgeting
Proposing and selecting investments and budget



Living Lab
Creating collaborative innovation environment



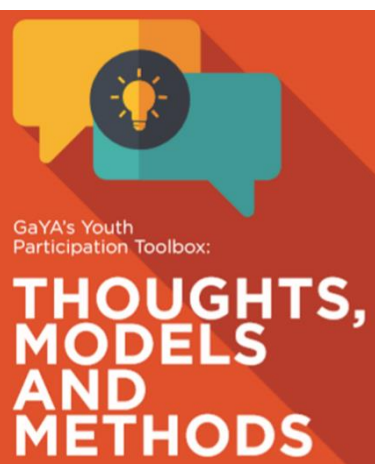
Future Search
Catalysing change



In Slovenia, the municipality of Idrija adopted a youth strategy giving young people a strong say in how they want to see the future development of the town. In the first half of 2015, data gathering, statistical analyses, document reviews, 15 half-structured interviews with representatives of all youth organisations and organisations for young people, and an online survey with almost 300 respondents were concluded in order to obtain an insight into the position of young people of the municipality. After the in-depth analysis of the results, three strategic challenges (employment, housing, participation) were identified and selected for this strategy. Ranked level 4 on GaYA's governance scale, the initiative managed to involve mountain youth in the decision-making process.

A guide to discover and test participatory governance techniques

Transforming governance, at municipal or regional level, requires breaking with preconceptions about young people and to be prepared to question its own political practices. Attracting younger generations in public life implies using alternative participatory models to avoid the bureaucratisation of decisions.



Credits GaYA

The toolkit drives you across the different steps and questionings towards a more inclusive governance. Are you ready to support young people in expressing their views? Is there a procedure that enables young people to join in decision-making processes? Are you ready to share some of your adult power with young people? These are primary steps for policymakers to question their decision-making processes.

If open to change, the toolkit also offers a wide range of methods to implement, depending on the objectives in terms of cocreation and on available time and resources. Information Days for instance can be a great tool to get an insight of the aspirations of young people in your County but techniques such as Hackathons and Living Labs would be much more appropriate to co-design policies.

14 steps for local policy makers to improve youth participation in mountain areas

Step 1: define your desired outcome and overarching goals

Step 2: precise in which decision-making process do you want to involve the youth

Steps 3 & 4: define what can be influenced and where you allow for changes or not

Step 5: determine which categories of younger generations you want to include depending on your objectives

Steps 6 & 7: look into the reasons why this determined group would be motivated to participate in public decision

Step 8: select a participation model by reflecting on the target group's preferences and your own preferences, think big!

Step 9: define the format of inputs (formal submissions, oral exchanges etc.)

Step 10: summarise all previous steps in to formulate a clear participatory process. Define it in steps and milestones

Step 11 & 12: allocate the necessary human and financial resources to your project, keeping in mind the profile of your target group. Form your team and structure your work depending on the capacities and skills of your own services

Step 13: think about the risks and anticipate ways to mediate them. The more risks listed, the more well thought through the process is and the more you are prepared for it

Step 14: Measure the success and evaluate the possible improvements

More information

For more information on GaYA, please visit the [project's website](#). You can also find more inspiration on smart governance in mountain areas in the [report](#) from Euromontana's eponymous workshop at the 4th European Rural Parliament in November 2019.



Innovative aspect

GaYA managed to make a comprehensive guide available for policies makers in mountain areas. It can be used both to combat prejudices on youth and public decisions and to get inspired by existing initiatives. The real added value of the toolkit is the step by step guidance provided for policymakers as well as local and regional authorities. Pedagogical yet very complete, this toolkit provides you with all the keys to test new participatory models, involve the youth in mountains' public life and make your territory vibrant and attractive.

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