

Youth Participation: 5 Principles for Local and Regional Action

An operational manual for strengthening youth involvement in Local and Regional Decision-Making, based on the findings of the Interreg North Sea project “LISTEN” (2023-2025).



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North Sea



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LISTEN

LISTEN – AN OPERATIONAL MANUAL OF THE NORTH SEA
5 Steps to Strengthen Youth Engagement

Title: Youth Participation: 5 Principles for Local and Regional Action

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Foreword

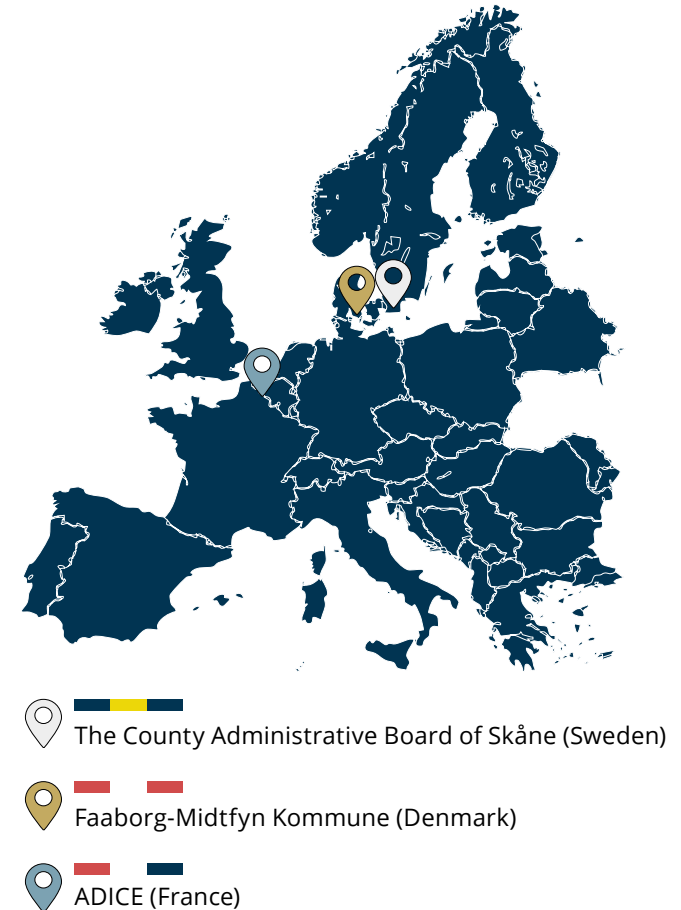
To enhance knowledge on procedures and initiatives that could strengthen the participation of young people and children at the local and regional levels within the EU, the County Administrative Board of Skåne (SE), ADICE (FR), and Faaborg-Midtfyn Municipality (DK) joined forces in 2023.

Supported by the EU Interreg North Sea programme, the LISTEN project was initiated. Throughout the project's duration (November 2023 – April 2025), the partnership focused on mapping the current state of existing policies for youth participation in societal planning and decision-making. The partnership also engaged with local actors and representatives of youth groups to understand current needs and investigated and documented successful initiatives that could be replicated.

The operational manual represents the primary outcome of the LISTEN project and contains a selection of exemplary initiatives identified during the project's duration. The selection of good practices in the manual is intended to inspire and demonstrate the wealth of possibilities available when perspectives are broadened.

More information about the LISTEN project [is available on the project website.](#)

The LISTEN partnership hopes that the material presented in this manual will serve as a valuable resource and inspiration for any organization committed to enhancing youth participation in their local communities. Together, we can empower the next generation to shape a brighter future.



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Aim of the manual

The aim of this manual is to provide a comprehensive approach to addressing the participation deficit among young people in the North Sea region. The content of the manual is based on the findings of the LISTEN project, where local needs along with several successful local initiatives for strengthening youth engagement were identified and analyzed.

The manual presents five principles, along with exemplifying local initiatives, on how municipalities, regions, and other stakeholders can more effectively and systematically involve children and young people. The principles are:

- Evaluate and keep well-informed
- Build trust and legitimacy
- Provide support for initiatives
- Foster Coordination and Coherence
- Facilitate and encourage dialogue

The content of the manual is based on the findings of the LISTEN project, where local needs along with several successful local initiatives for strengthening youth engagement were analyzed and identified.

Why Strengthening Youth Participation Is Important

Civic participation and the ability for people to be engaged are crucial for sustaining vibrant, inclusive, and resilient democratic societies. When individuals feel that their opinions are heard and considered by decision-makers, they are more likely to trust the democratic institutions and processes that shape our societies.

The EU Youth Strategy for 2019-2027 highlights a concerning decline in participation among young people in the EU¹. Reports indicate that democracy,

trust in democratic institutions, and the willingness to participate are decreasing globally, not only among the youth demography.² Given this context, it is more urgent than ever to understand the reasons behind this decline and to share successful examples between actors, both nationally and across borders, to reverse this negative trend.

The principle of democracy is built on allowing all opinions to be heard and from that, being able to compromise on a solution that suits the majority. If opinions are not allowed to be heard, either directly or indirectly, individuals or societal groups may not recognize themselves in the solutions ultimately presented by decision-makers. Teaching and discussing the importance of participation with both decision-makers and young people can encourage young people to take pride in their rights and abilities to influence policies that affect our communities, both now and in the future.

1 EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, European Union [EU Youth Strategy](#) | [European Youth Portal](#)

2 “Lack of trust in institutions and political engagement”, OECD 2024 [Lack of trust in institutions and political engagement](#) | [OECD](#)

Important definitions and perspectives

When working with and for young people, it is crucial to acknowledge that the demographic of children and young people reflect the overall diversity of our societies. This diversity encompasses differences in economic conditions, identity, ethnicity, beliefs, abilities, and sexual orientation. Factors that can have significant influence on a person's willingness or ability to participate.

To involve all children and young people effectively and equally, it is essential to consider and respect the differences that exist. By respecting and allowing different perspectives, actors can avoid discriminating against or suppressing the opinions of individuals or groups of young people who have the right to be heard but may be unable to express themselves.

In the LISTEN project, participation was defined as the act of taking part in an activity, event, or process by being actively involved and contributing one's ideas, opinions, or efforts. The main focus group of the project was young people aged 11-18. It is therefore mainly the needs and contexts of this group that is mirrored in the project result.

UN Convention of the rights of the child

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is an international treaty adopted by the United Nations General Assembly that entered into force in 1990. The treaty outlines the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights of children, defined as individuals under the age of 18.

The Convention has been ratified by almost every country in the world, including all member states of the EU. Some countries have also chosen to adopt the articles of the convention as national laws.

The Convention contains 54 articles that are all equally important. The four fundamental

principles of the convention can be found in articles 2, 3, 6 and 12:

- **Article 2** emphasizes that all children have the rights set out in the Convention without discrimination of any kind. This means that no child should be treated unfairly on any basis.
- **Article 3** states that in all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities, or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.

- **Article 6** recognizes that every child has the inherent right to life, and it obligates states to ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child.
- **Article 12** emphasizes the right of children to express their views freely in all matters affecting them. It also states that these views should be given due weight according to the child's age and maturity.

The aim of the initiatives presented in this manual is to inspire professionals and decision-makers to test new solutions and ideas to enhance participation among all young people.

Identify local needs, by using local knowledge

The aim of the initiatives presented in this manual is to inspire professionals and decision-makers to test new solutions and ideas to enhance participation among all young people. Before implementing a new initiative involving young people, it is highly encouraged to research and carefully consider the needs of the local youth.

The LISTEN partnership engaged local actors to identify needs and formulate the principles presented in this manual. The local representatives included professionals, politicians, decision-makers, and most importantly, children and young people.

The inputs revealed a variety of challenges concerning the ability of young people to participate. Some examples include:

Perceived lack of impact: Young people feel their involvement is symbolic and doesn't lead to real change.

Lack of interest from politicians and decision-makers: Young people's opinions are often overlooked by those in power.

Inadequate communication channels: Public authorities and young people often struggle to communicate effectively.

Low awareness and knowledge: There is a lack of understanding about democratic rights and how to participate, not only among young people but also within the broader community.

Exclusion of minority groups: Efforts to strengthen participation frequently overlook the recognition and inclusion of minority groups.

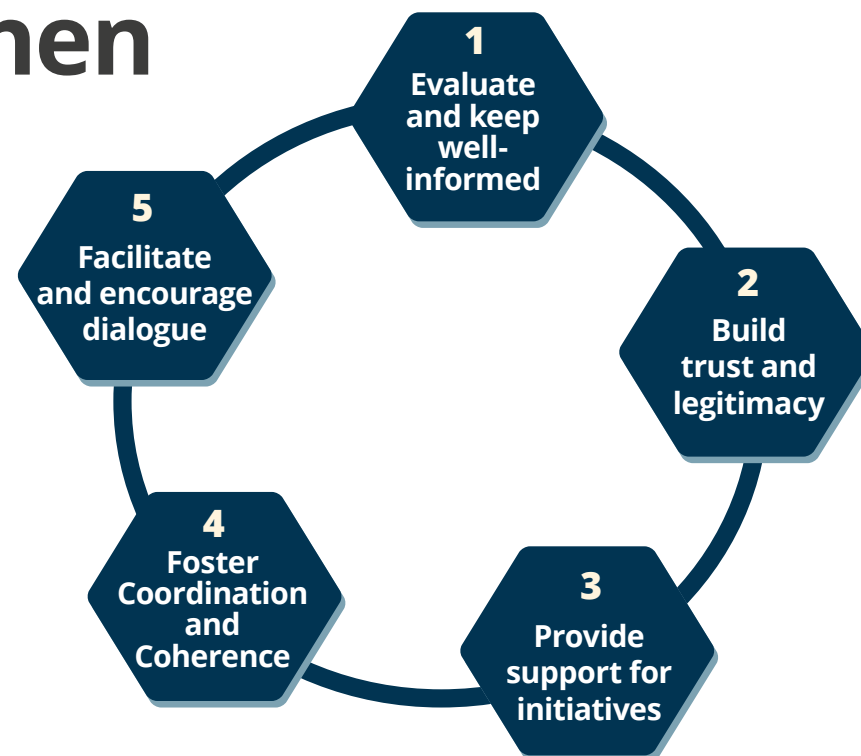
5 principles to strengthen youth participation

Based on gathered material and insights in the LISTEN project, along with prior studies on participation (such as “A Ladder of Citizen Participation” and the “Ladder of Children’s Participation”³⁴), five principles have been identified as important for local and regional organizations to consider to successfully include young people and safeguard their right to participate.

Each principle is important on its own, but applying and considering them as a whole enhances an organization’s ability to work proactively with youth participation. This approach ensures that young people’s opinions are taken into account and contribute to a society where everyone’s views are heard.

When applying these principles, it is important to regularly reassess, evaluate the results, and address current needs, as the needs of children and young people are constantly changing.

The initiatives exemplifying each principle were identified during the LISTEN project. The initiatives include methods, creative solutions, and forms of collaboration that have been successfully carried out in a local or regional context with the aim to strengthen the participation of young people in societal development, either directly or indirectly.



On the following pages, a detailed explanation of each principle is presented along with inspiring examples from the locations of each participating partner in the LISTEN project. Each initiative provides practical insight and inspiration on how the principles can be implemented.

3 Arnstein, S. R. (1969). A Ladder of Citizen Participation. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*

4 Hart, R. (1992). *Children’s Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship*. UNICEF International Child Development Centre

Principle 1: Evaluate and keep well-informed

To improve the possibilities for children and young people to be able to participate in society, it is important that adult professionals understand and continuously develop competence regarding the rights of children and young people. The understanding of the issues at stake among adults who work with the target group of children and young people is a crucial prerequisite for being able to work to counteract the problems that exists and will allow for greater impact for targeted efforts to increase children's participation. It is also important to recognize that actions for improving participation among any group of society requires ever-recurring efforts, learning and ongoing evaluation for the initiatives to stay relevant.

The three initiatives selected to exemplify the principle are:

- **Initiative #1** (France): Les Assises de la jeunesse (Youth Conference)
- **Initiative #2** (Sweden): Barnrättsstrategutbildning (Training for child rights strategists):
- **Initiative #3** (Denmark): Politisk mesterlære (Political apprenticeship):



Initiative #1 (France): **Les Assises de la jeunesse (Youth Conference)**

Les Assises de la jeunesse (Youth Conference) is an initiative created and organized by the Roubaix Youth Department, gathering both professionals and youth in response to numerous demonstrations by young people in Roubaix and other parts of France. These demonstrations were driven by dissatisfaction among the youth population, many of whom have a migrant background, over how their rights and interests had been disregarded. In response, the city of Roubaix sought to act and find new solutions to address the concerns raised during these demonstrations.

The initiative highlights the importance of listening to and understanding the perspectives of local youth before taking action to address urgent matters. The youth conference serves as an inspiring example of how an organization can act to gain a better understanding of the bigger picture amid an alarming situation.

In 2023, a first meeting was held, gathering 140 youth actors, including

prevention centers, social centers, cultural organizations, and universities. The meeting focused on discussing various topics to help professionals understand their roles and key issues. Thematic workshops in small groups promoted dialogue and exchange.

In 2024, a second meeting was held with 140 young people. This session allowed the youth to assess their daily lives, providing an accurate diagnosis of the youth situation in Roubaix. Key questions raised included how to promote citizenship among young people, support those in difficulty, and assist graduates in entering the job market. The main objective was to use these insights to address the needs expressed by the youth and provide relevant data to policymakers.

The two conferences resulted in a mind map outlining the problems, needs, demands, and questions of youth in Roubaix which the city will use as a basis for its future work. A networking action was also implemented, allowing participants to build connections and foster collaboration.

Initiative #1 (France): Les Assises de la jeunesse (Youth Conference)



WHERE

Roubaix, France
(local level)



DIFFICULTY

Not very
difficult to
implement



REQUIRED TIME

Doesn't require
much time to
implement



REQUIRED RESOURCES

Doesn't
necessarily
require much
resources to
implement



TYPE OF WORK

Requires a mix
of desk work,
field work and
collaboration
between
organizations

Three recommendations from the initiator, for actors planning to arrange a similar event such as the Youth Conference:

- **Reach a wide audience:** Actively reach out and mobilize the networks of key stakeholders to ensure the diversity of participants (stakeholders involved with young people, social centers, schools, school nurse)
- **Choose** an appropriate setting: Select a unique location, different from a traditional office environment, it's important to have a place that makes people want to get together and that can accommodate everyone but also a location that encourage free expression and stimulate meaningful exchanges.
- **Implement** engaging communication: Use playful and innovative materials (videos, animations) to capture attention, while ensuring the right people are targeted to guarantee constructive and productive discussions.

Initiative #2 (Sweden): **Barnrättsstrategutbildning** **(Training for child rights strategists)**

Training for child rights strategists is a national initiative by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR), completed by over 2,900 professionals across Sweden. This 4-day program provides participants with a comprehensive understanding of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its practical implementation in Sweden, demonstrating how various organizations can collaborate to build knowledge and learn about children's rights cohesively.

Spread over a year, the training includes in total 4 lectures and workshops based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The first session offers a theoretical overview, while subsequent sessions focus on the practical application of the convention's articles in the participants' contexts. Practical work includes creating an action plan (session 2), conducting child impact assessments (session 3), and planning for the implementation of the UN convention in participants' organizations (session 4). Between sessions, participants complete

homework to apply their learning to real cases from their organizations.

Participants come from diverse sectors, including preschools, schools, social services, municipal management offices, community planning, environmental administrations, various authorities, and civil society organizations. They are often selected by their employers to attend and complete the training, enabling them to support their organizations in the long term by passing on the knowledge gained.

While the training usually incurs a cost for participating organizations, in Skåne, the County Administrative Board of Skåne and SALAR have collaborated to offer the training free of charge to all interested actors. This joint effort has resulted in more than 600 professionals completing the training in Skåne alone by 2025, since the initiative started in 2012.

Graduates of the training in Skåne are also invited to join The Children's Rights Forum Skåne, detailed under the principle "Foster

Coordination and Coherence", which helps ensuring that the issue remains relevant and reminds participants to continuously consider these matters.

Initiative #2 (Sweden): **Barnrättsstrategutbildning** (Training for child rights strategists)



WHERE

Skåne, Sweden
(regional level
and national
level)



DIFFICULTY

Quite difficult
to implement



REQUIRED TIME

Requires time
to implement



REQUIRED RESOURCES

Requires much
resources to
implement



TYPE OF WORK

Requires a
mix of desk
work and
collaboration
between
organizations
(and to
educate)

Three recommendations from the initiator, for actors inspired to initiate similar trainings to foster knowledge on the rights of the child:

- **Acknowledge** the importance of knowledge: Comprehensive understanding of children's rights is essential for making positive changes in their application. Initiatives like training for child rights strategists can provide the necessary conditions to enhance knowledge levels among organizations.
- **Stay committed** to making change happen: Believe in your idea and dedication, as they will create added value and address identified needs.
- **Don't be afraid** to experiment: Regardless of the circumstances, small incremental steps can always improve the current situation. Dare to be creative.

Initiative #3 (Denmark): **Politisk mesterlære** **(Political apprenticeship)**

Politisk mesterlære (Political Apprenticeship) is an initiative that began in 2024 in Faaborg-Midtfyn Municipality. The initiative involves young residents aged 15 to 25 with an interest in politics and democracy being matched with elected municipal politicians. This initiative is an innovative example of how a political organization can combine education for both decision-makers and young people, allowing for new perspectives and transparency on how daily work is conducted in the municipality.

During the six months of the apprenticeship, the selected young people get to follow their matched politician in meetings and their political work. The young participants are also invited to a network where they are encouraged to discuss and share their new experiences of working with the politicians in facilitated workshops. The workshops and support for the young participants are organized by the municipality's youth school.

The initiative has two main aims: (1) To help young participants learn more about the operations of a municipality and the importance of local participation, with the intention of cultivating qualified and motivated young people to participate in local democracy by developing their knowledge and skills. (2) To raise elected politicians' and decision-makers' awareness of topics relevant to the local youth community and how they can better engage and communicate with young people. To make it more interesting and encourage new perspectives, the organizers try to match politicians and young people who have different opinions on various topics.

Before selecting participants and starting the initiative, the founders did careful groundwork to pave the way for successful implementation, such as becoming familiar with the relevant legislation in advance and carefully analyzing which meetings the apprentices would follow the politicians to to make it rewarding for both parties. During the implementation, ongoing



follow-ups and adjustments also proved to be important to make the six months meaningful for both the involved politicians and the apprentices.

Initiative #3 (Denmark): **Politisk mesterlære** (Political apprenticeship)



WHERE

Faaborg-
Midtfyn,
Denmark (local
level)



DIFFICULTY

Quite difficult
to implement



REQUIRED TIME

Requires time
to implement



REQUIRED RESOURCES

Doesn't
necessarily
require much
resources to
implement



TYPE OF WORK

Requires a mix
of desk work
and field work

One participant of the initiative shares some thoughts on why the offer to join the political apprenticeship was interesting and what it has resulted in:

"I signed up for the project because I wanted to learn more about local politics in my municipality. I thought it sounded exciting and it was an obvious opportunity to become more politically active. In addition, I have always had a great interest in politics. I also think that there is too little focus on municipal politics, as many can recognize top politicians, both here in Denmark and abroad, but almost no one can tell about just one politician in their municipality." (...)

"What I have gained from being part of project is greater knowledge of the political processes and to gain a greater knowledge of municipal politics. I've started to become more politically interested, as I have found out how important it is, that us young people get into the political arena and use our votes. It is important that we young people start to take a greater interest in politics, and it doesn't matter if our interest is in a local, national or international level, as it is important that we are involved in the decision-making process. (...)

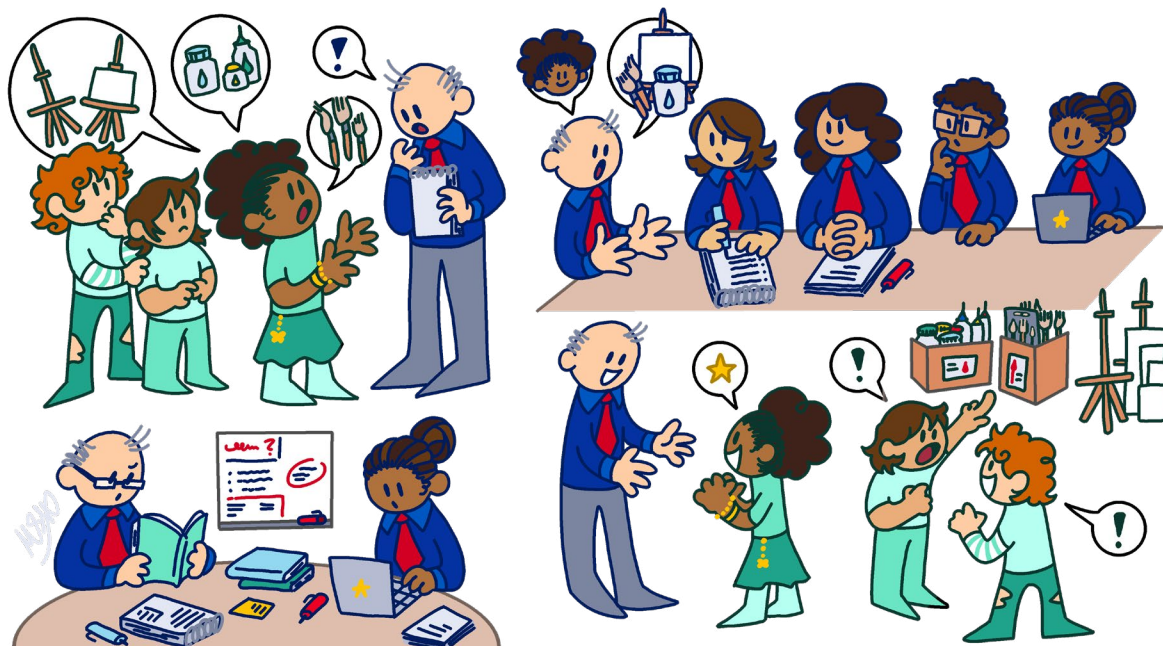
Principle 2: Build trust and legitimacy

All children deserve a just and supportive upbringing into adult life. It is important that local and regional actors have tools and methods in place to be able, in the daily operations of the organization, to respect the rights of children and young people. To be able to give support, it is also important that there is an established trust-based relationship between local societal actors and young inhabitants where clarity, feedback and a long-term perspective towards the target group are important success factors for fostering legitimacy and trust.

The three initiatives selected to exemplify the principle are:

- **Initiative #1 (Denmark):**
Ungekoordinator (Youth coordinator)
- **Initiative #2 (France):** Les filles du Sud (Girls from the South)

- **Initiative #3 (Sweden):** Ungdomsombud (Youth representative)



Initiative #1 (Denmark): Ungekoordinator (Youth coordinator)

The Ungekoordinator (Youth Coordinator) is an organizationally central role in the municipality of Faaborg-Midtfyn, mandated to provide local youth with access to resources, places, and networks. This role was established to support local youth in understanding municipal processes, overcoming bottlenecks, and facilitating the creation of new youth-led initiatives. It exemplifies how a municipality can create functions to offer smoother support and management of local youth initiatives and ideas.

When appointing the role, the municipality recognized the strong commitment and drive among local youth to create initiatives and be involved. They found that young people's own initiatives often succeeded much better than those led by adults. However, various setbacks, sometimes due to the municipality's own processes and organization, and sometimes due to external factors, negatively affected the engagement's ability to reach its full potential.

To address these challenges, the municipality created the role of Ungekoordinator to support young people in realizing their ideas for activities and to foster a better environment for youth topics in the municipality.

In its role, the Ungekoordinator works flexibly and strives to be highly available to local young people aged 13 to 25, quickly adapting to emerging needs. The tasks vary greatly, from helping to organize a concert to obtaining clear answers from decision-makers on questions posed by local youth. In return for maintaining close collaboration with local youth, the Ungekoordinator gains a strengthened understanding of the local young people's lives and enhanced channels to reach out to them when the municipality requires their knowledge and networks.

The role has proven to be a great success for the municipality's efforts to engage local youth. Local young people report that it has become easier to get the necessary help to realize their ideas. They also feel that they

are met with the necessary understanding of their conditions and realistic requirements for participation and abilities. Partly thanks to the initiation and efforts of the Ungekoordinator, the municipality of Faaborg-Midtfyn was selected as the Danish Youth Municipality of the Year in 2021.

Initiative #1 (Denmark): Ungekoordinator (Youth coordinator)



WHERE

Faaborg-
Midtfyn,
Denmark (local
level)



DIFFICULTY

Quite difficult
to implement



REQUIRED TIME

Doesn't
necessarily
require
much time to
implement



REQUIRED RESOURCES

Doesn't require
much resources
to implement



TYPE OF WORK

Requires
mostly desk
work and field
work, and less
collaboration
between
organizations

A young person living in the Municipality of Faaborg-Midtfyn shares some thoughts on the importance for the local youth to have access to a Ungekoordinator:

"The youth coordinator is a super important person for young people in Faaborg Midtfyn municipality. The coordinator plays a huge role in making things work. This applies both to the youth council but also to the various youth associations. We have several times witnessed the coordinator helping us on the right track after we thought a project had gone completely down the drain. On a daily basis, it is the coordinator that the young people go to when they are faced with a problem they do not know the solution to. Here the coordinator is fantastic, as she is ready to help you or explain to you how to apply for a fund or apply for a grant, for example"

Initiative #2 (France): **Les filles du Sud** **(Girls from the South)**

“Girls from the South” is an ongoing initiative in Lille, France, carried out by Association Itinéraires, a specialized prevention organization supporting young people and their families. The project was initiated in 2024 in response to a request from young girls in the Lille Sud neighborhood, who have experienced precarity, isolation, and exclusion in society. The participants have faced challenges such as dropping out of school, being placed in foster care, family problems, and difficulties linked to disorders like dyslexia. Most of the participating girls distrust institutions, lack self-confidence, and need help to set up their own projects and figure out their future paths. The project aims to promote mobility, cultural openness, and community solidarity actions for fourteen girls aged 15 to 19, while supporting their individual development, independence, trust in institutions, and strengthening their psychosocial skills.

The initiative exemplifies the importance of providing support and guidance on an individual level, based on the participants’ own will and needs. It demonstrates the crucial role of societal actors in stepping

in when no one else can, helping young individuals gain new perspectives and experiences that contribute to their development into adulthood.

As the project started in 2024, there are no results to report yet. Weekly sessions have been set up to provide individual guidance for personal projects and group activities, promoting community-building and planning for future outings.

The project is planning for arranging regular cultural outings where the participants can attend different activities, such as sports, museum visits, concerts, and artistic events, to broaden the participants’ horizons. Civic engagement will also be promoted through volunteering, supporting local initiatives, and participating in community events. Additionally, the project is planning for weekend trips and a week-long stay to enhance both geographical and cultural mobility. The first trip will be local, followed by an international one, and will culminate in a long stay abroad to work with an organization supporting vulnerable girls and women.

Initiative #2 (France): **Les filles du Sud** (Girls from the South)



WHERE

Lille, France
(local level)



DIFFICULTY

Not very
difficult to
implement



REQUIRED TIME

Doesn't require
much time to
implement



REQUIRED RESOURCES

Requires much
resources to
implement



TYPE OF WORK

Requires a
mix of field
work and
collaboration
between
organizations

Three recommendations from the initiator, for actors planning to provide support to individual young people in need in a similar initiative:

- **Actively involve young people** in building the project: To ensure genuine engagement, it is essential to base the project on the participants willingness to participate. By placing them at the heart of the process, they can develop their ability to think critically and take action, becoming true stakeholders in the project.
- **Be flexible and adaptable:** A project should be able to evolve according to the needs and dynamics of the group. It is crucial to respect both individual and collective timelines, adjusting actions to best meet young people's expectations. The ability of facilitators to adapt is key to ensuring an effective and inclusive initiative.
- **Build and maintain** strong partnerships: The success of a project relies on a solid network of partners, engaged from the start and throughout its development. By encouraging meetings and exchanges, these collaborations help broaden the project's reach, enhance its content, and strengthen its impact.

Initiative #3 (Sweden): Ungdomsombud och Ungdomssamordnare (Youth representative and Youth Coordinator)

Ungdomsombud och Ungdomssamordnare (Youth Representative and Youth Coordinator) are two innovative roles that the municipality of Ängelholm has implemented to strengthen local youth influence. This initiative exemplifies how a municipality can establish new, creative positions to engage with the local youth population, primarily targeting those aged 13 to 18.

The Youth Representative and Youth Coordinator work together to help young people address political issues. Traditionally, the Youth Representative position has been held by a young person and is more field-oriented. In contrast, the Youth Coordinator is a more senior role, primarily involving strategic work within the municipal administration.

The Youth Representative divides their time between managing the local youth council and being a youth leisure leader, allowing them to stay in touch with the young people in the municipality on multiple arenas. To support the youth council, the Youth Representative maintains regular contact

with its members, assists with their work, and handles practical tasks before, during, and after council meetings. Additionally, the Youth Representative monitors developments outside the municipality and networks with other municipalities to boost youth influence in Ängelholm.

It's important for the Youth Representative to build a strong sense of community, motivation, and courage among young people to keep them engaged and interested. A significant part of the role involves promoting the council's activities on social media in collaboration with the council.

The Youth Coordinator spends about 20% of their time on the youth council and the rest on other social sustainability tasks within the municipality. The coordinator is responsible for managing the youth council's budget and plays a crucial role in advocating for its functions within the municipality, ensuring that young voices are taken seriously and that youth council members are treated respectfully by decision-makers and politicians.



By having both roles, Ängelholm's ability to reach local youth has improved. These roles have also increased the visibility of the youth council and its activities. Overall, the collaboration between the Youth Representative and Youth Coordinator has proven successful in enhancing the municipality's support for young people and their access to municipal officials and decision-makers.

Initiative #3 (Sweden): Ungdomsombud och Ungdomssamordnare (Youth representative and Youth Coordinator)



WHERE

Ängelholm,
Sweden (local
level)



DIFFICULTY

Quite difficult
to implement



REQUIRED TIME

Doesn't
necessarily
require
much time to
implement



REQUIRED RESOURCES

Requires some
resources to
implement



TYPE OF WORK

Requires a mix
of desk work
and field work

Three recommendations from the Youth representative and Youth Coordinator in Ängelholm, for actors planning to implement similar initiatives:

- **Recognize the qualification** in being young: The person who will work as a Youth Representative should be a young adult or in other ways in touch with the local youth.
- **Good opportunities** to meet young people: Structure the role of the Youth Representative so that the person working in the position has flexible working hours and natural opportunities to daily work with, meet, and gather young people's perspectives.
- **Good cooperation** between the Youth Representative and the Youth Coordinator. Clear role distribution is important, but perhaps even more important is a strong sense of unity, helping each other and together creating good conditions for youth engagement.

Principle 3: Provide support for initiatives

Young people who are given the opportunity to develop their own ideas through planning and arranging activities and creating initiatives will learn to take responsibility, manage projects, and will be encouraged to participate more in the local society. Young people who engage this way will also be an inspirational example for other to do the same. Actors on the local and regional level can help children and young people realize their ideas and projects by providing start-up grants, offering knowledge/networks, and offer coaching and support.

The three initiatives selected to exemplify the principle are:

- **Initiative #1 (Sweden):** Unga leder unga (Young leading young)
- **Initiative #2 (Denmark):** Ungdomsråds cafeer (Cafes driven by The Youth Council)
- **Initiative #3 (France):** Conseil Consultatif de la Jeunesse (Youth Advisory Council)



Initiative #1 (Sweden): **Unga leder unga** (Youth Leading Youth)

“Unga leder unga” (Youth Leading Youth) is a support initiative for projects and associations offered by the municipality of Lund, targeting local young people aged 13-25. This initiative demonstrates how a municipality can structure public support to enable young people to create initiatives on their own terms and realize their ideas.

The current version of Unga leder unga originated between 2013 and 2015. Expert authorities were brought in to help shape the structure, and many local young people were interviewed and participated in surveys to provide input. This ensured that the support was relevant and adapted to the needs of local young people.

The purpose of the support is to strengthen and develop democratic values among young people by creating opportunities for them to initiate projects based on their own ideas, interests, and conditions. The municipality sets certain requirements, the most important being that the grant should

go to young people who want to organize themselves and other young people in an association or project.

The support includes three types of grants that can be applied for: project grants, start-up grants, and association grants. All types of grants target three thematic areas where the municipality aims to strengthen young people's engagement: culture, sports, and community engagement. In addition to the financial grants, Unga leder unga also offers coaching and support from youth leaders and grant administrators in the implementation of the projects for which applicants have been granted funds.

The initiative has resulted in many young project leaders learning what is required to run a project. Whether they receive support from a coach or manage the process themselves, they acquire valuable knowledge about project implementation. Additionally, project leaders get the opportunity to realize their own and shared interests,

allowing many young people to participate and feel a sense of community. Lastly, being a project leader also provides a sense of context and influence, enabling the young people receiving the grants to pursue and carry out their interests.

Initiative #1 (Sweden): Unga leder unga (Youth Leading Youth)



WHERE

Lund, Sweden
(local level)



DIFFICULTY

Quite difficult
to implement



REQUIRED TIME

Requires time
to implement



REQUIRED RESOURCES

Requires some
resources to
implement



TYPE OF WORK

Requires a mix
of desk work,
field work and
collaboration
between
organizations

Three recommendations from the initiator, for actors planning to implement similar support for young people:

- **Involve** the target group: In order to structure the support to make it successful, it is important to base the initiative on the needs of local youth.
- **Collaborate** and accept help from others: For example, contact national agencies or other actors that offers support to young people in a similar way.
- **Focus** on the decided target group: Be careful to ensure that it is primarily the target group that can use the grant form, so that adults do not take over.

Initiative #2 (Denmark): Ungdomsråds cafeer (Cafes driven by The Youth Council)

The Municipality of Faaborg-Midtfyn

has a Youth Council consisting of local young people aged 12 to 25. Members of the Youth Council are invited to provide their perspectives on political matters related to schools, culture, leisure activities, and more. They are also encouraged to come up with their own initiatives to improve the situation for local youth.

One such initiative is Ungdomsråds cafeer, cafés run by Youth Council members for young people aged 12 to 25 at two different locations within the municipality. The municipality pays wages to the young people working in the cafés and provides premises and consumables to support their progress. However, the daily operations, themes, and activities of the cafés are managed and run by the dedicated members of the Youth Council. This initiative exemplifies how a municipality can create engagement on municipal topics and continue involving young people by offering them a platform to create and organize initiatives based on their own conditions and interests.

The aim of the café initiative is to provide the youth of the municipality with meeting places where their interests and preferences are met, developed, and facilitated with the support of adult professionals, if needed. It also aims to continuously promote the Youth Council's activities and operations to new generations of young people in an informal way.






The activities organized by the youth running the cafés vary and are constantly changing. Examples include concerts, poetry evenings, and food preparation events. An artist club called “U Art” has been established as part of the café, and thanks to this platform, it has had the opportunity to arrange vernissages and exhibit many of the works created in several public buildings around the municipality.

While there are no legal requirements in Denmark for municipalities to have a Youth Council, the Municipality of Faaborg-Midtfyn has found it successful in creating engagement. The platform has resulted in



local youth being more interested in making themselves and their inputs available to decision-makers and politicians in the municipality.

Initiative #2 (Denmark): Ungdomsråds cafeer (Cafes driven by The Youth Council)

				
WHERE	DIFFICULTY	REQUIRED TIME	REQUIRED RESOURCES	TYPE OF WORK
Faaborg-Midtfyn, Denmark (local level)	Not very difficult to implement	Doesn't necessarily require much time to implement	Requires some resources to implement	Requires a mix of field work and collaboration between organizations

Three recommendations from the initiators, for actors interested in helping youth to arrange similar initiatives:

- **Hire young people** to run the cafes and give them wages to do so: Empower the youth by providing them with employment opportunities in the cafes. Pay them fair wages to ensure they feel valued and motivated.
- **Have monthly meetings** with young staff to secure progress and structure: Regularly engage with the young staff through monthly meetings. This helps maintain progress, provides structure, and ensures their voices are heard.
- **Help and support** to create activities during the opening hours of the café: Offer assistance and encouragement to the youth in organizing activities during the café's opening hours. This fosters creativity and keeps the environment lively and engaging.

Initiative #3 (France): **Conseil Consultatif de la Jeunesse** (Youth Advisory Council)

The Youth Advisory Council of Roubaix was created to address the shortcomings of a previous initiative, the Youth Council of Roubaix, which was dissolved due to its lack of concrete actions and genuine engagement. The new council aims to provide genuine representation, promote civic engagement, and spark interest in politics among youth aged 15 to 25 in Roubaix.

The initiative helps young people find their place in society and contribute to the local community. It offers opportunities to discover and understand their environment through visits, trips, and meetings with various city actors. Actions and consultations are proposed by the young people themselves and supervised by a municipal administrator. The objective is to present the city in a new light and encourage elected officials to pay more attention to the concerns of young people.

The initiative showcases how support and counseling for young people can be achieved creatively, allowing participants to realize their ideas and initiatives. It also highlights the importance of listening to and evaluating

the actual needs of the youth population and making changes if needed to more successfully engage the target group.

The goal is not just to consult but to create projects for and by young people. Each year, two major cultural projects are launched, serving as communication tools and strengthening civic engagement. These projects address various themes based on participants' feedback and aim to enhance the image of Roubaix by changing negative perceptions of the city. They also help participants better understand and appreciate the heritage and diversity of Roubaix.

Despite budget constraints, the Youth Advisory Council has achieved significant results. Notable projects include a fashion show and a menstrual poverty project distributing sanitary products in schools. The city of Roubaix has also evaluated that the engagement has been beneficial for the participants' continued lives.



Initiative #3 (France): **Conseil Consultatif de la Jeunesse** (Youth Advisory Council)



WHERE

Roubaix, France
(local level)



DIFFICULTY

Not very
difficult to
implement



REQUIRED TIME

Doesn't
necessarily
require
much time to
implement



REQUIRED RESOURCES

Doesn't require
much resources
to implement



TYPE OF WORK

Requires a mix
of desk work,
field work and
collaboration
between
organizations

Three recommendations from the initiator, for actors interested in starting a similar initiative:

1. **Make the project** accessible and engaging: It is essential to simplify the project and make it fun. Don't just stay behind a desk—go out into the field, combine words and actions to genuinely engage participants. Innovation is key; you need to avoid repeating the same projects to prevent falling into routine.
2. **Actively involve** young people: Give young people the opportunity to take ownership of the initiative and propose their own projects. This allows them to feel involved and responsible for their actions.
3. **Follow and understand** young people: It is crucial to have someone dedicated to regularly updating the realities that young people experience to better understand them. This involves understanding their personal lives, being attentive, and adapting continuously to promote inclusion and community openness.

Principle 4: Foster Coordination and Coherence

Children and young people should feel safe knowing that the adult world sees, hears, learns from and values their thoughts and ideas. This is however not always an easy task as many different societal actors, at many different governance levels, work to create participation and promote the engagement of children and young people.

The engagement among organizations is very positive and shows an overarching ambition to improve the situation, but for it to yield real positive results, collaboration between these active organizations is a requirement. Otherwise, the scattered engagement risks creating confusion and ambiguity, not least from the perspective of children and young people.

The three initiatives selected to exemplify the principle are:

- **Initiative #1 (France):** PROVOX Hauts-de-France
- **Initiative #2 (Sweden):** Barnrättsforum Skåne (The Children's Rights Forum Skåne)
- **Initiative #3 (Denmark):** Fælleselevråd (Joint Student Council)



Initiative #1 (France): **PROVOX** **Hauts-de-France**

PROVOX is a national platform in France that enables young people to express their views and influence public policy as part of the EU's "structured dialogue" initiative. CRAJEP Hauts-de-France coordinates its regional version: "PROVOX Hauts-de-France."

PROVOX encourages youth involvement by providing spaces and methodologies for dialogue with elected representatives and local actors. By using interactive formats such as events, media, and arts, the platform aims to promote participation. Examples include digital tools such as the "Citoyens en Communs" platform, where online consultations, debates, and questionnaires are facilitated. The primary target group of PROVOX includes young people aged 12 to 30, decision-makers, and youth actors.

The initiative demonstrates how a key platform for discussions and perspectives on a regional scale for both young people and professionals can be structured to foster engagement and strengthen youth civic participation, while also providing adult

professionals with insights into the needs expressed by the youth.

Since its initiation, PROVOX Hauts-de-France has organized an annual festival that brings together several hundred young people, professionals and elected representatives on the local and regional levels. The festival encourages exchange, improvement of practices, services, and public policies for young people, and promotes existing initiatives. PROVOX also supports associations and local authorities in implementing participatory approaches, providing tools, methodological support, and access to an exchange network. This has led to a network of youth stakeholders and a popular education strategy in Hauts-de-France.

PROVOX also encourages the creation of a network of ambassadors, bringing together committed young people who meet twice a year to work on joint projects and boost civic participation. The program provides a space for young people to express themselves, taking their expectations



and proposals into account. During the annual festival, young participants engage in collaborative workshops and formulate recommendations, which are compiled into a deliverable for public and associative actors. This space allows them to interact directly with elected officials and other young people.

Initiative #1 (France): **PROVOX** **Hauts-de-France**



WHERE

Hauts-de-France, France
(regional level)



DIFFICULTY

Very difficult to
implement



REQUIRED TIME

Doesn't
necessarily
require
much time to
implement



REQUIRED RESOURCES

Requires much
resources to
implement



TYPE OF WORK

Requires a mix
of desk work,
field work and
collaboration
between
organizations

Three recommendations from the initiator Hauts-de-France, for actors interested in initiating a regional platform such as PROVOX:

1. **Developing a network and solid partnerships:** Creating a discussion space for young people requires a diverse network of partners. Working with different structures enables us to reach out to a variety of profiles and ensure an inclusive, dynamic approach.
2. **Ensuring the project's longevity:** Young people's commitment is essential, but the project must not rely on their motivation alone. It's crucial to structure the initiative to guarantee its renewal and continuity over time.
3. **Innovate to stand out:** The offer to youth is vast, especially in urban areas. To capture young people's attention, you need to propose original initiatives that are adapted to their expectations, while anticipating future developments and needs.

Initiative #2 (Sweden): **Barnrättsforum Skåne** **(The Children's Rights Forum Skåne)**

Children's Rights Forum Skåne is a regional competence platform aimed at supporting and coordinating the development of sustainable strategies for implementing and applying the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which has been part of Swedish legislation since 2020. The initiative exemplifies how collaborative efforts can enhance knowledge and disseminate best practices regarding children's rights within the public and non-profit sectors on a regional scale. Its structure fosters experience sharing and collaboration at the regional level, spreads information about children's rights work, and provides inspiration and sustained energy for ongoing efforts and development, all while engaging many different stakeholders.

The forum was initiated in 2012, alongside the Children's Rights Strategist training (detailed under the principle "Evaluate and keep well-informed"). It was originally started by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, together with Skåne's 33 municipalities. Since then, the

County Administrative Board of Skåne has taken over the main responsibility for the forum.

The forum brings together both public and non-profit organizations and actors. It is open to all actors in Skåne working on assignments related to children's rights. Additionally, all professionals who complete the Children's Rights Strategist training are invited to join the network. By 2025, the forum involved around 400 members. By gathering such a broad variety of actors on a regional scale, the network enables a holistic view of the work to uphold the rights of the child and identify needs.

The operation of the forum is decided by a working committee where public and civil organizations are represented. Through the Children's Rights Forum Skåne's network meetings, held at least once a year, participants are offered opportunities for knowledge enhancement, experience exchange, and sharing good examples of children's rights work.

Initiative #2 (Sweden): **Barnrättsforum Skåne** (The Children's Rights Forum Skåne)



WHERE

Skåne, Sweden
(regional level)



DIFFICULTY

Quite difficult
to implement



REQUIRED TIME

Requires
much time to
implement



REQUIRED RESOURCES

Requires much
resources to
implement



TYPE OF WORK

Requires
collaboration
between
organizations

Three recommendations from the organizers, for actors interested in initiating a similar regional knowledge platform:

1. **Start by offering continuous training in children's rights:**
By providing ongoing training in children's rights to actors working for or with young people within your geographical area you can ensure a solid foundation of knowledge and a common awareness among the regional actors.
2. **Create a collaborative network:**
Form a network where those who have completed the offered training can continue to receive knowledge updates, share experiences, and collaborate. Ensure that a working committee is in place representing both civil society and public actors to develop joint activities that meet the network's needs.
3. **Allow time for development:**
Dare to experiment and give the network time to grow. The key is that the network provides inspiration, a sense of coherence, and energy for continued work in the attending organizations own operations.

Initiative 3 (Denmark): **Fælleselevråd (Joint Student Council)**

The Joint Student Council began as an idea as part of a political initiative in Faaborg-Midtfyn Municipality called “The School of the Future,” where decision-makers and professionals in the municipality aimed to improve the schools. The municipality recognized that students did not have enough influence in the operations of the schools and that there was a lack of cooperation between the different Student Councils in the municipality.

The solution was to implement the Joint Student Council—a coordinating body for all student councils, where issues, ideas, and solutions are discussed. The purpose of the Joint Student Council is to focus on students’ perspectives, daily life, and opinions, thereby discussing and working on solutions to relevant issues at the schools. The participants of the Joint Student Council are also tasked with developing proposals for actions together. These project proposals are then prioritized by the municipal council.

The initiative showcases how cooperation and joint efforts can overcome organizational boundaries within a large organization, which municipalities often are. Siloed organizations, where departments within the same municipal organization do not plan together or communicate with each other, are a common problem. Addressing this issue is often necessary for an organization to collaborate effectively with external partners.

The municipality is responsible for allocating staff resources to arrange the administration and coordination of the council. They are also appointing a budget each year to cover both arranging meetings and realizing projects that the council wants to initiate. Participants of the Joint Student Council are appointed by the different schools they represent. The municipality’s youth council is also represented in the student council.



Initiative 3 (Denmark): **Fælleselevråd** (Joint Student Council)



WHERE

Faaborg-
Midtfyn,
Denmark (local
level)



DIFFICULTY

Quite difficult
to implement



REQUIRED TIME

Doesn't
necessarily
require
much time to
implement



REQUIRED RESOURCES

Doesn't require
much resources
to implement



TYPE OF WORK

Requires a mix
of desk work,
field work and
collaboration
between
organizations

Three recommendations from the initiators, for actors planning for similar initiatives:

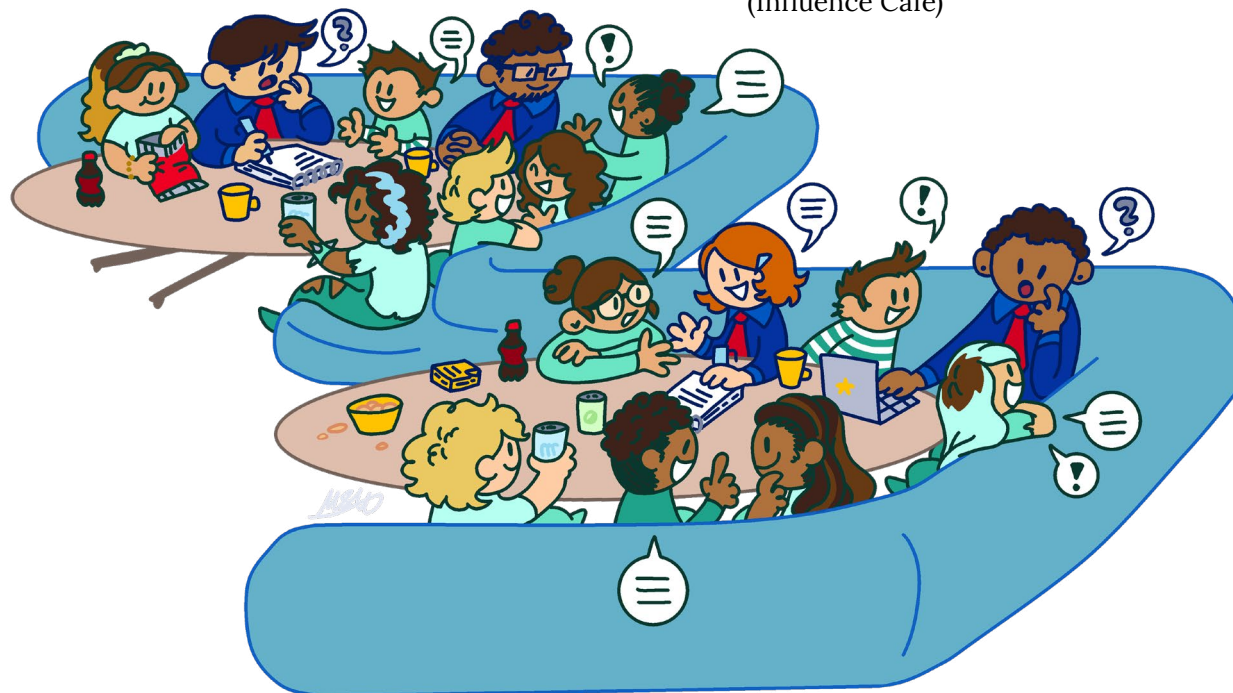
1. **Make the work clear for the participants:** Create a vision and mission that is easily understandable for the work of The Joint Student Council early in the process, to communicate towards the target group.
2. **Make the effort of the young participants matter:** Make sure that the Joint Student Council have a say in all decisions regarding school polity in the Municipality, and that they get feedback on their concerns from the decision-makers.
3. **See the big picture:** Remind the participants of the joint student council that they represent a large group of students.

Principle 5: Facilitate and encourage dialogue

To be able to create local engagement and receive input from children and young people, many public actors like municipalities and regions create structures and platforms that allow children and young people to participate. This enables children and young people to express their opinions, to have the opportunity to ask questions to civil servants and politicians in a safe environment, and most importantly allows them to influence the local societal development. When establishing such a platform, it is important to carefully consider the purpose of it and to review the actual influence that participants will have, to avoid creating expectations that cannot be met later. This can result in the initiative damaging the target group's trust, instead of strengthening it.

The three initiatives selected to exemplify the principle are:

- **Initiative #1 (France):** Le Conseil Municipal des Enfants (Children's Council of Roubaix)
- **Initiative #2 (Denmark):** En plads i §17-4 udvalget om liv i lokalsamfund og på øerne (A reserved seat on the local committee on life in communities and on the islands).
- **Initiative #3 (Sweden):** Inflytandecafé (Influence Café)



Initiative #1 (France): Le Conseil Municipal des Enfants (Children's Council of Roubaix)

The Children's Council was created in 2017 by the city of Roubaix. The city aimed to establish a democratic body for middle school students to raise young people's awareness of citizenship and local governance. The council is based on a structured framework designed to allow children to express themselves, propose projects, and better understand how a municipality works.

This initiative showcases how education and engagement can be combined in a practical and fun way, helping young people understand their future roles as citizens and learn about the municipality's responsibilities.

The primary target group of the council is young people aged 9-13. Children elected to participate in the council serve a two-year term. Elections are held in 17 schools across Roubaix, where one girl and one boy are chosen to represent each school. The city provides election materials (ballot boxes,

polling booths) and ensures the election process is legitimate.

After their election, an inauguration ceremony and an integration seminar are organized to familiarize the young people with municipal services. This allows the electees to meet the city's elected officials, learn about their city, and better understand their rights as citizens.

The electees are then divided into thematic committees based on their interests in the city's various responsibilities. These committees meet monthly, supervised by facilitators and teachers who support the electees as needed. Each committee works on specific projects. Examples from the period 2023-2024 include: toy collections for hospitalized children, providing inputs for creating of an accessible park, promoting second-hand sports equipment, producing sports podcasts, building an insect hotel, creating mini greenhouses, conducting biodiversity



interviews, and raising awareness on discrimination and road safety through events and workshops.

Members of the Children's Council are also invited to participate in several local events and forums, which they often do.

At the end of their term, the elected children are awarded a citizen advisor diploma by the city of Roubaix. The city has observed that the Children's Council improves the personal development of the participating children. They gain confidence, develop their speaking skills, and learn to work in a team.

Initiative #1 (France): Le Conseil Municipal des Enfants (Children's Council of Roubaix)



WHERE

Roubaix, France
(local level)



DIFFICULTY

Not difficult to
implement



REQUIRED TIME

Doesn't require
much time to
implement



REQUIRED RESOURCES

Doesn't require
much resources
to implement



TYPE OF WORK

Requires a mix
of desk work,
field work and
collaboration
between
organizations

Three recommendations from the initiators, for actors interested in initiating a similar platform:

1. **Engage and support schools:** engaging schools is sometimes more complex than engaging the children. Take the time to arrange meetings with the schools, supply appropriate materials, and lastly don't forget to integrate the schools into the project.
2. **Establish a relationship of trust with families:** Families play a key role in children's participation. To avoid reluctance, it is essential to communicate clearly about the council and its objectives, involve the parents in the highlights and to provide them with regular information.
3. **Ensure a rigorous organization:** by checking the attendance of the children beforehand, anticipating the necessary equipment and preparing each session. It is also necessary to have a first aid kit and an emergency protocol.

Initiative #2 (Denmark): En plads i §17-4 udvalget om liv i lokalsamfund og på øerne (A reserved seat on the local committee on life in communities and on the islands).

In Denmark, the §17-4 committee is a special legislated type of committee that can be established by municipality councils. These committees can include external participants who are not elected members of the municipal council but who are given the mandate to put forward political proposals in pre-defined specific issues. The purpose of these committees is to involve a broader range of stakeholders in discussions and decision-making processes, particularly on issues that require specialized knowledge or community input. The §17-4 committees are often used to address specific local issues, such as the development of rural areas.

Faaborg-Midtfyn Kommune has created a §17-4 committee to support the local initiative "Liv i lokalsamfundene og på vores øer" (Life in Local Communities and on Our Islands). The committee is tasked with developing action proposals aimed at enhancing life in local communities and on the islands in the municipality, such as initiatives to improve local meeting places,

support local ideas, and enhance community life.

The §17-4 committee includes a total of 10 members: 4 members from the municipal council and 6 external participants representing the islands and local communities, allowing for a diverse range of perspectives and expertise. One of the external members represents and is selected by the local Youth Council to voice youth perspectives. By working to especially include the youth perspective in the §17-4 committee, Faaborg-Midtfyn Kommune exemplifies how the youth perspective can be integrated into an already institutionalized structure.

By 2024, the specific §17-4 committee had managed to get a total of 16 action proposals worth 10,000,000 DKK approved by the municipal council. Of these, 2 actions were proposed by the Youth Council representative and specifically targeted to improve the life for young people in the local communities.



Initiative #2 (Denmark): En plads i §17-4 udvalget om liv i lokalsamfund og på øerne (A reserved seat on the local committee on life in communities and on the islands).



WHERE

Faaborg-Midtfyn, Denmark (local level)



DIFFICULTY

Quite difficult to implement



REQUIRED TIME

Doesn't necessarily require much time to implement



REQUIRED RESOURCES

Doesn't necessarily require much resources to implement



TYPE OF WORK

Requires mostly desk work, but also some field work and collaboration between organizations

Three recommendations from the initiators, for actors interested in making conventional structures more adapted and accessible for younger participants:

1. **Make the process** understandable: Make a clear plan for when and how the steps and sub-goals of the process looks
2. **Make it possible** to participate on young people's terms. For example, consider time, place, form, preparation and need for support.
3. **Follow ups and feedback:** Follow up with the young representative on an ongoing basis so that they feel well informed and heard.

Initiative 3 (Sweden): **Inflytandecafé** (Influence Café)

“Inflytandecafé” (Influence Café) is an initiative by the municipality of Lund that invites young students from special schools, along with staff, teachers, and assistants, to biannual meetings focused on participation, democracy, and amplifying students’ voices. Politicians and municipal leaders attend these meetings to listen and engage with students on various issues. This initiative demonstrates how a municipality can facilitate and encourage dialogue with groups of young people who are often overlooked.

The initiative began in 2015 after the municipality noticed that few young people from special schools were attending the municipality's events on youth participation. It was identified that many in this group were unaware of their right to participate in the municipality's influence work. This prompted the municipality to rethink how they could strengthen participation and influence for young people with experience in special education.

The Inflytandecafé format was developed in dialogue with the target group. When asked, the young people expressed a desire for a forum of their own with fewer participants, preferably in the form of a café where they could have fika (a Swedish social tradition involving having a cup of coffee or a snack together with friends or coworkers), an activity many appreciated. Based on this input, the municipality decided to create a new event instead of trying to push the identified target group to attend existing options.

The Inflytandecafé meetings are centered around three main components: visualization, workshops, and fika. Visualization involves graphic facilitation, where a facilitator draws the youths' thoughts and ideas on a large board during the event to clarify opinions and create context. Workshops offer students a chance to engage in various activities, such as crafts, floorball, and e-sports, introducing them to association life and leisure activities in the municipality. Fika is available throughout each meeting, providing a relaxed



space for those who prefer not to participate in workshops, allowing them to meet new friends or municipal decision-makers. Participation without pressure is always a prerequisite in the meetings.

Since 2015, Inflytandecafé has been held twice a year, with participation ranging from 50 to 200 attendees. The opinions, ideas, and thoughts expressed by the attendees have been used as a basis for reports sent to decision-making politicians in Lund. Overall, the event has contributed to a fundamental understanding of the target group's challenges and desires regarding influence and participation in the municipality.

Initiative 3 (Sweden): **Inflytandecafé** (Influence Café)



WHERE

Lund, Sweden
(local level)



DIFFICULTY

Quite difficult
to implement



REQUIRED TIME

Doesn't
necessarily
require
much time to
implement



REQUIRED RESOURCES

Doesn't require
much resources
to implement



TYPE OF WORK

Requires a mix
of desk work,
field work and
collaboration
between
organizations

Three recommendations from the municipality of Lund, for actors interested in initiating a similar platform:

- **Use visual aids** to capture the target group's opinions, thoughts, and wishes. Images offer an alternative way to successfully communicate with those who have limited ability to read, write, and/or speak.
- **Involve the target group** and those who work closely with the target group. Listen to how they prefer to participate and make their voices heard when creating forums for participation and influence.
- **Dare to try!** Testing, daring to be open-minded and flexible, and evaluating the work along the way is far better than avoiding working with influence and participation, out of fear that something will go wrong.

Next step to improve participation for children and young people

In today's rapidly changing world, it is crucial to continually evaluate current practices and seek out fresh perspectives. By doing so, innovative solutions can be uncovered that resonate with the unique challenges and opportunities faced by communities. Drawing inspiration from the successes and lessons learned by other actors and neighboring regions, a dynamic and responsive approach to youth participation can be created.

The journey towards strengthening youth participation is not a solitary one. It requires the collective effort of local and regional authorities, educational institutions, community organizations, and, most importantly, the young people themselves. By fostering an environment of collaboration and mutual respect, the voices of youth can not only be heard but actively shape the decisions that impact their lives.

We, the members of the LISTEN

Partnership who worked to summarize our findings in this manual, hope that other

actors are encouraged to follow up on the work we have started. By embracing and drawing inspiration from the five principles identified through local perspectives and needs, presented along with the practical examples compiled in this manual, we believe we can create a real impact. By addressing the urgent matter of reversing the participation deficit, we can create opportunities for meaningful youth participation, where the public and private sectors listen and respond to their needs and support their growth as active and engaged citizens.

Contact information

Interested in learning more about the presented initiatives? Below you will find links and contact information for each initiative:

Principle 1: Evaluate and keep well-informed

Initiative #1 (France): Les Assises de la jeunesse – (Youth Conference)

City of Roubaix Youth Department
Dorothée Baralle – dbaralle@ville-roubaix.fr

Initiative #2 (Sweden): Barnrättsstrategutbildning (Training for child rights strategists):

Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions
[English pages](#) | [SKR](#)

Initiative #3 (Denmark): Politisk mesterlære (Political apprenticeship):

Faaborg-Midtfyn Municipality
[Politisk Mesterlære – Faaborg-Midtfyn Ungdomsskole](#)

Principle 2: Build trust and legitimacy

Initiative #1 (Denmark): Ungekoordinator (Youth coordinator)

Initiative #2 (France): Les filles du Sud (Girls from the South):

Contact points: Anissa MEDDAH & Noémie PRETTE
<https://itineraires.asso.fr/>

Initiative 3 (Sweden): Ungdomsombud

Municipality of Ängelholm
[Ung i Ängelholm](#) | [Ängelholms kommun](#)

Principle 3: Provide support for initiatives

Initiative #1 (Sweden): Unga leder unga (Young leading young)

Municipality of Lund
[Unga leder unga](#)

Initiative #2 (Denmark): Ungdomsråds cafeer (Cafes driven by The Youth Council)

Municipality of Faaborg-Midtfyn
[Ungdomsrådet for Faaborg-Midtfyn](#)

Initiative #3 (France): Conseil Consultatif de la Jeunesse (Youth Advisory Council)

City of Roubaix
Contact point: Fabien LEFEBVRE
[Conseil Consultatif de la Jeunesse](#)
[Instagram](#)
[Facebook](#)

Principle 4: Foster Coordination and Coherence

Initiative #1 (France): PROVOX Hauts-de-France

CRAJEP Hauts-de-France
Contact point : Simon DUNBAR
<https://crajephdf.org/PROVOXhdf/>

Initiative #2 (Sweden): Barnrättsforum Skåne (The Children's Rights Forum Skåne)

The County Administrative Board of Skåne
[The County Administrative Board
skane@lansstyrelsen.se](mailto:skane@lansstyrelsen.se)

Initiative #3 (Denmark): Fælleselevråd (Joint Student Council)

Municipality of Faaborg-midtfyn
[Fælleselevråd - Faaborg-Midtfyn](#)
[Ungdomsskole](#)

Principle 5: Facilitate and encourage dialogue

Initiative #1 (France): Le Conseil Municipal des Enfants (Children's Council of Roubaix)

City of Roubaix
Contact point: Coraline LECOCQ
<https://lafabrique.ville-roubaix.fr/conseil-municipal-des-enfants>

Initiative #2 (Denmark): En plads i §17-4 udvalget om liv i lokalsamfund og på øerne (A reserved seat on the local committee on life in communities and on the islands).

Municipality of Faaborg-Midtfyn
[§17 stk. 4 udvalg - Liv i Lokalsamfundene og på øerne](#)

Initiative #3 (Sweden): Inflytandecafé (Influence Café)

Municipality of Lund
[Påverka i Lund](#)

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Illustrations:

Majken Steensgaard Hutflesz
littleinkbox.dk



LISTEN

Interreg
North Sea



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The County
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