

"Youth policies for better local democracies" Study visit to Belgium

STUDY VISIT

Participants had the chance to visit and get inspired by the work of various municipalities and organisations in Flanders and Wallonia and learn about their practices and approaches to youth participation in decision-making at the local level.



The study visit titled “Youth policies for better local democracies” took place from 17th - 21st October 2022 in Belgium. The Study visit started with a visit to Bataljong, a network of experts in the field of local policy for children and young people. They support municipalities around Flanders in setting up a local youth council, creating local youth policies, or applying for the label of child-friendly cities. Following that, we visited the municipality of Zwijndrecht, one of the municipalities Bataljong supports. We visited their youth house and learned about their youth council, comprised of representatives of youth movements. The next part of our Study visit took us to the region of Wallonia, where we were hosted by our partner CRECCIDE who shared with us their approach to supporting municipalities related to youth topics. This visit coincided with the official launching of the publication “Local youth councils - Mapping practices” done by a DYPALL Network in cooperation with CRECCIDE (Belgium), Città di Collegno (Italy), Krapinsko-Zagorska Županija Croatia) and Mladinski svet Ajdovščina (Slovenia). This publication gathers information about various aspects of the local youth councils, such as their composition, goals, organization,

resources available, and other relevant information. We also had the opportunity to visit the Youth Council of Walcourt. In this small town, we talked with youth representatives about what motivates them to engage in the youth council, and we participated in an environmental action they were organizing. The final part of our program was dedicated to the Tree company and the Municipality of Sint-Niklaas. Tree company, which already cooperated with DYPALL Network on the “Digital participation tools for youth engagement in local governance” project, shared their inspiring approach to finding digital solutions for municipalities that want to engage young people in participatory and democratic processes. They also presented their new concept of “phygital” - in-person processes that incorporate digital technology. Lastly, in the Municipality of Sint-Niklaas, we were welcomed by the Councilor for youth and municipal officers for youth and participation who presented their interesting practice of youth participatory budget under the slogan “Young, wild, golden”. They also took us for a bicycle ride around their city and showed us different youth spaces. What an inspiring week!

OUTCOMES

- Explored and learned about youth policies and models of youth participation at the local level around Belgium;
- Discovered innovative strategies to support youth workers in broadening youth participation in their realities;
- Exchanged good practices and reflected on the potential of different approaches to engaging young people at the local level;
- Got to know how local youth councils work in Flanders and Wallonia;
- Learned the municipalities' opportunities and challenges regarding youth participation in Belgium;
- Reflected on the challenges faced by the different organisations focusing on their local solutions;
- Expanded the network and built new synergies around Europe.



To discover ways of youth participation at the local level in different national contexts



To increase knowledge and expertise about different approaches and systems of child and youth councils



To improve competencies to provide platforms and tools to encourage youngsters to participate meaningfully

“Participation without insight means decision without prospect.”

Councilor for youth, Municipality of Sint-Niklaas

“Information is crucial for participation.”

Tree company, Antwerpen

“Wallonie wants to empower the child and youth councils to raise the concept of democracy in the youth population.”

CREECIDE

Belgium

17th – 21st
October 2022



The Study visit was a space for discussion, inspiration, and exchange of good practices.

BATALJONG

3 thematic teams:

- Coordination of leisure time
- Broad youth policy
- Policy participation

MUNICIPALITY OF ZWIJNDRECHT

- Youth centre
- Youth house
- Youth council

CRECCIDE

- Consultancy to municipalities
- Support of the youth councils
- Municipality of Walcourt

13
PARTICIPANTS

4
MUNICIPALITIES

5
DAYS

4
PARTNERS

6
VISITS

HOW

TREE COMPANY

- Online participation - digital tools for municipalities
- Phygital - in-person processes that incorporate digital technology

MUNICIPALITY OF SINT-NIKLAAS

- Participatory budget
- Youth house
- Youth movements

Participants evaluation

92%
High & Very High
Quality Activity

100%
Positive opinion on
goals achievement

THE ACTIVITY

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/ [Programme](#)

/ [Resources](#)

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