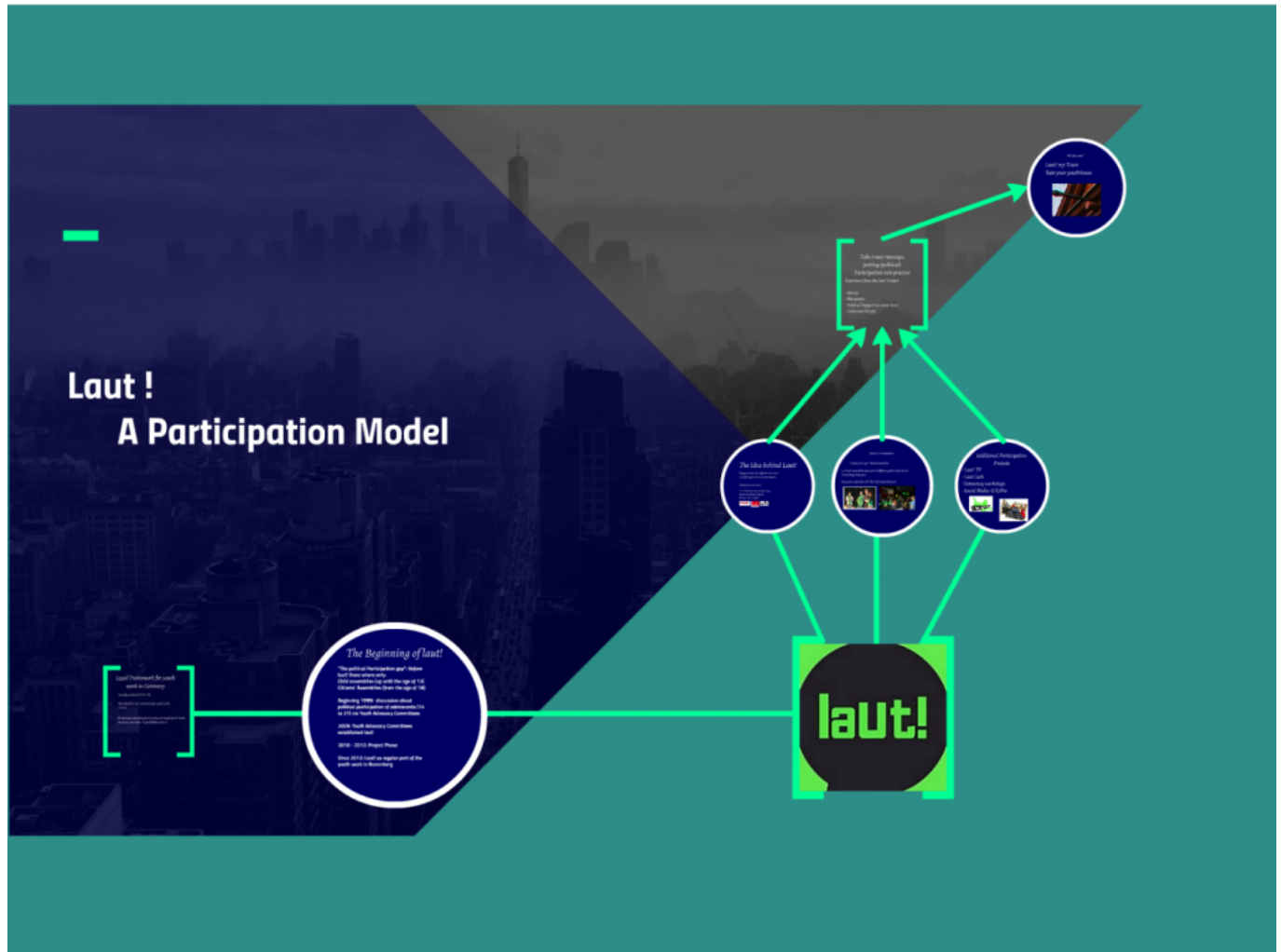


Project “Laut!” - Youth Participation in Germany

04/12/2019 - Actions in EGL



LET'S GET 'Laut!'

The goal of 'Laut!' ('Loud' in English) is to stimulate participation and give presence and voice to all young people in Nuremberg. It makes a point that young people are a very diverse group and in order to provide quality support and representation, a wide range of varied approaches is required. The multiple activities and opportunities within 'Laut!' focus on promoting and stimulating consistent dialogue between adolescents of various social backgrounds and decision makers, policy makers, administrators of the city of Nuremberg and more. The project is financed and supported by the Youth Welfare Service Nuremberg, the Nuremberg Youth Council, and Parabol Media Center.

We talked with 'Laut!'s project coordinators **Derya Bingöl-Karik** and **Antonia Möller** in depth about what makes 'Laut!' unique and what meaningful youth participation looks like

in Nuremberg.

Q: Can you summarize the impact of 'Laut!' so far? What are its biggest accomplishments and challenges so far?

A: The main impact of 'Laut!' is to highlight the needs and ideas of youngsters between the ages of 14 and 27 in the city. It aims to bring politicians and young people together and emphasize the need for diverse and different approaches in order to reach these young adults and give them a voice.

One of the biggest accomplishments of 'Laut!' is to clearly voice the wishes and ideas of young people to the public, to the regional politicians and also help implement them. For example, a skate park in the city was renovated by installing street lamps, new skate-ramps, a drinking fountain and benches, so young people have a place to sit. These wishes were quite costly and it took about 3 years to implement from the time the first ideas were given until everything was completed.

It is sometimes challenging to work together with politicians and the municipal administration. If young people want new street lamps, we have to first take this to the municipality and only if it is approved we can realize the idea and project. Although 'Laut!' supports the different ideas of young people, we always have to work with the administration of the Municipality to realize a project. That is why sometimes it takes a lot more time and effort to implement changes than young people think it does.

Q: How is 'Laut!' promoting the voice of youth in Nuremberg? What skills does it help youth develop through its activities?

A: One of our most important tools that gives young people a voice is the 'green sofa' where they can address their topics and voice out issues regarding the city. We record short video clips, which are then shared on social media. We also inform politicians via a newsletter. Of course, social media plays an important role in our work, however we believe in the effectiveness of face-to-face communication, which is why we organize two bigger youth assemblies every year where we bring young people and politicians together. Also once a year, the Lord Mayor of Nuremberg visits one of the youth centers and the young people get the opportunity to ask him questions and discuss current problems and topics.

Through 'Laut!', our goal is to help young people develop a number of diverse personal skills. We help them learn how to communicate their own wishes and needs, develop their own point of view and critical thinking on a number of issues independent of the opinions of political parties and learn how to participate in society in order to make their voices heard.

Q: Can you tell us more about your Green Sofa Initiative?

A: The green sofa is transported around the city so that more young people get to participate. They sit on the sofa and are asked about their opinions on current political issues around the world and locally, in Nuremberg. These interviews can be found in our YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/user/CiTyVee>). It is an interesting way for young people to find their own statements online, find out what other people their age think, and feel heard and valued.

Q: What is the vision of the project? What does a society with meaningful youth participation look like?

A: The goal of 'Laut!' is to give young people a voice and to promote their needs and ideas to the politicians. It is important that these ideas and wishes are implemented by the young people **together** with the 'Laut!' team. That way, they learn that participation also requires involvement and collaboration and that one has to put effort into an idea to reach set goals. **We want to motivate young people to participate because they often don't know that they, too, are able to influence the political process.**

A society with meaningful youth participation is open to young people and makes an effort to explain the political system on a level that is clear and easy for young people to understand how they can participate. Young people also have more opportunities to get involved in issues that concern them. In such a society, young people are active participants in the political system and not simply subject to it.

Igor Korovin is a Youth Volunteer at 'Laut'! Would you like to read the short introduction of Igor? [Read his short introduction as part of the 'Faces of EGL' series!](#)