

Jovem Autarca (Young Mayor)

Name of the organisation

Município de Santa Maria da Feira

Website of the organisation

www.cm-feira.pt

Location of the organisation

Praça da República, 4520-174 Santa Maria da Feira, Portugal

E-mail address of the organisation

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Good practice aspect(s)/themes of youth work

- Participation of young people in decision making

Good practice category

A practice of processes and methods

Good practice aim & purpose

The Young Mayor through non-formal education aims to encourage the active participation of young people in local life; enabling young people to be architects of their own lives, supporting their personal development and growth towards autonomy, strengthening their resilience and providing them with the necessary life skills to face a changing world; encourage young people and provide them with the necessary resources to become active citizens, agents of solidarity and positive change inspired by EU values and a European identity.

Good practice description

“Young Mayor”, whose first edition took place in 2014, is a project that aims to boost citizenship behaviours, appreciate the opinions of young people, as well as their ideas and perspectives for the future, through a process that results in the election of a Young Mayor and two Councillors from among 21 candidates. Young people aged between 11 and 17 can vote in the elections and Young people aged between 13 and 17 who study and/or live in the municipality of Santa Maria da Feira can apply. Per year, we have almost 7000 young persons voting in the election of the young Mayor. We have the limit of 21 candidates per year.

The mandate is only one year, in order to allow the elected young people to combine school and extracurricular activities and official duties.

By assuming an active participation in the political decisions of their municipality, the elected young people will act as spokespersons for their peers, and will be co-responsible for managing the 10.000€ budget assigned to them, as they try to carry out the projects they designed, within a logic of dialogue and sustainability.

During one year, the young mayor team have a meeting 2 times a month (minimum). In the beginning, they share the ideas and organize all the mandate (how many things they want to do, areas, investment, and how they want to do it). After deciding what they want to do, they present the idea to the council of Santa Maria da Feira and all the deputy-mayors, UNDERSTANDING ?? how they can help, or be involved in these areas.

After that, they build their idea and begin to do all the steps necessary to turn it real. This is one of the main goals of young mayor, because the young person will be part of all the phases (think, contact and prepare, realize).

During the year, after all the projects that they promote, the team is invited for different moments, representing the youth of the municipality or sharing the experience to being part of the young mayor.

The Young mayor is also an official member of the youth council of Santa Maria da Feira.

In relevant moments of the city and special dates for the country, the young mayor is invited to speak and represent all the youth in Santa Maria da Feira (Ex: Dia das Fogueiras – Municipal holiday and 25 of April – national holiday).

In the final of the mandate, the group does a reflection of the work, and what can be better in the future. Normally, this young team will be active citizens for the society. After the young mayor, they are involved in youth, cultural or sports associations, school associations, political associations, ONG's, European spaces of participations, etc.

More than the projects that they developed, it is all the process that we believe that is more important for their lives.

They open their minds, receive a lot of information and opportunities, and share all this knowledge with the community.

Slogan of the project: "The future starts tomorrow".

Good practice result & concrete effects

Young Mayor started in 2014 and involved 21 young people, who developed their soft skills. They organized 3 actions addressed to YP. At the end of their mandate, young people continued to participate actively in the sustainable development of the local community through their assiduous presence in events/actions/projects addressed to youth (and the youth advisory council was even created). The regular participation of young people in Erasmus + youth allowed them to get to know other young people and European realities, increasing the sense of belonging to Europe, as well as the appreciation of European democratic values of peace, solidarity, non-discrimination, equity, inclusion (art2 Treaty of EU).

Good practice chapter of the European Charter on Local Youth Work

Organisation and practice