Youth Democracy Academy

Name of the organisation
DYPALL Network

Website of the organisation
www.dypall.com

Location of the organisation
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Good practice aspect(s)/themes of youth work
• Participation of young people in decision making
• Non-formal education/-learning
• Active citizenship/activism
• Competence development of youth workers

Good practice category
Concrete tool

Good practice aim & purpose
The "Youth Democracy Academy" programme is composed of "Educate for democracy", a series of training modules based on nonformal education methodology, supported by a board game appealing to young people so they could explore the concept and values of democracy in an innovative way, tackling it from local, national, and European perspective. The programme is supported by Assessment tool to measure the impact of the programme, consisting of baseline and endline research to be conducted at the beginning and the end of the "Educate for democracy" programme. The programme can complement citizenship education programmes in schools or exist independently.

The main objectives of YDA program:

– To bring the idea of democracy closer to young people by increasing their understanding of its concept, values and instruments
– To develop young people's sense of critical thinking and media literacy skills
– To rebuild trust in democracy by giving the space for young people to have a critical look at the existing democratic system in the EU and their own role in it.
– To support existing citizenship education programs in schools with a set of training modules and a board game that can help engage young people in a more innovative and youth-friendly manner.

Good practice description
The practice was implemented in the following phases:

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1. DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH DEMOCRACY ACADEMY PROGRAM

– "Educate for democracy" training program – Toolkit

(https://dypall.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Educate-for-democracy-training-programme_Toolkit_Youth-Democracy-Academy_YDA.pdf)

– "Engage" Board game that can be used independently or as material supporting the training program

– Assessment tool to measure the impact of the program composed of base-line and end-line research to be conducted at the beginning and the end of "Educate for democracy" program (https://u.pcloud.link/publink/show?code=XZCJ1EVZ2gqQNoYhXrhDWSTt7pKh2SpoozCV)

2. TRAINING FOR THE STAFF – training for teachers from Sweden and youth workers from Italy who were to implement the Youth Democracy Academy in their youth centre (Italy) and school (Sweden-Ölands folkhögskola) (February 2022)
TESTING OF YOUTH DEMOCRACY ACADEMY PROGRAM IN:

– School in Sweden (Ölands folkhögskola)

– Youth centre in Italy (La fenice)

(February – June 2022 – one semester)

The main target groups of the practice are:

- Young people who increased their knowledge about democratic systems, institutions, decision-making processes at different levels, and the importance of their own active citizenship and participation in shaping the democracy they live in
- Educators, teachers and youth workers, who implemented the YDA programme. They could enrich their existing citizenship education school curricula with the Educate for Democracy training modules and the board game, or they start a new programme in their school or youth centre.

The "Educate for Democracy" training programme has a central role in the YDA programme. Through various training modules, young people can learn how democracy works at different levels and how it impacts their lives.

Each training module is focused on a specific topic:

Citizen participation;

Understanding and experiencing democracy;

Increasing my impact;

Media literacy and critical thinking;

Our democracies at risk;

Youth leadership.

Some activities are aimed at exploring the topic and sharing knowledge among participants; some others offer the opportunity to experience the topic and reflect on our own perception of a concrete issue; other activities develop specific competences, and/or invite us to take actions to address specific issues.

As a complementarity to this we also developed "Youth Democracy Academy" online course, a self-paced online course comprised of a set of webinars, toolkits, guidelines, videos and other relevant material that can be used by young people, youth workers, teachers, etc. that want to work on the topic of EU, democracy, critical thinking and combating fake news with young people.

(https://hop.salto-youth.net/courses/YDA).

YDA online course consists of eight modules:

– Module 1 European Union introduction
– Module 2 Intro to fake news
– Module 3 Exploring online tools for combating fake news and fact-checking
– Module 4 Critical thinking
– Module 5 Peer education
– Module 6: Inclusion and outreach
– Module 7: Use of social media in the context of local projects and campaigns
– Module 8: MAGI – "Mini Action, Great Impact"

Good practice result & concrete effects
The results that the YDA practice achieved are:

– YDA program designed and tested in a school and a youth centre;

– Results of the Assessment tool (base-line and end-line research before and after the Educate for Democracy intervention) analysed and compared;

– 17 Educators and youth workers from the participating school and youth centre trained to implement the full YDA program;

– Board game designed, tested by young people, adapted based on their feedback, fully produced and translated to English, Italian and Swedish

– 48 young people completed the YDA program in Italy and Sweden;

Main learning outcomes:

– Discussing the key democratic concepts and values and why it is important that young people (continue to) nurture them

– Exploring different elements of the program that would help them bring closer the concept of democracy and citizen participation to the youth in Sweden and Italy

– Providing teachers from Sweden and youth workers from Italy with a new set of educational materials that can be implemented when working with young people in their local communities

– Swedish teachers and Italian youth workers improved their facilitation skills to successfully implement the program in their local realities.

Good practice chapter of the European Charter on Local Youth Work
Core principles of youth work