

Platform C: Platform Citizenship: Platform design for a child participatory decision-making culture in Flanders in times of crisis.

Name of the organisation

Platform C

Website of the organisation

www.platform-c.be

Location of the organisation

Henri Dunantlaan 2, 9000 Multiple cities in Flanders, Belgium

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

A strong and qualitative local (youth and children's rights) policy requires a shared mindset, policy vision and culture in which the participation of all citizens (and therefore also children and young people) is seen as meaningful, important and non-committal. Despite the many tools, methodologies and strategies available, partners from research, civil society and local governments indicate that such a shared mindset is still lacking. The approach of the COVID-19 pandemic has sharpened the above

challenge. For example, the participatory reflex towards children and youth was largely lost during the implementation of the COVID-19 measures. By setting up the project 'Platform C', the Children's Rights

Knowledge Centre (KeKi), Bataljong, Foundation Lodewijk de Raet, Network Youthfriendly, HOGENT and Ghent University want to answer the question how we can work more strongly on the equal citizenship of children and young people in Flanders, Belgium and Europe.

Good practice description

Platform C wants to:

- Let children and young people formulate answers to local COVID-19 challenges;
- Make visible the impact of a broadly supported reflex in the structural policy participation of children and young people (and concretize this within the context of the COVID-19 crisis);
- To investigate and visualise what influences the conviction and perception about children's and young people's policy participation and how we can respond to this.

We want to realise these objectives through the following activities:

- Action research: setting up and supporting experiments on citizenship with children and young people in 3 local cases in Flanders: City of Lokeren, City of Kortrijk, Meetjesland region;
- Platform design: generate 3 local and 1 umbrella network of actors, composed of (supra)local actors (local governments, civil society, children and young people) in which learning and sharing about citizenship and policy participation is central;
- Mission statement: developing a shared framework on the position of children and young people (and their participation) in local decision-making processes in times of crisis. Based on children's rights and developed together with children and young people.

These activities will cross each other in time and course, making cross-fertilisation possible.

The action research runs in three cases. Since the situation in the three cases is different, we are running three different trajectories. However, it is striking that we can unravel similar steps. For example, in all cases, as researchers, we started by examining the situation and challenges. This overview was the starting point to further explore the local ecosystem (network analyses and entity portraits). We then unraveled dynamics that can be leveraged to work on our envisioned culture shift. We took these steps together with a core strategic group associated with the local case. Right now (September 2023) we are taking the next step, which is to implement actions. These actions are very diverse, from a research resulting in a paper to bringing people together, organizing workshops, visualizing good practices,....

In addition, we have also established a teen advisory group to give us process advice in the research. For example, they were already thinking with us about how they themselves would like to participate in the policy and in the coming period we will reflect with them on how best to approach our communication to young people (about this research).

Good practice result & concrete effects

Since our research is still several months in progress, it is difficult to make statements about this already.

Good practice chapter of the European Charter on Local Youth Work

Youth work policy