

TAKE THE MONEY AND DO SOMETHING FOR YOUTH

Name of the organisation

GRAD PREGRADA

Website of the organisation

www.pregrada.hr

Location of the organisation

JOSIPA KARLA TUŠKANA 2, 49218 PREGRADA, Croatia

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Good practice aspect(s)/themes of youth work

- Participation of young people in decision making
- Active citizenship/activism

Good practice category

Concrete tool

Good practice aim & purpose

The aim of the project is to encourage the active participation of young people in decision-making processes in the local community and to strengthen the dialogue between young people and decision-makers. We stimulate the youth to take part in the workshops, then we conduct a workshop where young people can propose their ideas which involves youth between 15 to 30 years old. They can propose anything they want as long as it is legal. After that, they provide a campaign and encourage other young citizens to vote for their idea and gather support for the youth projects. The presenters of the projects lead campaigns, while the partners promote the main project and then submit projects through uniformed promotional materials. The best project is decided through the democratic vote of the youth aged between 15 and 30, who reside in the area of the city and win 3000 euros to provide the project. With participatory budgeting, local self-government responds better to the real needs of citizens, promotes social and democratic inclusion, and ensures more efficient spending of public money.

The City of Pregrada was the first city in Croatia that started with this project in participative budgeting for youth.

Good practice description

The animation of young people for coming to the workshop is the biggest challenge. Often young people are skeptical of the idea, believing that they will not really be able to decide. The first step is using social media and youth influencers in the community we encourage other youth to get involved.

The second step is the implementation of the workshop. They learn what is a budget and election rules – young people themselves define the rules for choosing the best project (who has the right to vote, method, place and time of voting). Then they propose projects – young people mostly come prepared in advance, with clearly developed ideas, formed teams, work out the goal, target group, relevance of the idea, place and time of implementation, team, expectations from the City, and resources)

After defining all the elements at the workshop, the mayor or head of the department comes and teams present the ideas. Decision-makers have the right to say whether the project is feasible or not within the budget provided for it, that is, whether it can be realized (land ownership and similar issues). In the end, as a final agreement young people receive instructions on the implementation of the campaign.

The next step is the campaign where the teams create posters for billboards and social networks. The project holder (City of Pregrada) calls for elections on its official advertising channels and also on the social media of the City Youth Council.

Elections take place in city hall or in any other public location in the afternoon (usually Saturday). There is an electoral committee – members of the Youth Council and the project team creating a cheerful atmosphere, music and refreshments.

The winning project is the one that won the majority of votes.

The last step is the implementation of the project in partnership between the winning project and the City administration.

Projects which don't win are also taken into consideration for realization or will be implemented because the municipality recognizes the value of youth involvement as well as the quality of their ideas.

We have been providing this project every year since 2019.

Good practice result & concrete effects

A youth worker is a key to successful work with the youth. Communication skills and understanding of the youth's needs and interests are essential for quality cooperation with the youth. Having a space to express the opinions is necessary, there is no patronizing, as there is plenty of that in the lives of youth. It is important to show them that their ideas are being heard. In a case where there are obstacles to implementing an idea, it should be clearly argued why and what other solutions should be proposed. Some youth in the community are socially well-connected involve. The participatory budgeting for youth is new and the idea should be thoroughly spread before the workshops begin, especially by involving the youth workers/project promoters. The youth know what they want help them achieve it. Believe in the process and leave some space for the mistakes that are bound to happen the first time. Nevertheless, continue the work so the youth doing something for the first time would have the courage to continue. The youth want to participate in the decision making but trust has to be built to dissolve the skepticism toward the political structures.

Good practice chapter of the European Charter on Local Youth Work

Core principles of youth work