



promoting youth involvement and social engagement

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Promising Contexts for Youth Engagement

EPN working lunch, Brussels, 21st November 2018

REPORT

On 21st November 2018, the youth research project H2020 **PROMISE** held the second meeting of its *European Policy Network* in Brussels. Participants were presented with the project's results and got involved in lively discussions of the results.

SPEAKERS

Dr Jo Deakin, Senior Lecturer in the Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice, Manchester University

Dr Sabine Israel, Project Researcher, GESIS - Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften

Sophie Brandes, Project Assistant YES Forum

Annett Wiedermann, Director & Project Manager YES Forum



PROJECT PRESENTATION AND RESULTS

Thanks to this meeting, PROMISE researchers could present their work and early progress to key European stakeholders, including the European Parliament, the Social Platform and youth workers. PROMISE explores **young people's** role in shaping society by focusing on the different ways they engage with social, environmental and political issues, and how they present **opportunities for positive social change** across Europe.

The day started with a warm welcome and introduction to the PROMISE project by Annett Wiedermann (YES Forum) and Dr. Jo Deakin (Manchester University) which was followed by a presentation of the **quantitative results** of the PROMISE research by Dr. Sabine Israel (GESIS). These were based on cross-sectional data from the European Value Survey 2008 which was compared with European Social Survey 2016/2017 data. The data was reduced to that of young people from 18-29 years of age.



All in all, the results show that **education** is a key predictor of broad social engagement. **Discussion about social topics** at an early age are however able to decrease low engagement even when resources are low. The findings also show that more than trust in political institutions, it is **trust in other people** that is able to increase political and social engagement. Next to these bottom-up contexts for youth involvement, the research also identifies the **important role of institutions** in

accumulating advantages or disadvantages for individuals and therefore influencing young people's transition into adulthood. Encompassing **youth support** in all areas of life seems crucial for the socially disadvantaged and those facing multiple life challenges to make their voices heard.



The discussion after this presentation was a chance for participants to share their own experiences with young people and social engagement in other (research) contexts and youth work as well as stressing the still low level of overall participation in Eastern Europe. Results from a survey the YES Forum conducted at the EYE 2018 complemented the quantitative results in confirming that those with high social trust and high education took part in the EYE, i.e. got involved.

After a short coffee break and time to stock up with some more food, the **qualitative research** findings were presented by Dr. Jo Deakin. She presented barriers and motivators to social involvement of young people that were identified in the 22 ethnographic case studies from the 10 project countries involved in PROMISE. Here too, **relationships** with family, adults and peers were found to be enablers of social involvement. Furthermore, providing **opportunities for young people to demonstrate agency** was seen as crucial, e.g. opportunities for them to be independent and to be respected by their peers and adults as well as opportunities to try out ideas and identities. Last but not least the research



findings show that **all types of action of young people**, no matter how small, **should be recognised** as attempts to exert influence and have power in everyday ways despite the constraints often imposed on their lives.

A discussion of these results led to the realisation of how important stigma-free education as well as the promotion of active participation in formal and non-formal education is. Furthermore, the participants discussed that the policy implications of the PROMISE research need to encompass the quantitative and qualitative results in a precise and appealing format.

PRESENTATION OF KEY MESSAGES

The working lunch ended with a short presentation of the key messages gathered so far which will be further developed by the YES Forum into a European Policy Brief. They take up the four aspects of **recognising the diverse life paths of young people**, **enhancing the recognition and support of youth-led initiatives**, **supporting structures for non-formal and informal education** and **creating safe urban spaces for youth**. The YES Forum will now, taking into consideration the discussions at the EPN, work further on the European Policy Brief which will be made available by mid-December.

All results are also published online on the project's **website**.



On behalf of the PROMISE consortium, especially the project lead Manchester University, the YES Forum would like to thank all participants for their participation and the lively discussions.

NEXT STEPS

The PROMISE Consortium will publish the European Policy Brief by mid-December 2018. Ongoing developments of the survey of young people's attitude towards change will be published on the project website. The PROMISE final conference presenting all results to a wider audience will take place in Manchester on 8th and 9th April 2019

MORE INFORMATION

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