



HECSOs

community engagement

Policy Recommendation

to promote the active participation of local communities within the decision-making process and advocate for the values of participatory democracy.

Austria, June 12th 2024



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Partners



Results from local multi-stakeholder policy workshops that took place in Austria, June 12th 2024

Within the framework of the HECSOs project, two multi-stakeholder policy workshops were held for each national context in order to solicit public debate and gather suggestions on how to advocate for the active participation of local communities in decision-making processes and to uphold the values of participatory democracy.

The purpose of the local workshops was to gather - through consultation processes, focus-groups and roundtables - recommendations to be submitted to local authorities in each local context and from which to elaborate a policy recommendation paper to be submitted to European institutions.

Below you can find the main results collected.

Involvement strategies

Access to information about Community Engagement (CE) Initiatives

Access to local "information offices" to find out where the points of contact/communities are and/or which communities exist

Community engagement agency (office for participation)

Using public spaces to be more visible and accessible (decentralized locations)

Knowledge transfer about local political structures

Enhanced representation of marginalized communities or community members

Taking different perspectives into account in decision-making processes

Inclusive education

Multi-lingual (as well as plain language) offers for engagement + inclusive language for governments and institutions

Hire diverse people in local administration / government and pay them

Access to political participation

Right to vote

Multi-lingual collective voice of people with no voting rights

Forums for direct participation

Public participation in policy-making

Low-threshold participation opportunities

Engaging social movements to build and implement public policies

Tools and resources

Continuous funding (not limited to 1 or 2 years) for community engagement initiatives

Increased time resources

Rooms for communities to use free of charge

More resources for marginalized communities

Digital tools

Artificial intelligence (knowledge transfer)

Social media to distribute information

Participative tools

Youth political participation (schools, youth parliament)

Art (music, dance, cinema, etc.)

Exchange: Exploring and excursions

Platform for CE networking

Community events and gatherings (e.g. community cooking)

"Human capital" – person as an important tool

Key persons: Gatekeepers / Intermediaries / Multipliers

Supporting volunteers through reflection, supervision, etc.

Human centered bureaucracy

Relationship work (building trust)

Social Infrastructure

Networking

Neighborhood partnerships

Investment in community spaces

Collection of methods

Universal and social design

Activating survey to build relationships and find key persons

Moderation and mediation

District welcoming map

Mapping existing activities in the territories and connecting needs

Capacity Building

Long-term trust-based partnerships between NGOs and administration

Promoting diversity in organizations

Trainings and workshops

Empowerment Training for Citizens (e.g. how to talk with policy makers)

Mandatory training/continuing education for administrations/local governments

Linked trainings of decision-makers, specialists and volunteers

Transdisciplinary: Beyond disciplinary on all levels with all stakeholders

Networking and knowledge exchange

Access for various stakeholders - not only students (e.g. summer schools)

Learning in practice (skills and methods)

Synergies instead of competition

Shared definition of community and CE

Meta-level discussion on community engagement

Congress of Civil Society

Objective: building bridges, experience and knowledge transfer between stakeholders, promoting social cohesion

Panel for communities

Open to all stakeholders

Implementation of CE in educational institutions

CE at schools

Higher education institutions should have fieldwork and CE along with teaching and research (science and outreach) > 3 pillars: science, education and CE fieldwork

Useful skills and competencies

Conflict managements skills

Awareness (about own background/from others)

Positionality

Tolerance, patience

Intercultural skills

Understanding of group dynamics

Media literacy

Boundaries

Evaluation and monitoring

Feedback loops between communities and policy members

Anonymous feedback

Qualitative and quantitative impact measurement

Review/Reflection of the HECSOs Definition of CE in the local context

Practical relevance/connectivity

Comprehensibility

Exchange of policy recommendations between partners

Communication to participants

Feedback round

Ideally leads to political pressure of grassroots movements

Possible outcomes (to be evaluated)

Masters program in CE

Handbook on local policy regulations

Proven pilot actions as best practices



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