



Position paper on youth responses to global
issues - consultative practices

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Youth Responses to Global issues - Consultative practices

Introduction

The globalisation process has now reached a stage where global issues are present in significant aspects of the lives and minds of young people. Over the last few years the issues that have most broadly encouraged young people to assume political positions and exercise active citizenship have been of a global nature, whether related to peace, globalisation, economy, environment or development. It is becoming obvious that youth organisations need to further develop their capacity to provide satisfactory channels for participation in global political processes and actions.

International institutions are currently and increasingly becoming aware of the potential of young people as agents of global development. Youth organisations have, indeed, long advocated the establishment of channels for participation in the elaboration, decision-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of global institutional policies. The need to mobilise youth and obtain legitimacy through young peoples' involvement have now caused international institutions to increasingly organise channels of participation and request responses on their own initiative.

The European Youth Forum response to this development

We believe that in order to fulfil the challenges ahead there is a need to divide our response into two parallel and complementary levels. Firstly, we need to ensure that the involvement of youth in institutional processes will be transparent, democratic and effective. Principles must be established for the participation processes leading to decision-making at the global level, and the youth actors that shall be recognised as having the credibility to be part of them. Furthermore, a specification of the conditions for the European Youth Forum to engage in partnerships for participation processes must be made.

Secondly, we acknowledge the multitude of potential international and global institutions, with whom the European Youth Forum could be engaged in a dialogue. The aim is to elaborate a global vision containing prioritised institutions and specified thematic content. In this regard there is a need to identify, with which of those it is feasible and beneficial to establish a relationship; while developing an understanding on how those global actors could efficiently and effectively address the challenges facing youth on a global dimension.

The issues relating to the first level - on youth actors in the global decision-making processes on youth issues - is partly answered by this position paper; while the elaboration of a global vision needs a more comprehensive approach and shall feed into an overall policy paper aiming to combine the two complementary levels with our existing policy paper on global youth participation.

Principles for consultative processes held by international and global institutions

The current stage of development of global youth civil society does not allow the establishment of a single global youth structure with the legitimacy to represent youth globally towards the international and global institutions.

As decisions taken at the global level have a strong impact on all levels including the regional and national, global responses must have a strong regional basis in order to reflect the different realities and respond to the various needs of young people worldwide. In this regard we must take into account that the conditions for the establishment of efficient democratic youth structures are not yet uniformly present and satisfactory in all parts of the world. Therefore, it is essential that the European Youth Forum empowers and supports its regional partners in their attempt to become the most representative and efficient interlocutor between the young people of the respective region and the international and global institutions. In this sense, the European Youth Forum shall promote and enhance the participation of the regional youth platforms in global decision-making processes as well as strengthening and increasing the role of the Global Cooperation Coordination Committee towards the international and global institutions as the most comprehensive structure that can guarantee the link between the global, regional and national perspectives of youth issues.

Recent well-intentioned institutional efforts to consult youth on a global scale have occasionally resulted in procedures which are not transparent and which are criticised on the basis of composition and lack of clarity about the legitimacy of the outcomes. In order to guarantee the legitimacy of political inputs on youth issues at the institutional level, the following principles shall be valued and prioritised:

Accountability

The membership and the structure itself should be accountable. Therefore, the structure needs to be based on youth organisations that can secure a control and take responsibility for the structure's actions and its leadership.

Representative democracy

The authority and mandate for political decision should be delegated by the membership to the elected governing bodies according to the basic principles of democracy. Governing bodies should reflect the diversity and plurality of the membership.

Bottom-up structure

The structure should be membership-driven and the decision-making secure and done in accordance with the interests of the membership and the rules of procedure.

Rules of procedures for a transparent decision-making process

A clear set of rules of procedure for the decision-making process should exist and be approved by the membership.

The European Youth Forum shall promote political inputs to global decision-making processes that comply with the principles outlined above and avoid providing legitimacy to processes in which the value of these principles are disregarded.