

## **Description of youth participation project**

**Name of project:** Youth Parliament of Tartu

### **Cities for Children contact person**

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### **Executive organisation**

Name of organisation: Youth Parliament of Tartu

Additional information:

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### **Project description**

The project provides a solution to the following question/problem:

- a) lack of communication between youth and town officials
- b) lack of leisure time activities for youngsters
- c) Why young people are not interested in social welfare and politics?

Project idea conceived by: The idea of Youth Parliament is to represent youth of Tartu next to City Council and City Government and at the same time developing the members of Youth Parliament itself.

Date started: 21.09.2005

Date of completion: continuous

Aims: The aim of Youth Parliament of Tartu (YPT) can be divided into two subdivisions. Like mentioned above first aim is to be a youth representative organ next to city administration, participating in various workgroups organized by city government and standing up for youth ideas and benefits. Secondly but maybe even more prior goal of the Youth Parliament is to educate its members by offering them special trainings, developing their communication-, organizing- and group work skills and of course raising their knowledge about public administration and local politics.

Target group: young people between ages of 15-26

The project reached over 350 young people: Basically those entire youngsters were reached during the campaign of electing second Youth Parliament of Tartu, when old members visited public schools and advertised Youth Parliament and discussed the needs and problems of young people.

Working method: Working methods of Youth Parliament has varied significantly. The main form of Youth Parliament's work is a meeting that are held twice a month. Under different projects Youth Parliament has organized round table meetings between pupils and education system officials. YPT has composed a campaign in which council propagated young people to vote in Estonian parliamentary elections in 2007. There have been several meetings between members of Youth Parliament and members of City government where youth problems have been discussed. In future plans a survey is going to be conducted to clarify the needs of young people in Tartu. Different public debates are going to be organized between politicians on the issues, which are important to youngsters. One of the methods how to raise a social knowledge among youth is to bring public officials and specialists in front of the pupils in schools and organisations of Tartu and that will be one of the main activities in close future.

How are young people involved? Young people are involved in ways mentioned above. The key of Youth Parliament is that whole projects and activities are based on their own willingness and motivation. All activities are initiated and finished by the members of Youth Parliament.

What is the role of young people? The role of young people is to run Youth Parliament of Tartu and to enjoy what they are doing.

How many young people participated? Participated almost 60 young people in different projects which were organized by Youth Parliament

How many young people were involved in the organisation of the project? In the first Youth Parliament which was elected in 2005 were 15 members and in the second term of Youth Parliament the size of council has been expanded up to 23 members.

What other organisations were involved? Tartu Youth Council ( An umbrella organisation to the youth NGO-s in Tartu), under which the project of first Youth Parliament of Tartu was made.

## **Finance**

What is the budget? The budget is 1600€ p/y.

Who provided the finances? City Government

## **Outcome**

Have the aims been achieved? Aims have been achieved partially. The first aim was to create a continuous institutions and that goal were achieved by electing the second Youth Parliament with growing youth interest in it. But there is still enormous way for development, because Youth Parliament of Tartu is not widely recognized by the City Government and not well known among youth in Tartu

What were the success factors? Success factors were great motivation of the leaders Youth Parliament to continue working with the project despite the upcoming problems in first two years of Youth Parliament. And of course the Youth Policy Service of the City Government of Tartu which made it all possible by being the major supporter of Youth Parliament.

What were the pitfalls? At the beginning Youth Parliament had hard time to gain the recognition by the city government and city council. Motivation of the members of Youth Parliament decreased over a time and active members of the first parliament reduces almost 50%. Financial problems, 1600€ is definitely too little to manage effective youth organisation.

Future plans: Youth Parliament will be well known and recognised among city officials and youth of Tartu. Youth Parliament is a respected institution in which youngsters wish to belong. Youth Parliament will do wide cooperation with other Youth Parliaments in Estonia and its neighbour countries. Youth Parliament is a sustainable institution.

Quotes and opinions of young people:

“Youth Parliament has lots of potential, but unfortunately at the moment I do not know about them a lot” (average student).

“Youth Parliament offers a rare opportunity for young people to meet with the major of the town and to speak up their mind about issues concerning their everyday life”(member of Youth Parliament”

“The most positive effect or benefit from the Youth Parliament is the self development of the members of YP. Those skills and experiences which youngster gains in Youth Parliament are indispensable in our future life” (chairman of the Youth Parliament)