Exploring outcomes and impacts of youth participation: Concepts, Methods, Questions

Cristina Bacalso Independent research consulta cristina@bacalso.me Participation is

In everyday parlance: to take part in something
 "I participate in a football game", "I participate in class"

A civil, political & human right: to have an influence on the decisions that affect you
"Nothing about us, without us"

Erasmus+ & SALTO PI Youth Participation Strategy (2020)

Definition of youth participation in democratic life:

Individual **young people** and groups of young people

having the **right**, the **means**, the **space**, the opportunity and, where necessary, the **support**

to freely express their views, contribute to and influence societal decision making on matters affecting them, and be active within the democratic and civic life of our communities.



Clockwise from top: Photo by FORTYTWO, Robert Koorenny, Christina @ wocintechchat.com, Tania Malréchauffé, Henri Lajarrige Lombard on Unsplash

Rationales for supporting youth participation

• It's a human right

- It can **empower** young people & help them challenge discrimination, violence or injustice
- It can make programmes and policies more efficient and relevant to youth
- It can encourage postive youth development through learning new skills and competencies
- It can make our democracies more accountable and promote good governance

Many rationales rely on assumptions about how change happens • Theory of change: A specific and measurable description of a social change

Problem: Challenge we want to address

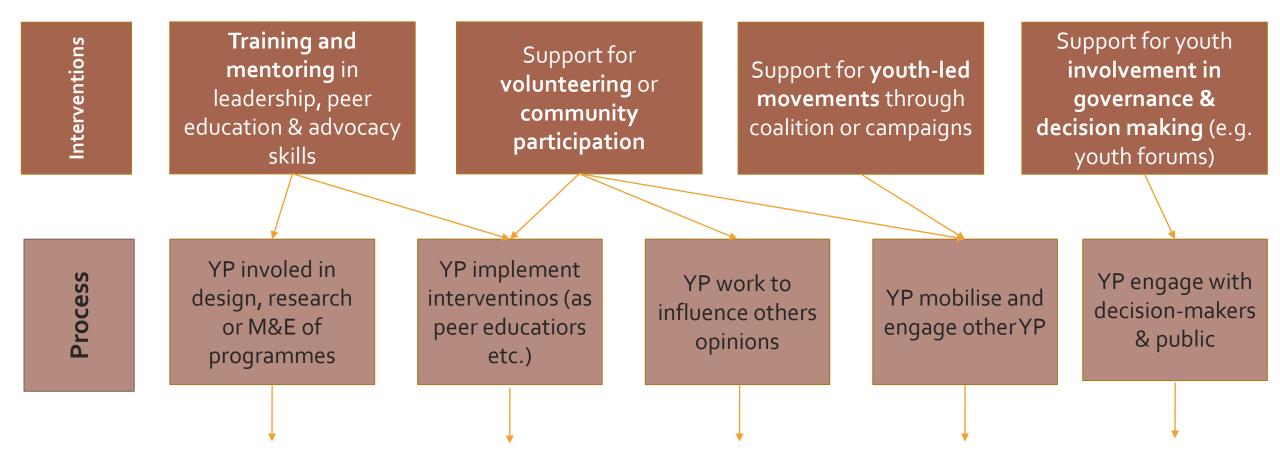
Interventions: Activities or actions with intention to affect change

Outcomes: Change brought about by action

Impact: Long-lasting change

Young people as agents and advocates (*adapted*, ODI, 2016)

Problem statement: Opportunities for young people to participate in decision-making are often **limited**, **tokenistic**, or **non-existent**. This prevents young people fulfilling their potential, limits programme effectiveness, and leads to public policies that inadquately address youth needs.



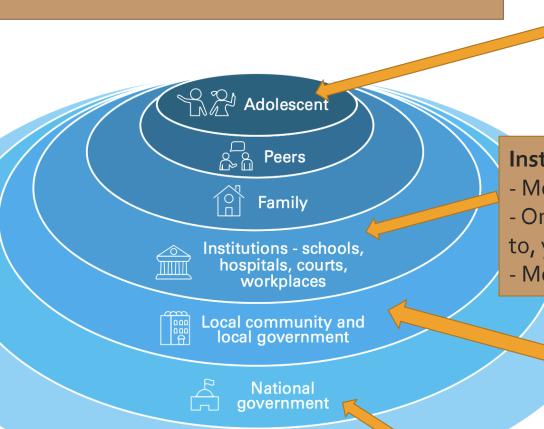
Young people have leadership capital to work at local, national, and international levels

Young people are civically engaged and active in their communities

Young people positively change decision-making processes through youth-led initiatives

Reform enables young people to participate in formal policy and governance structures

Outcomes



International community

Personal:

- Increased knowledge, self-confidence, resilience
- Communication, life skills, technical skills
- Changes in attitudes & behaviour
- Reduced sense of marginalisation
- Stronger family & social ties

Institutions:

- More youth-sensitive interventions & programmes
 Organisations better able to respond to, and more sensitive to, young people's perspectives
- More cost-effective & sustainable interventions

Community:

- Changes in knowledge, attitudes and norms among
- young people, wider community & decision makers
- Increased acceptance of YP voice & participation

Government & policy:

- Greater visibility of young people's concerns in public sphere
- Greater accountability of service
- Greater involvement of youth in governance
- Changes in attitudes & norms of decision-makers
- Youth-sensitive policy & supportive budgets

Empowerment, voice and participation of young people that contributes to better development outcomes with no one left behind such as:

- Reduced discrimination and greater equality
 - Problem-focused responsive governance
 - Improved health & education outomces
- Greater social cohesion, stability and security

Where to research

Problem: Challenge we want to address

Interventions: Activities or actions with intention to affect change

Outcomes: Change brought about by action

Impact: Long-lasting change

"Easiest" to conduct research here Challenges to impact research (and participation)

- Measurement
 - Difficult to isolate "cause" and "effect" (correlation vs causation; contribution vs attribution)
 - Transferrability
 - Challenging to capture concepts such as "empowerment", "accountability", "value change"
- Conceptual:
 - Is multi-dimensional, traditional/alternative forms, formal/informal
 - Participation is both a PROCESS and an OUTCOME, a MEANS and an END
- Participation as a RIGHT and a goal in and of itself (may be neglible if impact can be measured)

Example research I

- RAY (2018) Study on Long-term Effects of Erasmus+/Youth in Action on Participation and Citizenship (RAY LTE) (2018)
 - Research question/Hypothesis: How does E+/YiA contribute to the development of citizenship competence and the ability to participate as active citizens?
 - Intervention: E+/YiA programmes
 - Outcomes: Citizenship competence, active citizen abilities
 - Method: Surveys and interviews on knowledge, skills, attitudes, values
 - **Target:** Youth participants & project leaders / team members

Example research II

- Bau (2015) Building peace through social change communication: participatory video in conflict-affected communities
 - **Research question / hypothesis:** What impact can communications for social change have in post-conflict settings?
 - Intervention: Participatory video project in Rift Valley of Kenya after 2007-2008 post-election crisis
 - Outcome: Change in individuals towards the opposing community; Change in relationships with victims and perpetrators
 - Method: Semi-structured interviews
 - Target: Youth participants in project (secondary: others in the community)

Example research III

- Crowley (2015) Is Anyone Listening? The Impact of Children's Participation on Public Policy
 - **Research question / Hypothesis:** Are youth councils and youth forums effective in having children's voices heard and acted upon by policy-makers?
 - Intervention: Youth Forum in Wales, UK & Neighbourhood Children's Parliament in Tamil Nadu, India
 - Outcome: Degree of: impact on services, policies and institutions; Impact on social and power relations; Impact on children's wellbeing personal development
 - Method: Interviews and focus groups ; desk review to establish case studies
 - Target: Participating children + support workers, senior managers and governors, policies (documents)

Example research Iv

• Local Government Association (2022) Engaging young people in policy making (case studies)

- Research question: In what ways did the participation of young people have an influence on a specific policy?
- Intervention: Various (youth councils / advisory councils, peer engagement researchers, youth voice post boxes) in the UK at local level
- Outcome: More tailored policies; New policy ideas
- Method: Semi-structured interviews
- **Targets:** Local government and municipal workers

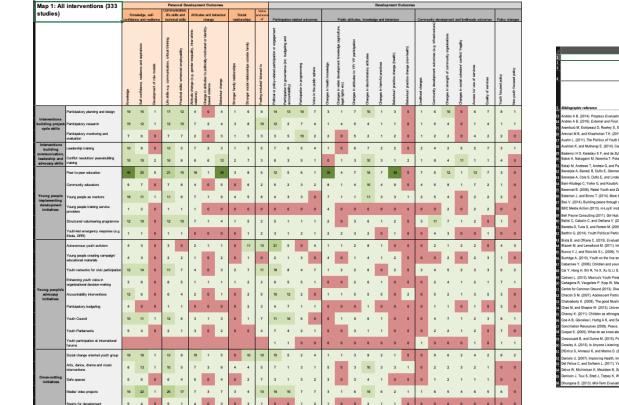
To discover potential areas for research, ask yourself: What is the theory of change?

Worksheet: WHAT?

- Which Erasmus+ **INTERVENTION** (project/programme/initiative) do you want to focus on?
- What are the anticipated **OUTCOMES** and **IMPACT**?

Worksheet: HOW?

- And for **WHOM** or **ON WHAT** should this impact occur?
 - The young people participating?
 - For their **communities**?
 - For the **institutions** they participate in?
 - For government policy?
 - Etc.
- How will you *measure* this? (research design)



Worksheet: ANY EXAMPLES?

A	8 C D	E	F	G	н	1	K L M	N C) P	Q R	5 T	U	v w	x	Y Z AA
Total count				180 59		80 34		172 41	112	15 23	258 1		313 12		138 2 1
Count after applying filters Proportion of documents after applying filters				180 59		80 34	6 216 1	172 41		15 23	258 1		313 12 100% 100%		138 2 1 100% 100% 100%
Proportion of obcuments and apprying ments					Advocates	100%	Research		a 100%		search design	100 1	Language	10036	100% 100% 100%
				inter	vention										
					and and	, 4 Å	for for ratuation	ente ante	rethods	mental	ational	hry.		-spoul	haran An
ibliographic reterence	ar T Abstract	Type of literature	Publication form	Agents Advocz	Agents ot	Primar 4 Second		Duality Duality	- N		System 1	8	Spanls	Global/	Angola Benin
ndres A B. (2014). Progress Evaluation. Programmes for the Youth in Burundi. Youth Inspired: Today and Tomorow and Intam 20		Grey Literature	Report/Working paper				x		×		*		x		*
ndres A B. (2016). External and Final Evaluation. Internenwa (Les Indivisibles): Mobilizing Youth for Peaceful Elections. Buju 20		Grey Literature	Report/Working paper		x		×		×		x	I	×		x
ramburti M, Estripeaut D, Rowley S, Smoot S, Chamorro F, and Bayard V. (2012). Educational impact of peer-intervention on #20		Academic Literature	Peer-reviewed journal article	x	-		×	. x		×		I	×		
revian M B, and Khasholian T K. (2010). Impact of a Peer-led Educational Program on Knowledge and Attitudes about Preven(20		Academic Literature	Peer-reviewed journal article	x			×			×			×		
ustin L. (2011). The Politics of Youth Bulge: From Islamic Activism to Democratic Reform in the Middle East and North Africa 20		Academic Literature	Peer-reviewed journal article		×		x	×				x	x		
ustrian K, and Muthengi E. (2014). Can economic assets increase girls' risk of sexual harassment? Evaluation results from a 20		Academic Literature	Peer-reviewed journal article	×			- ×	Г. ,		×			×		×
ademci H O, Karadayi E F, and de Zulueta F. (2015). Attachment intervention through peer-based interaction: Working with 1st 20		Academic Literature	Peer-reviewed journal article	x			×	×			x		×		
seenci H O, Kasadayi E P, and be Zulueta P. (2015). Attachment inservention brough peer-based interaction: working with isig 20 sker A. Nakagami M. Noronha T. Potaski K. and Puckart E. (2009). A Qualitative Assessment of Girls Gaining Ground. Working 20		Grey Literature	ReportWorking paper	×			×	×		1	×		×		
alaii M. Andrews T. Andrew G. and Patel Vikram. (2011). The Acceptability. Feasibility, and Effectiveness of a Population-bas 20		Academic Literature	Peer-eviewed journal article	x			×	Г , х		x			x		
anetee A, Baneti R, Dufo E, Giennerster R, and Khemani S. (2008). Pitalis of Participatory Programs: Evidence from a Rand 20		Academic Literature	Peer-reviewed journal article	x			×	x		x		I	×		
anetjee A, Cole S, Duflo E, and Linden L. (2006). Remedying Education: Evidence from Two Randomized Experiments in Indi 20		Academic Literature	Peer-reviewed journal article	x			×	×		x			×		
ini-Afudego C, Yorke G, and Koudoh A. (2011). Seeing from our perspectives: youth budget advocacy in Ghana. Participatory 20		Academic Literature	Peer-reviewed journal article	×			×	×			x	I	×		×
ronnet B. (2008). Rebel Youth and Zapatista Autonomous Education. Latin American Perspectives, 35(161. No. 4). pp.112-120		Academic Literature	Peer-reviewed journal article		x	×		x				×	×		
ternan J, and Binns T. (2014). More than just a game? Grass roots cricket and development in Mumbai, India. Progress in de 20		Academic Literature	Peer-enviewed journal article		x	l x			×		x	I	×		
ú V. (2014). Building peace through social change communication: participatory video in conflict-effected communities. Com 20		Academic Literature	Peer-reviewed journal article		x		×	×			x	I	x		x
IC Media Action (2013). m-Loy®: mobile phones to increase youth participation in Cambodia. London: BBC Media Action. 20		Grey Literature	Factsheet/Case study	×	-		×		×		x		×		
ell Payne Consulting (2011), Girl Hub: State of Girls in Rwanda. London: Restless Development. 20		Grey Literature	Report/Working paper	x			×	×			x	I	x		x
ellel C, Cabalin C, and Crellana V. (2014). The 2011 Chilean student movement against neoliberal educational policies. Stud 20		Academic Literature	Peer-eviewed journal article		x		*	×				×	×		
erretta D, Turra S, and Ferrero M. (2005). PRESUPUESTO PARTICIPATIVO JOVEN Construyendo ciudad(ania). 20		Grey Literature	Report/Working paper		x		x	×				x	x		
erthin G. (2014). Youth Political Participation in Local Governments: Initial Evidence from Latin America. Social and Econom 20		Academic Literature	Peer-reviewed journal article		x	×			×		x		×		
ista B, and OKane C. (2015). Evaluation of Child and Youth Participation in Peacebuilding. Nepal. Global Partnership for Child 20		Grey Literature	Report/Working paper		x		×		×		x	I	×		
lazek M, and Lemešová M. (2011). Integrative, Mobile Work with Children and Youth: Its Contribution to Community Developm 20		Academic Literature	Peer-reviewed journal article	×		×		×			x	I	×		
unce V J, and Wolchik S L. (2006). Youth and Electoral Revolutions in Slovakia, Serbia, and Georgia. SAIS Review of Inferra 20		Academic Literature	Peer-reviewed journal article		×		x	×				- x	×		
unidge A. (2010). Youth on the line and the No Borders movement. Children's Geographies. 8(4), pp.401-411. 20		Academic Literature	Peer-reviewed journal article		x	l x		×			x		x		
abarnes Y. (2006). Children and young people build participatory democracy in Latin American cities. Environment and urbar 20		Academic Literature	Peer-eviewed journal article		x		×	×			x		×		
al Y, Hong H, Shi R, Ye X, Xu G, Li S, and Shen L. (2008). Long-term follow-up study on peer-led school-based HIVIAIDS prev 20		Academic Literature	Peer-eviewed journal article	x			×	- x		x		I	×		
arisen L. (2013). Mexico's Youth Protest a Return to the Past. Dissent, 60(1), pp.10-15. 20	3 The article looks at politics and gover Charged	Academic Literature	Peer-reviewed journal article		×		×	×				×	×		
artagena R, Veugelers P, Kipp W, Magigav K, and Laing L. (2006). Effectiveness of an HIV Prevention Program for Secondary 20		Academic Literature	Peer-reviewed journal article	x			×	x			x		×		
entre for Common Ground (2013). Sharing Common Culture: Balkan Theatre Networks for EU Integration. Final Project Evaluation		Grey Literature	Report/Working paper		×		×		×		x		×		
acón S.M. (2007). Adolescent Participation in Impoverished Urban Communities: The Case of the Jóvenes de la Cuadra Groion	7 This article discusses the different cd Charged	Academic Literature	Peer-reviewed journal article	x			x	×			x	I	×		
takraborty K. (2009). The good Muslim girl': conducting qualitative participatory research to understand the lives of young Mu 20		Academic Literature	Peer-reviewed journal article		x	l x		×			x	I	×		
hao M. and Shapiro W. (2013). University Volunteer Scheme for Youth Empowerment and Development of Papus: Review of Upo		Grev Literature	Report/Working paper	×			×	×			х	I	×		
heney K. (2011). Children as ethnographers: Reflections on the importance of participatory research in assessing ophans' ne 20	1 Critiques of child participation within Charged	Academic Literature	Peer-reviewed journal article	x		l x		×			x	I	×		×
e A B, Goicelea I, Hurtig A K, and Sebastian M S. (2012). Understanding How Young People Do Activism: Youth Strategies (20		Academic Literature	Peer-reviewed journal article	1	x	×		×			х		x		
inciliation Resources (2008). Peace, Security and Development Update: Youth and Security. Freetown: Conciliation Resourc 20		Grey Literature	Report/Working paper	1	x		×	×		1	x		×		x
coper E. (2005). What do we know about out-of-school youths? How participatory action research can work for young refugee 20		Academic Literature	Peer-reviewed journal article	1	x	×		×			х		x		×
ossouard B, and Dunne M. (2015). Politics, Gender and Youth Citizenship in Senegal: Youth Policing of Dissent and Diversit 20	15 This paper reports on empirical researCharged	Academic Literature	Peer-eviewed journal article	1	×	×		×		1	x		×		x
rowley A. (2015). Is Anyone Listening? The Impact of Children's Participation on Public Policy. International Journal of Children's		Academic Literature	Peer-reviewed journal article	1	x	×		x			х		ж		
Errico S, Amraoui K, and Marmo D. (2010). External Evaluation Final Report. MediAction. A project implemented by Search fc20		Grey Literature	Report/Working paper	x			×		×	1	х		×		
aniels U. (2007). Improving Health, Improving Lives: Impact of the African Youth Alliance and New Opportunities for Programm 20	7 The African Youth Alliance (AYA) was Open	Academic Literature	Peer-reviewed journal article	×			×	x		×			×		x
el Felice C, and Solheim L. (2011). Youth organisations as learning organisations: exploring special contributions and challer 20		Academic Literature	Peer-reviewed journal article	x		×			×		x		x	x	
elva W, Michielsen K, Meulders B, Greeninck S, Wasonga E, Ajwang P, Temmerman M, and Vanreusel B. (2010). HIV prever 20		Academic Literature	Peer-reviewed journal article	x			×	x		1	x		x		×
enison J, Tsui S, Bratt J, Torpey K, Weaver M, and Kabaso M. (2012). Do Peer Educators Make a Difference? An Evaluation (20		Academic Literature	Peer-reviewed journal article	x			×	x			х		x		x
hungana S. (2013). Mid-Term Evaluation. KabarOrdo: Our Time for Diafogue. Washington DC: Search for Common Ground. 20		Grey Literature	Report/Working paper	1		1				1				1	

ODI (2016) Young people as agents and advocates of development: Evidence gap map report https://odi.org/en/publications/young-people-as-agents-and-advocates-of-development/

Outcomes

