Key Action: Support for policy reform  
Action Type: Dialogue between young people and policy makers

Project Title

Europakonzil - Querdenken auf Augenhöhe

Project Coordinator

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Project Information

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Partners  STADT KONSTANZ (DE) , JUGENDINFORMATIONSZENTRUM VORARLBERG (AT)  
Topics  International cooperation, international relations, development cooperation ; Reaching the policy level/dialogue with decision makers ; Youth (Participation, Youth Work, Youth Policy)
**Project Summary**

The year 2015 started with the attack on the French satire magazine Charlie Hebdo. A little later occurred the probably biggest accident of refugees in the Mediterranean Sea und since summer more and more refugees arrived in Austria and Germany. On the other side grew activities like Pegida in Germany and Ausschaffungsinitiative in Switzerland. Politics and Society reacted correspondingly insecure.

In youth around Lake of Constance already existed diverse individual initiatives, campaigns and projects about those topics. Youth officers of federal states, cantons and districts around Lake of Constance are interlinked in the project group youth engagement of International Lake Constance Conference (IBK). Since 2003 this cooperation organized several cross-border youth conferences, an idea competition in cross-border youth exchange and a dialog between youth and regional politicians.

In early 2015 originated the idea of a participative cross-border project for dialogue and empowerment of youth dealing with the topics religious (in-)tolerance, migration, refugees, human rights and integration.


On 4th of November 2015 all young adults met for the „Europakonzil“ in Konstanz. They mutually presented their regional results, they continued working in mixed groups and they were coached about acting. In the morning of 5th of November they continued working on their demands together with the Minister for European Affairs of the federal state of Baden-Württemberg Peter Friedrich. In the afternoon they met about 30 regional officials, inter alia Landesrat Schwärzler (AT), Grossratspräsident Arnold (CH, TG), OB Burchardt (Konstanz), Nationalrat Naef (CH, ZH), L. Frommelt, Kinder- und Jugenddienst (FL), as well as out of enterprises, parliaments, administrations, candidates, NGOs, churches, unions and members of the board of Trustess of Konstanzer Konzil Award – Award for European dialogue and encounters. After an introduction took place intense mixed discussions. In the evening the young adults offered so called gallery walks to the results of the process for the about 400 persons of the audience of the Konzil Award. During the award ceremony the young adults performed their performances about their results and demands.

The process until than was moderated by a professional moderator, facilitator and experience educator with long experience in youth participation. He was supported by a service provider for social media communication and the professionals of the IBK working group. All the results were noted by the IBK steering group and IBK heads of governments.

On 1 of January 30 participants in the process travelled to the initial refugee reception in Sachbachwalden, Baden-Württemberg. After a guided tour they spend the afternoon together with the refugees, cooking, playing, tinkering, play music and talking. In the evening in the youth hostel in Kehl there was another moderated workshop to work on the final demands and their presentation: Promote education! Fight causes of flight! Create legal and safe immigration opportunities! European distribution key for refugees and faster identity checks! Next morning the young adults took part in a guided city tour in European metropolis Straßbourg before there was a presentation at the Council of Europe where they presented their results. Next station was the European Parliament. Ten of the young adults and three professionals met the president of the European Parliament Martin Schulz (S&D), the other ones MEP Andreas Schwab (EPP). They presented their demands and had intense and impressing discussions. Afterwards they listened to a plenary about refugee crisis. During return journey took place an intense reflection of the eventful journey and process.
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