

DIALOGUE BETWEEN YOUNG PEOPLE AND POLICY MAKERS

More say for migrant and refugee young people!

Make a difference and tell politicians and policy makers what you think about the issues that affect you and your community.

„RESYPA - Revitalize the spirit of youth participation: Join us!“ is a structured dialogue project that improved the dialogue between young people in risk situations and young immigrants with few chances, with political decision-makers at the local, national and European levels. It develops strategies and fundamental measures to improve the access and permanence of African youth diaspora in education system, reducing school drop-out in the region and improve access to the labor market, to create a set of recommendations aimed at social inclusion.

The main objective of the project is bridging the gap in participation of African diaspora youth in the structured dialogue, allowing the local African Diaspora young people to influence the process of construction of youth policies at local, national and European levels. It also empowered local youth associations that have as their main target audience African diaspora young people. It also promoted the opportunities that exist in the new Erasmus + and how they can use these opportunities to improve youth, migration and integration policies in Germany and Europe.



Participants

The project „RESYPA - Revitalize the spirit of youth participation: Join us!“ involve a universe of 318 young people, including some others youth groups and youth organizations, organizations that work with migrants young people and community that need special intervention in terms of social-economic participation, school leaving and unemployment. It involved the participation of 46 local community youth leaders and leaders linked to youth associations and the associations that develop work with the immigrant community and descendants of Africans with German citizenship.

These participants improved their organizational skills, social competences and their knowledge regarding youth projects. In addition, it involved counseling and advisory meetings on promotion of structured dialogue, social inclusion, intercultural dialogue, youth participation, active and democratic citizenship.

Themes

Under this project we have traveled to a number of cities and towns around Germany and invited the African Diaspora young people and stakeholders to a discussion.



In our debate with young African migrants in different towns and cities across Germany, we have noted many challenges and opportunities these young people raised to politicians and decision makers. Below we have summarized some of the main topics.



Asylum Process and welfare

The new coming asylum seekers face the challenge of getting proper accommodation and reception as they arrive to Germany in which they were supposed to get assistance and support as they process their asylum cases.

The Asylum applications are usually too complicated for new arrivals and they usually do not get the initial legal support as they prepare their asylum cases. The other concern is the “Dublin Regulation”. Under this Regulation, adopted in 2003, it is determined which State is responsible for examining an asylum application – normally the State where the asylum seeker first entered the EU. The “Dublin” system operates on the assumption that, as the asylum laws and practices of the EU States are based on the same common standards, they allow asylum seekers to enjoy similar levels of protection in all EU Member States. In reality, however, asylum legislation and practice still vary widely from country to country, causing asylum-seekers to receive different treatment across Europe.

Hence, when they travel to other European countries to get a better treatment, they are deported back to in which they first arrived. During determination procedures under the Regulation, asylum seekers wait in limbo, often separated from their families and in detention, pending transfer to the state deemed responsible for their claim. In some cases, their claims are never heard. Demonstrated failures to respect the rights of persons transferred under the Regulation have been so severe, that both UNHCR and ECRE have appealed governments to stop asylum applicants from being returned to certain countries. The other challenge is the deportation procedures. Also in this case young people who are deemed to be deported usually wait in limbo without any kind of social support that will lead them to different kinds of criminal activities in order to support themselves.



Integration of migrants

The main challenges in the integration process for young African diaspora in Germany are lack of opportunities for integration courses and also lack of opportunities to integrate to the job market. The other challenge is getting decent housing and decent living conditions. Also young people require decent health care and health insurance. The young people also requested for diversity in the agencies that provide services for integrating young migrants and refugees to the German society. They have also shown support to migrant organizations role in facilitating integration.

Migrant organizations like Migrafrica play a significant role in supporting young migrants and refugees as they go through their asylum process, undertake their training programs and look for employment.

Employment and Entrepreneurship

Employment and entrepreneurship is among the main issues that was raised by most of the participants to the structured dialogue project.



For refugee youth, the main obstacle that hinders them from joining the job market is the language gap. They need the proper job training and orientation before joining the job market. Therefore there is a need for more language courses and training courses. The other obstacle that the African migrant youth face when it comes to employment is job related discrimination. They also have difficulties getting a decent job that pays them decent amount of wage. As a solution the participants proposed quota schemes programs for migrant youth and tax reduction to companies and organizations that hire more migrant youth.

With regards to youth entrepreneurship, there are few number of young migrants with African background who are entrepreneurs and managed to establish their own enterprises.



Youth entrepreneurship among the African Diaspora youth shall be encourage and more training opportunities and funding opportunities shall be available to building the capacities of the African Diaspora youth entrepreneurs.

Social inclusion and Political Participation

The African Diaspora youth look for opportunities for a better social integration in to the society. This includes better social and political participation and inclusion into the current state and national youth council structures and institutions. The African Diaspora young people want to be include and have a say in the formulation of youth policies and want their voices heard by the policy and decision makers. This includes regular meetings and consultations with local, national and European level policy makers and implementing agencies. This will greatly enhance the social, political and economic participation of the African Diaspora young people.

African diaspora young people undertake many social inclusion projects to increase the social participation of young people with African background. These projects require skills and resources for their efficacious implementation. Hence, we must build the capacity of the young social workers and provide the different kinds of support they might require to undertake successful social youth projects.



Social inclusion activities and projects also need to cater to different gender issues and needs. Gender mainstreaming shall be among the top priorities and the African Diaspora women shall be empowered in our societies.

Results

Among the main results of the “RESYPA” project is the increased in the number of projects that aimed at increasing the social participation and inclusion of the African Diaspora youth especially the once who are the most disadvantaged. This projects are done in cooperation with the local government, European institutions, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders. The “RESYPA” structured dialogue facilitated cooperation among stakeholders to support African refugees and migrants.

Here are some of the projects that were implemented in cooperation with stakeholders, which are directly linked to the structured dialogues that took place in different cities and towns in Germany.

1. The Afro-woman workshop in Bonn. This project aimed at increasing the social participation of the young women with African background. It raised some of the issues that young African Diaspora women face in Germany and the opportunities that exist for social participation.



2. „Kompass zur Selbsthilfe PLUS“. This project which is being implemented in different cities and towns in Germany aimed at giving responses to questions raised during “RISPA” youth meetings regarding some of the issues that African refugees and Asylum seekers face in Germany. It provides important information to refugees and Asylum seekers about Asylum process in Germany and opportunities for a quicker integration and social participation.

3. „Wohnraum Kompass Plus“. This project aimed at improving the living condition of refugees and migrants provided trainings to migrants and community members on how they can address the issue of decent housing for migrants.

4. Youth Work for Intercultural Competencies. This project in collaboration with an organization in Portugal was designed to develop essential intercultural and social competencies of young social workers who work with immigrants groups living in the disadvantage communities.

5. „Orientierung Plus II“ is a project that trains and orients African refugees to effectively integrate to their host communities. It provides orientation and language courses to newly arriving refugees and supports them as they process their asylum cases, look for training opportunities and in their efforts to integrate to the job market.



“RESYPA” had allowed direct communication and consultation between the African Diaspora young people and decision makers at different governance levels. It also helped us raise wide ranging issues that concern the migrant communities in general and African migrants in particular. The led to cooperation of stakeholder to undertake projects to increase the social participation of migrants and refugees.

We would like to say Thank you to Erasmus + for co-funding RESYPA.