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Youth Participation as a Public Policy Instrument at Local Level. Ukrainian Experience

Abstract: The article provides an overview of the modern concepts on the development of youth policy in Ukraine, the tools to encourage young people to participate in city's public life and participation in urban development. The authors of the article analyzed the various forms of youth participation in the activity of city councils in Ukraine and found 12 modifications of the structural forms of youth councils. The purposes, tasks and possible forms of youth participation in urban development in accordance with Ukrainian legislation are analyzed. It is determined that for successful participation in urban development, young people must have certain civic competences. The authors of the article suggest to attribute such civic competencies, which are important for participation in self-government at the regional level, as: ability to make decisions; the set of individual abilities required to achieve the goal; possession of a young person with relevant competence and attitude to the object of activity; integral personality quality manifested in ability and willingness to act. Non-formal and informal education tools that can help to form civic competences for young people are proposed. The authors present an example of youth self-government in the city of Lviv, namely, the activities of the Lviv Youth Council. The article analyzes the internal structure of the Lviv Youth Council, its activity over the last two years, and the attitude of Lviv City officials to other activities of the youth council. The article proposes the tools for youth participation in urban development processes in Ukraine. The list of tools is made on the basis of the legislation of Ukraine and the practice of the Lviv Youth Council. These tools of public participation change the role of youth in urban development processes from self-governing actors to urban policy makers.

Key words: youth participation, youth policy, urban development, city government, civic competence, self-government, non-formal/informal education, instruments of self-government participation

Paper's Main Body

The issue of citizens' involvement in public affairs is among the most resonant in modern Ukraine. Given the lack of persistence in the activities of state institutions and the spread of the distrust of political parties that have been in power for a long time, the citizens of Ukraine have repeatedly influenced the situation in the state bypassing the institutions of state bodies. Traditionally, youth

is the most active class of society. There is a need not only for restoring confidence in representative democracy but also for the continued development of direct democracy tools and practices.

These issues are of particular relevance in the youth environment, since it is at a young age that civic competencies, experience of participation in public life, and involvement in mechanisms of influence on public administration should be acquired.

The youth field is the closest to involving young citizens in their country and society, as it is here that both current issues of a particular stage of socialization and the whole range of issues from transition from childhood to adulthood are addressed. Due to this, youth participation should be considered first and foremost in the context of state youth policy. The concept of the complicity of public authorities and the population is one of the basic ones for civil society. In the context of urban governance processes, youth policy is of great importance. Youth is the engine of change in public life at all levels of community life.

Analysis of the Literature on Problems

Modern research on participation in urban government processes may be classified in two directions. The first direction explores youth as the most active layer of civil society, the impetus for civil impulse. This issue is being explored by E. Brodie, T. Hughes, V. Jochum, S. Miller, N. Ockenden, D. Warburton. The cross-cutting idea of their basic research “Pathways through participation: What creates and sustains active citizenship?” is that people choose to participate in civil society. The collective action that takes place within the voluntary associations that are part of civil society is seen as contributing to social capital, community empowerment and resilience. Associational life of all sorts is considered essential to fostering norms of trust and reciprocity and people developing a sense of connectedness, mutual understanding and solidarity. Through their participation in associational life people can also gain skills and confidence, and the conviviality of coming together has a positive influence on people’s quality of life and well-being (Brodie et al. 2011, p. 13).

Among the Ukrainian researchers one should mention the works of Ye. Borodin. The focus of these studies is on youth work in Ukraine, historical and modern aspects, experience, instruments and challenges of youth politics, participation of youth in the self-government (Borodin Ye. 2019, p. 180; Borodin Ye. 2017, pp. 177–174).

The second direction examines the individual aspects of youth policy implementation, the tools and methods of youth participation in self-government at

different levels (national, regional, local). Researchers following this direction have analyzed in detail the essence of the concept of “youth participation.” Youth participation is considered as a process, in which young people, as active citizens, take part, express views, and have decision-making power concerning the issues that affect them (Farthing, Farrow 2012, p. 73).

The development of youth competencies that are necessary for participation in civic self-government at different levels is one area of research. A. Crowley and D. Moxon, youth participation innovation researchers focus on the issues of exploring the participation of young people aged 16–30 in decision making concerning the social, economic, cultural, ecological and political environment that influences their lives (2017). N. Kalashnyk deals with the issues of forming civic competences in the Ukrainian scientific research on public administration. The focus of N. Kalashnyk’s researches is on the self-improvement of the citizens of all ages and social roles in order to acquire the civic competences. Moreover, the author examines the possibilities of the influence of the state and society on these processes through youth and education policies (Kalashnyk 2013, pp. 143–146).

Framework and Analysis

The regulatory framework (international and national acts) is a separate major component of the source base that shapes youth policy in Ukraine. Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life (European Charter 2003) is the main European act.

Among the Ukrainian regulatory sources, the authors of the article would like to pay special attention to the General Provisions on the Youth Advisory and Advisory Body of the Local Level Approved by the resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 1198 (General Provisions 2018). This regulation act does not only capture the general directions of youth participation in self-government at different levels, but also proposes specific tools for youth participation in local governance processes. For Ukrainian legislation, this is an innovation.

Despite some positive dynamics in the development of mechanisms for youth participation in self-government at different levels, the direction of approaches and tools for youth participation in shaping city policy, the implementation of city development, etc. remain unresolved. Unfortunately, these issues are being addressed in a chaotic and spontaneous manner in Ukraine today. Developing tools for youth participation in self-government would give impetus to the development of civil society institutions and, as a consequence, the development of territories and cities.

The activity of youth councils is a main form of youth participation in local self-government in Ukraine. Nowadays, the processes of decentralization in Ukraine 2014 have given impetus to regulate the activity of youth councils at the national level. This is the legal side of the issue. On the other side, public inquiry and the need to participate in the management of the territory where one lives are shaped and flourished under the influence of the Revolution of Dignity.

In accordance with the current Ukrainian legislation, youth councils are guided by the Constitution and laws of Ukraine, the decrees of the President of Ukraine, the resolutions of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (Parliament) adopted in accordance with the Constitution and the laws of Ukraine, the acts of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, the orders of ministries, the acts of rural, settlement, city, district in the city (if established) councils (hereinafter referred to as local councils) and their officials, revised by the European Charter for the Participation of Youth in Public Life at Local and Regional Levels, and other legal acts in the youth field.

As one can see, this approach took shape and gained legal status in 2018. Previously, in the territory of Ukraine, youth participation in the management of territories, mainly cities, was carried out in various forms. Open source analysis allows one to distinguish the following forms:

1. Youth city council;
2. The youth council at the mayor;
3. Youth public council at the mayor;
4. The Mayor Youth Policy Council;
5. The city's youth executive committee,
6. The city's youth council;
7. Youth council at the executive committee of the city council;
8. Youth council at the apparatus of the city council and its executive bodies;
9. City council youth council;
10. Youth public council;
11. Youth community college;
12. Youth advisory committee under the mayor.

This diversity of the forms of youth participation in the work of public administration institutions of the city is more likely to cause chaos in the process of self-government than it is evidenced by the pro-democratic nature of the procedures.

Accordingly, the powers and rights of youth participation institutes in self-government were little defined. The current system of youth participation

offered by the modern approach offers the following. The main tasks of the Youth Council are:

1. promoting; the participation of young people in the process of development, the adoption of acts of the local council and its officials to resolve the issues of local importance in the youth field and control their implementation; the involvement of youth in addressing the issues of socio-economic, political and cultural life of the local community through participation in the development and implementation of local programs in the youth field; the consolidation of the youth movement in the territory of the respective administrative and territorial unit; the cooperation of local council with public associations and their separate units, student and student self-government bodies, religious, charitable organizations, creative unions, trade unions and their associations, associations, employers' organizations and their associations, self-organization bodies, non-governmental organizations, mass media, other non-business associations, and institutions legalized under the law addressing issues of local importance in the youth field;
2. promoting the coherence of the local council activities in addressing the issues related to the life of young people and their participation in all spheres of public life of the local community;
3. study, systematic analysis and forecasting of social processes in the youth environment;
4. submission of proposals on definition and justification of priority directions of implementation of state policy in the youth sphere and on carrying out appropriate work at the local level, addressing issues of local importance in the said field;
5. involvement of socially active youth in addressing issues of local importance in the youth field.

In accordance with the above tasks, the rights of youth councils were expanded too. The Youth Council has the right to:

1. receive, in due course, the information necessary for the performance of the tasks assigned to it obtained from the central and local executive authorities, local self-government bodies, enterprises, institutions, and organizations;
2. involve the representatives of local executive bodies, local self-government bodies, enterprises, institutions and public associations (with the consent of their leaders) and independent experts (with the consent) in their work;
3. consider the proposals of civil society institutions and citizens' appeals on issues within the competence of the youth council;

4. establish permanent or temporary working bodies (committees, commissions, expert groups, etc.) as necessary to fulfill its tasks;
5. organize conferences, seminars, meetings and other activities aimed at fulfilling the tasks of the Youth Council;
6. make proposals to the local council to encourage the representatives of civil society institutions and individual citizens, in due course, for their contribution to addressing local issues in the youth field.

The members of the youth council have the right to access, in the established order, to the premises in which the local council is located, and the right to participate in the meetings of the local council, deputy commissions, executive bodies, working groups, competition commissions formed by it, in the consideration of matters within its competence youth council (General Provisions 2018).

It can be stated that the normalization of the tasks and powers of youth councils creates a transparent rule by which young people will be involved in governing the city or other territory.

According to the current Ukrainian legislation, the approach described above is in line with the current trends in understanding youth participation in self-government. It makes it possible to turn youth from passive participants in public administration processes into policy-makers.

Such approach supports and develops the idea that the greater public participation within the structures and institutions of democracy is seen as positive because it contributes to:

- strengthening the legitimacy and accountability of democratic institutions;
- empowering local communities to take part in local decision-making and increase ownership of decisions;
- building social cohesion by bringing people together around common causes and shared interests;
- improving the effectiveness and efficiency of public services that are more in tune with people's needs;
- increasing individuals' political efficacy and self-esteem (Brodie et al. 2011, p. 13).

The aforementioned General Provisions and the accompanying regulations allow the implementation of youth policy in the public, social, and individual sphere. This approach has been sufficiently researched in the scientific literature (Farrow 2018, p. 6).

Public sphere can be realized through the structures within existing decision-making structures and processes, for example youth city council, the youth

council at the mayor, the Mayor youth policy council, city's youth executive committee, youth council at the executive committee of the city council, youth council at the apparatus of the city council and its executive bodies, members, and leaders of youth organisations or groups, voting, standing for election, organisational or institutional panel or committee, formal consultations, conferences, seminars, meetings, and other activities.

The social sphere of youth participation in self-government is embodied in formal or informal structures that are created outside political or organisational structures such as social or cultural groups; community development; local service or project delivery; social movements; grassroots campaigns; housing associations; faith groups; informal networks; involvement in identity or interest groups; student self-government bodies, religious, charitable organizations; creative unions, trade unions and their associations, associations, employers' organizations, and their associations; self-organization bodies, non-governmental organizations mass media, other non-business associations and institutions legalized under the law addressing issues of local importance in the youth field.

Individual sphere is displayed by individual choices, decisions, interactions with the world and behaviors as part of everyday life; personal morals, values or principles; religious beliefs; consumer choices, forming of civic competences.

The authors set out to understand civic competences in the sense deriving from the provisions of Recommendation 2006/962/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (EU) On Core Competences for Lifelong Learning (Recommendation 2006).

In the authors' view, the analysis of the concept of citizenship is important to uncover the concept of civic competence of young people in the participation of city self-government. Young people understand citizenship as a person's stance on their state and people, and their willingness and ability to do something for their benefit. They define citizenship in the processes of self-government at the regional level as a spiritual and moral value, outlook and psychological characteristics of the person who determines his/her desire, duty and responsibility to the territory where he/she resides and to the citizens with whom he/she identifies as community.

To use civic competencies at the regional level, in particular to participate in city public self-government, the young person needs to acquire such competencies as: the ability to make decisions; the set of individual abilities required to achieve the goal (mainly the ability to work with different partners, perform different roles in the team, plan independently, etc.); competence and attitude to the object of activity relevant to a young person (a wide range of competences, starting with political or social activity, determining their correlation of ways to

achieve the goal of legal and other social norms of society, multicultural competence, etc.); the integral quality of the personality, which is manifested in the ability and willingness to work (the ability and willingness of the young person to work, to acquire new knowledge and skills, to apply them in practice, to spend on public goals their own time and abilities, etc.).

It should be noted that the civic competence of the individual is an important factor in the development of Ukrainian society, especially today. Making it our civil society requires focused efforts of the authorities (central and local), the educational institutions, and the society, to develop civic competences in the youth. But the question is how civic competences are formed. Mostly their formation is outside the higher education system, because within it they are considered as additional to the professional ones. On the other hand, it is impossible to exclude from the public life those young people who do not get education in educational institutions.

Accordingly, civic competences in youth are shaped by the means of non-formal and informal education. These can be: trainings, project activities, participation in various target programs, analysis of life situations to form competencies the ability to make decisions and a set of individual abilities required to achieve the goal; participation in the implementation of social projects, situation modeling, competitions, business games participation in self-government at the local level (school, home, interest group, university, etc.) for the competence of “owning a young person relevant competence and attitude to the subject of activity;” cultural and tourism projects, tourism or virtual travel, visits to art events, museums, exhibitions, communication with government officials, etc. to form an integral quality of personality, manifested in ability and willingness to act.

In order to demonstrate the practical implementation of the above, the authors turn to the experience of the City of Lviv, namely, the activities of the Lviv Youth Council. It was created relatively recently in 2016. But it has established itself as an active social force in self-government in the city.

It should be noted that thanks to the activities of the Lviv Youth Council in 2018, Lviv was elected the Youth Capital of Ukraine. The youth councils (in different interpretations of the names of these public associations) from the cities of Dnipro, Vinnytsia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kamianets-Podilskyi, Kremenchuk, Lutsk, Lviv, Rivne, Ternopil, Kharkiv, etc. were the participants of the competition. All 55 participants were from youth movements of cities and united territorial communities. In general, the competition showed many interesting cases of active youth work in the regions, projects of youth organizations, examples of joint activities of youth and local authorities. The main purpose of the competition

is to enhance the cooperation between youth and local self-government, and to facilitate the creation of comfortable conditions for youth development in Ukrainian cities (Lviv 2018).

Non-solidity is a characteristic feature of the internal construction of the Lviv Youth Council. Today, the Lviv Youth Council includes 8 NGOs: Institute of Ukrainian Studies, Youth Nationalist Congress – MNC Lviv Regional Youth Center, Society Initiatives Institute, Young Diplomacy Center, UMSA Lviv, ELSA Lviv, AEGEE Lviv, and FRI PLUS. On the other hand, the Lviv Youth Council is a structural part of the National Youth Council of Ukraine.

This multi-vector approach makes it possible to broaden the range of youth council involvement in city governance. According to the Lviv City Council, as of January 30, 2020, 26 communities were formally established and are eligible to participate in decision-making. Most councils in Lviv City Council offices were set up in 2017, but officials do not want to talk about the success of these councils' activities nor about working closely with profile departments. Nowadays, Lviv City Council officials talk about these NGO's participation in self-government as mostly isolated cases (The UPLAN platform 2020).

On the other hand, the activity of the Lviv Youth Council is considered to be one of the most successful. In 2019, the Lviv Youth Council submitted proposals and participated in the discussion of projects in the following areas: Culture, Social Protection, Education, Civil Society Development, Information Technologies and Innovation, Tourism, Waste Management. Also, the Lviv Youth Council participated in the formation of the Public Participation Budget, for which 219 projects were submitted for the total amount of over UAH 215 million. Almost 104 thousand of Lviv citizens voted for them. Unfortunately, statistics of how many of them were not kept (The UPLAN platform 2020).

The experience of the Lviv Youth Council and other public institutions at the Lviv City Council demonstrates that today the activities of public councils should be attributed to the tools that need refinement. As an example one may take the slogan of the youth center of Lviv, Molo Dvizh Center: "Here we create ourselves for the city, and the city for ourselves."

Conclusions

As the conclusions, we can offer tools for youth participation in urban governance processes in Ukraine. The list of tools is made on the basis of the legislation of Ukraine and the practice of the Lviv Youth Council. Therefore, the effective (practiced) tools for youth participation in urban governance processes include: a local referendum; request for public information; requests (requests)

of citizens; reception of citizens; electronic petitions; local initiative; public examination; general meeting; bodies of self-organization of the citizens; public hearings; participation budget; speeches at meetings of public administration/ their structural units; and the demonstration of public position through peaceful assembly.

From the article, it seems to be clear that today in Ukraine there is a good situation for youth engagement and its participation in public administration at different levels of government. The legal and institutional opportunities for youth participation in urban governance processes have been created over the last four years and there is a strong social demand for this type of civic engagement.

The formation of civic competences for young people to participate effectively in the processes of the city self-government and maintaining the desire to exercise such activity remain the main issues. These tasks are within the scope of decision-making by means of sound youth policy formulation.

The experience of the Lviv Youth Council and other public institutions at the Lviv City Council provides rich material for the research on the modern possibilities for realization of the practical instruments of youth public policy at local level. The application of the tools proposed for youth participation in urban governance processes will change the paradigm of young people's participation in self-government in Ukraine from understanding the role of youth as "situational actors" to "policy makers."

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