

Summary – GENiYOUTH 2014: Co-creation of social spaces - for youth with youth

In 2010, Maribor was awarded the **European Youth Capital 2013** title by the European Youth Forum for the period of one year. Therefore, the Municipality of Maribor passed a 'youth-friendly city' strategic and developmental plan. The main topical issues for young people were aimed towards solving current problems of young people. Programs of European Youth Capital Maribor 2013 were designed by young people for young people, and as such were among the young well-taken. The primary part of the program was designed to increase employability and employment, encourage volunteerism, intercultural cooperation and active participation of young people. 11 programs in the area of youth employment have been implemented and the results are very encouraging.

In recent years Maribor is facing high level of youth unemployment. There are also inconsistencies between the education system and the labor market. We have a lot of young people with a high level of education on one side; on the other side there are the needs of the labor market, where we can see a lack of young people with vocational education. Municipality of Maribor understands the problem, and is actively involved in projects that enable young people to improve their employment opportunities. Awareness of the local authorities of the situation in the field of youth employment is an important step towards finding solutions.

The Municipality of Maribor has also participated in EU projects - Europe for Citizens and URBACT - My Generation at Work, within which a good practice ***Co-creation of social spaces - for youth with youth*** was implemented. Within this project we wanted to associate young people with less desirable professions (carpentry, painting, masonry, electricity) for which there are demand in the labor market. We also saw that young people in our city often face the issue of where to get practical knowledge, a chance to show their skills and improve them; on the other hand there is also a need among young people to have more spaces where they could get together and implement their ideas. The workshop had many positive impacts on the local youth and local community. It gave young people a chance to show their talents, as well as working together as a team. The premises now offers better environment for events, organized by local youth and youth organizations. The budget of the workshop was very low; the Municipality of Maribor paid only materials needed for work.

The approach itself is an innovation in our local environment. In this case the Municipality of Maribor approached young people with a proposal of co-creating social space for youth with youth. The result of this practice is renovated premises of the City Youth Council Maribor. Due to the successful work, different places, owned by the Municipality of Maribor, are to be renovated within similar workshops in 2015 - 2020. The success is shown in cooperation between young people and local authorities to create friendlier local community.

The possibilities of extending our good practice more widely is without limits, because we believe there are many similar spaces in every city, as there are young men and women who want to co-create a better local community. We would be happy to share our experience, especially in helping you to encourage and involve young people for these kinds of activities.

