



International Organization for Migration (IOM)  
Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations (OIM)  
Organización Internacional para las Migraciones (OIM)

# ACCESS

## Active Citizenship: Empowering Political Participation of Migrant Youth

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This project is carried out with  
funding from the European Union



# Why is the Participation of Migrant Youth Important?

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- They are residents and have the right to participation
- Participatory democracy requires early education into it leading to active participation also in adult age
- They are experts on their own life circumstances and listening them results in better services for them



# ACCESS PROJECT

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- Funded by the European Commission and other partners
- Transnational project executed by IOM in partnership with five European municipalities
  - Helsinki, Finland
  - Barcelona, Spain
  - Prague, Czech Republic
  - Marseille, France
  - Cluj Napoca, Romania



# ACCESS Project Aims

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- Capacity building of migrant youth on political participation
- Strengthening municipalities to work towards more profound involvement of migrant youth
- Awareness-raising and building of networks



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# ACCESS PROJECT

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- THEMATIC MIGRANT YOUTH GROUPS
- PEER ADVISORS
- PEER REVIEW



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# ACCESS PROJECT

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- Project coordination and Peer Review Consultant in Helsinki, Finland
- 5 municipalities and 11 partners in total
- 20 Peer Advisors working on a hourly contract
- 125 YOUTH



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# PEER ADVISORS

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- Migrant background
- Acted as mentors to 'younger migrants' in the thematic youth groups
- Peer reviewers (researchers) in the Peer Review for the municipality
- Received training on National and European structures
- Received training on peer reviews
- Trained on public speaking and group leadership



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# THEMATIC YOUTH GROUPS

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- Young migrants ages 15-30
- Four thematic youth groups in each country and one peer advisor per group
- 19 youth groups and 20 peer advisors in total
- Themes were selected according to the youth's preference
- Worked throughout the project within their theme to influence decision making



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# THEMATIC YOUTH GROUPS

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- ACCESS Youth Teams implemented various activities which connected like-minded young people together to make an impact on policies and address the challenges.
  - Migrant youth challenges in Schools
  - Entrepreneurship
  - Non-formal learning
  - Youth and migrant youth unemployment
  - Recreational activities



# THEMATIC YOUTH GROUPS

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- The teams across the five municipalities took part in and organized
  - consultative meetings and discussions with EU parliamentarians
  - meetings with municipality representatives
  - Youth to youth events
  - Election panels
  - Seminars
  - meetings



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# THEMATIC YOUTH GROUPS in Finland

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- Youth between the ages of 15-18 years old
- 11 nationalities
- Team Schools
  - Racism button, anti-bullying
- Team Cosmos
  - Employment opportunities
- Team Active Youth
  - Fair access to recreational activities for all youth



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# PEER REVIEWS

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- A research paper or review of the municipalities in question
- The aim was to increase municipalities' awareness of the benefits and limitations of their practices, programmes and policies for involving migrant youth in decision-making processes



# PEER REVIEWS

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- Peers: municipal officers and young persons
- Interviewed their peers in cities they reviewed
- Evaluated the structures and practices in the city & made recommendations utilizing their own insight and expertise



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# PEER REVIEWS

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- Included 20 interviews in each country
- Open-ended questions with different sets of questions for different stakeholders
- Interviewees included Migrant Youth, Active Youth, non-active youth, municipality officers, youth ngos, migrant ngos.



# PEER REVIEW INDICATORS

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- Participation -> rights, structures, opportunities ♣
- Impact -> results of participation ♣
- Motivation & inclusion -> requirements for participation ♣
- Capability & knowledge -> necessary for participation ♣
- Strategy -> enhancing participation



# RESULTS FROM PEER REVIEWS

## PARTICIPATION

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- Helsinki had existing structures and events for Youth to participate and engage with decision makers
- Many of these existing structures also included migrant youth
- Young migrants not specially targeted
- Young migrants have less knowledge on these structures





# RESULTS FROM PEER REVIEWS

## IMPACT

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- Young people's own initiatives are noticed and taken seriously. Especially by the youth department.
- Many young people still felt that their voice was not being heard
- The role of the youth body was just consultative



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# Motivation and Inclusion

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- small engagement of migrant youth within initiatives and decision-making processes.
- NGOs involved with young people are willing and capable of integrating migrants in their activities.
- young people indicate that they consider themselves citizens with full rights, but it is unclear whether they feel included in the society.



# Capability and Knowledge

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- There is civic education and training in participation for young people.
- There are information and counselling centres or points (physically or virtually) for young people in the city.
- Young persons feel that they don't have good knowledge of how the municipality works.



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# Capability and Knowledge

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- Politicians and municipality officers do not have enough knowledge of young residents, including migrants, problems, desires and situation.
- In Helsinki only the very active young interviewees felt that they are well aware of their local participation opportunities and that they are capable of influencing matters important for them.



# Strategy

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- Youth strategy exists
- Doesn't pay special attention to migrant youth
- Monitored and evaluated



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# OUR EXPERIENCES

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- Migrant youth especially in Finland experience lack of knowledge on participation
- Target group's age in Finland
- Less emphasis on political participation
- More focus on themes and preparing for events



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# Strengths

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- Cooperation with the youth department
- Review visits
- Good combination of research and field activities
- Peer learning
- Youth were leaders



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# Weaknesses

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- Lack of continuation in Helsinki after the Project ended
- 18 month-project too short to execute all project aims
- Thematic groups were only allocated around 50 hours, meetings once a month
- Political participation was not discussed greatly





# Opportunities

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- Further projects with political youth groups
- Continuing the project with the municipalities own youth activities
- Spreading the model onto other Migrant NGOs



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# Future Projects

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- Inclusion of Youth Organizations in the Project
- Inclusion of Migrant Organizations in the Project
- Inclusion of Youth in Planning Projects and in Steering Committees
- Inclusion of all youth from all backgrounds



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# Things to consider

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- Ages of youth in relation to topics and aims
- Motivating young people
- Access and capability to participate



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# Empowering Young Migrants?

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- What is empowerment?
  - Rights of citizenship vs. feelings of inclusion
  - Ability to participate
  - Ability to seek knowledge
  - Ability to question
- Society at large
- Role of Media
- Role of education systems
- Role of families



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# Questions?

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- Should migrant youth be considered as a separate group when planning projects or strategies?
- If yes, to what extent and what are the things we need to consider?
- How do we consider the current influx of refugees in future projects involving youth?



# Short Video

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