Technical Session:

Child Participation in policy and decision-making: school and youth councils

Wolfgang Dietz, Lord Mayor City of Weil am Rhein

Child Friendly Cities Summit, Cologne, 15th - 18th October 2019
The City of Weil am Rhein:
- 31,000 inhabitants
- 19.47 square kilometers
- The City borders Switzerland and France alike

Average age: 43 years
0 - 6 years: 2,000 (7%)
7 - 18 years: 3,800 (13%)
65 - 80 years: 4,400 (15%)
81 - 90 and older: 1,550 (5%)
Kindergardens

- 7 establishments managed by the city
- 9 establishments managed by the Catholic or the Protestant church (sponsorship for the cost of operation by the city at around 95%)
- 3 establishments managed by independent groups (same sponsorship by the city)

Total number of places for toddlers: 1,177
(younger than 3 years: 150; up to 6 years: 997; playgroups: 30)
All types of school available in town:

- 4 elementary schools
- 1 elementary school plus special schooling for children with learning disabilities
- 1 elementary school for children with multitude of handicaps
- 1 Community school
- 1 Secondary school
- 2 High Schools

Number of schoolchildren in the local school system: 3,482
The road to Child friendly Community

Participation of children guaranteed through:

- Workshops
- Expeditions through town
- targeted press work
- to-do lists for administration
- Inclusion in action plan
A. Anchoring the participation of children and youth in governance:

Shown in the measures

– Creating a mission statement and guidelines
– Establishment of an internal administrative control group
– Training for employees
– Setting up a focal point for children and young people
– Creation of a budget for youth
The road to Child friendly Community

B. Space in the public sphere

Children and young people claim their public space to play, to meet or to do sports.

Shown in the desires for

- Use areas as playing fields ✓
- “Street Workout-Park” ✓
- Meeting / shelter for teens ✓
- Offer to do sport at night ✓
- "Weil am Rhein should be clean" - actions against waste (continued process)
- "Rheinpromenade“ along the Rhine river (in planning)
- Approach to use schoolyards in the (late) afternoon and on weekends (to be decided)
Goals set to implement the action plan in the years 2015 - 2018

Conclusions (What do I consider important?)

- The process has a value as such.
- Raising awareness for the needs and the perspectives of children in the political process.
- Taking a look at our world through the eyes of the children and youngsters.
- Teach your staff to be aware.
Other activities for Youngsters supported by the City

Youth Assembly

Established in 1993 on decision by the City Council

- **Composition**: 18 seats
- **Term of mandate**: 2 years
- **Meetings**: every 6-8 weeks
Other activities for Youngsters supported by the City

Youth Assembly

**Eligibility** and right to vote:

age group 14 to 20 years
Majority vote on the bases of personal votes

**Latest election:** 2019 (turn out 15 %)
Nominees: 26
Elected: 18 youngsters age 14 - 20 years

**Next election:** 2021

Young and elderly people together:

*Members of the youth assembly invited people to help them using their mobile phones.*
Other activities for Youngsters supported by the City

Youth Assembly

**Powers**

- Advising the local government in questions of planning
- Advisory Statement for budget on local youth activities
- Permission to participate actively in debates in local parliament about affairs concerning youngsters can be granted by the chairperson

- **Own Support Budget**
  - budget set aside by the local parliament: € 2,000.- per year,
  - teaches responsibility and budgeting
Other activities for Youngsters supported by the City

Meeting places for Youngsters / Youth Activity Houses

- Five establishments in various parts of town
- Staff: 10 people employed by the local government
- Offering programs to teenagers (among other things: help with job applications)
Other activities for Youngsters supported by the City

Meeting places for Youngsters / Youth Activity Houses

Ground-breaking ceremony October 2019 for the next project for children and youngsters about 7,8 Million Euro.
School councils and class representatives

School councils at 4 secondary schools

− Through the school councils students have opportunity to take part in the organisation of their school
− Make suggestions to improve life of the school communities
− Responsible for school magazines
− Interfere at conflicts for example

− School councils are made up by the elected representatives of all classes/grades
− The members of the councils elect their chairman/leader every year
School councils and class representatives

School councils at 4 secondary schools

– The Chairman of the School council is mandatory part of the school conference:
  ⇒ this committee is made up of teachers, parents and students
  ⇒ it decides for example about the head master of the school

– School councils have old tradition in Germany:
  - the first ones started in the 19th century
  - since 1976 it is a duty by law to install school councils at secondary schools
Participation of children and youngsters in city development projects:

For example for the planning for a new pleasure ground at the Rhine bank with special areas for all generations together with our french neighbours.
City Map created from elementary school kids of Weil am Rhein for other kids

Shows for example:
- Meeting points
- Playgrounds

But also:
- Places with trees good to climb
- Fields for playing with kites
- Where you can slide in wintertime
- Dangerous places for children!

Child Friendly Cities Summit, October 2019, Field Trip to Weil am Rhein
At the very end...

... we are proud to report that our certification for the second part of the process will be reached on 5th November 2019!

Child Friendly Cities Summit / Cologne, 15th – 18th October 2019
Thank you for your attention!