

Mobilizing Youth For Political Participation in the French Quartiers

by: Sarah Lartigue

Context of the Project

From April to June 2017, I have volunteered in a social center of a West Parisian *banlieues*, called *Hissez Haut*. There, I had the chance to participate in the activities organized by this center but also conduct a Focus Group with youngsters involved in the association.

I found out that the youngsters I interviewed were actually taking part in projects organized by the center, which consist in involving them in what they call „citizenship activities“. These projects are diverse and started already in 2010. From environmental theater to visits of structures informing on Women’s Rights, these projects’ main aim is to awaken youngster’s political interest and encourage them to get involved in the social life of their neighborhoods. It also includes excursions where they find out about different institutions of the country, they are informed about how the laws are voted, but also about inequalities, discrimination, racism and fundamental rights.

These projects are part of a process which final goal is to put in a place a Youth council in the quartier where they live, an instance which would concretize this political participation. Through this Youth Council, they would meet regularly in Nanterre and take part in decision making processes concerning the neighborhood they live in.

During this research, I have found out that this process is very challenging for the team of the social center, leading me to expose the following question for this study:

How are social workers challenged in the process of mobilizing youngster for political participation in the quartier?