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Leadership in Action: The Role of Religious Leaders and Local Authorities in Empowering Young People towards More Cohesive Cities

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The European Policy Dialogue Forum brings together religious leaders, policy-makers and experts to discuss pertinent issues of social cohesion in Europe.

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Donald Winnicott, English pediatrician and psychoanalyst

*Wherever there is a young person throwing a challenge
there must be an adult ready to take it up.*

Executive summary

As Europe becomes more urban, cities are increasingly the places where all community members, including young people,¹ are actively engaged in shaping solutions towards building cohesive communities. However, wide-spread challenges of young people's social and economic exclusion call for the systemic participation of young people in decision-making processes, particularly at local level. Both secular and religious institutions play a key role in promoting young people's talents and addressing intergenerational discord. Guided by unifying sentiments and common principles of respect of human rights, human dignity and non-discrimination, religious and secular leaderships are well-placed to engage young people in promoting shared values and bridging divisions. Their endeavours should include open and frank discussions on contested issues that matter for youth: diversity inclusion, equity and participation on equal footing. Dialogue – interreligious, intercultural and intergenerational – encounters are powerful tools that can contribute to this process.

By discussing young people's marginalisation and intergenerational power dynamics in Europe, this input paper explores pathways towards increasing young people's participation in decision-making processes to engage them as active changemakers in their communities. In doing so, this paper looks at which leadership approaches are best suited to enable religious and secular institutions to catalyse the participation of young people towards more cohesive communities and put forth dialogue as a key method to enhanced cooperation between secular and religious actors.

Introduction

Young people in Europe are impacted by a pervasive sense of insecurity, influenced by intersecting crises resulting from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate disasters, conflicts and fears of economic instability. In pointing to Greta Thunberg and Malala Yousafzai as inspiring models of young leaders, young people increasingly question the way the ‘older’ generation – the traditional forms of secular and religious leadership – has been managing societal change.

Young people’s energy and commitment to social justice issues – illustrated by their wide-spread participation in the Black Lives Movement protests, though not associated with a specific faith or political affiliation – raise conflicting questions about the increasing youth disengagement from traditional political and religious institutions. Passionate about the issues which matter to them, young people are in search of empowering mentors to break the vicious cycle of exclusion, calling out for safe, dynamic and inclusive spaces to grow. Secular and religious actors in cities are well-placed to employ dialogue approaches and methods to support young people tackle their concerns and find direction and meaning.

Leaving Young People Behind: Are Young People a Minority?

According to recent analyses, young Europeans hold quite polarised political opinions, ranging from progressive views to conservative values and anti-establishment sentiments². Yet, the consequences of global crises such as COVID-19 and climate change affect all social and economic groups, with the young generation suffering the harshest repercussions.³ Young people across Europe face widening socioeconomic inequalities resulting in a reduced likelihood of early economic independence and the growing exclusion from quality education and gainful employment.⁴ These challenges are compounded with a return of conflict to the continent and the fear of its spill-over. These trends parallel data that show how young people are statistically underrepresented in both national and European parliaments. Young people are at a numerical disadvantage when it comes to political participation since older generations outnumber them; population aging has increased the generation power index out of their favour.⁵ These factors contribute to standing concerns about social cohesion in Europe, which many observers consider under greater pressure than in the past.⁶

To ensure that young people’s voices are heard, they should be involved as key stakeholders in policy processes and initiatives addressing their concerns.⁷ However, it can be particularly difficult for them to achieve recognition as legitimate partners. Even though young people are a very diverse group, they tend to be ‘problematised’ because of the many prejudices that associate them with anti-social behaviour and/or crime. Those from ethnic and religious minorities are particularly at risk of stereotyping and marginalisation. The 2019 study of the Fundamental Rights Agency, *Being Black in the European Union*, paints a dire picture of the reality on the ground, describing harassment against young people of ethnic and religious minorities as commonplace, including discriminatory profiling by the police. These challenges are exacerbated by an emerging ‘blame culture’,⁸ whereby poverty and unemployment are considered a personal responsibility and a result of characteristic features of those who are at the margins.

Such experiences heighten feelings of exclusion and can be related to and, indeed, are the result of declining levels of trust in traditional forms of leadership – both secular and religious – the very leadership responsible for managing change and supporting social cohesion.⁹



*Despite the lack of a common definition, the **social cohesion** as outlined by major international organizations is based on the idea of creating conditions that allow a sense of belonging, legitimacy, recognition and participation within diverse communities. The following dimensions appear to be particularly relevant: 1. A horizontal dimension: recognition and respect for diversity – bridging ethnic and religious divisions as well as fighting discrimination; 2. A vertical dimension: transparency and accountability of authorities, civil society organizations, as well as market institutions that work for the well-being of all the members of the community, tackling inequalities and enabling upward social mobility, particularly of the most fragile.¹⁰*

According to Dario Nardella, former President of Eurocities and Mayor of Florence, cities hold a “special responsibility to bring to the table our experience of working directly with citizens and our understanding of their hopes and concerns.” In his opinion, citizen participation in local governance is an essential tool that allows policymakers to truly govern and react to the critical challenges ahead.



By listing innovative approaches and providing an overview of the participatory practices supported by city administrations, the **Eurocities Brief: “City administrations paving the way to participatory democracy”** demonstrates why cities are the level of government closest to citizens. The publication and its brief offer inspirational initiatives worth leveraging by secular and religious actors to enhance young people’s participation in co-shaping policies and measures at the local level. https://eurocities.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Cities-and-participation_Eurocities_Brief.pdf

The close relations that faith institutions and actors nurture within their community and the influence that faith leaders display at the local level are key features of their role. Enhancing alliances between religious and secular actors holds the promise to reinforce intercommunity trust. To this end, dialogue – interreligious, intercultural and intergenerational – is a critical tool to build bridges across different age, cultural, ethnic and religious groups. Dialogue can act as a catalyst of mutual learning for policy professionals, statutory service providers, religious groups and leaders as well as civil society, offering innovative opportunities to enhance young people’s participation in the economic, social and political life of their communities.

Participatory Governance: a ‘Smart’ Approach for Inclusive and Cohesive European Cities

A deliberate effort from religious and secular leadership is needed to expand spaces for dialogue and interaction with young people at the local level. Such efforts should be driven by a genuine interest in listening to young people’s concerns and needs to foster cohesive and inclusive communities. The concept of participatory governance captures many of the approaches – formal and informal, traditional and innovative – through which young citizens can be engaged in co-shaping the policies and measures that address what matter to them. Participatory governance approaches provide the chance to involve community members in defining the core values on which communities are based. In undertaking these approaches, dialogue methods are critical to ensure that young people’s concerns and aspirations are considered.

Youth policies are at the core of strategies that provide young people with opportunities and experiences that support their participation, enabling them to be agents of change within their communities. Investing in opportunities to mobilise young people adds value and enhances the likelihood of generating visible outcomes for the whole community. Innovative social impact investment tools can bolster the sustainability of policies and initiatives, aided by partnerships with secular and religious institutions at the local level.



The ‘value’ of youth policies - Rotterdam has reduced youth unemployment with a social impact bond that helped 60% of an 80-person cohort find work and get off social benefits. In its first social impact bond, Rotterdam partnered with **Buzinezzclub**, a job training firm, to **tackle youth unemployment**. In a social impact bond, private investors pay for a government-sanctioned intervention – in this case, getting young people off unemployment benefits. If the desired results are met, investors are paid back their initial investment plus a return. For local governments, social impact bonds create a new revenue stream by attracting socially conscious investors and allow authorities to test innovative services with little risk. **Cities in The Netherlands, Portugal and France** have pioneered social innovation through Social Impact Bonds: <https://apolitical.co/solution-articles/en/rotterdam-gets-young-people-off-benefits-social-impact-bond>. **Faith-aligned finance approaches** such as Tzedek, Tikkun olam, Sharia Compliance or Halal Investing, the United Methodist Church’s Socially Responsible Investment and others are suitable tools for local impact investments worthy of further utilisation: The Faith-based investing guidelines offer information on these tools: <https://www.ccminvests.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/CCM-Perspective-Faith-Based-Investing-Guidelines-June-2022.pdf>

Civic participation can be a strong tool to foster a sense of belonging to the local community. According to the 2022 State of the World's Volunteerism Report "Building equal and inclusive societies", **volunteering and community service** are powerful ways to establish social connections and strengthen community bonds. Both provide personal fulfilment and self-esteem while connecting people from different backgrounds, thereby increasing resilience to stereotypes and reducing violent behaviour. This is particularly relevant for **young people from religious and ethnic minorities**. By engaging in community-based initiatives, they can connect with other groups of young people and the community, as a whole.



The Machers - volunteers for Jewish Culture Festival in Kraków, Poland. In Yiddish a Macher is "an important guy", the one who not only 'does' things, but also bristles with energy to act. It is a dynamic person – a real influencer. The festival offers an annual opportunity to enhance skills and competences in the field of civic, cultural, educational, personal, professional and social development. Machers are invited to develop their own projects, experiencing multiculturalism and promoting unity in diversity in the community. https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity/placement/29904_en

The backing of local authorities is critical when young people develop and implement initiatives to tackle the social exclusion of their peers. Building alliances with religious leaders and actors can enhance the continuity of action, ensuring the impact of civic engagement. This is particularly relevant when addressing long-standing economic, social and spatial marginalization of ethnic and religious minorities.



Learning 'life skills' in Romania. The project 'Prepare for Life!' was carried out in several areas of the **Prahova County, Romania**, home to multi-ethnic communities. The initiative was organised and implemented by young people in collaboration with local authorities. Participants were young people from Roma and non-Roma communities, experiencing social marginalisation. They were provided with non-formal learning and capacity-development. <http://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/71-1202-11GROUP2p%2520good%2520pract%2520sheets%25201.pdf>

Young volunteers from faith-based associations often act as **frontliners** in deprived areas of cities. What makes the long-standing engagement of the British faith-based organization, Initiative of Change, particularly interesting is the approach that the volunteers apply. By bringing together otherwise unconnected groups to think of solutions together, they help **reconfigure power relationships** between groups and contribute to **mobilising the community's inner potential**. This approach encapsulates the transformative power of dialogue, worth leveraging more systemically in addressing common challenges at local level.



The **Sustainable Communities Programme** of the faith-based-organization (FBO), **Initiative of Change (UK)**, involves civil society organizations, decision makers, faith leaders, local grassroots actors, local politicians, ordinary people, police, researchers and students in promoting community-led dialogues and actions to address local problems. <https://iofc.org.uk/initiatives/sustainable-communities/>

Fostering young people's active engagement in **shaping the urban environment** where they live, enhances social cohesion at local level and the inclusion of those who are at the margins. **Greening city spaces** offers religious and secular institutions the opportunity to make their respective real estate available to host youth-led initiatives. The book, *Small change: The art of practice and the limits of planning in cities*, by the guru of urban participatory development, Nabeel Hamdi, provides inspirational small-scale actions particularly suitable for young people, bringing about positive change in urban communities.



Building a community is the primary aim of urban agriculture and gardening. The project **“Urban agriculture for changing cities: governance models for better institutional capacities and social inclusion”** piloted the establishment of urban agriculture initiatives in six cities in the Danube region: **Blagoevgrad** - BG, **Prague 9** - CZ, **Székesfehérvár** - HU, **Vaslui** – RO, **Velenje** – SLO. The aim was to address the social exclusion of marginalised young people by involving them actively in the planning and implementation of urban agriculture initiatives at local level. https://www.interreg-danube.eu/uploads/media/approved_project_output/0001/29/7951bad5c888f772c6881fcf11713c3349b7d14b.pdf

To truly empower and engage young people, it is essential to offer spaces and opportunities that allow them to co-create. This requires that secular and religious donors of programmes for young people **rethink their models of grant making**, which may be too rigid to allow for the flexibility needed for young people’s engagement – often different from what donors consider ‘suitable’ approaches that they are accustomed to. This calls for expanding **participatory approaches for the use of urban spaces** where the integration of knowledge – intellectual (head), affective (heart) and operational (hands) – can take place. Pooling the potential of the universal language of arts can offer unexpected ways to untap the changemaking potential of young people towards cohesive communities.



Founded in 2008 and initially opposed by local authorities concerned about young people using and managing the space, the **Mostar Rock School** in **Mostar**, Bosnia and Herzegovina, provides a safe space where youth from different ethnic and religious backgrounds come together. The school organises public performances, which engage other members of the community, involving social groups that would not interact otherwise and displaying the youth changemaking potential in the community. <https://mostarrockschool.org/en/>

Since marginalisation hampers young people’s empowerment and societal participation, **promoting economic participation** is a key area for religious and secular institutions’ partnerships to develop joint initiatives. In their joint endeavours, religious and secular actors can promote **equitable business models and employment policies for young people** that promote human dignity and mitigate the precarity typical of the ‘small jobs’ of the gig¹¹ and platform economy.¹² Several features make the example of Mondragon in Spain outstanding: it originated from the idea of a religious leader in a conflict-torn area of Spain and the business ecosystem was purposely grounded on social economy,¹³ a values-based business model that privileges equitable remuneration, social and environmental impact to the primacy of profit maximisation.¹⁴ Social enterprises usually do not de-localise and have a special connection with local economies, providing a substantial contribution to the prosperity of communities.



The **Mondragon** corporation based in the homonymous town in the Basque region (Spain) is the outcome of a cooperative business project launched in 1956 by its founder, José María Arizmendiarieta, a Catholic priest. Its mission is encapsulated in its Corporate Values. Particularly relevant for young people, is the ‘education’ value that postulates: “[...] allocating human and financial resources to the professional education of young people.” <https://www.mondragon-corporation.com/en/about-us/>

This same idea serves as the basis for programmes in support of **young social entrepreneurs**. Particularly interesting is the experience in the Western Balkans, a post-conflict area where reconciliation and social cohesion are under pressure. Such initiatives offer opportunities for religious actors and investors to join forces with secular institutions at the local level in promoting young entrepreneurs and supporting them to turn their ideas into action. Reducing inequalities that prevent young people’s economic participation is essential to build and maintain cohesive communities.



Youth social entrepreneurship in the Western Balkans - The RISE project, implemented by the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO), has opened new spaces for youth social entrepreneurship, reconciliation and increased cross-border interactions based on the social economy business model. RISE creates a regional network of 'Risers', young social entrepreneurs, and supports them in making their ideas a reality in and for the local communities. <https://www.risewb.org/>.

Religious and secular leadership can display their empowering potential while bridging the trust gap between generations and jointly implementing **policies and initiatives to enhance young people's political participation**. In doing so, they amplify young people's voices and incorporate their concerns systemically in decision-making processes. Studies confirm that in providing a vision of the world, religious affiliation can foster initiative-taking in the political arena.¹⁵ Yet, young people's religiosity and how this relates to civic activism and political participation is often poorly understood.



Youth leadership programmes for youth mobilisation - ParliaMentors is a youth leadership programme run by the Faith & Belief Forum (F&BF) in the UK. Over the course of an academic year, participants work together on social action projects while receiving training and support from F&BF staff and mentoring from politicians. Participants are encouraged to think intentionally about how to include the community in their social action projects and to consider how they can benefit multiple groups. <https://faithbeliefforum.org/programme/parliamentors/>

Several city governments in Europe are increasingly supporting the establishment of **youth councils** as a participatory governance tool that allows the views of young people to be represented at the local level. Councils give young people a voice in the decision-making process of local authorities, including through **participatory budgeting** whereby youth provide ideas on how municipal authorities should invest public money in local initiatives for them. Supported by the EU Erasmus+ programme, youth councils are progressively acting as vectors of **political mobilisation** of the young generation in Europe.



Lublin (Poland) - Participatory budgeting. The local authority has designated a youth budget that is allocated through youth participation in schools and youth spaces. The model was developed together with the Youth City Council and the Team for Children and Youth that develop recommendations for the use of the city budget. <https://youthpb.eu/project/youth-civic-budget-in-lublin-poland/> The World Atlas of Participatory Budgeting offers the widest compilation of data to date on the situation of these processes on the planet.¹⁶

Faith-Inclusive, Values-Sensitive Leadership in Action

An increasing wealth of literature suggests that young people's disengagement from politics and religion is the result of losing faith in the traditional political and religious leadership. The younger generation fears the world they are inheriting from adults and their quest for quick change remains largely unmet by the older generation. At the same time, young people remain engaged in civic life. They attend demonstrations, use the Internet to make their voices heard and are active outside the traditional political sphere. Intergenerational tensions trigger new forms of young people's aggregation. To capitalise on this energy, religious and secular leadership need to reflect on questions about what young people today need to experience feelings of affiliation and which activities, spaces and values catalyse belonging. To address these challenges, there is an intrinsic need for faith-based and secular actors to join forces and pool interreligious, intercultural and intergenerational dialogue methods to engage community members across different age, cultural, ethnic, religious and social groups.



The faith-based association Bridges in **Bulgaria** organises **youth camps** in cooperation with the local authority, like the one in **Plovdiv**, which brings together youth from different religions and cultures offering young people the opportunity to meet with various religious leaders and learn more from them. <https://bridges-forum.org/work/bridge-interfaith-youth-camp-2021/>. Similarly, in the framework of its **local Active Coexistence programme**, the association, Coexister, organises **regular meeting points called Kawaa**, a café-debate on living together and secularism. The goal is to create a space for friendly exchange and train young people how to express their views while respecting those of others. <https://www.coexister.fr/en/what-do-we-do/>

Guided by unifying sentiments across religions and common principles of respect of human rights, human dignity and non-discrimination, religious and secular institutions can act as catalysts of feelings of belonging and affiliation. In doing so, secular-religious alliances would also trigger the participation of young non-believers including those who are 'spiritual' but not affiliated with any specific religion. Building **values-based communities** is critical to enhance social cohesion in increasingly diverse European societies, calling for a systemic use of interreligious, intercultural and intergenerational dialogue methods.¹⁷



In **Leipzig** (Germany) the City Council established the Integration Officer whose role is to gather the Interreligious Round Table (IRT) twice a year, gathering representatives of the Protestant, Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox Churches, the Jewish, Muslim and Vietnamese Buddhist communities and the Bahá'í. The IRT takes proposals to the relevant communities, strengthens existing initiatives, supports opportunities to get to know each other and share ideas on topics of mutual interest, as well as to implements joint projects. <https://english.leipzig.de/youth-family-and-community/foreign-nationals-and-migrants/migrants-integration-and-intercultural-activities-in-leipzig/intercultural-leipzig/interreligious-dialogue/leipzig-interreligious-round-table>

Pursuing values-based communities calls for traditional hierarchies to engage in a mutually trustful relationship with young people. Religious and secular leaders cannot expect the young generation to be involved unless they are involved first. As youth activist, Khadija Tirha, highlights when speaking about Imams learning about the interests of young people within their communities through social media: "I can follow him [on social media] and he can follow me". Using dialogue methods has the potential to build this trust across generations, fostering cohesive and inclusive communities.



The **Muslim Jewish Leadership Council (MJLC) Ambassadors' Programme** is intended to build up a network of young European leaders from the Jewish and Muslim faiths who share enthusiasm for interfaith work, consult regularly and coordinate interreligious activities. The MJLC Ambassadors Programme will cover projects **in four European cities** per year. The 'Ambassadors' are mentored by 'older' leaders, members of the MJLC. <https://mjlc-europe.org/Article/mjlc-statement-on-the-ambassadors-programme>

The Ambassadors' Programme offers a strong example of how dialogue nurtures trust-building across religions and generations. The programme uses elements of dialogue, religious literacy, mentorship and hands-on collaboration between young Jews and Muslims to strengthen mutual understanding. The projects undertaken by the young Ambassadors are meant to strengthen harmonious coexistence and social cohesion within their communities. Older Jewish and Muslim religious leaders mentor the Ambassadors throughout their projects. This intergenerational component gives the young people the opportunity to be in the driver's seat while engaging the experience and knowledge of the older generation. Initiatives of this sort foster a self-questioning attitude that can help religious and secular leadership re-think their postures towards young people and hold the promise of increasing young people's prospects to be recognised as key stakeholders and partners.

With its focus on mutual learning, exploring difference and challenging harmful stereotypes, dialogue approaches – whether interreligious, intercultural or intergenerational – can highlight issues of power and, by extension, powerlessness within communities. Young people desire an open and critical discussion about pressing political and social issues such as structural injustice and violence in cities, as well as other crucial topics related to identity and behaviour. Their aim is to be involved in co-shaping the values on which their communities are based so that they can act as their custodians.

Yet, many issues need to be considered in this process. Concerns are often raised about whether young women can expect to receive the same opportunities as their male peers within spaces convened by faith-based and secular organizations. On the other hand, faith and belief remain poorly understood and often relegated to just another category when questions of social cohesion are considered. Too often, faith-based actors feel the need to ‘translate’ the impact of their work for it to be of relevance or interest to secular actors. At the same time, secular institutions may be suspicious of how religious leaders can exert their influence on young people.

To ensure that secular and religious actors are equipped to empower and inspire young people and expand partnerships across institutions with differing values, engaging dialogue specialists is likely to lead to innovative results and help building a common framework for action.



KAICIID Fellows programme is an ongoing capacity development and networking programme designed to connect and cultivate a network of leaders committed to fostering peace in their communities through interreligious and intercultural dialogue. Since its launch in 2015, the programme has equipped hundreds of Fellows from 90+ countries with the dialogue skills needed to tackle real-world challenges. <https://www.kaiciid.org/what-we-do/we-build-capacity/kaiciid-fellows-programme>

Yet, there is a strong need for secular and religious actors to reflect on what engaging leadership means for young people. There is a need to suitably balance the vertical tension typical of traditional hierarchies and the horizontal and the peer-to-peer approaches generally pursued in initiatives led by young people. To this end, the concept of servant leadership could offer sources of inspiration. Coined by Robert K. Greenleaf in *The Servant as Leader*, an essay first published in 1970, the concept emphasises ‘the care for those served’. The Servant Leader fosters spiritual growth, mental and physical wellbeing, greater critical thinking and the autonomy of the individuals who are being cared for.

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Emerging Recommendations



FOR LOCAL POLICYMAKERS

- Create mechanisms for participatory governance, engaging young people in co-designing and co-deciding initiatives that are beneficial for them and the whole community, such as youth councils or platforms.
- Create regular opportunities for interaction among and with young people – including dialogues, workshops, or community cultural activities – that build relationships and common actions across lines of difference: age, religious, ethnic, cultural, social, economic.
- Foster innovative, multistakeholder partnerships to mobilise resources and social impact investment at the local level that alleviate young people's social exclusion and unemployment.



FOR RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND ACTORS

- Establish and foster spaces for dialogue and mutual interaction with secular actors, including civil society organizations, where differing values can be transgressed and common frameworks for action jointly built for youth participation.
- Mobilise resources – financial, human and in-kind – within and across religious communities to provide young people with spiritual mentoring and support.
- Support the implementation and expansion of policies to tackle youth unemployment by mobilising faith-based associations of entrepreneurs and advocating for faith-aligned business models, such as social entrepreneurship.



FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS

- Advocate for more space for and more development of youth programmes, including initiatives that can be 'different' from what donors would consider a 'suitable' approach.
- Bridge differing values across religious and secular institutions by combining dialogue and collaborative action with religious and secular leaderships to engage young people across different social groups.
- Be a proactive and reliable source of information and analysis for religious and secular leadership about the situation of young people in local communities and provide good practice examples that inspire innovative initiatives.

Questions for Reflection:

Considering the disengagement of young people from traditional forms of religious and political institutions, how can religious and secular leadership spark critical reflection by both young people and those in leadership about how to reverse such challenges and involve young people?

How can cooperation between religious and secular leadership offer spaces for dialogue between generations, to address intergenerational discord, inter-ethnic tensions and the discrimination young people face in an open and beneficial way for all? In which form(s) should this cooperation take place?

What kinds of partnered initiatives, between the religious and secular authorities, support equitable economic models that create and expand spaces and opportunities for young people and promote communities based on shared values of fairness and equity?

How can participatory models – political and religious – be adopted at the municipal level to better engage and incorporate the voices, concerns and ideas of young people?

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Endnotes

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- 13 See: Social Economy Europe. (2023) *Social Economy: A business model for the future of Europe*. Social Economy Homepage. <https://www.social-economy.eu.org/>
- 14 Romeo, N. (2022, August 27). How Mondragon became the world's largest co-op. The New Yorker. <https://www.newyorker.com/business/currency/how-mondragon-became-the-worlds-largest-co-op>
- 15 Ekström, G. & Kvale, T.A. (2013, January 28). Religion and Youth's Political Engagement: A Quantitative Approach, bachelor thesis. School of Business Economics and Law, Göteborg University. https://gupea.ub.gu.se/bitstream/handle/2077/32496/gupea_2077_32496_1.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y
- 16 See for instance: Dias, N. (2019). *The World Atlas of Participatory Budgeting*. Oficina. <https://www.oficina.org.pt/participatory-budgeting-world-atlas-2019.html>
- 17 The European Union is a values-based Community. This is legally embedded in Art. 2 of the Lisbon Treaty (TEU): "The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail". European Union. Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community. (2007, December 2007). EUR-Lex. This example offers an inspirational lens for enhanced cooperation between secular and religious leaders.



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