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**ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF YOUTH
INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING IN LOCAL
GOVERNMENT BODIES (USING THE EXAMPLE OF
MYKOLAIV TERRITORIAL COMMUNITY)**

The article presents a comprehensive study of the mechanisms and tools for involving youth in decision-making processes at the local government level in the context of decentralization and civil society development. The importance of active youth participation as a key resource for the socio-economic development of territorial communities and improving the quality of public administration is substantiated. The author analyzes modern national and international approaches to the formation and implementation of youth policy, as well as existing methods for assessing its effectiveness at the local level.

The paper proposes a comprehensive approach to determining the effectiveness of interaction between local government bodies and the youth community, which combines quantitative and qualitative indicators. Particular attention is paid to the activities of youth councils as an institutional mechanism for representing the interests of young people, the use of e-democracy tools, in particular electronic petitions, consultations and online surveys, as well as participatory budgeting practices as a form of direct participation of young citizens in the distribution of local resources. The article identifies and substantiates a system of key performance indicators (KPI), which allows for a

comprehensive assessment of not only the level and forms of youth involvement in local governance processes, but also the real impact of their participation on the adoption of management decisions, the formation of local policy and the socio-economic development of territorial communities. The proposed indicators cover the institutional, organizational and social dimensions of youth participation, which allows for a more objective and comparable analysis of the effectiveness of youth policy. Based on the analysis, practical recommendations have been formulated for improving the youth participation strategy, aimed at strengthening inclusiveness, transparency and efficiency of interaction, which, in turn, will contribute to ensuring the sustainable development of local self-government and strengthening trust between authorities and youth.

Keywords: *youth policy; local self-government; decision-making; youth participation; youth councils; civic engagement; management efficiency; territorial community.*

General statement of the problem. The current stage of development of local self-government in Ukraine, which takes place in the context of decentralization reforms and long-term military challenges, brings to the fore the problem of active involvement of citizens in the processes of formation and adoption of administrative decisions at the local level [12]. In this context, youth acquires special importance, which is considered as a strategic resource of the state and territorial communities, a carrier of innovative thinking, high adaptive potential, leadership qualities and the ability to social transformations. At the same time, despite the presence of significant potential, the level of real participation of young people in local governance remains insufficient and is often fragmentary or formal in nature.

The adoption in 2021 of the Law of Ukraine “On the Basic Principles of Youth Policy”, as well as the introduction in 2025 of amendments to the Law of Ukraine “On Local Self-Government in Ukraine”, which for the first time at the legislative level enshrined the right of young people from the age of 14 to participate in resolving issues of local

importance, significantly expanded the institutional opportunities for youth participation. At the same time, these regulatory innovations have actualized the need to develop and implement effective, accessible and efficient mechanisms for the practical implementation of declared rights, capable of ensuring the real influence of young people on local governance processes [5].

This problem is particularly acute in communities located near the war zone, in particular in the Mykolaiv urban territorial community. In such conditions, young people face increased risks of internal and external migration, a decrease in the level of civic activity, psychological exhaustion and a loss of a sense of involvement in the processes of community recovery and development. In this regard, the study of effective mechanisms for involving young people in local governance becomes particularly relevant, as it contributes not only to improving the quality of management decisions, but also to the formation of a sustainable, democratic and socially cohesive local environment focused on long-term development.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The issue of making managerial decisions in the public administration system has been the subject of research by many Ukrainian scientists, in particular V. Yemelyanov, V. Andriyash, N. Hromadska, O. Malikina and others, whose works highlight the theoretical principles of decision-making by government bodies, as well as approaches to increasing their validity and rationality. The issues of forming and implementing state youth policy, as well as mechanisms for involving youth in public governance processes, are reflected in the scientific works of T. Akimova, T. Lushagina, A. Solovyova, N. Shyshpanova, which analyze the development of youth councils, various participation practices, tools for consulting with youth, and the role of youth policy institutions in influencing management processes. At the same time, international experience in assessing the level and quality of youth participation, in particular the concept of R. Hart's "Ladder of Participation", is thoroughly researched in publications by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Council of Europe, and scholars working in the field of youth governance. Despite the presence of significant scientific achievements, the issues of practical

ensuring effective youth participation at the level of specific territorial communities, especially in conditions of military challenges and crisis transformations, remain insufficiently studied, which determines the relevance and scientific significance of the chosen topic.

Formulation of the purpose of the article (task statement). The purpose of the article is to assess the effectiveness of existing forms of youth participation in decision-making in local government bodies (using the example of the Mykolaiv territorial community).

Presentation of the main material of the study. In modern conditions, it is active, proactive and socially responsible youth that act as a key resource for the development of territorial communities, forming their human capital and innovative potential. Young people play an important role in the processes of updating local governance, implementing new approaches to community development and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the state as a whole. At the same time, the aggravation of the demographic crisis, the decline in the birth rate, as well as large-scale internal and external migration processes caused by the full-scale war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, significantly complicate the involvement of young people in active public life.

According to the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine, after 2022, about 40% of young citizens were forced to change their place of permanent residence, which led to the disruption of social ties, a decrease in the level of civic activity and a weakening of the human resources potential of individual territorial communities [14]. In such conditions, communities deprived of active, conscious and involved youth risk losing their ability to recover, innovate and plan effectively. That is why the need for the formation of a holistic, systematic and proactive youth policy at the local level, aimed at creating favorable conditions for the self-realization of youth and their integration into management processes, is becoming more urgent.

An important element of such a policy is the development and implementation of effective mechanisms for the participation of young people in making management decisions in accordance with the principle of “nothing for youth without youth”, which involves the direct involvement of young people in the formation, implementation

and evaluation of policies that directly affect their lives [21]. The implementation of this principle contributes to increasing trust in local government bodies, the development of civic competences of young people and the formation of a sense of responsibility for the future of their own community [8; 22].

Youth participation in local government should be considered as part of a broader concept of civic participation, which encompasses various forms of citizen influence on decision-making processes [16]. Today, one of the most widespread and recognized tools for assessing the level of public influence on public policy is the Civic Participation Spectrum, developed by the International Association for Civic Participation (IAP2). According to this model, five successive levels of growth in civic influence are distinguished: informing, consulting, involving, collaborating, and empowering or delegating authority [17]. The use of this approach in working with youth allows not only to systematize the forms of their participation, but also to gradually increase the level of real influence of young people on local development processes.

It is worth noting that in scientific research, the issue of youth interaction with public authorities is most often considered through the prism of a multilevel participation model [1; 22]. Most scientists identify four basic levels of young people's involvement in public governance processes, which differ in the degree of influence on decision-making and the level of responsibility of the parties [10].

The first level is information, which involves one-way communication and is aimed at providing young people with relevant, reliable and accessible information about the activities of government bodies, opportunities for participation, the implementation of programs and projects, as well as increasing the general level of awareness and legal culture of young citizens [15].

The second level is consultation, which involves creating mechanisms for obtaining feedback from young people through surveys, consultations, focus groups or public discussions. At this stage, young people have the opportunity to express their own positions and proposals, but the final decision, as a rule, remains with public authorities.

The third level is dialogue, characterized by a deeper and more systematic communication between young people and government officials.

It involves a two-way exchange of views, joint discussion of problems and ways to solve them in the format of round tables, public hearings, working groups, youth forums, etc. At this level, a culture of cooperation is formed and the level of trust between the actors of interaction increases.

The fourth level is partnership, which is the highest level of youth involvement and involves joint responsibility for the development and implementation of management decisions [7]. Within the framework of partnership relations, it is possible to delegate certain powers, perform specific tasks, and involve youth in the implementation of community development programs and projects on an equal basis, which contributes to the formation of leadership competencies and strengthening the institutional capacity of the youth environment [10; 4].

Based on the theoretical provisions outlined above, in order to comprehensively assess the effectiveness of youth involvement in decision-making processes in local government bodies, a matrix for assessing the level of youth participation was developed using the example of the Mykolaiv city territorial community. The proposed tool allows you to systematize existing forms of participation, determine their compliance with the specified levels of involvement, and identify problematic aspects and potential areas for improving youth policy at the local level (Table 1).

Based on the Matrix for assessing the effectiveness of youth involvement in decision-making processes in local self-government bodies of the Mykolaiv city-territorial community, an appropriate scale for assessing the level of such participation was formed. The specified scale is an analytical tool that allows quantitatively and qualitatively to determine the degree of involvement of young citizens in management processes, as well as to assess the effectiveness of existing mechanisms for youth participation within the community. The developed scale provides for the generalization of results by individual indicators, which allows for a comprehensive assessment of the state of interaction between youth and local self-government bodies, to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current practice of involving youth, and to determine priority areas for its further improvement. The use of this tool creates a basis for informed management decisions and the formation of a more effective youth policy at the local level (Table 2).

Table 1

Matrix for assessing the effectiveness of youth involvement in decision-making in local government bodies of the Mykolaiv city territorial community

Participa- tion level	Evaluation indicator	Evaluation indicator
Information	1. Data accessibility	1.1. Community documents open for free access (development strategy, budget, programs), especially those that concern or affect youth (availability of published youth programs, reports, etc.).
		1.2. Availability of draft official documents submitted for public discussion.
	2. Publicity of local government bodies	2.1. Official information resources focused on youth.
		2.2. Frequency of information updates active information of citizens.
		2.3. Youth awareness of local government activities and opportunities for participation.
		2.4. Qualitative reflection of the level of trust of youth in messages from the authorities.
	3. Relevance and clarity of information	3.1. Adaptability of messages for youth – simplicity of language, use of visual materials, explanation of why it is important for the younger generation.
		3.2. Correspondence of information channels to the needs of youth. Consultation 1. Ensuring conditions for youth participation

продовження таблиці 1

Consultation	1. Ensuring conditions for youth participation	1.1. Tools for collecting youth opinions (online surveys, public hearings on youth issues, electronic petitions, etc.).
		1.2. Availability of youth advisory and consultative bodies.
		1.3. Participation of youth in general public consultations, hearings, working committees and groups at local government units.
		1.4. Training and informal education activities for youth on youth participation processes.
		1.5. Strategic and planning documents developed with youth proposals.
	2. Openness and transparency of processes	2.1. Openness of meetings of commissions, executive committee, city council sessions.
		2.2. Taking into account youth proposals
	3. Ensuring a feedback system	3.1. Functioning of the application submission system.
Dialogue	1. Youth Council Activity	1.1. Number of Youth Council meetings per year; number of recommendations or decisions developed by the Youth Council and submitted for consideration to the City Council.
	2. Systematicity of Communication	2.1. To what extent is the interaction systemic, not random.
	3. Interaction with Vulnerable Groups of Youth	3.1. Creation of legal conditions for cooperation with vulnerable groups of youth (IDPs, LWO, NEET youth)

продовження таблиці 1

Partnership	1. Participation Budget	1.1. Functioning of the Participation Budget
		1.2. Functioning of competitions for programs, projects, events that are implemented in the community by youth NGOs at the expense of the budget of the Mykolaiv City Territorial Community.
	2. Institutionalization of Partnership	2.1. Degree of formalization of cooperation between the authorities and youth. This includes having signed memoranda, cooperation agreements with youth organizations, and including youth development goals in official community strategies.
		2.2. Permanent working groups outside the strategic planning process.

Source: compiled by the authors [11; 13]

In the process of assessing the effectiveness of involving young people in making management decisions in local government bodies of the Mykolaiv city territorial community, a set of complementary research methods was used, which ensured the comprehensiveness and objectivity of the results obtained.

In particular, an analysis of regulatory legal acts adopted by local government bodies of the Mykolaiv city council, which regulate the implementation of the functions of interaction with youth and the public, was used. This method allowed us to assess the level of regulatory support for youth participation, as well as the compliance of local acts with current legislation and state priorities in the field of youth policy [20].

An important place in the study was occupied by the analysis of official documentation, in particular reports, official letters, minutes of meetings of executive bodies of the city council, working groups, consultative and advisory bodies and other collegial formations. This made it possible to trace the actual practice of interaction between

authorities and youth and the level of their involvement in decision-making processes.

Table 2

Scale for assessing the effectiveness of youth involvement in decision-making in local self-government bodies of the Mykolaiv city-territorial community

Level of participation	Basic assessment criteria		Points awarded by criteria					Total points	
	Pointer	Indicators	0	0,25	0,5	0,75	1,0		
Informing	1	1.1.							
		1.2.							
	2	2.1.							
		2.2.							
		2.3.							
		2.4.							
	3	3.1.							
		3.2.							
Consultancy	1	1.1.							
		1.2.							
		1.3.							
		1.4.							
		1.5.							
	2	2.1.							
		2.2.							
	3	3.1.							
Dialogue	1	1.1.							
	2	2.1.							
	3	3.1.							

продовження таблиці 2

Partnership	1	1.1.							
		1.2.							
	2	2.1.							
		2.2.							

Source: compiled by the authors [11; 13]

In addition, an analysis of statistical data was carried out regarding the demographic structure of the community's youth, the level of their activity and participation in the implementation of youth programs and events. The use of this method made it possible to quantitatively characterize the state of youth participation and identify the main trends.

To deepen the analytical base, an analysis of public reports and open data of local government bodies, as well as the activities of youth consultative and advisory bodies, was used. This contributed to increasing the transparency of the study and made it possible to assess the openness and accountability of the authorities in the implementation of youth policy.

Considerable attention was paid to the content analysis of the official website and pages of local government bodies on social networks of the Mykolaiv city territorial community, which made it possible to assess the quality of information support for youth policy, the accessibility of information for young people, and the level of communication with the target audience [9].

A separate content analysis of the communication resources of the Youth Policy Council under the Mayor, in particular its pages on social networks, was conducted to determine the activity, thematic focus and involvement of young people in discussing topical issues.

In order to obtain primary empirical data, a questionnaire method was used, in which representatives of the Youth Policy Department of the Mykolaiv City Council, the Youth Policy Council under the Mayor, as well as young residents of the Mykolaiv city territorial community took part. The questionnaire made it possible to find out the level of awareness, attitude and assessment of young people regarding the effectiveness of existing participation mechanisms.

A group interview conducted with the joint participation of representatives of the Youth Policy Department, the Youth Policy Council under the Mayor and the youth of the community was a supplement to the quantitative methods. The use of this qualitative method made it possible to more deeply analyze the problematic aspects of interaction, identify barriers to participation and outline promising directions for the development of youth participation at the local level.

In order to identify the level of interest of young people in participating in decision-making processes at the community level, a comprehensive study of young residents of the Mykolaiv city territorial community was conducted. The study identified general characteristics of the situation of young people, their needs, motives and expectations, and conducted a comparative analysis of these aspects in different age groups. Based on the collected data, a socio-psychological portrait of a young person within the community was created, which allows for a deeper understanding of their characteristics and interests. To achieve maximum depth of the study, qualitative methods were used, in particular focus group discussions, which provided an opportunity to delve into the everyday experience of young people in detail. Thanks to this, their assessment of the current socio-economic situation, the state of implementation of youth policy, and the level of opportunities provided by the community for development and self-realization were recorded. The results obtained allow us to outline both the challenges and prospects for involving young people in active participation in community life and the formation of its strategic decisions.

Four focus groups, divided into age categories of 14-17, 18-23, 24-28, and 29-35, allowed us to track changes in the needs and behavioral orientations of young people depending on their life stage.

The results showed that participants aged 14-17 showed a particular interest in self-discovery, the formation of their own identity and social recognition. At this stage, they are actively shaping their future educational and professional trajectories, which makes their motivation unstable, and their worldview open to new opportunities and experiments. Young people in this category are extremely sensitive to the attitude of adults, so the issues of distrust from the older generation and the feeling

that their opinion is not taken into account in decision-making were often raised in discussions. They are aware of their limited life experience, while emphasizing their willingness to actively participate in community life if they are heard.

The main motive of young people aged 14-17 is the desire for self-expression through creativity, personal initiatives, participation in non-formal education and spaces where they can express themselves without pressure. At the same time, the environment does not always contribute to the realization of their potential: participants noted the lack of quality infrastructure, clubs and spaces for development, as well as the dangers of the information environment – manipulation, toxicity and the risk of emotional isolation. They express the need to develop practical skills – financial literacy, communication, planning and decision-making, as they feel a gap between the theoretical knowledge gained in school and real life challenges. The feeling of insecurity is the central emotion of this group, often reinforced by the lack of support from adults, limited resources and the fear of being unheard.

The focus group participants aged 18-23 are in the transition phase from education to adulthood, when a clearer idea of the future is being formed, but at the same time a sense of uncertainty remains. They strive for independence, but often face limited opportunities to realize their own ambitions. The main needs of this group are related to stability, access to quality education, opportunities for professional development and gaining practical experience. Young people note that the labor market does not always meet their expectations, and educational programs do not guarantee real career prospects, which stimulates the desire to travel, migrate or look for alternatives outside their hometown or country. Despite the desire for mobility, young people aged 18-23 demonstrate an active civic position, although such participation is often episodic or short-term. They feel the need for mentoring support and training focused on practical skills: financial literacy, entrepreneurship, time management and communication. Young people also emphasize that information about available opportunities is often fragmented or not sufficiently accessible, which reduces motivation to actively participate. The key fear of this category is the risk of “getting stuck” in a state of uncertainty and not finding a foothold for personal and professional development.

Young people aged 24-28 in focus groups noted that the transition to adulthood is accompanied by a desire for stability, financial independence and professional development. This group already has some work, volunteer and educational experience, therefore demonstrating a more critical thinking and pragmatic approach to life. Also important is the growing sense of responsibility and increased demands for quality of life, in particular for job stability, access to social and medical services, as well as professional prospects. During the discussions, young people focused on instability and exhaustion caused by the economic situation, martial law and a high level of uncertainty. They emphasize the need to support the development of entrepreneurship, career growth and access to quality training programs. It is important to develop mentoring as a mechanism for transferring experience, as well as creating platforms for developing professional skills and self-realization. At the same time, this group faces the risk of emotional burnout, a feeling of being “stuck” and an accumulation of responsibilities, which limits their creativity and flexibility.

The social activity of young people aged 24-28 remains, but becomes more selective and pragmatic. They are willing to join projects that benefit personal or professional development, but are less inclined to long-term participation in communities without clearly defined results or support. At this age, the need for a balance between work and personal life also increases, which affects the structure of their activity. One of the key risks for this group is emigration and the search for better opportunities, which can reduce the human resource potential and social capital of the community.

The focus group of young people aged 29-35 showed the most formed outlook on life, high responsibility for professional and family development and a clear awareness of their own needs and opportunities. Young people in this category have significant professional experience and extensive social connections, which allows them to act as experts, mentors and leaders in communities.

At the same time, they face serious systemic challenges: limited career opportunities, lack of affordable housing, lack of quality medical and educational services, as well as constant work and family stress. Participants often feel “at the limit of opportunities” when their devel-

opment is slowed down by external factors – economic instability, poor quality infrastructure and limited access to professional growth. This leads to exhaustion, burnout and lack of time for self-development and participation in public life.

The social activity of young people aged 29-35 becomes selective and focused on those areas that directly affect the quality of life of their families – urban planning, security, territorial development, ecology and infrastructure. At the same time, they have a high potential to participate in strategic processes, including managerial decision-making and policy development, but their involvement is limited by distrust in institutions and the lack of mechanisms for real influence. The main risks for this group are emotional and professional burnout, outflow of personnel abroad, and decreased motivation for civic engagement.

A comparative analysis of four age groups indicates that young people in the Mykolaiv urban-territorial community have significant potential for civic engagement, creativity, and personal development, provided that appropriate conditions and opportunities for participation are created. At the same time, the study revealed significant differences between age categories in terms of motivations, expectations, and obstacles that young people face. This emphasizes the need to apply a differentiated approach to developing youth policy that takes into account the specific needs of each age group. An important general conclusion is that young people do not demonstrate reluctance to participate in community life, but they need transparent and effective mechanisms for influencing decision-making. A sense of distrust in institutions and the lack of effective engagement tools remain among the main barriers to youth activism.

The assessment of the effectiveness of youth involvement in decision-making processes in local government bodies of the Mykolaiv city territorial community showed that the study participants discussed the advantages and disadvantages of only those participation mechanisms in which they directly participated. Among the tools that received the largest number of responses during group discussions were: public budget, electronic petitions, parliamentary appeals, direct action actions (protests, rallies), participation in round tables and working groups, attending receptions of local government officials, public hearings, youth

council activities, and informal learning. The methods of involvement that young people were least aware of included general meetings of residents at their place of residence and public expertise.

Based on the research conducted and the applied scale for assessing the effectiveness of youth involvement, participation scores were calculated for each level of involvement (Table 3), which allows assessing both qualitative and quantitative aspects of youth participation in decision-making processes at the local level.

The participation score was calculated using the formula:

$$B = \sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^{m_i} I_{ij} \quad \text{where:}$$

B – participation score;

n – number of indicators that were included in the basic assessment criteria;

m_i – number of indicators in indicator i;

I_{ij} – score of indicator j in indicator i.

The assessment of the effectiveness of youth involvement in the decision-making process in local government bodies of the Mykolaiv city territorial community indicates that the community has already created basic and at the same time significant institutional and procedural principles, which are a necessary prerequisite for the development of active youth participation. The results of the analysis conducted at four levels of involvement – information, consultation, dialogue and partnership – demonstrate the heterogeneous effectiveness of the functioning of various components of youth participation. Some of them work quite effectively and already provide real influence of youth on decision-making, while others are at the initial stage of institutionalization and require systematic improvement and development.

The youth involvement effectiveness assessment matrix (Table 4) allows you to clearly see the strengths and weaknesses of existing participation mechanisms, reflecting their structural organization and practical implementation. On its basis, you can draw a generalized conclusion about the current state of youth participation in the community

and identify priority areas for further development of youth involvement policy.

Table 3

Results of calculation of the effectiveness of youth involvement in decision-making in the local government of Mykolaiv city territorial community

Level of participation	Basic assessment criteria		Points awarded by criteria					Total points	
	Pointer	Indicators	0	0,25	0,5	0,75	1,0		
Informing	1	1.1.	-	-	-	-	+	1,75	6,25
		1.2.	-	-	-	+	-		
	2	2.1.	-	-	-	-	+	3	
		2.2.	-	-	-	-	+		
		2.3.	-	-	+	-	-		
		2.4.	-	-	+	-	-		
	3	3.1.	-	-	+	-	-	1,5	
3.2.		-	-	-	-	+			
Consultancy	1	1.1.	-	-	-	-	+	4,75	6,5
		1.2.	-	-	-	-	+		
		1.3.	-	-	-	-	+		
		1.4.	-	-	-	-	+		
		1.5.	-	-	-	+	-		
	2	2.1.	-	+	-	-	-	0,75	
		2.2.	-	-	+	-	-		
	3	3.1.	-	-	-	-	+	1	
Dialogue	1	1.1.	-	-	-	-	+	1	3
	2	2.1.	-	-	-	-	+	1	
	3	3.1.	-	-	-	-	+	1	
Partnership	1	1.1.	-	-	-	-	+	2	4
		1.2.	-	-	-	-	+		
	2	2.1.	-	-	-	-	+	2	
		2.2.	-	-	-	-	+		

Source: compiled by the authors

Table 4

Matrix of effectiveness of youth involvement in decision-making in local government bodies of Mykolaiv city territorial community

Level of participation	Indicators	Score (score/maximum score)	
Information	1. Data accessibility	1,75/2,0	6,25/8,0
	2. Publicity of local government bodies	3,0/3,0	
	3. Relevance and clarity of information	1,5/2,0	
Consultation	1. Ensuring conditions for youth participation	4,75/5,0	6,5/8,0
	2. Openness and transparency of processes	0,75/2,0	
	3. Ensuring a feedback system	1,0/1,0	
Dialogue	1. Youth council activity	1,0/1,0	3,0/3,0
	2. Systematic communication	1,0/1,0	
	3. Interaction with vulnerable youth groups	1,0/1,0	
Partnership	1. Participation budget	2,0/2,0	4,0/4,0
	2. Institutionalization of partnership	2,0/2,0	

Source: compiled by the authors

The matrix data at the level of participation “Information” demonstrate a fairly high level of ensuring openness, accessibility and content quality of information resources of the Mykolaiv City Council and its subordinate structures. Particularly high indicators are noted for the components “Data accessibility” (1.75/2.0) and “Publicity of local government bodies” (3.0/3.0), which indicates not only the availability of information in open access, but also its sufficient quality and structure.

This means that electronic resources, official websites, pages on social networks and channels of operational information perform their function effectively, providing young residents with the necessary data on the activities of government bodies, the implementation of programs and projects, opportunities for participation and initiating proposals. At the same time, the indicator “Relevance and clarity of information” received a slightly lower score (1.5/2.0), which indicates the need for additional adaptation of information messages to the specific needs of the youth audience. The value of this indicator reflects not only the regularity of resource updates, but also their stylistic accessibility, ease of presentation, and the use of modern communication formats. Youth as a social group usually focuses on fast, interactive, and visually structured ways of obtaining information. Therefore, the relative insufficiency of this component emphasizes the need to strengthen communication interaction with youth, actively use modern media formats, and create special “youth information packages” that would contain structured and accessible information about local government decisions.

In general, the level of information in the Mykolaiv city territorial community can be characterized as sufficiently developed and systematic. Unlike many other communities, the community has clear, open, and multi-channel communication practices that meet the basic standards of good governance. At the same time, the lack of targeted adaptation of information content to the needs of youth reduces the effectiveness of information as a stimulus for the active participation of young people in the life of the local community and the activities of government bodies [6].

The generalization of the assessment results by the level of “Consultation” reveals a certain asymmetry between the availability of public participation tools and their real effectiveness. The highest score was given to the indicator “Providing conditions for youth participation” (4.75/5.0), which indicates the systematic work of the community in creating opportunities for youth participation. This includes conducting consultations, organizing surveys, using electronic interaction tools, and ensuring the availability of various mechanisms for influencing decision-making.

At the same time, the indicator “Openness and transparency of consultation processes” received a significantly lower score (0.75/2.0),

which indicates the existence of problems of institutional transparency and accountability regarding how exactly youth proposals are taken into account. Although consultations are held, their results are not sufficiently systematized and are not always made public in formats convenient for youth. This creates a situation where young participants may perceive the consultation mechanism as formal, even if their proposals are actually taken into account by the authorities.

At the same time, the assessment of the systematicity of feedback reached the maximum value (1.0/1.0), which indicates the presence of effective mechanisms for recording feedback. However, they are probably not fully integrated with the transparency mechanisms of consultation, which is why young people do not always have the opportunity to understand to what extent their opinion influenced the final decisions and why such decisions were made.

Thus, in the area of consultation, the Mykolaiv city territorial community demonstrates a high level of openness of the existing participation tools, but their effectiveness in terms of perception by young people remains insufficiently high. The analysis shows that the community has significant potential to transform the consultation mechanism into a systemic tool for regular and structured interaction between authorities and youth. At the same time, to achieve this, it is necessary to implement more transparent and public procedures that would allow for a clear demonstration of the results of consultations and show how young people's proposals are taken into account when making decisions. The level of dialogue in the Mykolaiv city territorial community demonstrates high indicators for all assessed components, in particular the activity of the youth council (1.0/1.0), systematic communication (1.0/1.0) and interaction with vulnerable groups of youth (1.0/1.0). This indicates that the institutional mechanisms of constant dialogue between youth and authorities function stably and effectively.

The indicator of youth council activity is particularly important. The Youth Council under the Mayor, in accordance with the Regulations on its activities, performs a wide range of functions: from consulting and monitoring to representing the interests of youth and initiating its own projects. Analysis of documents confirms that the Youth Council is a real

subject of youth policy, not a nominal structure. Its activities correspond to modern approaches to youth participation, enshrined in legislation and international standards. The effective work of the council contributes to building trust, attracting new members and disseminating best practices of youth self-government.

The indicator of systematic communication shows that joint events, round tables, working meetings, consultations and regular discussions of youth policy are permanent. The community demonstrates openness to discussing youth initiatives and creates conditions for their implementation.

The indicator of interaction with vulnerable groups of youth confirms the presence of an inclusive approach that covers not only active youth, but also representatives of socially vulnerable categories. This approach meets the standards of the European Charter for Youth Participation and the recommendations of international organizations.

In general, the level of dialogue in the community can be assessed as high and sufficiently institutionalized, which creates a solid foundation for the transition to even higher levels of youth participation – partnership and co-management.

The level of partnership also demonstrates almost maximum scores for key indicators. In particular, the indicator “Participatory Budget” received a score of 2.0/2.0, and the overall result for the block – 4.0/4.0. This indicates that the mechanisms for financial participation of youth in the decision-making process not only exist, but are also practically implemented, providing young people with real opportunities to influence the development of the community.

The institutionalization of partnership, which received the highest possible score (2.0/2.0), indicates that the Mykolaiv city territorial community has created appropriate conditions for the full participation of youth in the processes of management and decision-making. In particular, this means:

- the presence of co-management procedures that regulate the interaction of youth and government bodies [19];
- the functioning of consultative and advisory structures that ensure the possibility of systematic youth contribution to policy-making;

- the implementation of public budgets or participatory budgets that give youth a direct influence on the distribution of community resources;
- the provision of youth participation in working groups, commissions and collegial bodies, which allows them to be actively involved in management processes and decisions [3];
- the existence of an institutional framework for the integration of youth into budget and management processes on an ongoing basis.

This level of partnership allows us to consider young people as full participants in local politics, capable not only of consulting or discussing issues, but also of directly influencing decision-making. This is an extremely important achievement, since partnership, according to the model of R. Hart, is the highest level of youth participation, where young people actively co-decide issues of community development, taking real responsibility for the results [2].

Summarizing the above, we can state that the Mykolaiv city territorial community is already at the stage of transition from basic forms of youth participation, such as informing and consulting, to more developed levels of co-management and partnership. Analysis of the effectiveness matrix shows a combination of numerous strengths and individual problematic aspects. The strengths include transparency of communications, high activity of the youth council, the presence of institutionalized procedures for involving young people and the functioning of the participatory budget. At the same time, there are certain challenges, including insufficient adaptation of information resources to the needs of young people and limited transparency of consultation processes, which affects the perception of the effectiveness of their involvement by young people. This combination of positive and problematic elements is typical for most Ukrainian communities and indicates the potential for further development of youth participation by improving existing mechanisms [18].

Conclusions. Thus, the effectiveness of youth participation in the Mykolaiv city territorial community can be assessed as a high level, which demonstrates not only the activity of youth, but also significant potential for further development. There is a pronounced trend towards increasing youth involvement in various spheres of community life, including

decision-making at the local government level, the implementation of social and cultural initiatives, as well as participation in community development programs and civic activism projects.

The community has created favorable conditions for the systematic involvement of youth, in particular due to the availability of institutional mechanisms, a resource base and programs to support youth initiatives. This allows young people to take an active part in shaping local policies, influence decision-making processes and develop responsible citizenship skills. The existing prerequisites include well-established communication between government bodies and youth organizations, the availability of platforms for discussing current community problems, as well as mechanisms for financing and supporting projects aimed at youth development.

Mykolaiv city territorial community has the potential to become a model of a modern model of youth policy, which combines democratic governance, active citizen participation, the formation of social responsibility and ensuring sustainable development. Such a model provides for a comprehensive approach that covers educational, cultural, social and economic aspects of youth development, and can serve as an example for other communities that seek to increase the level of youth activity and the integration of young people into governance processes. Thanks to systemic support and a favorable institutional environment, young people in the community not only actively participate in existing processes, but also initiate their own projects and initiatives aimed at improving social infrastructure, developing the cultural environment and strengthening civic positions. This indicates that Mykolaiv city territorial community is on the path to forming a sustainable, open and inclusive system of youth policy, capable of providing a long-term positive impact on the development of the entire community.

ОЦІНКА ЕФЕКТИВНОСТІ ЗАЛУЧЕННЯ МОЛОДІ ДО ПРИЙНЯТТЯ РІШЕНЬ В ОРГАНАХ МІСЦЕВОГО САМОВРЯДУВАННЯ (НА ПРИКЛАДІ МИКОЛАЇВСЬКОЇ ТЕРИТОРІАЛЬНОЇ ГРОМАДИ)

У статті здійснено комплексне дослідження механізмів та інструментів залучення молоді до процесів прийняття рішень на рівні місцевого самоврядування в умовах децентралізації та розвитку громадянського суспільства. Обґрунтовано значення активної участі молоді як ключового ресурсу соціально-економічного розвитку територіальних громад та підвищення якості публічного управління. Автором проаналізовано сучасні національні та міжнародні підходи до формування й реалізації молодіжної політики, а також наявні методики оцінювання її ефективності на місцевому рівні.

У роботі запропоновано комплексний підхід до визначення результативності взаємодії органів місцевого самоврядування з молодіжною спільнотою, який поєднує кількісні та якісні показники. Особливу увагу приділено діяльності молодіжних рад як інституційного механізму представництва інтересів молоді, використанню інструментів електронної демократії, зокрема електронних петицій, консультацій та онлайн-опитувань, а також практикам партисипативного бюджетування як формі прямої участі молодих громадян у розподілі місцевих ресурсів.

У статті виокремлено та обґрунтовано систему ключових показників ефективності (КПІ), яка дає змогу комплексно оцінити не лише рівень та форми залученості молоді до процесів місцевого управління, але й реальний вплив її участі на ухвалення управлінських рішень, формування місцевої політики та соціально-економічний розвиток територіальних громад. Запропоновані показники охоплюють інституційний, організаційний та соціальний виміри молодіжної участі, що дозволяє здійснювати більш об'єктивний і порівнюваний аналіз результативності молодіжної політики. На основі проведеного аналізу сформульовано практичні рекомендації щодо вдосконалення стратегії молодіжної участі, спрямовані на посилення інклюзивності, прозорості та ефективності взаємодії, що, у свою чергу, сприятиме забезпеченню сталого розвитку

місцевого самоврядування та зміцненню довіри між владою і молоддю.

Ключові слова: молодіжна політика; міське самоврядування; прийняття рішень; молодіжна участь; молодіжні ради; громадська активність; ефективність управління; територіальна громада.

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