



City of Lund



## Lund Youth Council

### What is the Youth Council?

In spring 2002, young people, politicians and officials from Lund Municipality met on the island Ven in southern Sweden. The purpose was to meet and discuss how public participation of youth in Lund could be improved. Many different issues were discussed and several concrete ideas were brought up. One suggestion was to form a youth council, for and by young people. The first youth council was held in September 2003, where the young people themselves decided what they wanted their youth council to look like.

The Youth Council has three pillars; dialogue, influence and the youth's own activities. The purpose of dialogue is to minimize bureaucratic detours between young people and politicians and officials. Since most young people are not allowed to vote, they need the opportunity to influence adults in issues that relate to them. An important part of this is the youth's own activities and projects, where young people take responsibility and realize their ideas. It strengthens their commitment. The Youth Council should be a forum where young people and adults meet and discuss. The goal is that young people's views should be brought to light.

### How does the Youth Council work?

The youth have themselves decided how the Youth Council should operate. They want to step out of traditional hierarchies and have an organization that is flat, where everyone's vote is equally valued. The Youth Council is constructed around the Youth Parliament, various committees and a coordination group. As a participant you choose yourself how much you want to get involved and in what way, so there is no need for you to be involved in both the Youth Parliament and one of the committees. The participants in the Youth Parliament are mainly young people in the ages between 12 and 25 years old, but also politicians and officials participate. The attendance rate is about 250 people, and of them only the young people are eligible to vote.

The Youth Parliaments are arranged four times a year and this is where all of the major decisions are being made. The participants meet to look into motions, run the economy, exchange information and work with larger issues and projects. After the formal part of the meeting discussions, workshops or lectures are usually being held. Every Parliament has a theme, some examples from the past five years are sustainability, the future and gender equality.

The committees are doing the ongoing work with focus on different issues, such as education, international business, environmental issues and equality. The committees organize their work themselves and sometimes politicians and officials are present at their meetings. The adults can then ask and answer questions, have dialogues with the youths and create direct

cooperation. Whether the committee wants adults to participate on the meetings or not is a decision that is up to each committee to make.

In the coordination group there are representatives from all of the committees. The coordination group's task is to organize and prepare the Youth Parliament, manage ongoing work for the entire organization and uphold the contact between the committees.

## **Activities**

The three pillars of the Youth Council penetrate all of its activities. Dialogue and direct influence occurs in the Youth Parliament and at the committees' meetings.

The committees mostly work with their own activities. The Environment Committee has conducted several campaigns, for example one about organic roses and coffee and a trash-collection-day. They have had an influence on local and regional policy, among others the decision that Lund should become a Fairtrade City and the reduction of the fee for 16- to 18-year olds using public transport. They also arranged a three day Climate Gathering in Lund the 13-15 November, 2009 in connection to the COP 15 meeting in Copenhagen. It gathered around 300 young people from all over Sweden, Europe and globally from four continents. The event was recognized as an event connected to Sweden's presidency in the EU, 2009, and also received the status as a Regional Centre of Expertise on education for sustainable development, from the United Nations University in Japan.

One major project that has been engaging the youth since the idea was initiated is the desire for a meeting place for young people, which was realized in the summer 2006 when the Youth Council got Wickmanska. The website [www.ungilund.se](http://www.ungilund.se) is an important part of the organization and an important information channel. It contains current information about the Youth Council and its activities.

[www.ungilund.se](http://www.ungilund.se)

<http://www.ungilund.se/sv/Lunds-ungdomsting/Utskotten/Miljoutskottet/>