Contemporary Methodologies and Tools on Community Engagement

Guidebook

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INTRODUCTION

To address the social disengagement of young people and their low participation levels in civic and political life, people need to become more engaged in their communities, appreciate the values of volunteering and active citizenship, recognize their benefits, as well as focus on positive youth development. And the key role here is played by youth organisations, which very often take the responsibility to implement those objectives and keep the dialogue with youth open. This requires a lot of resources (both – human and financial) and ability not to lose track in a more than ever rapidly changing young generation. To facilitate these difficult processes, the **UComE project** aims to provide youth organisations and youth workers with modern tools which would help to bring youth back to their communities, through "active citizenship" and "community-based learning". It also seeks to help to develop a culture of community engagement, positive youth development and innovation among youth.

This guidebook constitutes an introduction to the theories and concepts of community engagement, but from a youth-point of view, thus assisting you to practically put down your project ideas and elaborate on them from scratch in order to create an Action Plan for youth community engagement. In doing so, you will firstly learn to identify the purpose, scope, objectives, as well as the level/depth of engagement processes, by also determining the anticipated outcomes. It also contains information about the roles of different actors present in your project: Users and Beneficiaries of the activities, project advisers, the contributors to management processes, decision makers, as well as the deliverers. This guidebook tackles main issues dealing with youth engagement, so that it can be applied in both small and large-scale community youth projects.

The guidebook will assist you to consider the range of stakeholder interests, including local residents, communities of interest (ethnic, racial, faith-based and cultural groups) web-based and virtual groups. It also analyses the ways in which various groups are already represented within the community, by also enabling you to detect the already existing forms of communication and gaps at different levels (such as digitalization, communication, information and knowledge gaps and omissions). Briefly, it analyses the quality standards for successful community engagement.

1. WHAT IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Today we live in a very fast paced environment with an overwhelming amount of information circling around us. We have all the means and tools to easily reach and access it 24/24 h. Inevitably this impacts our social life, choices, preferences and even opportunities (especially if we lack access to information). Information flow also encourages the creation of a dialogue resulting in problem solutions, compromises and specific actions. Without knowledge and information a lot of important decisions might not take place, despite if they are taken at the individual or a community level. All this makes information an immensely powerful tool significantly impacting our daily routines. It is also important to understand that this works both ways – sharing information between the different sources creates an even stronger and bigger impact and enables mutual comprehension between the different parties. Though one of the toughest dilemmas communication experts are facing - how to help people engage with that information? The answer is not that simple though - there are many factors important for an engagement of different groups of individuals, but one thing remains clear – to be able to engage we need to know how to communicate (ATSDR, 2011).

Community engagement is in principle based on communication – power which has an impact on a lot of different factors. Society has used a power of communication in various ways – from the power of fake news and conspiracy theories gathering huge communities united for one purpose (like a QAnon conspiracy theory vivid in the United States) to strong political decisions taken (Brexit). The way we communicate as well as the information we willingly (or unwillingly) provide have certain effects and reach specific audiences or communities. This implies a very simple conclusion – address the

problem which is important for the community and it is very likely you would not only attract their attention, but also be able to involve them in your cause *(ATSDR, 2011).*

Community engagement principles

Generally we refer to community engagement as a process, dialogue, relationship, partnership or any other active interaction and exchange of views and ideas or actions. The goal is to obtain some positive changes in the society or a part of the society – community (ATSDR, 2011). This process usually includes a party which possess the resources to implement the change (staff, infrastructure, financial resources, etc.) and a party containing a specific group of individuals, united by a common cause, geographical restrictions, social status, etc. Even though the definitions of community engagement vary, depending the target audience and final goal, the principle remains the same. Community engagement contains several different levels or types of engagement. You should make sure that the way you choose to engage is suitable for the community you work with and the goal you have in mind, as each approach is very different.

As you can see from the Spectrum of Public Participation in the following page (you may also read more in detail about the spectrum in STEP 3 of the guide, p. 61), there are five different levels of community engagement, each of them having stronger impact in the decision making process and on the decision itself. The levels also help to determine at which engagement state you are currently in, by reviewing your relation with the community. Each engagement stage provides different resources and brings different outcomes to the community and your organisation too – therefore setting the participation goal in the community engagement process is very important.

If you are seeking for the highest possible engagement with your community it is useful to gradually approach the objective by passing through different levels. It would be a very challenging task to jump right away to empowerment if you have not created the connection with the community you work with. Bilateral trust, just as the trust of your community in your organisation, in this case is essential.

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation was designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any public participation process. The Spectrum is used internationally, and it is found in public participation plans around the world.

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION →

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

Table1. Source: International association for public participation; IAP2 spectrum of public participation:

https://www.iap2.org/page/resources

Trust in communication with your community

Without the trust of your community, your organisation or project would be programmed for failure. Trust is essential not only to create a meaningful engagement, but also establishes a baseline for your work. We can also call it a foundation on which you will build all your further actions.

Trust building is strongly connected with the different community engagement levels and knowing the community you work with (we are talking about work specifically with youth in the next chapter). To facilitate building of trust in your organisation you may work on some important aspects (Jeffery, 2009):

Community trust – right to operate. Your organisation should know that, first of all, you need to build the foundation for the further work with the community. Everyone should be aware of where you're headed. You may also state it publicly to youth – it shows they matter.	
Consult with the community. Even if you do not have any established relationship yet, this would not only help you to directly engage, but also show that you listen to their needs.	
Face to face. Organise some in person meetings with young people to discuss the issues or their ideas. It is especially important in our virtual era.	
Keep them in loop. Community engagement requires a lot of effort, so if you want to build their trust, make sure the people matter to you not only now but always – for your future projects too. Newsletters, e-mails, are social media are among the most accessible tools to do that.	

Be organised and reliable. Regular meetings are building trust, so make sure you set a pattern and most importantly hold those meetings not when it is convenient for you, but when it is feasible for your community – in the end you want to reach as many community members as possible.	
Follow up internally. It may be difficult to keep an eye on everything so make sure you have someone who can monitor your organization's progress. Who would be there to listen to youth and address critical issues internally.	
Be informal. Engage with your community outside of the "official" meetings.	
Talk their language. Use the content they would understand and find relevant, avoid specific and "heavy" language.	
Small things matter. Address not only big, but small issues too. Sometimes picking the low hanging fruit is a better solution.	
Show the progress. Let your community know that their contribution has an impact on your work. Highlight the achievements and set future goals.	

Following those steps will help you gradually build up trust within your community, engage more effectively, and gather useful information about the people you work with – both as individuals and as a community. Apart from this, you would also need to do some prior research before diving in the engagement process.

Engaging with youth

Youth is a very sensitive audience to work with, therefore it makes it even more important to master the communication with them. By sensitising youth and involving them in different social issues, we are increasing their participation in democracy, economy, cultural processes and shaping of the future society. Involvement also aids in shaping their self-image, as an active member of a society, who has a right to be heard.

One of the most vivid examples of youth involvement in public issues is that of Greta Thunberg – Swedish environment activist, who has managed to create a big movement around her, even though by the time she had started her protests she was only 15. She was heard in the United Nations (2018 UN Climate Change Conference), World Economic Forum (in Davos 2019) and by politicians in Europe and USA. Her activism created a huge movement around climate change impacting mostly the youth. Thunberg has managed to engage with likeminded people for a cause which mattered for a big part of society and aimed to impact the decision and policy makers to fight for that cause.

This example also proves that by engaging with youth it is immensely important to focus on the current actualities and the priorities youth itself has put forward. As Europeans, we should focus on the realities which are closest to us by determining what youth actually needs. While there are also many ways to monitor the needs of the youth in the local areas, it is very beneficial to take a look at the full image in Europe. The EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, which is currently in place, provides a great overview of the realities of youth in all of Europe, as it was developed by closely collaborating with European youth from different countries (and not only member states) and puts focus on 11 goals. These are the priority areas which the youth of Europe stated as the most important in realising the full potential of the young generation:

11 EUROPEAN YOUTH GOALS

1.Connecting EU with Youth

Foster the sense of youth belonging to the European project and build a bridge between the EU and young people to regain trust and increase participation.

2. Equality of All Genders

Ensure equality of all genders and gender sensitive approaches in all areas of life of a young person.

3. Inclusive Societies

Enable and ensure the inclusion of all young people in society.

4. Information & Constructive Dialogue

Ensure young people have better access to reliable information, support their ability to evaluate information critically and engage in participatory and constructive dialogue.
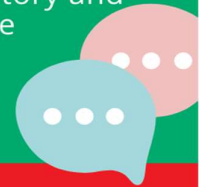
5. Mental Health & Wellbeing

Achieve better mental wellbeing and end stigmatisation of mental health issues, thus promoting social inclusion of all young people

6. Moving Rural Youth Forward

Create conditions which enable young people to fulfill their potential in rural areas.

7. Quality Employment for All

Guarantee an accessible labour market with opportunities that lead to quality jobs for all young people.

8. Quality Learning

Integrate and improve different forms of learning, equipping young people for the challenges of an ever-changing life in the 21st century.

9. Space and Participation for All

Strengthen young people's democratic participation and autonomy as well as provide dedicated youth spaces in all areas of society.

10. Sustainable Green Europe

Achieve a society in which all young people are environmentally active, educated and able to make a difference in their everyday lifes

11. Youth Organisations & European Programmes

Ensure equal access for all young people to youth organisations and European youth programmes, building a society based on European values and identity.

These priority areas are varied and wide, nevertheless they help to address concrete problems. Focus on one of the goals (or a more specific aspect of it) in youth work would not only help to move forward with European tendencies, but also to find a most suitable way to work in case you're just starting your engagement with youth and need to set some direction, depending on the background of the audience you are working with and different contexts.

Importance of different contexts – cases of each country

Even though the youth community around the world shares similar behaviour and usually goes through similar problems, the background plays an essential role in this too. Working with young people, whether in a national or international context requires sufficient knowledge of the background young people are coming from.

Luckily or in some cases, sadly, country's youth policies acquire a dominant role in the way young people evolve and engage in the community. Youth Policies can direct youth workers to develop initiatives which are aimed at the wellbeing of young people or controversially help in spotting the areas which need improvement. Even though policies give directions, they do not completely frame the youth work. They rather give some ideas and directions for the country's priorities or ways to access funds for your projects and initiatives. Let's take a look at several different examples from the EU.

Belgium

As Belgium comprises three different entities in its territory, each of them has a right for different legislation, there is not one common approach towards youth policy either. The policies defined at different community levels might also be targeting different age groups (the Youth Organizations ("organisations de jeunesse") – below 30 years old, the Afterschool classes ("écoles de devoirs") – children aged between 6 and 18 years old (15 years old to obtain grants), etc.).

Even if each community is responsible for youth policies individually, we can say that the overall objective in Belgium is to boost active citizenship and democracy. Youth initiatives and activities on the questions that matter to the youth most get special attention.

Cyprus

Youth Strategy (in place until 2022) in Cyprus envisions all youth of the island to have equal opportunities in empowerment, so as to be able to reach their full potential in all aspects of their life as well as develop their talents.

It encompasses 8 thematic areas:

1.   Education & training
2.   Employment & entrepreneurship
3.   Health & well-being
4.   Participation
5.   Voluntary activities
6.   Social inclusion
7.   Youth & the world
8.   Creativity and culture

Greece

The General Secretariat for Vocational Education, Training, Lifelong Learning and Youth (GSVETLL&Y), part of the Hellenic Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs (MoE), is the official authority that creates youth policies in Greece.
The GSVETLL&Y aims to plan, coordinate, monitor and evaluate policies in the respective fields. Apart from this, GSVETLL&Y follows a new model of youth advocacy, which:

➢   promotes the active citizenship of young people at local level by boosting their cooperation with municipalities

➢   guides youth organizations through EU programs

➢   promotes their participation in the EU Youth Dialogue, volunteering, and youth work.

In Greece, a national Youth Strategy was issued by the MoE in January 2022 and can be found in the Strategic Plan for Vocational Education Training, Lifelong Learning and Youth 2022-2024 (YouthWiki, 2022).

The Netherlands

According to the Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children (HBSC; http://www.hbsc.org), which every four years investigates young people's well-being, health behaviours and social context, in 2017/2018 the Netherlands had one of the highest self-ratings of health and happiness among young people worldwide.

The Netherlands Youth Institute is a national information centre with the mission of enhancing the lives of youth, their parents, and other caregivers by gathering, enlarging, explaining, and disseminating current knowledge. Dutch systems' structure has five main points:

1. Decentralization of youth care
2. Responsibilities on a local level
3. Regulations
4. Competent ministries
5. Social inclusion

Youth itself plays an essential role in this. To stimulate social inclusion and youth participation, young people are now expected to take the initiative themselves. Youth workers must encourage young people to take charge of their own lives. Municipalities received 58.5 million euros in December 2020 for projects for young people, particularly for vulnerable ones, including youth living at risk, in underprivileged areas.

Getting further from the policies, it is also essential to take in consideration the respective surroundings, like the social context and the cultural differences.

For example, working with migrant youth from Africa might be challenging in a European context. Similar challenges might apply if you're working with different youth groups from different European countries. You might, for example, face difficulties in countries like Belgium, where three official languages are spoken in different regions.

Knowing "what is what" becomes a priority before starting any concrete work. This would not only prevent you from making mistakes in your work, but would also prepare you for future challenges.

2.   ACTION PLAN FOR YOUR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

STEP 1: Identify the purpose

This is the first step of the Action Plan for your Community Engagement: "Step 1: Identify the purpose". In the following sections, you will learn about the importance of identifying the needs of young people and how to connect with them. Section, 2.1.1. focuses on the analysis of the context of youth, including developmental processes, generational characteristics, and socio-demographic differences that characterise youth. At the end, we will illustrate four methods to do work in youth engagement and to motivate young people: brainstorming, debate, questionnaire, and event. Section 2.1.2 is dedicated to the choice of your cause. Section 2.1.3 helps with the identification of your target group. The concluding section of the Step 1 of the Action Plan, 2.1.4 discusses the desirable results and ends with six tips for starting youth work.

Participation has become an increasingly important item on the agenda of governments and organizations. And this is a good thing when the target group (in this case the youth) is also allowed to have its say in the issues that concern them. As far as young people are concerned, we are seeing progress in this regard. Youth councils are on the rise, more and more municipalities want young people to participate in city life and in other government institutions and organizations in which youth are being called upon to think and act. Young people can become part of such information, communication and decision-making processes through distinct means, including brainstorming, questionnaires, and other activities. Moreover, there are also more

creative methods through which young people can express their ideas in memorable ways and simultaneously explore how to share, investigate, and develop them.

2.1.1 Analysis of the context - Identification of needs

To identify the needs of a target group such as young people, you can observe it from three aspects (ZID, project 'Choose & Dare', 2018-2019):

1. Developmental processes

2. Generational characteristics, and

3. Socio-demographic differences.

Learning about these aspects will help you to better understand the target group and its related needs. You can learn about them in different ways. Reviewing the body of literature on the subject is an excellent place to start. You can read an easy guide on the topic by [Purdue University](#). You might require further information, though, that has not been published yet. Therefore you can start your own investigation. For instance, via qualitative research such as surveys, focus groups, and other activities (Silverman, 2016). In focus group research (Miller & Glasser, 2016) you bring together a small group of selected people to answer questions in a controlled setting. You will choose your group based on their relevant demographic traits. All the questions are meant to shed light on the subject that you are investigating.

In order to introduce you to the subject, in the following paragraphs we will give you a brief description of 1. Developmental processes, 2. Generational characteristics and 3. Socio-demographic differences.

1.   Developmental processes – On a physiological level, being young today – as it was twenty years ago – means going through a series of stages in psychological, physical and neurobiological development. Therefore, insight into how these processes work is timeless and valuable for understanding some general needs of young people. To have an informed perspective it is helpful to pay attention to this level of young people's needs (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Or, in other words, when you do not have first-hand knowledge, you need to be able to put yourself in their shoes.

When dealing with developmental characteristics of the youth, you are dealing with the following question:

❖ What is it like to be young?

The homogeneity of needs across generations at the physiological level, however, does not apply to the sociocultural level. The specific needs of young people who were young twenty years ago are not the same as those who are young today. Therefore, you would need to consider the 'generational characteristics' to which specific generational needs apply. Note that you generally speak of a generation referring to all those born within a specific period (often more than ten years). For example, Generation X are those born between 1965 and 1980, Generation Y, or Millennials, are those born between 1981 and 1996, Generation Self, or Gen Z , are those born between 1997 and 2012 and Generation Alpha are those born between the early 2010s and the mid-2020s (Dimock, 2019).

2. **Generational characteristics** – the young generations of today – whether we speak of Generation Self (Gen Z) or Generation Alpha (today's youth) – grew up at different times. Since during their formative years these young people were influenced by different social, cultural and historical trends, they differ from previous and future generations (see Being young in Europe today – demographic trends, Eurostat, 2020). This makes them unique and sometimes difficult to understand for those without first-hand knowledge. For example, a study conducted in the U.S. compared adolescents' habits, from the 1976s throughout the 2016s. The study showed that in recent years, teenagers engage less than teenagers in previous years in 'adult' activities, such as getting a paid job, dating, having sex, drinking alcohol, and going out without parents (Twenge & Park, 2019).

Basically, when considering generational characteristics, you are dealing with the following question:

❖ What trends are relevant to your target group?
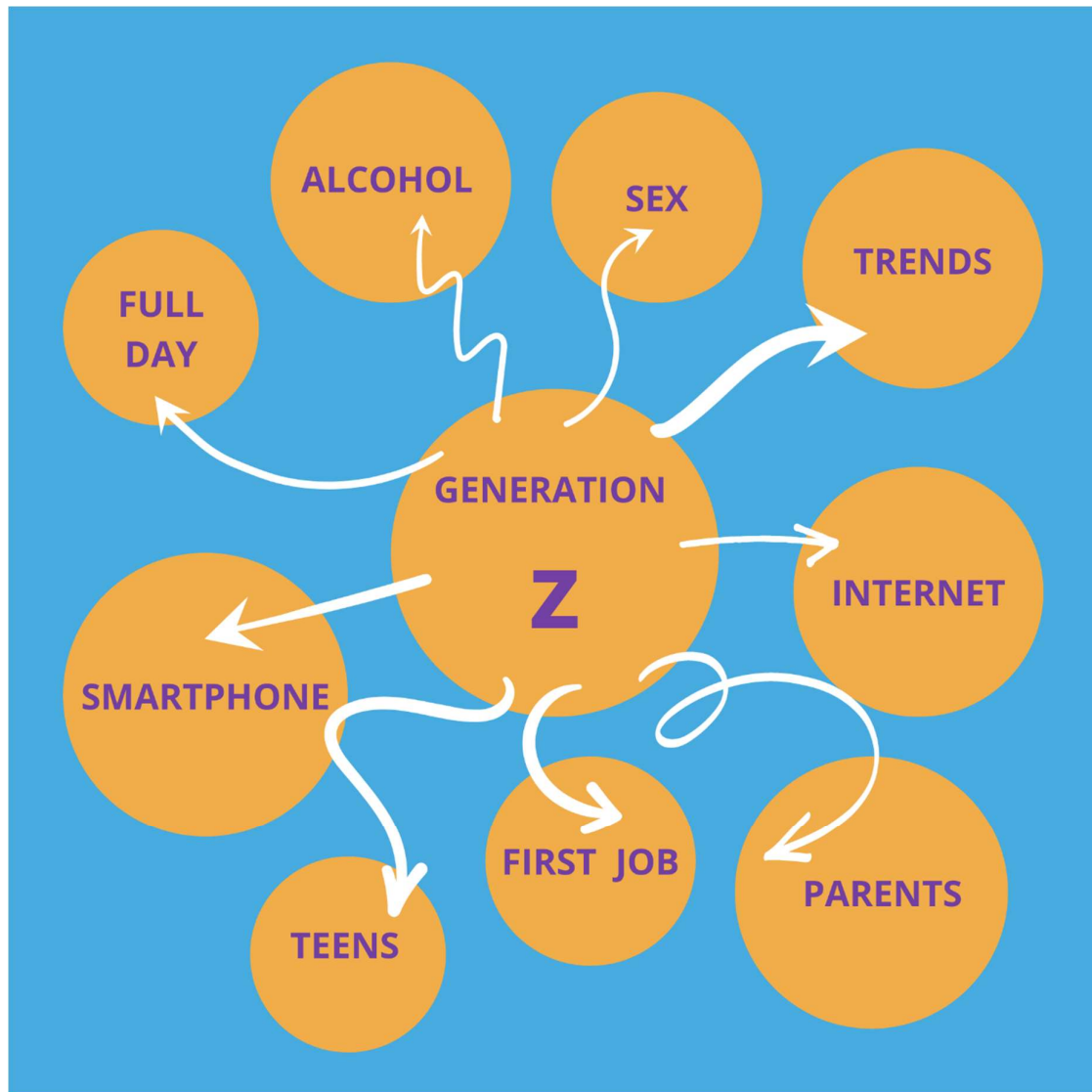
Word Cloud about Gen Z. Some characterising ideas related to Gen Z in comparison to previous youth generations as mentioned in Twenge and Park's article (2019).

3.   **Socio-demographic differences** – This aspect is very important for how young people grow up and the values and opportunities they receive from their upbringing both at home and in their environments. You may think about how different generations can use the internet for different purposes (such as emailing, online banking and social media, see Figure 2). You may also think about how the Covid-19 pandemic has affected young people. For example, the younger generations affected by the Covid-19 pandemic have not been able to go to school, college, or recreation centres to meet face-to-face with other young people. Instead, they have had long

periods of online classes and social media, which has affected their wellbeing (Gagné et al., 2022).

When dealing with socio-demographic characteristics of your target group, you can ask yourself the following question:

❖ Who are you talking about exactly?

To guide you through some of the major issues relevant in youth work, in the sections that follow we have chosen four key themes, which we have called REMC:

1. Role of young people

2. Education

3. Media and culture

4. Climate change

Following the REMC key themes you will be able to develop the vocabulary of young generations. You can use the REMC as useful resources to help you identify youth's needs and develop communication strategies to connect with them.

The role of young people

You can start by identifying the needs and motivations of young people. Depending on what you already know, this can be done through targeted desk research and qualitative research (including informant analysis and focus groups; Silverman, 2016). You can further substantiate your data quantitatively. For instance, if you're working with young people you can segment them in different groups, for example, according to their hobbies or lifestyle, age, etc.

Young people do not always come up with the solution to the problem themselves. As youth work professionals this is your job. Young people, on the other hand, can improve those solutions and make them more practical. Remember that the devil is often in the details when it comes to success! Therefore, young people play a critical role in the entire process of identifying the needs and potential solutions of youth.

Young people can reflect on problems and potential solutions by adding their own demands and creative thinking. As facilitators, you can achieve this goal by employing a variety of creative work forms and conversation techniques. Consequently, together with young people you can find feasible ideas that are relevant to them, as well as impactful and achievable.

Working in the field of youth work at ZID, a cultural organization based in the Netherlands, we realised that while the problems you address are always centered on youth, the target population of your research approach should be larger (ZID, project 'Choose & Dare', 2018-2019). For instance, you can conduct extensive research with parents and teachers. After all, you need to understand and reach those who influence young people to find the best answers, such as healthier behaviour and better education.

The role of education

Most young people spend a lot of their time at school. During the Covid-19 pandemic, with the lockdown, it became evident how crucial in-person education is. Young kids were missing out on interactions with their peers and teachers. Many struggled with internet homeschooling.

Education is a key component of young people's growth. A good education can increase chances of a successful future (see Hughes et al., 2016; OECD, 2019; OECD 2020). When aiming to better understand the youth's needs concerning education you can keep in mind the following questions:

❖ How can you assist students in making their choices concerning education?
❖ How can you tailor information to the needs of young people and their parents?
❖ What strategies can you use to keep your students engaged in class?

Through the numerous initiatives that at ZID we have worked on, the outcomes of which are presented in this book, we have addressed these and other issues connected to education, training, and educational institutions (ZID, project 'Choose & Dare', 2018-2019). The solutions found together with young people have resulted in a

series of insights and advice that we wish to share with you. Here is a rundown of all that:

The role of the media and culture

Media and culture are like oxygen for young people. In other words, they cannot live without it. Particularly, social media allows young people to maintain continuous contact with their peers. Due to this, the formation and development of the identity of young people depend heavily on media and culture (Osgerby, 2020).

Individually, nationally, and worldwide, cultural forms, created and disseminated by the media, impact on the daily lives of young people. Through the tools of media and culture, young people discover new ideas, ways of appearing, and ongoing possibilities for change and development. These tools provide youth with a larger perspective of the world in relation to their personal experiences. This difference might be inspiring, but it can also be discouraging to their own self-esteem (Tiggemann et al., 2018).

Therefore, there are also disadvantages to the exposure of young people to media and culture that we must seriously consider in youth work.

When you want to examine how the identities of young people grow and develop you should consider the sort of questions that young people are asking themselves, such as:

❖ Who am I?
❖ How do I relate to others?
❖ Who do I want to be?

The role of climate change

The effects of climate change and ecological decline are becoming more visible, affecting the present and future of the entire world's population. When dealing on this crucial topic, as youth work facilitators, you can start by asking:

❖ What is the impact of climate change on young people?

This is one of the most critical challenges for young people today.

In this regard, we are almost witnessing a paradox. A growing number of young people are becoming more and more concerned about climate change, seeking perspectives for action, and expressing themselves as conscientious customers, activists, or committed employees. In contrast, among adults, there is a considerable number who, due to lack of information or interest, do not feel that sense of urgency.

Organizations of all types, from corporations to governments, NGOs, and educational institutions, are looking for ways to promote the sustainable transition out of necessity and idealistic motivation. They are in dire need of the creativity, vitality, and ideas of the young generations for accomplishing this goal. Because young people are not yet in charge, youth work aims to offer them space and actively involve them in the process of change.

In conclusion, the following considerations when approaching youth work are useful to keep in mind:

❖   Which young people are most suitable to meet your desired goal?

❖   How can you engage with them in a way that makes them feel taken seriously?

We will present four methods that we have used in our projects at ZID to do work in youth engagement and to motivate young people (ZID, project 'Choose & Dare', 2018-2019):

1. Brainstorming

2. Debate

3. Questionnaire

4. Event.

1. Brainstorming

A dynamic way to bring ideas from young people to the surface is through brainstorming. The objective of brainstorming is quantity and not (necessarily) quality, therefore you aim to collect as many ideas as possible. For this reason, it is crucial to warn participants in advance not to make value judgments about someone else's idea. All ideas are good, no idea is wrong or foolish. The whole point is to generate ideas first, and only later discuss them and assess them.

Figure. Brainstorming. An example of group discussion. Source: Clipart. License: public.
https://openclipart.org/detail/227550/students-group-work

Why this method?

❖   Through this method, creative and original ideas can emerge. It is a free way to exchange ideas with each other.

❖   When you think about a topic impulsively, a lot of energy or enthusiasm may be released, which might cause new and fresh ideas to surface.

Result

❖   (Original) ideas about a certain subject.

❖   Insight into the prevailing opinion on a subject.

❖   An action strategy.

2. Debate

A debate is a formal dialogue on a certain issue that (often) includes a moderator and an audience. The idea of debates can be traced back to discussions about philosophy and politics in Ancient Greece. Although debates originally came from politics, they are now widely used also for educational and recreational purposes. In a debate, people advance arguments for their divergent or contrasting ideas. The key topics are briefly introduced by a member of the project group and a proposition is put forward. Young

people and adults must stand up to respond; a presenter gives them the floor. If you wish, you can choose to set young people and adults to compete against one another. You need to agree on a time, for example ten minutes per argument, then set an alarm clock so that you have a final signal. This ensures that all subjects are discussed. You can include a competition component; for instance, the winning proposition of the work plan receives funding and can be carried out. You can measure the popularity of a proposition or solution by the strength or length of the applause.

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Why this method?

❖ Young people have a say and may have the power to influence, for example, the youth policy of local governments.

❖ The viewpoint of young people can be useful to professionals and political institutions.

❖ The municipality and the institutions that offer services to young people must be aware of their demands.

Result

❖ Young people experience that they have a voice and that change is being made.

❖ Young people and adults come to agreements about how to handle specific issues relevant for young people.

3. Questionnaire

Surveys are techniques for gathering and processing data. A survey usually includes a questionnaire which is a tool for gathering data. Using an online or paper questionnaire, you can compile an inventory of what your target group thinks about a particular topic. A questionnaire can be distributed via mail, schools, training programs, sports groups, etc. Planning a collaboration with schools will guarantee that many young people fill out the questionnaire during class hours. Therefore, the whole activity can be linked to a subject or project related to the subject of the questionnaire. The digital survey can also be made available through youth-friendly social media sites or other digital platforms, like Facebook, Instagram, and Hyves. You may want to include a small form of compensation for participating in the survey, such as a gift raffle for participants (for example, a bonus to buy the winner a book).

- ❖ The questionnaire is a way to consult a large group of young people about a certain topic at a relatively low cost.
- ❖ It can be used for consulting young people as well as to find motivated people to participate in engagement activities, reflect on, or work on a particular topic.

Result

- ❖ A summary of ideas and opinions that young people have regarding a topic.
- ❖ Possibly, an overview of young individuals
- ❖ Possibly, a list of young individuals who want to be reached to share their thoughts or act on determined issues.

4. Event

An event is a social activity planned together by a team of young people and coworkers. The program of the event is decided by young people themselves, who develop it based on their own ideas and experiences of what youth need. The team develops and plans the schedule and activities of the event. For instance, debates, networking events, and information workshops. The young people and their coworkers split the tasks among themselves and engage in frequent meetings to work towards the event. After the event, the results are discussed and the event project team comes up with advice.

- ❖ The team creates a tangible result: the event.
- ❖ It is applicable to a variety of topics.
- ❖ Because it requires active participation, it suits various target groups.
- ❖ A large group of young people and residents are reached because they attend the event.
- ❖ Young people themselves start and develop the plan.

Result

- ❖ An event where young people can present themselves and share their own activity.
- ❖ Transfer of knowledge to young people (in information workshops).
- ❖ Feedback from young people (in debate sessions).
- ❖ Inclusive Youth participation.

2.1.2 Choice of your cause

Once you have enough information on the youth's needs, you want to start and engage with them. In the next step of the process of engaging with youth that we propose at ZID you need to decide which is the cause, or the goal you will be focusing on (ZID, project 'Choose & Dare', 2018-2019). There can be many different causes or goals in youth work that you want to focus on. You may focus on improving the education of young generations. You may focus on helping youth to better acknowledge gender differences, to address their gender biases and to improve their vocabulary by enhancing their respectful language. You may focus on helping young generations in stress management and burnout prevention.

Remember, ideally, no cause or goal is more important or better than another. However, in practice, as any marketing expert will tell you, it is fundamental to identify and fight for the "right" cause. Simply put, the right cause is the one that is better suited to you, your context, your area of expertise, and for the real needs of your

(local) community. We have outlined three key steps (which we have called **IES** for ease of remembering) in this guide to assist you to find your cause:

1.   Identify your criteria.
2.   Evaluate your contribution.
3.   Seek a strategy.

First, to finally decide on the cause you want to focus on, you will need to identify some criteria that will guide you. These criteria might include, for instance, the relevance and sensitivity of the topic as determined by a careful investigation of the context, including the need for such an initiative in your community, the absence of comparable ongoing programs, who would profit from it, and so on.

Second, you must also consider what unique contribution you can make to the cause you have selected. This means to ask you the following question:

❖ Why am I the right person to solve this problem?

❖ Do I have the necessary expertise to address this issue?

If you are unable to offer good reasons for answering positively to the first question or enough knowledge to support a positive response to the second question, you may want to reconsider your approach.

Third, searching for an overall strategy enables you, for example, to change your cause to focus on a goal that more closely matches your knowledge and skills. On the other hand, you can keep the same goal while gaining the necessary support. Never forget that asking for help is OK. You will need other people's help all the time. Partners, collaborators, consultants or advisors (such as educational specialists from regional institutions and European organizations, for example) can help you define your purpose in accordance with the right criteria by evaluating the criteria you choose or developing new, more relevant criteria. Moreover, you can have a look at useful resources provided by the European Union, such as reports of the [European barometer](#) and similar tools. By speaking with professionals and other consultants,

you can assess if you are the best person for leading the project and if you have the essential tools. All the IES steps are required to work out your strategy at best.

We will now provide you two examples to make the IES steps more concrete.

Example 1. Let us imagine that you are a student and that you decided to focus on the goal of improving the education of young generations in your local community. Following the first step of IES, (I), "Identify your criteria," you should start by asking questions like the following:

❖ What is the need for such an initiative in your community?

❖ What current projects focus on the same goal?

❖ What is missing in the way the other projects addressed their goal?

Then you want to start exploring all these questions. For instance, you can conduct a review, by searching for available public data, such as official reports, or you may also want to start survey research among people who can become your informants. Given that you are a student (**Example 1**), you are already familiar with your surroundings and community; you are aware of the resources available to young people, such as books, and you may also have easy access to information from your peers about their own experiences. Therefore, the response to step (E), "Evaluate your contribution," appears to be on the right track. The initial phases of your plan might be based on your personal resources, experience, and area of expertise.

After learning that there is a critical need in your community to promote youth education since they do not have adequate access to resources like books, you still need to consider how you can make a real difference in achieving this objective. Therefore, in the next step (S), "Seek a strategy," you can choose to address the goal by setting up a real or online location where young people can freely swap books, or you might want to think broader and start a small library, etc. You have now completed all the IES steps and are equipped with a successful plan.

The second example we offer, **Example 2**, is based on real experience with the European *Erasmus+* project "Go Digital: Digital tools to prevent stress management and burnout" (GoD) (read more on page 116). Through direct work with youth workers and by following European Union recommendations the project identified the following needs:

● Need 1: Determine the skills necessary for stress management and burnout prevention

● Need 2: Create a curriculum based on the skills needed for stress management

● Need 3. Create digital training to help young people better manage their stress and prevent burnout.

Based on these needs, project GoD established **four distinct objectives**:

1. Conducting a review of the European Framework of the skills necessary for stress management and burnout prevention

2. Design the associated curriculum

3. Develop digital training to help young people better manage their stress and prevent burnout

4. Develop a digital tool to support youth workers' performance.

It took project GoD twenty months to create a stress management curriculum and software (an app) that trains young people how to manage stress and avoid burnout, like the apps used for health/body training.

2.1.3 Identification of target groups

You have now determined your cause; in **Example 1** above, the goal is improving education for young people in your local community; in **Example 2**, the goal is to address stress management and burnout prevention for young people. The next step is the identification of the target group, or the target groups, of your desired intervention. This means considering the people that are directly and indirectly impacted by your intervention. Therefore, you may ask yourself:

❖   How will my intervention affect a specific target group and the related community?

The target group(s) for **Example 1** and **Example 2** are young people belonging to the generations of the Millennials and Gen Z. The target group in **Example 1** is likely made up of students or young people who are pursuing any type of education. Then you can specify who your target group is: first, young individuals who are enrolled in high schools, or universities, or other forms of educational institutions. These individuals include members of generation Z or 'Gen Z', 'iGeneration', 'Post-millennials', 'Homeland Generation', who are the people born between 1997 and 2012 and whose age is between 9 and 24 years old. Additionally, there may also be some people from the previous generation, the Millennials, or 'Gen Y', 'Gen Me', 'Gen We', 'Echo Boomers', who were born between 1981 and 1996, and whose age is between 25 and 40 years old (Dickon, 2019).

To define the target group for **Example 1** and **2** more precisely, as we discussed in the previous sections (2.1), you should first identify their needs by asking: what trends are relevant to your target group? And you may do this by identifying the 'generational characteristics' of each target group. You can use resources such as [Eurostat](), the statistical office of the European Union (see also Being young in Europe today - demographic trends, Eurostat, 2020), or look into initiatives such as those [funded by the European Union](). Moreover, you can look for the 'socio-demographic differences' (the values and opportunities in the upbringing) between Gen Z and Gen Y. Accordingly, keep in mind: "Who are you talking about exactly?". Examine the influence of media and culture, or the impact of the internet, on each generation when developing a strategy and the best form of intervention for that group.

When planning the intervention, you need to consider, for instance, that according to recent analyses (for a clear, simplified view, see Kasasa, 2021), Generation Zers are those whose preferred form of communication is the smartphone. Keep in mind that they spend, on average, three hours every day using their smartphone. This information should affect the intervention you design to enhance their education or prevent burnout: any digital tools, such applications, can be valuable to include in your plan. Gen Y are also accustomed to using mobile devices. Additionally, you may want to consider that they experience great financial instability and that you can build on

this to develop a suitable strategy to help them attain a better access to education or to help them manage their stress and prevent burnout.

2.1.4 Desirable results, aspirations

We want to start by noticing that it is a human right to participate. Therefore this should be a right also for young people (see Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the 1994 Programme of Action of the International Conference for Population and Development). Even if they may be the ones who best understand their demands and the issues they encounter, young people rarely have the opportunity to actively participate in socioeconomic or political activities. Youth work strategies are centered on the underrepresentation of youth in institutional and political activities generally. The primary question posed by these actions is:

❖ Why are young men and women often not involved in the planning or implementation of programs for youth?

As mentioned by the European youth strategy for social inclusion, the implications are likely to be more significant and long-lasting the more young people are encouraged to engage in and evaluate processes, decisions, and activities that affect them. It is crucial to create practical solutions that enable successful youth participation.

Based on the "Ladder of Participation," developed by Roger Hart in 1992, youth participation was described by the youth-led organization CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality and YouAct an European Youth Network on Sexual and Reproductive Rights with the model of the "Flower of Participation".

The "Flower of Participation" model shows the various forms that participation by young people can take. Tokenism, adornment, and manipulation are at the lowest end of the model, since they are less meaningful types of participation and do not include responsibility for young people. The top three levels of the model are "Adult initiated shared decision with youth", "Youth initiated and directed actions", and "Youth initiated, shared decisions with adults". These types of participation are the most significant and require a higher level of responsibility for the youth. In approaching youth work, you will especially consider these last three forms of participation: first,

where youth take the initiative and lead the way; second, where youth take the initiative and collaborate with adults; and third, where adults take the initiative and collaborate with youth.

Meaningful youth engagement is a context-related notion, like many other fresh concepts that are a part of the innovation of social enterprises and organization. This implies that there is not a single, authentic kind of engagement that is right and legitimate for everyone. When you enter the world of youth work, it is crucial to comprehend how youth participation is viewed differently by different communities, how its definition, purpose, and objective vary, as well as the definition and purpose that you decide to endorse.

Consider a healthier young workforce, students who make better decisions for the future of us all, or more young people having access to culture and visiting museums. For any of these objectives, it is essential to consider young people's viewpoints and interests. This can be done via a variety of techniques, including co-creation and creativity.

In the Netherlands, [ZID theater](#) has developed a form of social engagement training with theater and performance using creative participation techniques. This is a special way to foster inclusive engagement with children and young people and to encourage their participation in decision-making. By using creative methods, children and young people can express their ideas in memorable ways and explore how to share, investigate, and develop them. Using creative arts training is not the only focus of this educational participatory process. The training focuses on methods and exercises that may be applied in a range of contexts to encourage participation among kids and young people.

However, youth engagement does not always proceed as planned. Sometimes, young people choose not to participate, or it takes a very long time for the entire team to commit and agree to the participation process. When planning your youth work, you should keep in mind that youth participation may be challenging for a variety of reasons. Here are our **Six tips** for encouraging youth participation.

Tip 1 - Listen well

Take the time to really listen to young people. Young people often like to share their opinion. However, they want to believe that the information they share with you can make a difference. Always inform young people of your plans for using the information they shared with you, and as soon as you have additional data, let them know. Moreover, remember to explain them why some things are possible and others not.

Tip 2 - Concrete objectives

Young people prioritize results. This translates in the vocabulary of an adult that they can be impatient. Therefore, before involving young people, think about what you want them to do. Think about the following questions:

❖ What would you like to discuss with them?

❖ What is the objective?

❖ What do you want to achieve with this action?

❖ Whom exactly are you developing it for?

❖ What will happen after that?

Answering these types of questions gives clear guidelines to start working with young people.

Tip 3 - Involvement may work better on a project basis

We advise to engage with young people on a project-base, which relates to **Tip 2 - Concrete objectives**. You can work on multiple projects with them, but they must have the option to decide to stop working at any time. Do not get frustrated, often a busy schedule at work, school, or in a sport activity is the cause for their withdrawal. Therefore, when working on a project basis, it is important to have a concrete goal, but also to have clear dates, schedules, times, and locations. Give youth responsibility and discuss this issue of organization beforehand. For instance, you can inform them that you expect them to attend at least three out of every four events. Tell them "why" you want them there. Make sure the allocated time is adequate, short, to provide a narrowly focused outcome. Do young people drop out? You can let them suggest new participants. The easiest way to recruit young people is through them.

Tip 4 - Establish welcoming and secure settings

Regardless of their age, but especially if they are young, people need to feel at ease. Establishing a welcoming and secure setting is the best way to allow youth to speak their minds and contribute in their own unique way to bringing about change. In a secure and supportive environment, everyone should feel free to interact and learn from one another. Explain carefully that in principle there are no right or wrong answers and that all questions and doubts are always accepted. In this way, youth participation should not be constrained by cultural biases such as social standards pertaining to gender, class, social status, education, etc. Some effective suggestions for doing this include encouraging young people to learn new skills and expanding on those with training, creating shared definitions and a respectful language, and ensuring ongoing monitoring of the entire creative process.

Tip 5 - Be honest and clear - ensure good feedback

Clearly state your objectives to young people. What do you hope to accomplish via youth engagement? Remember that the answer "I am not sure yet" is a suitable response as well. When you show that you have a concrete goal, young people are eager to assist you. Know the duration of each activity, especially inside institutions such as municipalities. Young people demand fast results, and they may find it difficult to accept that an institution cannot move as rapidly as they would want. Therefore, set up clear plans for when you will learn new information and keep them informed.

Tip 6 - Fun factor

Keep youth participation fun! Young people favour casual interactions. For instance, this can be done in a meeting while eating a tasty pizza. And make sure that there is enough time left for informal conversation too. Additionally, adopting various creative approaches also works quite effectively. This ensures both that the activity remains fun, but also that the outcomes are more concrete than just "Bla Bla Bla", to quote Greta Thunberg and a popular saying of the young generations. By doing this, you give youth an even more active role.

STEP 2: Roles' distribution

In this section, we will focus on the main factors which are involved in the process of engaging with youth and setting up a youth initiative, project or organization. More specifically the topics that will be elaborated refer to the 1) identification of the resources and people required for the implementation of a project, 2) definition of users and beneficiaries of the project, 3) determination of the project advisors, the contributors to management processes, decision makers, as well as the deliverers of the final outcome.

2.2.1 Identify the resources/people required to implement your plan

The allocation of resources (money, personnel, software, equipment) is one of the most efficient ways to minimize the potential risk which could be destructive for the implementation of your plan.

When designing a project, you need to be aware of the actors that will implement the plan, therefore it is of utmost importance to identify the main outcome that needs to be reached. A thoroughly organised project consists of a concrete goal which will be accomplished through the inclusion of specifically determined resources. Given that each project differs from the others regarding the scope and the issue that is being tackled, we will provide some generally applied strategies about the identification of the actors required to carry out your project. It is important to clarify that since every project is a unique endeavour, there is not only one appropriate way to deal with it, therefore, it is possible to engage partners or policy makers in your project, but it is also more than feasible to run the project by your own or with the help of your colleagues and/or volunteers. To comprehend what type of actors you want to engage in your project you shall carefully consider the reason behind this potential engagement. Every action and every decision you take should have a clear impact on your endeavour.

Engaging with Associations

The case of partnering up

If you wish to engage with other actors you shall keep in mind that a partnership can be successful if it is determined to work in a collaborative way, therefore before selecting the members, it is essential to assess which are the associations that can support the project in a complimentary and profitable manner, for both sides. To do so, you can reach the potential partner organisations and collect information about their activity and the field in which they are more engaged. Since the collaboration among the partnership has a significant role in the overall project process, the selection of partners needs to be done carefully and be based on the objective capacities and competences of the organisation's staff.

Some key areas that should be taken into consideration when searching for partner associations are:

➢ **Experience of the association**

Of course, this does not mean that less experienced associations should be excluded rather than should be incorporated in a partnership which consists of both developed and developing organisations/ institutes. In the development of a project every contribution is valuable if it is taking place in the framework of seamless collaboration. Apart from this, knowledge needs to be shared and evaluated by diverse actors as this is the most efficient way to enrich the already existing information. More experienced organisations need the new perspectives and the motivation of the recently formed ones as much as newcomers need the "know-how" of the already developed associations.

➢ **Objective of the association**

Most associations are being engaged in a wide spectrum of activities since they aim to tackle issues which are commonly perceived as essential. To do so they staff their workforce with professionals experienced in a variety of fields. This multidisciplinary

approach ascertains a more holistic but at the same time scientific dealing with the examined issue. Since it is given that the partnership, by definition, will work in a multidimensional manner, the project designer needs to identify which association is more suitable for each project activity and distribute the roles accordingly.

> **Network of the association**

During the implementation of the project, it is important to share the project outcomes with a wider network of associations/ institutions/ policy makers, etc.) to achieve better dissemination of your work. To reach as many receivers as possible you need access to the partner organisations' net, therefore another key point when constructing the project's partnership is to clarify how the involved associations will support the dissemination process of the project. It is recommended to include associations from different cultural backgrounds to achieve more extended distribution of the project deliverables.

After the completion of the project, the partnership is responsible for the follow-up of the project by promoting its sustainability. Besides this, it is advisable that partner associations continue their cooperation by upscaling their project ideas and scheduling next steps in terms of project designing. For these reasons, it is necessary to recruit a partnership where everyone is committed to a shared goal in the long term.

The case of not partnering up

As we have already mentioned, the possibility of not creating a partnership is also very high, especially if we are talking about developing organisations, local and/or volunteer-based initiatives. In this case, all the work is done within the youth organisation (can be a group of youth workers, or even one single person). The implementation of the project becomes even more feasible when the youth organisations exchange knowledge and experience with each other, even though they work separately, it is always a good idea to keep in touch with respective youth initiatives and support each other, especially through the initial stages of establishing an organisation.

Engaging with Local Authorities and/or Policy makers

Youth policies are designed to enhance young people's living conditions, raise their opportunities, and promote their equal participation in economic, social and political frameworks (Youth Policy, 2022).

According to Sustainable Development Goals, local authorities can be individuals or institutions working on the achievement of these long-term goals. According to goal no.11: Sustainable cities and communities, local authorities maintain the responsibility of promoting the development of inclusive, safe and resilient communities. Therefore, local authorities, such as municipalities, appear to be very eager to support and advocate any local initiatives which will undoubtedly contribute to creating impact on the community. Of course, local authorities vary from one European country to another, for example, in more decentralised contexts local authorities may have more discretion in comparison to countries where the power to decide is more centralised. Besides this, the level of municipality involvement in the implementation of youth policies is an additional indicator of the diversity which can be found among European countries.

In any case, reaching out for advocacy from the local authorities is a very fruitful thing to do. Inform them thoroughly about your vision and do not hesitate to propose further collaboration with them, your contribution is valuable, and municipalities are often searching for local initiatives!

You can find more information about the national Youth Policy of your country here: https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/countries

Before getting to know more about how to engage policy makers in the project, it is of utmost importance to clarify what is "policy" and who are the ones making it. As the UK Department for International Development (2005) states, every plan, course of action, or set of regulations implemented by either the government or businesses and other institutions aiming to influence and determine decisions is called policy. The last decades there has been a great need for research-based evidence in policy and therefore policy makers are gradually becoming more active in several phases of the

implementation of respective projects. Researchers and project designers can be characterised as "knowledgeable outsiders" who act complementarity and indirectly to the policy making process (Elliott & Popay, 2000).

There are several key areas that the project designer should consider and try to answer before trying to reach out for policy makers working in the field of youth:

➢ Why is your project idea important to policy makers?

One of the features that a project designer should have been the ability to actively listen to the needs of the policy makers and provide them with deliverables which will facilitate their decision-making process. What is also worth mentioning here is that researchers and project designers need to be aware of the potential impact of their endeavour and always work with respect to ethics.

➢ Who exactly to address? Who can make a difference?

For the optimal outcome it is important to contact actors (individuals or groups) who can create impact on policy making. These actors can be politicians, civil servants, professionals, businesspeople, or international governance organisations.

➢ How to engage policy makers?

There are two efficient ways to address policy makers during the project's lifecycle and can also be combined:

A) Meetings: These can take place in the format of workshops to encourage the active participation of all the involved actors (associations' members and policy makers).

B) Policy briefings: There are many ways to conduct a policy briefing such as: briefing paper or report, briefing note, research briefing, etc. It's advisable to create a short (2 A4 sides) document with references that summarises the key areas of your project as well as their policy implications.

Members of the community

Engaging community members to the project is considered necessary not only for creating significant impact but also for promoting the idea and the principles of a participatory society, where the members have the potential to contribute to a change-making process. But what do we mean exactly when referring to community members? These can be members of local action groups, local media, local youth centres, experts, professionals in a respective to the project field.

During planning your project, it is advisable to decide who are the community members you want to engage in the activities of your project. It is also preferable to select individuals/groups of people who are either interested in the topic of the project or experts who can share their knowledge and contribute in research. Community involvement is a dynamic procedure which includes more things than just the communication of information.

Stage	Relationship	Engagement
Awareness	People know about your project	Inform them and get them to sign up for your communication channels. Send them broad messages so they understand the scope of the project
Understanding and Consideration	People have a more advanced knowledge and are actively looking into the issue	Send more advanced information, invite them to an event or to a closed channel for discussion
Supporters	People display a first layer of active support	Ensure they like more of your posts, flag your news to them, encourage them to sign a petition

What is expected from the engagement of such factors is a twofold outcome: the development of both the participating community members and the organisation implementing the project. The traditional engagement ladder is very explanatory of the community engagement process:

Promoters	People actively share your content or participate passively at some of your activities	Encourage them to join the events, like a public debate or a march, to re-share a petition on their own channels, to take up a small responsibility
Activists	People take an active role in your advocacy efforts	They are equally engaged online and offline, can leas small activities like a stand at a fair, know well your message, and can recruit more people
Leaders	People take a leadership, strategic role	You can give them team leadership roles, or strategic roles. They are active recruiters; they can train new people

Table 2: The engagement ladder retrieved from European Youth Forum's Advocacy Toolkit

What is suggested for your organisation is to develop a structure that allows community members to enter at every level of the ladder. To do so it is advisable to:

➢ Come up with a shared vision

➢ Design tailored roles which can be easily acquired by people who find themselves at different levels of the ladder

➢ Community members will only climb the ladder of engagement if they feel that they have a space to express their concerns

➢ Providing learning and growth mechanisms will motivate community members who were stuck at a particular level of the ladder to go further

Some key areas that need to be taken into consideration when working with community members are the following:

➢ **Define** the added value of the participation of the selected community members. How will your project be benefited by the engagement of the community? How will the community be benefited by participating in your project? Having a concrete idea of the expected results from such actions (engagement of community members) will increase the credibility of your organisation and will minimise the potential risks which could put your endeavour in danger

➢ **Identify** the motivation of community members to actively participate in the project. By doing so, the project designer acquires a better understanding of the

expectations of the community members and therefore can plan the project activities in a more efficient way

➢ **Express** your gratitude for the active participation of community members. This will contribute to avoiding any dropouts during the lifecycle of the project.

2.2.2 Define on Users and Beneficiaries of the activities

In every project, the designer needs to have a clear picture of the target group that is being addressed. Normally, the target group of a project consists of the Users and the Beneficiaries.

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Users or end users: Are the people who end up experiencing the product or the service that is being provided by your project (direct target group). For example, if you are a youth organisation working on a project whose goal is to improve digital literacy among youth workers, the end users are the people who are going to receive directly your project's product which can be an awareness campaign, a training or even a handbook regarding digital literacy.

Beneficiaries: The term refers to people whose lives are being improved because of the project's product or the service (indirect target group). Based on the previous example, the beneficiaries can be the peers, family members or colleagues of the end users, since they will be indirectly affected by the knowledge acquired by the end users.

It is not recommended to decide on a target group rashly, on the contrary a thorough research indicative of the needs, the opportunities and the availability of the target group is necessary.

Therefore, before targeting a specific group, either directly or indirectly, is highly advisable to pay attention to the following key areas:

a) Conduct a **Needs Assessment** to describe your target group as precisely as possible. Either a very broad or a very narrow target group should be avoided since in both cases it becomes difficult for the project designer to create a program that is applicable to such populations. The aim of the Needs Assessment is not only to track the problems and the deficits of the target group but also their strengths and opportunities. The following questions will help you describe sufficiently your target group:

➢ **Who are the members of the target group? What is their age?**

The demographic characteristics are essential to efficiently address the group. Regarding the previous example, the target population is youth workers aged from 18 to 30 years old with limited digital literacy skills.

➢ **What is their social identity? What is their education/ family/ economic state?**

In our example, the end users are people maintaining an occupation, so they have a relatively stable economy.

➢ **Are they natives or migrants?**

Potential language barriers or intercultural differences should be carefully considered when designing your intervention. In our example the youth workers can be European citizens (without this being required), with sufficient knowledge of English.

➢ **What is the development potential of your target population?**

Keep in mind that a successful project can also foster and upgrade the already existing competences of the target group, therefore a screening of their capacities will undoubtedly facilitate the planning of project activities. In our example, youth workers can capitalise the acquired skills to apply for a new job, to impart their knowledge to their students if they are working in the field of education, or even to run a respective project by themselves

➢ **What talents do they possess? What are their competences?**

In our example, youth workers are fluent in English, and they are willing to learn. Their further contributions to the project will be identified as the programme proceeds.

➢ **What are their expectations?**

Collecting the expectations of your potential target group is crucial to better construct your project's objectives. Since you are addressing a specific social group, you should create a tailor-made program which will reach the expectations of the group. In our example, we can conduct focus groups or interviews with the youth workers of our city to identify and categorise their expectations.

b) As soon as you have conducted the Needs Assessment, you should **review the results**. The research findings are indicating the social needs and the gaps on whom your project should be focused on.

However, there are some **risk factors** which could endanger your endeavour if not considered.

➢ Access to the target group:

The selected target group should be easily reachable; therefore, it is advisable to decide on a target group which is sufficient and not occasional. For example, youth workers with poor digital skills are an easily reachable target group.

➢ Representative sample:

When identifying your target group, it is important to avoid any potential biases. Systematically selecting specific members of the general population can jeopardise the external validity of your endeavour. For example, if you choose to have youth workers who come solely from the northern part of your country, maybe this sample will not be so representative as selecting participants from the whole country.

➢ Existing resources:

Before reaching a conclusion, you should evaluate whether the project's resources (which were identified in 2.2.1) can cover the estimated needs of the potential target group. In this way you can prevent any unexpected discrepancies.

c) What are you going to offer and to whom?

As a next step it is of utmost importance to **clarify who are the members of the target group** that will be addressed directly (end users) and who will be addressed indirectly (beneficiaries). Hence, when addressing the end users, the project designer should construct an appropriate code of communication and respective tools and methodologies which are seamlessly understood by the users. On the other hand, beneficiaries will be addressed through the end users, for that reason the project designer should be aware of the needs and the special characteristics of both the users and the beneficiaries and try to create impact on the last in an indirect way, since they will only interact directly with the end users.

2.2.3 Determine the project advisors, the contributors to management processes, decision makers, as well as the deliverers.

Project Advisors

The role of the project advisor is to provide their expertise and advice during the project's life cycle so that the products reach the expected quality. The guidance of the project advisor is essential since they have a key role in many organisational activities of the project:

➢ Provision of guidance and support in project management processes

➢ Provision of advice on communication strategy to reach possible stakeholders/policymakers/community members, etc.

➢ Guidance on quality assessment strategy

➢ Advice on risk management strategy and mitigation

➢ Monitor the overall project implementation as an external observer and provide inputs when required

➢ Monitor project activities for ensuring the compliance with procedures and standards

The project advisor works closely with the project designer team and aims to ensure that the project's products are delivered on time and in compliance with the agreed

specifications. Project advisors can be individuals, experts on the field of project consulting and management or organisations working in the respective sector.

Why is it essential to work with a project advisor?

The feedback retrieved from the project advisors should be considered as an objective review of the project's products and process in general. Having your project evaluated by an external view of point can significantly contribute to raise not only the quality of your endeavour but also its impact.

In the context of youth organisations, it is more than common that the staff members equally share multiple roles, for example there is not only one person acquiring the role of the project manager or the role of the project advisor but is more of a cooperative sharing of duties and responsibilities. On the other hand, there is also the case that the youth organisation includes no more than one youth worker who is running the project and is also responsible for all the respective activities such as project management, implementation, and dissemination. It is for your benefit to be aware of the different roles that can be found in a corporate environment so you can more easily adopt the organisational principles that work best for your organisation.

Contributors to management processes

Managing a project requires sufficient organisational skills since there is a great number of arrangements that need to be done. Apart from this, project management consists of many other pillars which are equally demanding and need to be dealt with accuracy and responsibility.

The main duties of the project management professionals are the following:

- Coordination of the planning, the budget, and the execution of the project.
- Provision of guidance and motivation to the rest of the team.
- Keeping in touch and promoting the collaboration with the stakeholders of the project.
- Mitigation of potential risks.
- Coordination of the release of the project.

Based on the key areas of responsibility, you should decide carefully on the contributors to project management.

Following a project management technique, which consists of several incremental steps towards the completion of the project, can be very helpful. In comparison to the traditional techniques, a more adjustable one (Agile project management methodology) appears to apply better in the framework of innovative and youth initiatives as the emerging needs are being more efficiently covered.

Traditional Project Management Technique	Novel Project Management Technique
Initiating phase	Envisioning phase
Planning phase	Speculating and drafting phase
Executing phase	Exploring and iteration phase
Release phase	Adapting phase
Closing phase	Closing phase which becomes the beginning of a new envisioning phase

Table 3: Comparative view of Traditional and Agile Project Management Model

What are the benefits of the novel technique?

- **Flexibility**: Having a plan and keeping track of the following activities is of great importance, although it is equally important to be able to adjust to the potential upcoming alterations. The element of flexibility should be present throughout the overall project.

- **Adaptability**: As mentioned above, do not hesitate to reconstruct, and rearrange your work plan in case of need. You are the creator and the manager of your project; this gives you the privilege of taking decisions so act wisely and use your organisational skills for the benefit of your endeavour.

- **Diversity of roles**: In case you are working collaboratively with other youth workers, keep in mind that roles exist for being acquired. Of course, it is not obligatory to sharply distinguish the duties but in the context of a bigger youth organisation it is profitable to do so. In this way you avoid the overlapping of tasks and responsibilities, and you also spare time and energy. Take some time to identify the talents of your team members and distribute the roles accordingly, always in compliance with their personal interests.

- **Improved usability and exploitation of project's products**: Make sure that your outputs are being efficiently and effectively exploited by the population you are targeting and not only. Since you have worked hard to make your project a complete deliverable product, it is more than complimentary to work on the proper transferability of it. Disseminate your work, hold meetings (either online or face to face) to inform your peers, the community, the local authorities, or the end users about your product. Give them guidelines and suggestions on how to use the deliverables actually and actively.

Decision makers

Another key role in the framework of designing and implementing a project is the one of the decision makers. The decision maker acquires the role of the leader of the team who is responsible for finalising a particular decision after considering the inputs of the rest of the team members. The leadership qualities of the decision maker indicate whether the individual acquires good decision-making skills. In the context of youth organisations though, the decisions are being made through assemblies where the youth workers discuss and finalise the flow of their work. In other words, although in corporate environments it is very common and even necessary to establish one Decision maker, in the context of youth work this is not given. Therefore, here are the

basic four styles of the decision making process, which are interchangeable and can be used depending on the needs and the special features of each situation.

Directive

Some of the distinctive characteristics of the directive decision makers are the quick and decisive thinking process as well as the intense focus on the tasks. Normally, they tend to be very selective with their colleague's suggestions as they are mostly based on their own judgement. Their rationality and precise dealing with any issue are the cornerstones which make the directive decision makers ideal for urgent and short-term decisions. For example, in the hypothetical scenario of arranging a public campaign within a short period of time and lacking volunteers to run a volunteer-based workshop, the responsible youth worker should adopt the directive style of decision making aiming to reach the expected result in the most efficient and timely manner.

Analytical

The main characteristic of this type of decision-making process is the investment of time in the procedure. More specifically, they usually collect data and evidence before reaching a conclusion. They are also task-oriented, as the directive ones, but they will not jump into rushed decisions. For example, in the imaginary scenario of running a project regarding the enhancement of digital skills among youth workers, the analytical decision-making style would be ideal when conducting the Needs Analysis, meaning at the initial stages of project's life.

Conceptual

The difference between conceptual and the previous two types is that the first is more social-oriented, as well as more prone to taking risks. Conceptual decision makers invest time into thinking about creative solutions, they visualise the potential of its decision and try to imagine which outcome would be the most profitable. They are ideal for making long-term decisions. For example, in the hypothetical scenario of working on the dissemination and exploitation strategy of a public event, which is

being organised by the youth organisation, the conceptual decision-making style would greatly facilitate the overall activity.

Behavioural

The focus of the behavioural decision maker is centralised more on relationships than on the task. Besides this, behavioural decision makers are mostly based on the information that they collect from their colleagues. The process of decision making is a collaborative procedure for them, and they usually pay attention to the impact that this process will have at a relationship level among the team members.

What is recommended for decision makers to reach the optimal results is to adopt flexibility techniques, so they are capable of readjusting whenever it is needed. Being absolute will not help meeting the project's needs, therefore combining the previously referred styles and critically selecting each time which one is the most appropriate, would be the most professional and effective coping strategy.

Deliverers

The final project products will be distributed to the end users by the deliverers who can be youth workers, educators, trainers, teachers, volunteers etc. The selection of the appropriate deliverer is of utmost importance for the successful implementation of the project as it is the final step of the overall process. When deciding on the deliverers is essential to answer the following questions:

● Who are the end users?

The identification of the end users is already done during the planning phase of the project, assessing though the target group of the end users is essential for the project designer to estimate who would be the most suitable deliverers that will manage to disseminate the project's products sufficiently

● Do the end users have any kind of special needs?

The deliverers should be aware of any potential particularities, such as communication barriers, so they can prepare themselves accordingly

- What is the content of the project product that you want to deliver?

The selection of deliverers should also be based on their expertise since it is crucial for the professional to have a holistic view of the examined issue to be able to deliver it to the end users.

- What are the soft skills and the competences that the deliverer should have to better distribute the project products?

As soon as you have answered these questions it is easier to decide on the profile of the deliverers.

Conclusion

This part of the guide focused mostly on the identification of the required resources to run a project efficiently and effectively. Secondly, we examined how youth initiatives can structure their organisation, especially in terms of establishment and distribution of roles within the association. Another key point that was addressed is the determination of target groups which are being reached during the project. Do not hesitate to dig deeper and do your own research about the different but also fascinating aspects of running your own project.

 If you are looking forward to positively changing your community and you are also determined to create impact, then you have all that you need.

STEP 3: How to identify and reach your stakeholders

Within this part of the guidebook, you are introduced to stakeholders, which hold a vital role for any community engagement initiative. The concepts of stakeholders and stakeholder analysis are presented as a way of gathering a comprehensive list of people and groups who are either interested or have an interest in the given issue. Section 2.3.2 explores the importance of understanding the different ways of communication for ensuring that the best ways of reaching out and communicating with the stakeholders are implemented as well as are inclusive of marginalised and / or excluded groups. Section 2.3.3 will concentrate on the idea of a 'Needs Assessment' and ways of arriving at the relevant needs, issues and concerns of the target community. Lastly, section 2.3.4 considers the level of participation for each stakeholder group depending on the project's goals as well as individuals' personal needs.

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2.3.1 Identification of the current and/or potential stakeholders

A very important aspect for any community engagement initiative are the stakeholders who are truly impacted by that initiative and who will need to be engaged in order to ensure the initiative's successful implementation. Importantly, the implementation of youth community engagement initiatives will produce a successful outcome only if the plans are positively received by the stakeholders involved. Alternatively, without a positive outlook from stakeholders, the successful implementation of initiatives cannot be taken for granted (Ibrahim et.al. 2019). As such, identifying and understanding who

those relevant stakeholders are, is significant to allow you to recruit them as part of your initiative.

Before we proceed with ways of identifying and reaching out to these stakeholders, we will firstly provide some definitions on the key terms that are relevant to this section.

Stakeholders, which can be considered as internal or external (Hill and Jones 2001) can be defined as "those groups and individuals who can affect or are affected by the achievement of an organisation's objectives" (Freeman and McVea 2001:23).

Accordingly, **stakeholder identification** in the context of youth community engagement refers to the identification of those persons, groups, organisations, communities including local residents, ethnic, racial, faith-based as well as cultural groups (Rabinowitz n.d). Nevertheless, it could also include any web-based communities and virtually organised groups where people sharing the same interests or concerns, for instance, regarding the environment, gather and form a group.

Identifying and analysing stakeholders as well as their interests provides an array of benefits such as including a variety of perspectives from all sectors of the affected community hence, giving the opportunity for more ideas to be put on the table (Rabinowitz n.d). Moreover, your initiative will have the advantage of gaining more support from all stakeholders, by making them a crucial part of the development, planning, implementation as well as evaluation. During this process the initiative now becomes their effort and stakeholders will feel a need to do their best to make it work (Rabinowitz n.d). The process of stakeholder identification is vital as it sets the groundwork in building relationships that will turn into successful stakeholder-community engagement and ultimately the success of the project.

On the other hand, **stakeholder engagement** is understood as the process whereby there is interaction and involvement of the relevant people, groups, communities, or organisations affected by the project in question. Stakeholder engagement which is also referred to as 'Citizenship Participation' is an important factor for maintaining an equitable power balance within a country or an organisation and in our case within a community (Ihugba & Osuji 2011; Greenwood 2007).

When engaging in brainstorming for the identification of youth stakeholders and community members for participation it is useful to consider and try to answer the following questions:

➢   Who is affected by the project/initiative?

➢   Who makes decisions or has influence in the given community?

➢   Who can impact on the success of the project?

➢   Who has an interest in this project?

(Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Group 2016)

By answering the above questions, you will immediately begin to narrow down the selection of stakeholders who are not only relevant to your initiative, but who also have the potential to drive it forward.

Whilst a larger project will naturally also require a larger number of stakeholders involved, simpler projects should still be equipped with an exhaustive list of possible stakeholders. In order for you or your organisation to create a comprehensive list of stakeholders the following three steps are suggested (MOLGROUP 2017):

How to identify stakeholders:

1.   Create a list of all possible stakeholders (be as specific as possible). Try to identify individuals on all levels and plot all stakeholders, not just the ones that you have already established a connection with; even if the impact of those individuals is still unknown or they hold a negative position towards you or your organisation.
   Whilst it is important to engage with the most opinionated stakeholders and those who can have the most direct impact, it is nevertheless imperative to ensure that the wider local community will be engaged. As such, even the individuals, groups, organisations etc. with the least influence, cannot be left out as the project could run the risk of failing as a result of lacking comprehension of the wider concerns and/or context under which it is being implemented.

Lastly, ensure the involvement of vulnerable and/or marginalised stakeholders even though they might not have the same level of influence as other members, or they might not be able to raise more public attention.

2. Once you have completed a brainstorming of all possible direct stakeholders to be involved, then you are in a good position to start considering extending that list further. By asking the stakeholders you already know and are in contact with for suggestions of others who might have an interest in the current project and its objectives you can add others to the list.

3. Create a detailed directory with specific contact persons – referencing their name - from each of the stakeholder groups and in case of an organisation list the name of the person who is a key decision-maker. Finally, once all the stakeholders are listed add any other relevant information such as, details about the history of that individual, group / organisation with your organisation, any past interactions etc.

Nevertheless, simply identifying the relevant stakeholders is not enough, rather you will have to discover as well as understand the range of stakeholder interests that could, on the one hand, benefit the effort and, on the other hand, prove to be harmful. Further, conflicting stances could be harboured even among the same stakeholder groups. These different aspects of stakeholders also need to be identified and noted down in order for you to be prepared regarding future engagement with these individuals (MOLGROUP 2017).

The following table for analysing stakeholders and the community can be used in the process of stakeholder identification:

Name	Representing	Issue/ Concern	Contribution	Level Of Interest	Level Of Influence	Type of Engagement
John Smith	Youth for the Environment Group	All environment issues	Useful in disseminating initiative / finding participants etc.	High	High	High involvement - empower

Table4: The table has been adapted from various sources (MOLGROUP 2017; Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Group 2016)

2.3.2 Identification of the communication means these stakeholders / groups are using and what they might be lacking by using those means

Technological advancements are occurring at an unprecedented pace, and with them also the ways that people search for, absorb, share information, as well as the ways in which they communicate with each other. Schroedel (2020) explains that "for the under 30s, citizen engagement is showing up in new ways: their engagement is primarily done online, through social media or civic tech platforms. These tools give young citizens a greater voice in their communities".

As the younger generations are entering ages of civic and political participation the way of reaching out and facilitating their engagement is mostly found through online platforms and forums that are local and inclusive (Schroedel 2020). As such, for community engagement initiatives that are targeted towards youth, a very crucial form of communication will be online communication platforms or social media channels.

Whilst in the age of digital advancement accessibility to various communities has never been greater, a youth community engagement initiative which adopts an inclusive approach for its stakeholders by including marginalised and / or historically excluded groups of people, might not be able to reach them through social media or digital/online platforms. Alternatively, there might be existing community networks which specifically represent these groups of people, and which can serve as a crucial communication point (Community Planning Toolkit 2014).

Accordingly, your organisation should be able to identify the communication means that young people or specific youth groups are using. This would allow you not only to spot the weaknesses in your communication but also identify what works best and therefore, maximise the potential for reaching out to young people.

2.3.3 Detect what needs improvement in the existing actions and / or decide which ones to promote

When implementing your project, it is important to conduct prior research in the local, regional, and national context of the given country, to identify other initiatives that have been or are currently being implemented and to determine any issues or difficulties that might arise from current actions. In doing so, it will allow you to narrow down the scope of your own initiative and to address the gaps that other initiatives might have disregarded or were otherwise unable to address (SALTO-YOUTH 2022).

In order to effectively detect what requires improvement, a 'Needs Assessment' is an essential starting point in this process whereby the stakeholders that you have previously identified are included. The practice of a Needs Assessment was previously introduced in Chapter 2 of the guidebook () focusing on using the needs assessment to describe the target group more generally, whereas in this part we propose the use of the needs assessment to locate the gaps in addressing the needs of the community and refining your own initiative. Starting from the project participants' needs allows for two significant benefits:

1.   Helps youth workers gain the participants' trust,

2.   Through the skills and knowledge gained it helps to boost the confidence of those involved whilst creating a sense of responsibility and ownership for the planning and implementation process (Tammi and Hendriks 2008).

A Needs Assessment will allow you to identify the individual and/or community needs, issues, concerns that exist as well as gather individual's and/or communities' hopes and desires. In addition, it will allow you to recognize if any of the needs have changed so as to refocus the project's activities and empower grassroots action around the specific needs (SALTO-YOUTH 2022).

Possible ways to facilitate the needs assessment are the following:

- Conduct focus group interviews
- Disseminate surveys and questionnaires
- Interviews
- Participatory Action Research
- Secondary data analysis
- Forums on public issues

Whilst all the above methods are useful for the purposes of gathering information; when aiming for the maximum participation of stakeholders whereby there is a high sense of ownership and control of the project then, **Participatory Action Research** – is the most recommended one as it allows for placing the participants at the heart of the process based on the assumption that individuals are the experts for their own lives and hence, are the best point to start any planning or action process (Tammi and Hendriks 2008).

There are three key steps in Participatory Action Research:

1.   Identify / define the need or problem (mapping)
2.   Consider the problem and take action in order to address the need or problem (action)
3.   Evaluate the outcomes of the action taken to address the need / problem (learning & development, evaluation)
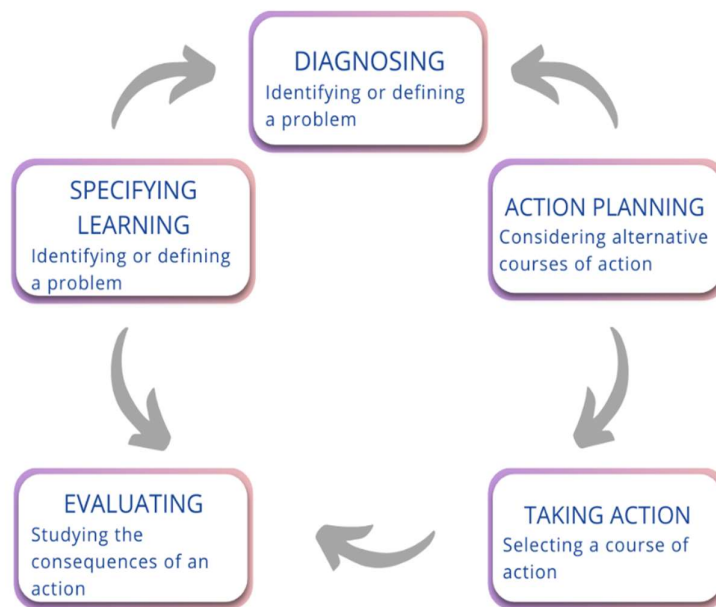
Adapted from: Susman, G.I., "Action Research: A Sociotechnical Systems Perspective", ed. G. Morgan (London: Sage Publications, 1983) 102.

The above diagram for Participatory Action Research indicates a continuous process, set according to the individual / community and situation needs. As such, in order to be effective in the identification of these needs this process should continue throughout the lifespan of the project.

2.3.4 Plan to ensure the achievement of goals for all stakeholders involved

A youth community engagement initiative can only be considered successful when the project's objectives and goals have been reached. Stakeholders can have a great influence on the intended outcome as well as success of the project.

This is conditional upon the extent of the participation of each stakeholder whereby their goals and needs are matched to the goals and needs of the project (T-EST.EU 2013).

As such, the level of participation for each stakeholder has to be taken into consideration in order to ensure that when engaging with them, the appropriate approaches, methods and tools are utilised to maximise their contribution as well as to ensure that their goals are achieved, and their needs are satisfied.

A spectrum for community engagement has been developed by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) whereby a methodology is provided to determine the level of influence that a person, group, or community can have over a certain topic, and hence, to decide the level of engagement that is appropriate. Whilst the IAP2 Spectrum was developed to assist groups to define the public's role in public participation processes its simplicity and descriptiveness allow for this framework to be applied to a variety of contexts and engagement processes.

The IAP2 Spectrum reveals that depending on the outcomes, resources and timeframe and levels of interest and concern of each initiative there are different levels of participation needed.

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

iap2 international association for public participation

IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation was designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any public participation process. The Spectrum is used internationally, and it is found in public participation plans around the world.

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION →

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

Table1. Source: International association for public participation; IAP2 spectrum of public participation:

https://www.iap2.org/page/resources

According to the IAP2's spectrum of Public Participation, the level of participation ranges from a minimum of simply informing the stakeholders all the way through to empowering them where they hold the final decision-making power. At this stage stakeholders may be involved through the following ways:

➢ Surveys / Questionnaires

➢ Working groups – with responsibility of specific aspects of the work

➢ Advisory committees

➢ Newsletters – provide a mechanism for keeping stakeholders informed

➢ Personal meetings

Possible stakeholder involvement strategies will be contingent upon the level of impact the project has on the stakeholder and vice versa (refer to level of influence in stakeholder analysis table). Following from the stakeholder analysis table (p. 67):

● Stakeholders that have a **low impact** on the project and are themselves **less impacted** by it, only need to understand the project and its objectives. As such, it is necessary to only keep them **informed** of the process.

● Stakeholders that have a **low impact** on the project's process but are **highly impacted** by it themselves should agree to give it support. Therefore, these stakeholders are important to be kept **informed** as well as **consulted**, providing their opinion and advice where possible.

● Stakeholders that are **less impacted** by the project but have a **high impact** on the project on their end, should be able to act i.e., to take decisions, provide resources etc. Hence, these stakeholders should be **consulted** and **involved**.

● Stakeholders that have a **high impact** and are also **highly impacted** by the project's initiatives should be able to act as well. As such, these stakeholders should be **involved** as much as possible.

In the following section, possible ways of informing, consulting, and involving different stakeholders depending on their identified level of participation in the project are outlined (T-EST.EU 2013).

Ways of informing

- Website
- Newsletter
- Regular updates on the project by e-mail
- An article in a newspaper or magazine (relevant to target group)
- Posters and flyers
- Training of specific topics

Ways of consulting

- Opinion polls and questionnaires
- Organize meetings to give updates on the process and ask for opinions and suggestions
- Invite to kick-off workshops at the beginning of the project (ask for opinions, ideas, concerns opportunities)
- Keep them informed using possible interventions from the 'inform' category

Ways of involving

- Organize regular meetings whereby you co-decide on specific actions and steps to be taken
- Invite to project / implementation team
- Invite to kick-off workshops whereby you co-decide on objectives and actions of the project
- Involve stakeholders in specific aspects of implementation
- Inform and consult by using possible interventions from the 'inform' and 'consult' categories

STEP 4: Evaluation of the actions and further activities

As we have highlighted before, thorough tracking of the project is one of the most important aspects if you want to make sure you have been successfully engaging with your audience and achieving the goals you have set in the beginning. It also helps to evaluate which methods were more successful and which – less and eventually assess whether you need to make some changes in the way you manage your work.

Evaluation of your actions and activities allows you to learn both – from the successes and from the shortcomings. This is very important not only for the growth of your organisation, but also for the growth of trust among the youth you are working with. It is normal that not everything we do is a success, though even more important is to be able to assess what you do and come out clear about the weaknesses. Transparency would not only help you to indicate improvement areas, but also enrich your communication with youth and mutual understanding (Dobbs, 2015).

2.4.1 Establish a tool to track the actions and impacts of the project

By creating your project you must have set yourself some objectives or goals. Would that be "to involve more youth aged from 15 to 18 in your centre activities", "organise a youth street art festival" or maybe "improve mental health access to socially vulnerable young people"- you must have had something concrete in mind to achieve. The goals and steps to achieve those goals are very important and if you want to make sure you measure the impact of the project correctly, you should always keep your goals in mind.

It is indeed a good practice to set up a tool to track your actions and eventual impacts of the project, since the very beginning. It by no means signifies that this tool is something untouchable and you must stick to it at all costs. There are many things which may happen throughout the lifetime of the project and one of the strengths is to be able to adapt to those changes and the tools should not be a restriction. On the contrary, it should help you to follow the activities you carry out and track any changes you experience along the way.

Depending on how experienced you are with the activities in community engagement and how big or small your project is, there are various aspects your organisation would

like to consider in order to put in place the tools most suitable for your needs. However, there are several tools which are interchangeable and yet so basic, that neither setting them up, nor updating them would require much of your time. In the end what matters is that the goal you focus on is achieved.

Activity list and milestones

As mentioned before, the core of your project is the goal you have set yourself in the beginning. Though the goal of the project cannot be achieved in a day, rather it must be completed by engaging in a lot of different activities. To simplify it, we may call it your team's "to do's list", which would be used in order to achieve the main goal.

Activity list should include all the activities in your project and a description of the scope of each of them. This way your team members are well aware of the tasks they have to carry on and what exactly each activity contains (PMBOK, 2016). Sometimes the names could be confusing and we might imagine that something more or less is required from us, causing a confusion. Being clear is also a key to success while implementing your activities.

To imagine all this easier, let's take a look at an example of how an activity list could look like if our project goal is to "organise a youth street art festival", just as mentioned earlier, which in details looks like this: Depending on what is your initial idea (which, of course, is more detailed than in this example), you already know very well what you are going to do.

> **Our goal is to bring at least 30 young street artists, practising murals and graffiti to participate in the festival in Dream city. There they would showcase their talents in live performances which would attract mainly young audiences. This way youth would be encouraged to join the youth centre and express their talents there too.**

Let's imagine we already have a specific budget, contacts with the city council (to get all the necessary permits) and that we already know at least 20 young street artists, who would join the event. Our organisation also possesses all the necessary human

resources. All we need to do is actually get this to work. So our primary activity list could look like this:

1. **Gather the team of street artists** – a certain person or a team should contact the 20 street artists and agree with them about their participation in the event. Team also works further to gather the contacts of 10 other street artists who would be interested to join the event. This team is also responsible to keep communication with the 30 selected artists.

2. **Ensure the accessibility of spaces for the festival** – by discussing with the city representatives, map out the spaces accessible for the street artists and create the list, who uses which spaces and how many square metres could be used for each artist. People working on this activity should arrange all the necessary permissions too.

3. **Conferences and workshops preparation** – street art festival also includes extra activities encouraging the engagement of youth. Under this activity the detailed plan of each activity is developed, including the topics of conferences, guest list and all the logistics around those activities.

4. **Prepare the agenda** – the actual agenda with the dates and times of the activities is developed in line with the availability of spaces and people participating in the event.

5. **Communicate about the event to the public** – the wide audience is informed about the event through different channels including local media outlets (like newspapers and TV) and social media. This includes development of materials such as posters and flyers and their distribution.

6. **Hold the street art festival** – organise all the logistics around the festival, coordinate the smooth delivery, etc.

This activity list identifies the biggest tasks to be completed. Each of those activities could be subdivided in many different tasks, allowing to plan each of them in more detail. Those specific tasks can be something like organising meetings with authorities, preparing dissemination lists and social media campaigns or preparing invitations for the speakers of the conference. You may use exactly the same principle to subdivide

each activity and break it into smaller tasks. This would allow you to monitor closely what has to be done and approach your goal step by step.

Activity list also allows us to allocate tasks to other people, as the limits where one task begins and ends are set clearly.

Milestones are much like activities and sometimes a milestone in your project could actually match finalisation of one of your activities. For example a list of the street artists who will participate in your festival. The activity itself takes some time and work to do, including communicating, researching and coordinating, but the final confirmed list would be your milestone – something you have achieved in your project. Milestones, however, unlike activities, do not have start and end date, they rather mark a specific achievement in your path – it's like saying: "you have already walked x miles and you have x more to go" (PMBOK, 2016).

Activity calendar and timeline

Each project has a defined amount of time for its implementation and in order to manage your time well, you would need to understand when activities should take place. This is where the previously prepared activity list becomes very handy. This facilitates the creation of an activity schedule, which does always include the start and end date (or deadline) of each activity within the overall project timeline. One of the easiest forms to present this activity schedule is graphic visuals, also known as Gantt chart (PMBOK, 2016).

Gantt chart lists the activities on the left side (vertically – one under the other). The dates are listed horizontally. Activity duration is represented by a bar in the line of each activity. The length of the bar indicates the length of the activity. To easier imagine, let's put our previously listed activities in the Gantt chart. For that you may be using any document or tool you find handy. However, keep in mind that it should be easily editable, in case there are any changes you would like to do.

	ACTIVITIES	2023											
		Term1						Term2					
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	Gather the team of street artists	■	■										
2	Ensure the accessibility of spaces for the festival		■	■	■								
3	Conferences and workshops preparation					■	■	■					
4	Prepare the agenda							■	■	■			
5	Communicate about the event to the public									■	■	■	
6	Hold the street art festival												■

As you can see, our project lasts one year – from January 1st 2023 to the end of December 2023. This means that we will start with the activities at the beginning of the year and the last activity will take place by the end of the project. The illustrated case shows that some of your activities may overlap, such as 1 and 2 or 5 and 6, but some of your activities may also happen simultaneously or be repeated throughout the project period with some gaps. You should make sure that the tool used reflects well what you're doing and gives you as much precision in scheduling activities you need.

In case your project is shorter, you may want to reflect weeks or break the tasks by days, rather than months. This would allow you to be more accurate and manage any possible delays. You may also use different colours in the chart to mark the activities once they are completed or are overdue. By knowing your resources and staff, you should be able to anticipate the time which would be needed to complete each of the activities. If your project is long and you have more time, you may want to extend each activity, giving some more time to manage unpredicted issues or plan for such periods as staff holiday. In case you see the project is advancing well, you may always take some more time to work on some tasks or communicate with youth!

2.4.2 Assessment of further actions and possible improvements

Any project evolves and changes depending on the circumstances. Sometimes it is possible to foresee some of the changes or anticipate them (like change of personnel in your organisation), but sometimes it is impossible (like a COVID-19 pandemic, which has

changed every operation in the world). While it is good to map out those potential threats in your risk analysis, it is even more crucial to properly evaluate your project to be able to adapt to the changes and see what are the next steps you should take.

Every evaluation is very different and you should tailor make one which would be most suitable for your project and team. It also depends what exactly you are evaluating. While evaluating, you could work with primary as well as secondary sources. Primary sources would include the data collection from the people involved in the project – so the stakeholders. It may take different shapes, such as discussions in groups or individual interviews. It could also be done through surveys. The secondary data would be the work your team has carried out, so any written or graphic materials (such as a poster to advertise the street art festival) or your presence in the social media. By doing evaluation you should harvest both – qualitative and quantitative data (Levine, 2015). This would give a more complete picture.

There are several different ways to approach evaluation (Dobbs, 2015):

➢   Collect information on achievements and compare with your initial objectives.

➢   Feedback from project team and stakeholders.

➢   Ask questions – what went well? What could have been done better? Where were the actions different from the plan? Why?

➢   Employ an independent evaluator.

The first three options are most widely used for smaller scale projects and usually more in the NGO environment. They allow us to carry out the evaluation internally, using our proper resources and avoid costs needed for external evaluators. However, it is important to note that sometimes external evaluation is necessary, depending on your project funding source and the requirements which are set. However, in the youth work environment this is very unlikely to happen.

Usually, though, you would start with asking different questions (like the ones in the cloud below), and structuring your answers in comparison with the goals set in the beginning. Structuring the evaluation process is beneficial and by starting to ask those questions, you should set yourself evaluation criteria you would take in consideration

such as staff experience and expertise, delivery dates, adequacy of the approach to the task and other similar standards (PMBOK, 2016).

You also might want to set some internal procedures to evaluate within your team all the project progress. Surveys are a very useful tool for that. You may create one yourself in paper form if you want to do an evaluation on spot after the event (for example you want some feedback of the participants who have joined the conference with the street artist, so you could distribute the forms on spot and keep the anonymity of the people filling it in) or use some tools accessible online, which would record everyone's answers and would allow people participate in the survey online and provide you with statistics (more suitable for internal evaluation or for events which takes place online – like webinars).

In some situations, in person discussion might be more beneficial (if the event included not that many stakeholders, for example), than questionnaires. It is likely that your respondents could get disinterested and fatigued or simply fill in the questionnaire of a

mere feeling of duty to do so (Krosnick and Presser, 2009). By looking for quality feedback, you should give it a thought. Once you are gathering feedback from young people, you should keep in mind their interest and anticipate what kind of feedback they would prefer.

This is a good practice to carry out evaluation with every activity you do (this where the activity list and milestones comes in very handy). It would allow you to track your process and focus on what could be improved.

Eventually all the gathered evaluation should be put into a report, which, depending on the length of the project and tasks involved, could be periodical or carried out just once – after the termination of the project. It would be a useful material to share with your stakeholders and evaluate the lessons learned (Dobbs, 2015).

EXAMPLES ANALYSIS

In this part we present you 12 different projects around youth engagement. Those are the initiatives from all around Europe, including some local small-scale projects, as well as international collaborations. The information we are providing, involves all the main aspects outlined in the action plan part of this guidebook. The initiatives we are sharing below might serve as inspiration or best practices for your projects and help you see the different ways to engage with youth.

EUROTHON – European Hackathon: shaping youth ideas on the future of Europe (ERASMUS+ Project)

Year of implementation:
21/12/2020-30/11/2022
Project website
https://eurothon4youth.eu/
Country/countries of implementation:
Italy (Coordinators); Belgium; Cyprus; Spain; Greece; Romania
Target group and number of participants engaged
The target group of the EUROTHON project are young people between 18-30 years old and activists in NGOs, youth organizations or wider civil society organizations. Moreover, of particular interest are young people who would like to play a more active role as EU Influencers / Cultural Ambassadors in their capacity as European Citizens individually.
Project context
The EUROTHON project aims towards tackling the low levels of youth participation in democratic processes by broadening as well as strengthening the civic engagement and participation of youngsters not only at the local and national levels but also on the international level. This is achieved through their active participation in the training programme that will have a

student/youth centered & action-oriented approach. The training programme will encompass training modules on various aspects of active citizenship including, European values & history, democratic participation, social entrepreneurship, and environmental issues.

Specifically, even though participation in democratic life is reduced to voting or standing for elections, the revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life states that "Participation and active citizenship is about having the right, the means, the space and the opportunity and where necessary the support to participate in and influence decisions and engage in actions and activities to contribute to building a better society". In this context, youth participation is seen as an approach and attitude in daily life that enables young people to express their opinions, become involved, be part of the decision-making process at different levels and create a dynamic and participatory civil society.

In order to do so, they should have a clear idea, which is currently lacking, of the values, rules and functioning "life" of EU Institutions.

Project goals

The project aims to enhance youth's civic participation by providing them with the right kind of information as well as channels and tools to amplify their voices and make them heard. Moreover, the project focuses at strengthening the civic participation of youth by developing their sense of initiative, specifically in the social field and in supporting their communities.

Throughout its implementation the project, aimed to increase the social inclusion of youth around concepts of European values, whilst also promote tolerance and acceptance of diversity through intercultural dialogues. The project is rooted in the concept of a "hackathon" as exploratory programming and marathon as well as a tool for networking, knowledge sharing, and inspiring moments. As such, the general scope of this project is

the organisation of a "Eurothon", a European event focused on the future Europe: with debates on roots, threats and ideal horizons; where we explore and discuss the values and history of Europe. Young people from around Europe can meet, interact, and exchange views etc.

Project implementation

The project was implemented under the framework of Erasmus+ and it belonged to the strand: "Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices - Strategic Partnerships for youth". The project was implemented by a partnership of Organizations (2 from Italy,1 from Greece, 1 from Romania and 1 from UK):

- FONDAZIONE INTERNAZIONALE DON LUIGI DI LIEGRO ONLUS (Italy)
- AZIENDA SANITARIA LOCALE ROMA 1 (Italy)
- MERSEYSIDE EXPANDING HORIZONS LIMITED (UK)
- IASIS (GREECE)
- CENTRUL PENTRU PROMOVAREA INVATARII PERMANENTE TIMISOARA ASOCIATIA (ROMANIA)

How the needs of the stakeholders in the project were assessed and addressed.

The project designers were able to assess the needs of the stakeholders in a survey that was conducted by the partners. The survey results highlighted that most young people do not have a clear idea neither of the current social and environmental threats nor of the opportunities offered, such as the growing sector of social enterprises. As such, the fact that youth are not properly informed of these issues leads them to not being able to actively participate in processes that shape the current as well as future state of their countries. This project addresses the lack of information on these matters by developing and offering a training course on active citizenship and an Open Education Resource containing all the material produced.

How the project engaged with the participants, which tools and channels were used and why.
The project has so far engaged with its participants through the [EUROTHON's website](#) as well as its social media channels including [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). These platforms are useful as they are the main communication tools used by young people. Further, young people don't only use these for communication but rather as sources for their daily news and to find like-minded people and groups they can become members of.
Project success stories. Why project was successful and if not – what were the issues.
At the time of writing, the project is still being implemented and hence, it is early to decide if the project has been successful or not.

YOUth workers PROmoting MEntal health (YOUPROME)

Year of implementation:
2019-2022
Project website
https://www.youpromeproject.eu/the-project-2/
Country/countries of implementation:
Italy, Greece, Romania, UK
Target group and number of participants engaged
The target groups of the project were the: ● **Youth Workers**: either involved in the paths of social inclusion of people with mental health problems, or staff members of recreational institutions of public or private agencies/centers for young people, or of the participating organizations. ● **Young people with mental health problems** (final beneficiaries) Both target groups were involved in multiple phases of the project to maximize the impact that the program would have on them. More specifically: ● 75 Youth Workers representing different organizations were involved in the research phase of the project. ● 50 young people with mental health problems were involved in focus groups during the research phase of the project. ● 50 Youth Workers and 30 young people with mental health disorders were involved in the phase of testing the project's products.
Project context
The project aspired to tackle the challenges that young people with mental disorders face, such as stigma, isolation, and discrimination, as well as lack of access to health care and education facilities.

It is observed that Youth Workers worldwide were unaware of the fact that problems they face in their work with young people are due to a mental illness or disease. Moreover, young people appear to be reluctant when it comes to seeking professional mental health care.

Therefore, Youth Workers need to be properly trained and educated to be able to work with young people with mental health disorders. It is considered that Youth Workers can be effective gateway providers to mental health care since they are well engaged with the youth. In other words, YOUPROME aspired to strengthen the connection between Youth and mental health.

Project goals

The main goal of the project was the development of the social skills and emotional competencies of the Youth Workers dealing with mental health. Apart from this the project's partnership achieved the following goals:

- Provision of novel services in supporting young people with mental health problems
- Proactive collaboration between Youth Workers and the families who have young people with mental health problems
- Facilitation of the social inclusion of young people facing mental health issues
- Successful integration of young people with mental health issues with their peers.

Project implementation

The project was implemented under the framework of Erasmus+ and it belonged to the strand: "Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices - Strategic Partnerships for youth". The project was implemented by a partnership of Organizations (2 from Italy,1 from Greece, 1 from Romania and 1 from UK):

- FONDAZIONE INTERNAZIONALE DON LUIGI DI LIEGRO ONLUS (Italy)

- AZIENDA SANITARIA LOCALE ROMA 1 (Italy)
- MERSEYSIDE EXPANDING HORIZONS LIMITED (UK)
- IASIS (GREECE)
- CENTRUL PENTRU PROMOVAREA INVATARII PERMANENTE TIMISOARA ASOCIATIA (ROMANIA)

How the needs of the stakeholders in the project were assessed and addressed.

To achieve the project's objectives, the partnership worked on the creation of a specific Handbook including basic concepts, definitions and innovative methodological approaches aiming at Youth Workers empowerment in their work and personal life. In accordance with the Handbook, the project's partnership developed a Toolbox incorporating a set of practical activities based to be applied by Youth Workers with young people facing mental health issues.

All the material created throughout the project's life cycle was uploaded to an e-based Open Educational Resource where everyone can access it. More specifically, educators, trainers and youth practitioners who seek to elaborate their knowledge in the specific field can take advantage of the synthesized educational material.

Through this initiative the empowerment and the well-being of the local community was also achieved.

How the project engaged with the participants, which tools and channels were used and why.

The project managed to engage participants throughout the overall duration of the program by involving them directly in the scheduled activities. Moreover, the project's partnership was constantly testing the project

outcomes to adapt them to the needs of the Youth Workers. The involvement of Youth Workers in evaluating processes was also an important engagement. Seminars were also organized including participants from the different target groups as well as professionals, stakeholders, decision makers, policy makers and educational credit providers.

The channels that were used to facilitate the engagement of the participants were the following:

- projects and organizations' website
- dedicated discussion opportunities such as information sessions, demonstrations
- national seminars and transnational conference: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pT71v04sjiE
- targeted written material such as articles
- social media: https://www.facebook.com/YouProMe/
- presentation on public local/regional/national/European events
- sending information regularly to existing contacts and networks

The targeted audience of the dissemination activities of the YOUPROME project were:

- associations working with Youth Workers in the field of sport, art, culture etc.;
- teachers, trainers, experts or practitioners in the field of youth;
- practitioners, experts and organizations in the field of mental health;
- Youth Centers, daily centers of Mental Health and other interested organizations at local, regional, national level;
- press and media at local, regional, national, and European level.

Project success stories. Why project was successful and if not – what were the issues.

The success of the project lies in the fact that the partner Organizations managed to cooperate seamlessly regardless of the differences and the difficulties that occurred (diverse cultural features, Covid-19).

This initiative was valuable not only for the Youth Workers and the young people facing mental health issues but also for the staff members of the organizations since they had the opportunity to strengthen their social and emotional competencies as well as broaden their knowledge regarding mental health. During the implementation of the project, pilot session with mental health patients was conducted to test the effectiveness of the created activities.

The final conference held in Italy was an amazing experience for the participants since they enhanced their understanding regarding Young Peoples' mental health and Youth Work in Europe.

Another strength of the YOUPROME was the development of a user-friendly Toolbox which made it very easy for the participants to replicate.

Based on the principle of "youth supporting youth", the project gave young people the tools and the inspiration to invest in the mental health field and promote it.

Extra information

"Before this experience, mental health was a bit of an exotic topic for me. Working on the YouProMe project has completely changed my outlook on the importance of this topic. I realize how much I have grown through this project - it has been a personal journey that has allowed me to grow."
Maria, Youth Worker.

Silvia, 24 years old, Clinical Psychologist

"Thanks to hippotherapy, we offer a new experience to young people with mental discomforts: with this opportunity, they finally are the ones who take care of and focus on another living being. Theory is not enough to offer them concrete help: we need contact, relationships and new and challenging activities for everyone."

STUN - Social Transitory Use Network

Year of implementation:
1 June 2019 – 31 January 2020
Project website
https://stuneurope.org/
Country/countries of implementation:
Belgium, Austria, France, Latvia, Denmark, England and Germany
Target group and number of participants engaged
Project has targeted non-profit urban youth organisations, working on Transitory Use of the buildings with the youth as final beneficiary.
Project context
European cities are facing overpopulation challenges, regardless, there are still a lot of vacant unused buildings. These buildings often can be reimagined and repurposed to serve and build the communities. This is the objective of the different non-profit organisations, engaged in STUN project working in major European cities, who are providing the opportunity for young people with various initiatives to occupy the "refurbished" spaces and use them as "urban labs" to implement their ideas. Activities vary and cover many fields, including the EU priority areas, such as green mobility, horizontal democracy, recycling, etc. Those are also topics which in large part consider the young population living in the cities. Bringing those initiatives together also brings like minded young people, increasing the engagement and involvement of youth in their neighbourhood life, to eventually create strongly linked communities.

Project goals

One of the main objectives of this project was to create a network around Social Transitory Use (STU), which would enable to share the best practices in the domain (over topics such as community management, youth involvement and engagement, best technical approaches in renovation, safety measures, negotiations with municipalities and building owners, legal frame of STU) and raise awareness on transitory use as well as to collaborate on future projects. This work was facilitated by creating a STUN website with the information on the network itself and the STUN CAMP – an activity for different organisations also working on STU.

Project implementation

Who was implementing the project, how people responsible were chosen, what were their actual responsibilities and how they were distributed?
Participants of STUN were 7 cutting edge non-profit organisations:
- Communa (project coordinator, Belgium);
- Free Riga (Latvia);
- Yes We Camp (France);
- Paradocks (Austria);
- Planungsbüro für Urbane Transformation (Germany);
- Meanwhile Space (UK);
- Institut for (X) (Denmark).

These same partners also have formed the core of the STUN network.

How the needs of the stakeholders in the project were assessed and addressed.

How the needs of the stakeholders in the project were assessed and addressed.
The transitory use is becoming more widely known and getting more popular in cities around Europe. However, there is still an existing need for awareness raising in order to scale up the impact of STU activities on international level

and impact policy making around the subject. This helps to create the access to numerous transitory use sites and engage people in them.

To achieve this, the project partners have organised STUN CAMP for various organisations (more than 20 organisations from around Europe took part in the project) working in the field, who have brought workshop ideas, which were facilitated by the project partnership. Three best practices sharing events were organised in between the partners and a handbook on "Sustainable and circular re-use of spaces and buildings" created and published as a tool aimed to help similar initiatives, citizens or cities.

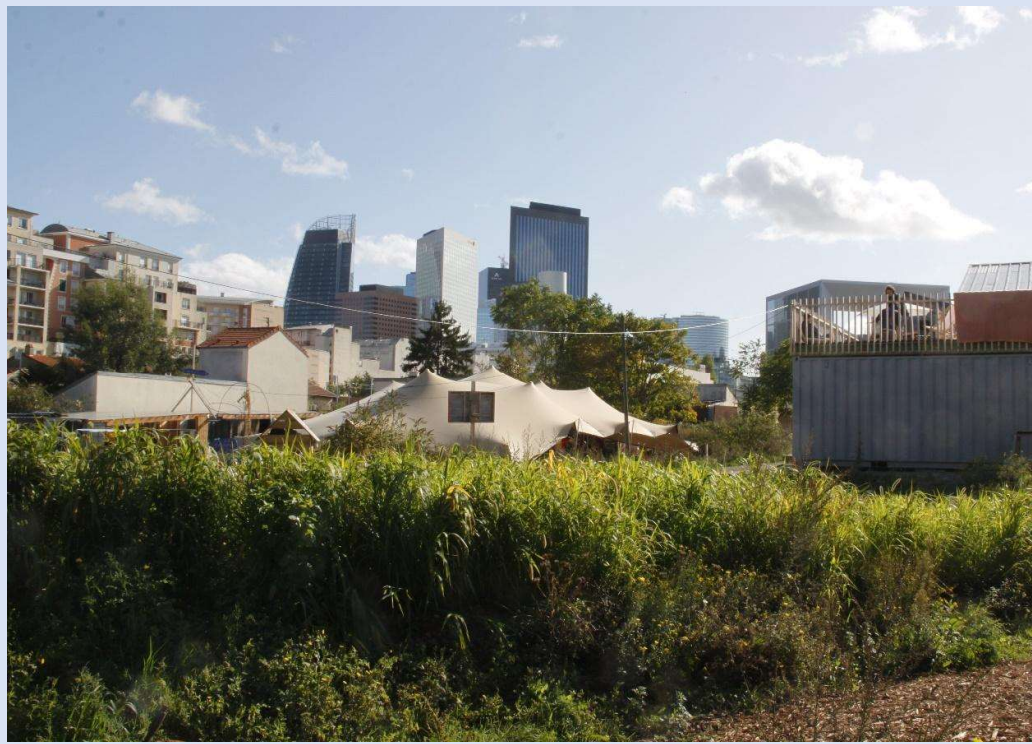**How the project engaged with the participants, which tools and channels were used and why.**

Main project engagement tools were the existing networks of partner organisations and their private communication channels. Project also had Facebook and Instagram pages, though their maintenance after the end of the project proved to be challenging.

Project success stories. Why project was successful and if not – what were the issues.

Project team has achieved all the main goals with great success, engaging over 20 other organisations in STUN camp activity. A strong network of STUN has been created, as the collaboration between network members continues up to this day, including various visits and smaller collaborations of staff. Network also develops other ideas to continue the initiative under the flagship of different EU funding programmes, such as Creative Europe (as per interview with Antoine Dutrieu from COMMUNA, the coordinator of the project).

Extra information

Photo credit: Mélissande Boyer
STUN camp in Paris, 2019

Growing Together (Erasmus+ Programme)

Year of implementation:
2019-2021
Project website
Growing Together section on the European Friends of the Earth website: https://youngfoee.eu/growing-together/
Country/countries of implementation:
Ireland, Malta, Denmark, Estonia, Cyprus (Young Friends of the Earth Organizations in these countries).
Target group and number of participants engaged
The target group for "Growing Together" are young Europeans, and particularly those living in rural areas .
Project context
The main issues that the 'Growing Together' project has targeted have been the ways that our food is being produced, consumed, and distributed, as this is an issue which directly impacts young European people's lives. Nevertheless, the conversation around food production, consumption and distribution is one which rarely left any space for the voices of young people to be heard. Accordingly, this project aimed to offer a voice to the young people, and particularly those from rural areas, who are most directly impacted by our food system. It also encouraged youth to actively engage with the crucial political debates that surround food production and its future, as well as other, wider debates on the future of Europe.
Project goals
More specifically, the 'Growing Together' project has aimed to increase the democratic participation and civic engagement of young people at risk of marginalization due to the unsustainable development of agriculture as well

as policymaking which regards food sovereignty. This was done by increasing the cooperation between youth organizations, rural youth and decision-making institutions. In practice, the project's goal was to provide training opportunities for youth from the countries participating in the project. In doing so, they aimed to develop the specific skills as well as in-depth knowledge needed for the rural youth to be able to organize effectively around issues of food sovereignty and possible policy and practical solutions that would help to address the issues on local, national and international levels.

Project implementation

The project 'Growing Together' was implemented under the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union in 6 different European countries by their respective Friends of the Earth organizations. These organizations have included:

- Friends of the Earth Cyprus

- Friends of the Earth Malta

- Friends of the Earth Denmark

- Friends of the Earth Estonia

- Friends of the Earth Ireland

- Friends of the Earth Europe

How the needs of the stakeholders in the project were assessed and addressed.

The designers of the 'Growing Together' project recognized the dangers of the marginalization and alienation of youth regarding topics that concern food production, consumption, and distribution whereby their voices are being excluded from these important conversations. As such, they designed a

project which brings the power back to youth, enabling them to participate in conversations regarding agricultural policymaking.

How the project engaged with the participants, which tools and channels were used and why.

The project engaged with its participants through the various websites of the Young Friends of Earth from the partner countries that disseminated material on 'Growing Together'. Moreover, the partners engaged with participants through the social media accounts of their organizations i.e., Facebook, Instagram as well as through their YouTube channel where project related videos were uploaded. These channels were useful in each national context, as the specific target group frequently makes use of all these platforms to find information and socially connect with people and causes they are interested in.

Project success stories. Why project was successful and if not – what were the issues.

The project managed to implement more than 150 dissemination activities at the local and national levels that ultimately engaged and empowered at least 3,300 young people from rural communities. In addition, there were more than 30 broad outreach activities such as social media campaigns, events, taking project activities to festivals and other large-scale gatherings. Further, the project implemented its Environmental Workshops with its target groups.

Extra information

Friends of the Earth – Cyprus - https://www.foecyprus.org/projects/

Link to YouTube videos created for the purposes of the project: https://youtu.be/7S7LHk1IkkY

ACTin'YouTH
(InterculturAl communiCaTion for social INclusion of YOUng people through Theatre workshops)

Year of implementation:
2021-2023
Project website
https://www.actinyouth.eu/
Country/countries of implementation:
Netherlands, Italy ,Bulgaria, Portugal, Greece, Spain.
Target group and number of participants engaged
The target groups of the action are mainly the youth and youth workers.   - DIRECT TARGET GROUP: Youth workers from 6 different countries trained on intercultural and theatre-based communication methodologies of the ACTinYouTH project.   - INDIRECT TARGET GROUP: Young people coming from different cultural backgrounds, taking part in local activities and interacting with other young people.
Project context
The main objective of ACTin'YouTH is to tackle discrimination and social exclusion. Youth organizations and Youth workers play a key role within the scope of reducing inequality, as they are receptive in innovative and integrated approaches.   The project aspires to foster youth workers' intercultural competences with theatrical methodologies aimed at creating local theatre workshops for the social inclusion of young people who found themselves at risk of social exclusion. In fact, youth workers also are trained in the field of non-violent

communication as well as conflict resolution to develop their communicative skills.

All the acquired skills are used during the implementation of both local and blended theatre workshops.

Project goals

ACTin'YouTH is based on the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, therefore aspires to give to young participants a central role in the overall project's life cycle through engaging, connecting and empowering both young people and youth organisations/ workers.

The objectives of the project are:

- Develop a theatre-based training course for improving youth workers' intercultural competences and social skills
- Conduct local intercultural theatre workshops and related online activities
- Create a cooperative final "digital performance"
- Develop a collaborative interactive platform and tools
- Produce a methodological manual with a collection of case studies based on local experiences

Project implementation

The project was implemented under the framework of Erasmus+ and it belonged to the strand: The project was implemented under the framework of Erasmus+ and it belonged to the strand: "Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices - Strategic Partnerships for youth". The project was implemented by a partnership of Organizations:

- Stichting CWM Education
- Associazione Culturale Smascherati!

- SDRUZHENIE WALK TOGETHER
- ASSOCIACAO CHECK-IN - COOPERACAO E DESENVOLVIMENTO
- IASIS
- COLECTIC SCCL

How the needs of the stakeholders in the project were assessed and addressed.

How the needs of the stakeholders in the project were assessed and addressed.

To achieve the project's objectives, the involved organizations work on the development of an Interactive platform that will remain available after the project's lifespan as a repository of good practices. The platform is the digital environment where young people, led by youth workers, develop, starting from inputs given by the non-formal education sessions, the open, transnational and collaborative theatrical performance online:

- The development of the Manual which compiles the project results. This will help in disseminating the material on a national and international level, particularly addressing youth organisations and public authorities that are interested in creating local intercultural workshops aimed at social inclusion of young people.
- The development of a virtual network including organisations, associations, informal youth groups working with theatre and performative arts as tools for social inclusion and intercultural dialogue.
- The Internalisation of the created methodology which is tested, qualified and recognised in a transnational context.

How the project engaged with the participants, which tools and channels were used and why.

Participants engaged in blended- and local theatre workshops produce materials that are used to create a final "digital performance" which will be shown as project result during Multiplier Events as well as in virtual connection spaces.

Channels used to disseminate project's results:
- multi-modular platform
- social media of each organization (Facebook page, Linkedin, Instagram account)
- multiplier events

Project success stories. Why project was successful and if not – what were the issues.

The Strength of the Project:

Through the active participation in the theatre workshop activities, young migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and ethnic minority groups, become "young intercultural actors for social inclusion", significantly improving their self-confidence and motivation, as well as the acquisition of relevant skills and knowledge about European values and different cultures.

Moreover, thanks to the interactive virtual platform, all participants have an additional opportunity to interact, exchange ideas, materials and produce a final joint digital performative creation.

Extra information

Video with Youth Workers' expectations of the project:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rg459V0qJpo

Development of an SNSI (Small Neighbourhood Social Infrastructure)

Year of implementation:

December 2016 – October 2017

Project website

https://www.cabougedansnotrecommune.be/project/sombreffe/

Country/countries of implementation:

Belgium

Target group and number of participants engaged

Project has targeted mainly young people of 15-26 y.o. living in the municipality. Secondary target groups were children, which have benefitted from some of the activities organised.

Project context

The municipality of Sombreffe has an area of 3.577 and is located in the Province of Namur. Sombreffe is composed of 4 entities with rather rural tendencies: Boignée, Ligny, Sombreffe and Tongrinne. The municipality counts 8.422 inhabitants of which 3.245 are between 0 and 25 years old. This presents more than 38% of the population in the municipality. Even though the number includes kids, this is the potential youth growth factor in the future, which showcases the need to engage youth living in rural areas in more activities and give them ways to express themselves.

Project goals

Project had 3 main objectives:

- Create a place for youth exchange, meeting other young people and encourage listening to youth. This objective has addressed a specific topic outlined in the local youth policy – meeting places for the youth.

- Increase youth participation and initiatives by youth.

- Encourage innovation, creation and realisation of youth projects.

Project implementation

The project was implemented with the support of Carrefour Régional et Communautaire de Citoyenneté et de Démocratie, as a part of the reflection on the youth policies implementation on a regional level. The project was carried out by the municipality of Sombreffe, located in Wallonia, Belgium, who had involved 3 parties in the implementation of the project: local youth (15-26 y.o.), administrative officers (from municipality) and third parties (sponsors and associations).

How the needs of the stakeholders in the project were assessed and addressed.

The technique the municipality chose to address the needs of the targeted youth was based on collaboration and dialogue. Therefore, a public consultation was carried out in many different steps. Many meetings took place in which the municipality consulted youth and other actors to address the needs of the project's beneficiaries

December 2016:

First meeting between the coordinator and the "youth and municipality" leaders to discuss   the project. Meeting between the coordinator and the "youth" leader to sign a partnership agreement defining the roles and missions of each.

January - February - March 2017:

Drafting questionnaires to gather the opinions of young people, youth actors and responsible people in the administration of municipality.

April 2017:

Meeting with all the youth partners and distribution of the questionnaires to the field actors.

Mail sent to the different communal actors with a presentation of the project and the questionnaire that they had to complete and send back.

May 2017:

Return of the questionnaires, analysis of the answers, reports preparation.

July 2017 :

Meeting between public actors and young people in order to prioritise and release a common action plan for the continuation. The 4 themes that were worked (the ones that came from the responses from the questionnaires): meeting places for young people, public spaces for young people, youth participation and dialogue with authorities, and activities for young people.

August 2017:

Creation of Mind Map – the synthesis of the consultation (questionnaires feedback and workshop with the youth). The outcome is the need of the establishment of a youth centre.

September 2017:

Drafting of the charter of commitment for a more participatory local youth policy.

October 2017 :

Sombreffe Youth Festival and a signature of the charter by all the parties.

How the project engaged with the participants, which tools and channels were used and why.

As municipalities have more access and tools to enhance the visibility of the projects and actions carried out by themselves, it brought the project visibility to its advantage. Project was promoted through the official channels of the municipality, flyers distribution and was also presented in social media – Instagram page, which was specifically created for the project and sharing of the results (as the preferred social media platform used by youth), as well as an official Facebook page of the municipality.

Project success stories. Why project was successful and if not – what were the issues.

The project prioritised the needs of youth and successfully managed to assess and create a dialogue with them. The main outcome of the project was the creation of a place for youth community - a youth centre. The project showcased the importance of dialogue through the different activities and most importantly encouraged young people to get involved and be heard.

Extra information

After-movie of the youth day in Sombreffe:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-c9L8JCKYM

Youth Power (UNDP Cyprus)

Year of implementation:
2009-2011 (Phase 1); 2012-2013 (Phase 2)
Country/countries of implementation:
Cyprus
Target group and number of participants engaged
The target group of the Youth Power project have been young people between 15 and 24 years old. Specifically, it involved the participation of 12 youth organizations (Greek Cypriot & Turkish Cypriot). Throughout both phases, the project has benefitted approximately 7,000 young people in Cyprus.
Project context
Youth Power was formerly known as the Cyprus Network for Youth Development. This project aimed to inspire Cypriot youth to actively participate in efforts that support reconciliation and peacebuilding between the two ethnic communities in Cyprus (Greek Cypriots & Turkish Cypriots). The Youth Power Secretariat facilitated the formation of smaller projects and activities that facilitated the involvement of youth as active and concerned citizens for the future of Cyprus. The project was carried out in the context of Cyprus where there is an disconnect between the two ethnic communities of the island, due to the ongoing dispute between them. As such, the main problems that were identified were the physical as well as mental disconnect of youth from both communities as a result of competing historical narratives and geographical separation for a protracted period.
Project goals
The main goal of the project was to bring the youth of the two communities together. The project ultimately aimed towards the reconciliation of relations

between the two communities through the various peacebuilding activities that were planned and executed. The activities have included youth exchanges, dialogue opportunities, island-wide youth committees, festivals, and research jointly designed and implemented to further engage the youth in peacebuilding.

Project implementation

The project was implemented by the United Nations Development Program under the Action for Cooperation & Trust in Cyprus, and it is defined as a Youth Activism Project. The project was comprised by a network of 12 diverse, Greek Cypriot as well as Turkish Cypriot organizations in the field of youth activism.

The member organizations have included:
- Peace Players International

- Soma Akriton
- Environmental Studies Centre
- HASDER
- KAYAD Community Centre
- Mediation Association
- International Centre for Sport Research and Development (ICSRD)
- ADD-ADHD Cyprus
- University of Nicosia Research Foundation
- European University Cyprus Research Centre
- Frederick Research Centre
- Future Worlds Centre

How the needs of the stakeholders in the project were assessed and addressed.

The project designers recognized the need for the youth to be inspired and energized in order to become involved and support the efforts towards

reconciliation between the two communities. As such, the project focused on the design and implementation of specific activities and smaller-scale projects that would excite the youth to participate in. In doing so, over the **first phase of the project**, many youth organizations were involved in various **peacebuilding activities** which had allowed for many young Cypriots to be involved in meeting their peers from the opposite community, to learn about each other's beliefs, perspectives, hopes and fears. This gave way for the project to continue its efforts and implement a second phase of activities.

During the **second phase of the project**, the economic challenges which were even more prominent among the youth, opened more avenues for the project to target **youth unemployment**. This allowed for **opportunities of youth entrepreneurship** to flourish by introducing social entrepreneurship as an alternative option to creativity and productivity. In doing so, the project reached out to even more organizations as well as decision makers and youth.

How the project engaged with the participants, which tools and channels were used and why.

Youth Power engaged with its participants through various channels as well as tools such as the Youth Power website, Social Networking Platforms (e.g. Youth Power Facebook page), the project's Bilingual Magazine, TV and radio broadcasts, and TV public service announcements. These tools were useful in reaching out to a large number of people who could be interested in the project's aims and activities. Most importantly, the project's communication approach ensured that people from both communities (GCs & TCs) were equally reached out to and informed.

Project success stories. Why project was successful and if not – what were the issues.

The project's activities and the role of the youth leaders from the partner organizations, played a central role in the peacebuilding efforts whereby the youth was empowered and was able to realize their potential. In addition, this

project laid the groundwork for a newer and stronger, alternative voice to emerge from the Cypriot youth. The project has directly benefited more than 7,000 youth. Lastly, the project made use of outreach activities to the wider public using printed as well as electronic media. Other successful creative outreach activities and events which were employed include the Earthdance, One StreetS Festival and Nicosia tours, which attracted wider youth as well as community participation.

Extra information

The following statements are testimonials from two of the coordinators of two events that were organized as part of the project's peacebuilding activities.

One StreetS Festival Testimonials:

Maria Papadopoulou, 24, One StreetS Festival Project Coordinator
"One StreetS gave us the chance to experience the true meaning of multiculturalism, the true significance of acceptance and understanding of other people's differences and what peace really stands for… We can only truly embrace peace if we immerse ourselves in a circle of multicoloured and multicultural people and actively promote, in unison, the human values that everyone shares."

Deniz Urfali, 28, Event Coordinator for Morphou
"I can only report what our students have told me. They were happy to discover that Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots have so much in common. Many of them met Greek Cypriots for the first time, during the festival, and were impressed at how few the differences were. They felt happy to be included in a multicultural event, along with the locals of both sides, and enjoyed themselves immensely. They felt empowered and reassured in their effort to exchange positive emotions from the other participants and made many new friends."

YOUROTRIP
(KA3 – *A Youth Roundtrip to support Policy Reform*)

Year of implementation:
2020-2022
Project website
https://yourotrip.eu/about/
Country/countries of implementation:
Greece, France, Spain, Portugal, UK, Denmark, Romania, Austria
Target group and number of participants engaged
The main target groups of the action are the youth and youth workers. - DIRECT TARGET GROUP: Youth workers trained on how to support young people to work on a common purpose. - INDIRECT TARGET GROUP: The Young people supported on how to create official groups of youth on a local level, namely the "local youth councils".
Project context
In the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, the commitment to protect the planet from degradation and take urgent action on climate change is a highly examined issue. At the same time education and skills, environmental protection and fighting climate change are considered priority topics by at least half of the respondents of the European Youth Eurobarometer survey published in January 2018. The paradox which appears is that Member States must design policies to combat climate change which will affect youth's lives in a couple of years, while

the latter do not seem to be very interested in voting and engaging with decision making.

This project aspired to foster youth participation in democratic procedures of decision making through discussions on the high priority topic of climate change. A stable structure of youth local councils in each country was created coupled with a local network of stakeholders to ensure the sustainability of their activities and future initiatives.

Project goals

The specific aspects of the problem that were targeted are:

- Promotion of youth cooperation and engagement in democratic life and climate action, in a structured way.
- Youth acquaintance with their European identity and commonalities among people of Europe regardless of the cultural differences.
- Understand the necessity for international cooperation to solve common challenges regarding Climate Change.

How were the specific aspects of the problem targeted?

- Through the creation of youth local councils to enable young people to participate in decision making regarding climate change.
- Through the development of youth's and youth workers' skills related to their participation in democratic procedures.
- Through supporting the intercultural dialogue to help young people understand that despite cultural differences, people face common global challenges such as Climate Change that need to be combatted collectively.
- Through enabling youth to understand the structure of the European Union, their European identity, role, and power related to this.
- Through their participation in European institutions.

Project implementation

The project was implemented by the following organizations:

- IASIS NGO
- ACTION AID HELLAS
- Coopérative d'Initiative Jeunes
- SOLIDARIDAD SIN FRONTERAS
- Associação ara a Educação e Valorização da Região de Aveiro
- SAFE REGENERATION LTD
- ActionAid Denmark
- FITT - Fundația Județeană pentru Tineret Timiș
- SUDWIND– Association for Development Policy and Global Justice.

How the needs of the stakeholders in the project were assessed and addressed.

In the first phase, a training of youth workers on supporting youth to engage with democratic procedures took place. Subsequently a series of 7 youth exchanges with young participants from 8 European countries was organized, aiming to enhance the ability of youth to cooperate regardless of the place of origin and cultural background. In total 29 young people and 8 youth workers took part in each mobility.

Youth groups spent one week full of participatory activities and debates in 7 countries involving local youngsters. Workshops, intercultural dialogue, discussions on climate change and cooperation with their fellow participants to draw possible solutions were the daily activities of the young people.

 At the end of each exchange the local youth who had been involved in the action, formulated a "local youth council". In total 8 local youth councils were created within the project duration, aiming to transfer youth voice, in the form

of policy papers, to decision makers of all levels, local, regional, national and European.

Local youth councils were supported by local stakeholders through the development of local networks. Thus, young people were able to develop their future initiatives with the support of local communities. Representatives of the international network of young people presented their policy recommendations to European Institutions in Brussels. The partners in cooperation with the youth workers and youth developed a joint proposal idea based on policy recommendations in order to look for funding and expand the international cooperation of the network.

How the project engaged with the participants, which tools and channels were used and why.

"Local Youth Councils" had the support of local communities and attracted new members, while the round tables facilitated the dialogue between the youth and the local and regional authorities and relevant policy makers.

All activities were shared through the social media of each Organization

Project success stories. Why project was successful and if not – what were the issues.

Young people comprehended their dynamic to affect future policies through discussion and joint solutions to common problems. Drawing policy recommendations towards European and local policy makers was something that familiarized young people with the sense of social responsibility and strengthened their network of collaboration.

The Intercultural learning approach fostered the sense of European identity and summarizes the shared vision of youth for the future of the European Union.

Extra information

Promotion video: https://fb.watch/du_jtRLeR0/

Promotion video; https://fb.watch/dv9JLe2Rrf/

Youthtainability

Year of implementation:

1 September 2018 – 31 August 2020

Project website

https://youthtainability.com/

Country/countries of implementation:

Hungary, Portugal and Slovakia

Target group and number of participants engaged

Youthtainability project targeted youth workers and youth as a secondary target of the project. Overall 250 people were engaged directly in the project among which 45 youth workers, who continue spreading the knowledge of the project outputs and use them with youth, creating ever growing number of beneficiaries of the project.

Project context

Youth around Europe is facing inside migration – the relocation of youth from smaller towns or villages into the cities. This pattern, despite the geographical and social differences, is noticed all around Europe. The three project partners are the youth umbrella organisations from different European countries, working also in rural areas, which face this problem daily. Youthtainability project has tackled this issue exploring the sense of belonging of youngsters as well as the youth workers, creating the tools aimed to encourage the reflection on participation in community.

Project goals

The main aim of the project was to fully explore the role of youth work in connection with community development, particularly about how to enhance the sense of belonging of young people in youth work settings.

Project implementation

The project has been supported by the Erasmus+ programme and was carried out internationally by 3 partner organisations: Federation of Children's and Youth Municipal Councils from Hungary as the project leader; Dypall from Portugal, and Fénix from Slovakia as partners. Every partner has assigned a team, which supervised the project from the beginning to the end. The participants of the project activities (learning, teaching and training events) were chosen among the interested applicants. They had to prove their expertise in the youth work field and express their interest in the event, where they were acquainted with and tested the main outputs of the project.

However, distribution of the responsibilities between the partners and the workload proved challenging and imposed time constraints, leading to the extension of the project. This has pushed the project in a different direction, as a lot of discussions took place and a new tool has been designed, which eventually turned out to be the most innovative element of the project (the Around belonging maps).

How the needs of the stakeholders in the project were assessed and addressed.

The needs of stakeholders (youth workers and the youth) were assessed at the project design stage. The partnership between three different youth umbrella organisations was formed based on the common work they are doing in different countries and the similar challenges rural youth communities are facing. The need to identify the reasons for youth internal "migration" between rural and urban areas to tackle this issue by enabling youth workers, has

prompted the idea of three main project tools – a theoretical summary to provide contextual insights, a self-assessment tool and a toolbox. Below are described three final project tools:

Around belonging: a self-assessment tool

A collection of 3 different maps for local youth workers and youth to be able to explore their own sense of belonging to the place they live . This tool was created by youth work and community development experts in order to tackle the sense of belonging of individuals (particularly young people) about where they live. All the 3 maps can be used separately and allows to reflect on your sense of belonging and personal experiences. An important aspect is a map for youth workers, which helps them identify with youth and see their place in youth community building.

The Theoretical part

It aims to map the challenges of local youth work, especially in rural areas, like the migration of youngsters from the countryside to the bigger cities, the meaning of sustainability at the local level and the roles of the youth work to create and develop the sense of belonging of the local youngsters. It aims to help to cope with most common challenges which are commonly noticed in Europe and includes some case studies.

Activity Tool (everyday practice from the partner organisations) it also involves 3 activity levels (entry, intermediate, advanced)

A collection for local youth workers, which can help them with the development of the sense of belonging of youngsters, make their youngsters more local and more aware of their community. It's a selection of different scenarios, which can be implemented by working with young people.

All the tools are accessible through the website of the project.

How the project engaged with the participants, which tools and channels were used and why.

The project has been promoted using the existing networks of the partners and was mainly promoted internally. Social media and other outreach tools were used very little. This communication was chosen as it was easier and faster to reach the target group directly, rather than building new social networks. A part of the challenge for the project visibility was COVID, as the project was already more than half-way through, so the consortium had to carry on with the most effective and known ways of communication. New participants were attracted by the principle "word of mouth".
For dissemination of the project results (the three different tools designed) 6 different events were organised overall engaging 250 professionals from 3 different countries. Three of these events were specifically designed to promote the project in each partner country and the others targeted wider audiences, not only youth workers, but still connected with the youth work domain.

Project success stories. Why project was successful and if not – what were the issues.

The three self-assessment maps can be definitely defined as the success story of the project – an unexpected outcome, but an insightful tool. However, this has also led to the main issue about the use of the tool – the pre-existing needs within youth organisations in order to successfully use the tool were not anticipated.

Through the testing periods it was realised that it is not a standalone tool and it needs context to be incorporated into. Youth organisations need to have a wider strategy in mind. Strategic thinking around the maps promotion was not anticipated and it was clarified through the process that extra training or workshops are needed (the project leader is providing training for the further use of the tool after the end of the project). Training provides you more

insights on how to use the map, as you get the presentation and a facilitated learning activity (simulation). Maps have a great potential, but require extra work on the implementation and use, which was not anticipated in the very beginning.

Extra information

Interview with Gulyás Barnabás, project leader and Director at Federation of Children's and Youth Municipal Councils

How the idea of the project was born/developed?

The idea was not really clear when we met with the partners at the event organised by DYPALL Network – Developing Youth Participation at Local Level, involving many different youth organisations at European level. Though, what we were certain of, is that we met like minded people, working for the same cause. As goes for the topic choice – it was always one of the most relevant topics in our association, though we did not dare to tackle it without right partners, who do not only deal with youth work, but also with local identity, the sense of belonging, community building and particularly youth community building. So we have first met the partners and then we have jumped in with the idea.

What was the most challenging experience throughout the project?

Initially we wrote that we would develop a tool to foster a sense of belonging, through youth work tools or methods, so it was quite vague and not definite. The idea of the map came maybe half a year after we started the project.

As for the challenges, it's regarding the tool itself (the maps) because it deals with your perception, feelings, connection and questions that you never ask, because it's not in your routine: "How do I connect to the place where I live?". That is the main challenge. If the person using the tool   is not used to

sharing and reflecting on their own feelings, this would be an odd experience to them. If you are not used to doing self-assessment, this is a challenging tool. That's why the training around the maps is needed – not only to promote it, but to understand better how it can be incorporated in already existing processes of youth organisations.

What was the biggest lesson learned for you and the most rewarding experience?

I had to learn to deal with only one thing at a time. You don't have to juggle everything, though all is set in parallel. The plans are there for a reason – you don't have to accomplish everything at once.

The most rewarding experience was of course that we have created not only one, but 3 maps. We have managed to create not a map, but a tool which could be used in complex processes too.

Does your project have continuity? Are there any other initiatives deriving from this one?

We organise a biannual conference on local youth work (with a toolfair as a side event) and we will promote our maps again. This event is devoted to youth work and people interested in the recent field developments. Next year there is also a youth work mobility activity, where the tool would be used too. My colleagues are preparing workshops for youth workers where they promote and explain how to use the maps and incorporate them in your youth organisations' work.
We received an ERASMUS accreditation, which means we have prepared a 7 year strategic plan, with precise international and local activities, objectives and foreseen impact. Youthtainability project is a part of this plan. We are going to have the training on the maps every year (on 7 year period), which would also allow us to develop it at the same time.

Any other thoughts about the project?

How the places affect us is a very interesting question in psychology, which was first posed only half a century ago. It gives you a significant learning opportunity, helps you to answer questions which define your identity. That's why people call themselves Londoners or Parisians, as this is an integral part of their identity. And in youth work we need to think about this, because in the country where I live (Hungary) the villages face ageing communities. Young people are moving out or left with no choice because there is no school there etc., so they have to move. Those are the issues to build on. You have troubles with ageing communities, but you also do not have enough young people who want to stay there. So you need to understand how young people connect, how they feel in those places. And in youth work, we don't do this. We simply want to amaze young people, we want them to participate, but we don't understand why they don't like to come to the youth centres. Maybe because the youth centre is located in a place where they don't like to spend their time? Place affects our lives more than anything.

Godigital: Digital Tools To Prevent Stress Management And Burnout

Year of implementation:	
23-08-2019 until 22-04-2021	
Project website	
https://godigitalproject.eu/	
Country/countries of implementation:	
Netherlands, Spain and Italy	
Target group and number of participants engaged	
The target groups of the GoDigital project have been local youth workers and young people (from 18 to 35 years old) with a very diverse background and experience. Trainers and researchers were selected based on their profile, motivation or interest, while young people were involved without a selection. 300 people in total were reached by GoDigital's activities and benefited from the program.	
Project context	
The goal of the GoDigital (GoD) project was to address youth stress management and burnout prevention at a European level. Research in the field revealed that due to a lack of awareness, burnout is not always recognized by the authorities in some local contexts, and most people are unable to prevent it. Research findings indicated that stress levels are particularly high for adults and young adults worldwide, particularly in relation to job and social lives. The evidence-based analysis of GoD aimed to produce instructional materials that would assist young adults in their daily lives. The project promoted healthy lifestyles among the member states and raised awareness of the European aspect of these issues. It has been another crucial component of the initiative.	
Project goals	

Related to the overarching goal of tackling youth stress management and burnout prevention, GoD focused on three key specific aspects:

1. Identify the skills related to stress management and burnout prevention;

2. Develop a curriculum associated with the skills involved in stress management;

3. Develop digital training to improve stress management and burnout prevention for young people.

Different initiatives aimed to address these factors were planned, including an accessible web training platform , a curriculum and training program for stress management, and burnout prevention strategies across Europe; tools for managing stress based on several methodologies, such as a digital training tool for stress management and burnout prevention measures, and a European framework of competencies related to these topics.

Project implementation

The project was funded by the Erasmus+ program under the key-action 'Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices' and the specific action 'Strategic Partnerships for Youth'.

In the consortium, there were five participating organisations, one which served as the action's primary beneficiary and coordinator while the other four served as partners:

– STICHTING AMSTERDAM EUROPEAN MOBILITY which is a non-governmental organisation/association based in the Netherlands. It coordinated the genoverall management and financial management. Moreover, it coordinated the evaluation and continuous monitoring of the various stages of the project.

- STEPP STRATEGIE SERVIZI SVILUPPO SRLS which is a small and medium sized enterprise based in Italy.
- STICHTING ZID which is a non-governmental organisation/association based in the Netherlands.
- Academia Postal 3 Vigo S.L. which is a small and medium sized enterprise based in Spain.
- ASOCIACION CULTURAL INTEGRA which is a non-governmental organisation/association based in Spain.

Each partner worked on a separate component, with the leader of the specific objective and Stichting Amsterdam European Mobility offering assistance when necessary. A communication protocol for the project was developed by creating an executive team of project managers (at least one representative per partner) responsible for the successful implementation of the project locally.

How the needs of the stakeholders in the project were assessed and addressed.

Stress is a complex subject and a normal human response, so it is important to develop a deeper knowledge about stress functions and control. GoDigital analyzed the subject from different angles and linked more topics together. It focused especially on stress in young people namely: work-related stress, workload, and job satisfaction, unemployment-related stress, poverty condition and study-related stress, time pressures, and conflict with peers.

In the first part, the project explored in depth the concepts of learning and teaching and the added value to the training for both trainers and learners.

In the second part, the contents of the analysis and the research were implemented into digital, active, engaging tools for the end users. GoDigital offered stress management and burnout prevention training to youth workers

who were also part of the target group of the project and key factors for the exploitation of results.

Youth workers from the countries involved participated in the different phases/activities of the project, including:

1. Initial questionnaires to explore the needs of young people in relation to stress.

2.Training course held in different countries with local and foreign participants.

3. Dissemination activities to get participants involved and to address the identified target group with their specific features.

4. Evaluation.

5. Outreach.

How the project engaged with the participants, which tools and channels were used and why.

The GoDigital project interacted with its users through a variety of tools and channels. During research phases, local young people were asked to anonymously share their experience and insights. For the development of the tools, unofficially, the trainers tested their workshop material with the local community.

Social Media played an important role for the promotion. Partners and users shared the content on the Facebook account of the project. Participants of the multiplier events and relevant stakeholders were informed about the results of the project together with its relevance and objectives.

Local Partners were involved through the communication strategy. For example, a local organization in the Netherlands, asked the coordinator to hold a dedicated session to inform participants about the GoDigital project.

Through the partners' websites, users could see the link to the project and visit its webpage (http://godigitalproject.eu).

The webpage of the project provided information to users.

The local network of staff, volunteers and members of the consortium all became aware of the project and its outputs.

Project success stories. Why project was successful and if not – what were the issues.

The COVID-19 epidemic and the lockdowns were the biggest issues that not only this consortium but the entire world had to deal with. Due to the inability to travel in 2020, the collaboration schedule slowed down. The partners were forced to find other ways to work together. To keep people engaged, virtual meetings were set up and research content and developments of the project were shared on social media. The consortium successfully solved these difficulties and managed to achieve the project's and the activities' outcomes. There were no disputes between the partners because communication was open and respectful, decisions were made democratically, and existing agreements made it easier to comprehend expectations and obligations.

It is worthy to note that because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world experienced events that highlighted the importance of mental and physical health. The project GoDigital involved a lot of research on this topic and the activities made the participants reflect on the current COVID situation in deeper ways. The participants realized that digital material could support people in isolated areas. They also saw that isolation, lockdown, unemployment, and mental health were issues that society was more focused on and felt the need to take action and suggest solutions. COVID-19 demonstrated how digital tools can promote inclusion and easy access to material for wider audiences. Everyone can use the web app developed by GoD and it is an open educational resource.

The difficult circumstance of the pandemic, however, brought the insight to create yet a new project to address these specific issues: 'Creative European Methodology' CEM. This project was later approved, and many of the partners engaged in it because they all wanted to continue working on the topic and assist young people in their daily lives.

Extra information

This image of a typewriter was used as the main image for communicating GoDigital project's aims, impact, and results.
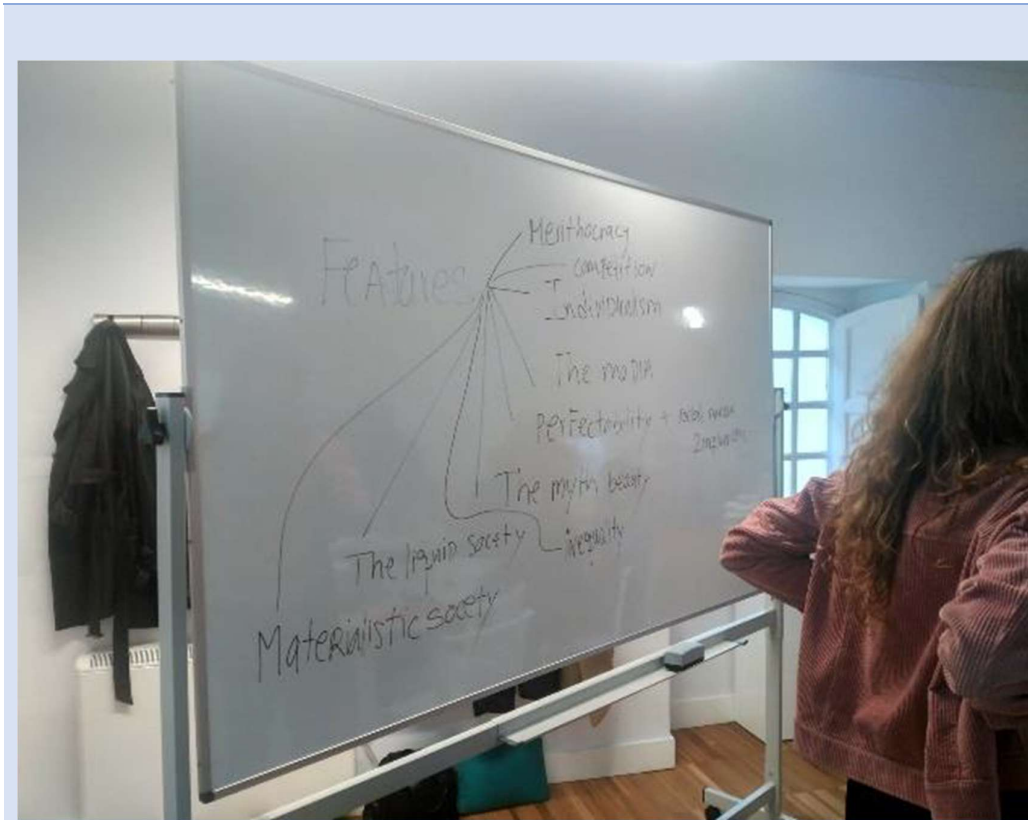
These pictures show some of the activities of the SHORT-TERM JOINT STAFF TRAINING held from 29th November – 3rd December, in A Coruña, (Spain).

The activities gathered 16 participants from the five partner organizations: Asociación Cultural Integra (ES), Stepp Strategie Servizi Sviluppo SRLS (IT), Academia Postal 3 Vigo S.L. (ES), Stichting Amsterdam European Mobility (NL), Stichting ZID (NL).

The training intended to develop an innovative and effective methodology for training about stress management. Each organization carried out two/three activities, covering a wide range of sub-themes and skills from different perspectives. Among the proposed activities there were : mindfulness, stress management and tai-chi, meditation, filling in the "Perceived stress scale", exploring personal boundaries for communicating within a group, storytelling, the StoryCatcher game and role playing.

Fate: Future Academy on Tour in Europe

Year of implementation:	
2020	
Project website	
https://www.fate-europe.eu/	
Country/countries of implementation:	
The Netherlands (main coordinator), Spain, Serbia, Germany and Italy	
Target group and number of participants engaged	
The main target groups are newcomers; refugees and migrants in Europe with fewer opportunities on the artistic field than other players. The Newcomers had a training in Netherlands and Spain where they had the opportunity to put up a performance in each country. The Number of participants engaged in each country are: The Netherlands- 28 participants on the training; Spain- 25 participants on the training.	
Project context	
Since the existence of human life, humans have always moved from one place to another to find resources or a better life. However, in Europe the so-called Mediterranean migrant crisis affects us directly. Migrants and asylum seekers have been crossing the Mediterranean for decades. The numbers have fluctuated over the years due to a variety of factors, including conditions in countries of origin and transit, geopolitical developments, and EU policies. In 2014, at least 219,000 people made the crossing, up from 60,000 the previous year. According to the UN refugee agency, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 89,500 crossed in the first five months of 2015. The principal route has long been from North Africa across the central Mediterranean, but increasing numbers	

now cross the Aegean Sea (eastern Mediterranean) from Turkey to the Greek islands. This trend has continued from the beginning of the crisis in 2014 to the present day.

The Netherlands is one of the main European countries welcoming migrants and asylum seekers. Among these newcomers, many skilled and artistic people arrive, who desire to express themselves and leave their creative mark.

The project FATE, aims to ensure that creative young people with a refugee or migrant background can participate equally in the professional art and culture sector, both on stage, behind the scenes and within organisations. Various studies have shown that participation of these young people in the professional arts and culture sector in Europe is still very limited. All the partners involved in this project who work on the performing and artistic field, believe that it's these people's "destiny" to stay in Europe and that they should be facilitated to participate in a full and sustainable way in the cultural life of their city, region, country and continent.

Project goals

This project aims to create a connection between new migrants, refugees and EU citizens through artistic training, inclusion and increasing employment in the cultural sector.

The goal is to generate interest and increase the employability of talented/professional creative migrants and refugees. It also aims to ensure that these "new players", also known as "urban talents", have equal job market opportunities in the cultural sector, compared to native European artists and creative professionals.

Project implementation

The project was implemented by a consortium led by ZID theatre.

The rest of the partners belong as well to the artistic field working in a very cooperative way to reach the goals of the project.

Partners are: Atalya Teatro (Spain), University of Torino (Italy); Studio 7 (Germany) and DAH Teater (Serbia).

How the needs of the stakeholders in the project were assessed and addressed.

The project partners implemented a lot of activities which enriched participants. Each country developed a training program consisting of3 parts: A series of lessons in which professional skills and artistic development was practised. A production phase in which a theater performance was developed, followed by an (inter)national tour and a mentorship program on building a network and getting knowledge about the host country's national creative and artistic sector. All partners did an international tour with these productions participating at the Explorez Festival happening in Amsterdam in May 2022.

How the project engaged with the participants, which tools and channels were used and why.

The main project engagement tools were the existing networks of partner organisations and their private communication channels. The project also had Facebook page and a website where all the successful stories were posted.

Project success stories. Why project was successful and if not – what were the issues.

The project is still running. It is very successful. The performances are welcomed very well in both countries. Some of the participants gained good opportunities during the project – like finding a job, having acted in a film, started master studies at music academy and so on.

During the training some participants fell out and it takes effort to keep on motivating participants and coach them to a good ending of the project.

Engaging other professionals and cultural institutions demands a lot of time. And organizing a meeting with them altogether is quite a challenge, because everybody has full schedules and are busy.

During the Explorez festival which was hosted by Zid Theater in May 2022, participants from the Spanish and Dutch training performed with the production created by them. Germany and Serbia also participated on the festival brining performances with actors with a migration background.

Extra information

FATE Training – Part 1, which took place from February to April 2021 in Amsterdam

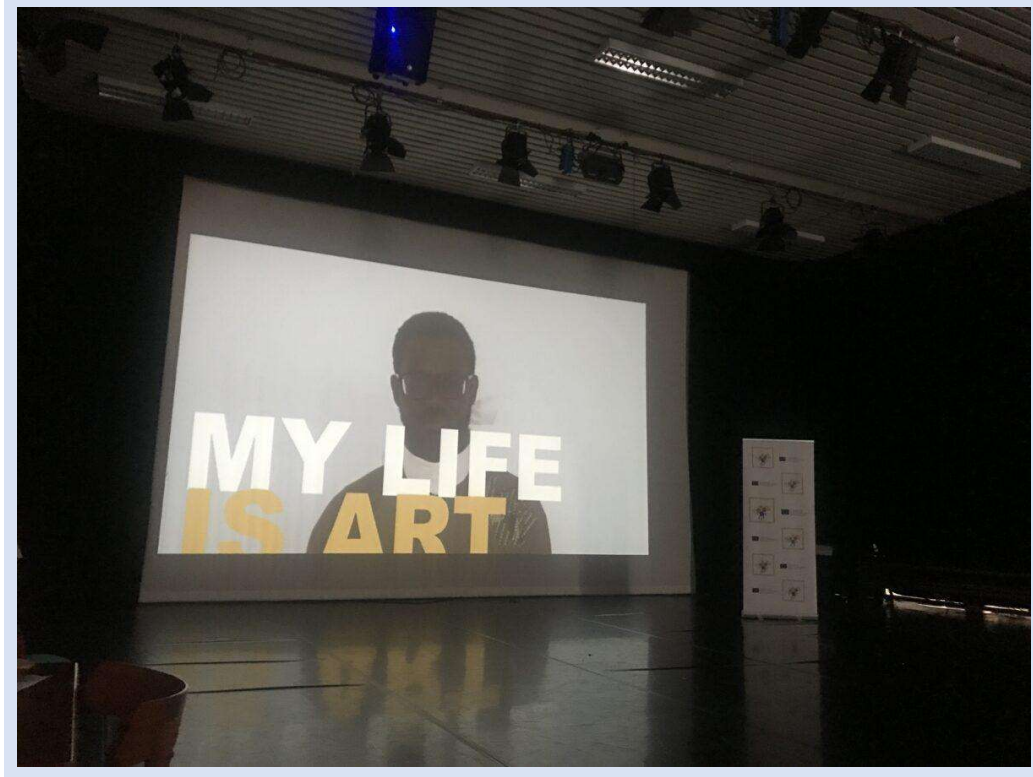https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=77LobzbHiDA

The presentations of the 3rd block of the training from ZID Theater, Solo's & Pitches, June 2021, Amsterdam

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xIpdjOCQfxw

Training in pictures:

Bridging the world

Year of implementation:	
2018	
Country/countries of implementation:	
The Netherlands, Poland and Greece	
Target group and number of participants engaged	
Young adults between 18 and 30 years, with no experience in volunteering but with high motivation to learn and to use new knowledge in practice after the youth exchange. The project involved 36 participants.	
Project context	
All the non-profit organisations engaged in this exchange recognised that the youth needs to meet their peers throughout Europe.	

All the non-profit organisations engaged in this exchange recognised that the youth needs to meet their peers throughout Europe.

We are currently seeing a new generation of young people who are involved in social processes and show commitment to work in the community. This was one of the motivations for this particular exchange. The core of the participating groups was also culturally diverse. Every group and country had their own way of handling themes like this. The consortium thought that it was important that the youth can learn this from one another.

Through this youth exchange, 30 young people from 3 countries (10 people in the Netherlands, 10 people in Greece and 10 people in Poland) expanded their knowledge about volunteering. They have also learned more about and discussed current problems related to youth unemployment, social inclusion and exclusion.

During the nine day program, a space was created for young people to meet and inspire each other, develop their capacities, connect with people from different cultures, and learn to understand them. This was achieved by participating in a varied program: open discussions, workshops, creative

sessions and cultural programs and visits to several organisations in Amsterdam that work with volunteers; an interactive program in which the creative methods of ZID (Netherlands), Brama (Poland) and Omma (Greece) were used to achieve the objectives.

Project goals

- To inspire and motivate participants to combat youth unemployment with volunteering and social involvement.
- To create awareness with regard to social problems caused by unemployment and social exclusion.
- To create a space where creative dialogue and constructive feedback can lead to new ideas and working methods.
- To obtain the necessary competencies and tools to get involved in projects within their communities with a focus on volunteering work (teamwork, creative thinking, meeting challenges, mind mapping stakeholders, depending on the needs of the participants).
- To create a network of participants for the development of new partnerships and support groups. As a result of the project, it was expected for more young people to exchange volunteer work as an effective tool to support the integration of the marginalized groups.

Project implementation

Bridging the world was an Erasmus+ youth mobility exchange program in Amsterdam hosted by ZID. It took place during the ExploreZ festival which ZID organises each year. The international festival ExploreZ is a multidisciplinary festival that connects art and social impact, both at local and international level. This was of high value for the exchange project because participants could meet more international youngsters, expand their network, join different programmes, and present themselves to the public.

The partners were:

- ZID Theater (project coordinator, the Netherlands)

- Brama Theater (Poland)
- Omma Theater (Greece)

All partners were responsible for the recruitment and selection of participants, their preparation, and the coaching. In addition, all partners gave workshops during the week, bringing in their expertise.

How the needs of the stakeholders in the project were assessed and addressed.

The partner organisations saw a common need to increase public awareness about volunteering to combat social problems, particularly youth unemployment and thus support social inclusion of excluded young people. Volunteering work is seen as an innovative and effective tool that offers many different options for reducing social problems worldwide. Volunteers are essential for social involvement in society, seize opportunities, that others lack, to improve social engagement, find new approaches and create solutions to change society for the better.

The project partners wanted to raise awareness about volunteering by working on young people's competencies so that they can use and make volunteering work attractive within their communities.

To achieve this, a nine-day programme was set up with various activities, which enriched the participants. These activities varied from workshops on communication; social and political issues; on the meaning of volunteering. and how the idea of volunteering differs from country to country; and preparing presentations for the public to improve organisational and public speaking skills.

Besides, the participants themselves were involved in the organisation. For example, they had to take care of their meals. To get hands-on experience, participants visited several organisations in Amsterdam - mainly social and cultural organisations whose work strongly depends on volunteers.

After the programme participants received their Youthpass certificate. The programme ended with a creative presentation for the audience.

How the project engaged with the participants, which tools and channels were used and why.

The information about the project "Bridging the World" was published on the websites of all partners and their social media accounts to inform and recruit participants. Also, newsletters were sent through the partner's mailing lists.

Before the start of the project, information was shared with the local and regional networks of the partners with details about the project.   A selection message with an application form was also published.

 The results were distributed as follows:

- – photos of the project with information on the Erasmus+ program;
- – video of the project via the social network with the Erasmus+ logo;
- – a report of the project with information and logo of Erasmus+.

Project success stories. Why project was successful and if not – what were the issues.

The main issue each partner has struggled with was to recruit the desired number of participants. This is because it took some extra effort for young people to clear their schedule for a program of 9 full days. Participants had to ask permission from their school, their work, or parents to be absent for a relatively long period.

But in the end, it appeared that many of them were enthusiast t to participate in the program, and a selection had to be made among the registrations.

When the project was approaching an end, an evaluation took place. Even though the project's schedule was very full and participants barely had spare time to visit the city, the overall feedback about the project was very positive.

The participants learned a lot and were particularly enthusiastic about the way they have learned, as they said all the workshops were very creative. In this case, the participants feedback being the most important evaluation factor of the project, it makes "Bridging the world" a success story.

Extra information

A visit to the Food Garden in Amsterdam. This is a voluntary project where city residents grow food for people that live in poverty. Photo credit: Maria Morales

The participants' final presentation on the last day of the programme was for the public. They showed in an artistic way, what they created during the week. Photo credit: Maria Morales

The end of the workshop given by Omma Theater, Greece. Photo credit: Karolina Spaic

CONCLUSIONS

This guidebook serves as an introduction to community engagement theories and concepts, from a youth perspective. We have shared the most common principles known for doing work with youth community engagement and the essential tools to manage the related projects. We conceived this guidebook to help you to write down your project ideas from scratch and to create an Action Plan for youth community engagement in four steps:

1. Identify the purpose;

2. Roles' distribution;

3. How to identify and reach your stakeholders and

4. Evaluation of the actions and further activities.

In the four steps, we discussed how to determine the purpose, aim, objectives, and depth of the community engagement processes, as well as the expected outcomes. We also reviewed the roles of the various actors involved in a project, such as users and beneficiaries of activities, project advisers, contributors to management processes, decision makers, and deliverers. We focused on the stakeholders and the actions needed to engage with them and communicate with them throughout the process. Finally, we explored common ways to track and evaluate the actions and impact of the project as well as to assess further actions and potential improvements.

Our idea was to cover key issues related to youth engagement that can be used in both small and large-scale community projects. Our objective was to show how these tools are adaptable in youth work and to offer examples of good practices coming from different cultural backgrounds. These include both smaller projects, carried out locally, and bigger international collaborations.

By showing examples of good practices, we wanted to avoid paternalistic attitudes so that you could see for yourself the main do's and don'ts and find the patterns that best suit your youth community. Therefore, it makes no difference whether you are just

starting with community engagement or, vice versa, whether you are well into it and looking for inspiration, insight or fresh information.

This guidebook was designed as a step-by-step manual – starting with the basic concepts, moving through the topics relevant to today's youth and concluding with tools and projects. However, youth work does not begin and end with following the standards – it entails innovating, pushing yourself beyond your comfort zone, sharing and learning together. To engage with young people and help them become active members of society, you must first understand their way of being, their needs and behaviours. You are both a teacher and a student here.

As this guidebook comes to an end, we rather feel that this is just the beginning. There are no manuals, nor theories that will teach you how to engage with youth: the keys are listening, seeing and exploring. Thus, there are no final words we will say on the topic. Participation is a continuous process. Allow young people to have a say in the matter. With your work, passion and engagement, you will help them participate and find their way in the world. We hope that this book will help you in achieving this goal.

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ANNEX

Useful Resources

- ➢ [Helping researchers become policy entrepreneurs: How to develop engagement strategies for evidence-based policymaking](#) (Overseas Development Institute)
- ➢ [Evidence and evaluation in policy making](#) (Institute for Government)
- ➢ [Communicating research for evidence-based policymaking: A practical guide for researchers in socio-economic sciences and humanities](#) (European Commission)
- ➢ [Impact Toolkit](#) (Economic and Social Research Council)
- ➢ [Europe Goes Local](#) is a European cooperation project to develop and strengthen local youth work.
- ➢ [The European Charter on Local Youth Work](#)
- ➢ https://www.salto-youth.net/ trainings, tools and state-of-art strategies for youth