



SHAPING

ON THE FUTURE

YOUTH IDEAS

OF EUROPE

Toolkit for EU Ambassadors & Influencers

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Introduction

The **EUROTHON Project** aims at *broadening youngsters' civic engagement, while strengthening their participation in democratic processes*. Way too often participation in democratic life is reduced to voting or standing for election – the project idea was born with the scope of subverting this attitude, in order to provide concrete tools for youth to become protagonists of European change.

The **European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life**¹ already in 2003 mentioned 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**”.*

By definition, toolkits include « *skills and knowledge that are useful for a particular purpose or activity* »². In this context, the **Toolkit for EU Ambassadors & Influencers** presents youth participation as an **attitude to daily life**, enabling young people to express their opinions, get involved and be part of the decision-making process at different levels.

The three chapters have a specific functionality for youngster to use

1. **Success Stories:** examples of successful active citizenship experiences
2. **Youth Engagement Strategies to promote EU values:** European political activism golden rules
3. **European Opportunities:** European opportunities' list for youth activism

What is Youth Participation/Engagement?

The EUROTHON project is based on the idea that **young people possess invaluable creative potential for the communities they live in**, and get empowered themselves when participating in active citizenship experiences. Following the definition of the United Nations³, youth engagement harnesses the potential of youth in the following ways :

- **Empowerment**

Youth engagement is a process that enables youth to ***understand, realise and claim their rights***.

¹ Source: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/-/revised-european-charter-on-the-participation-of-young-people-in-local-and-regional-life>

² Cambridge online dictionary : <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/it/dizionario/inglese/tool-kit>

³ Source: UN “Meaningfully engaging with youth » (2019), <https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2021/05/Meaningfully-engaging-youth-Guidance-training-UN-staff.pdf>

- **Agency**

Youth engagement encourages peer-to-peer organizations and the expression of their voices and ideas.

- **Identity**

Youth engagement contributes to identity-building while strengthening a number of life skills that are key in all aspects of their lives (soft and hard skills)

For many people, ‘**citizenship**’ is the embodiment of the rights and responsibilities, which they derive from living in a particular nation-state. For EUROTHON, this is not enough. The term ‘**active**’ needs to be added to the equation, with the fundamental implication that citizens should be enabled to be actively involved in community activities and in decision-making at all levels. In this sense, active citizens stand at the heart of democracy and – if combined with a social justice agenda – it can help create a more robust and fairer society.

What you gain as an EU youth ambassador

Being a youth ambassador means playing an active role in either grassroots organisations, national and/or international events. This ensures that the voice of young people is heard whenever new tools and services are created. Youth engagement is linked to youth being involved within challenging and yet responsible actions that are aimed at **the crafting of concrete, positive social change**. Young people possess both the greatest understanding of their own needs and the energetic creativity to rethink old problems in completely innovative ways⁴. The way in which this become possible is:

- **Involvement within decision-making processes:** by involving youth in planning and in making decisions that affect themselves and others.
- **Projects and partnerships :** Youth engagement happens in both **peer-to-peer** and **youth-adult partnerships** that are structured so that both groups contribute, teach, and learn from each other⁵.

All official EU Ambassadors are professionally called upon to protect and promote the EU Values. Such protection and promotion of EU Values will thus also be at the heart of your personal proposals and ideas and of your further activities connected to those proposals and ideas as EU Cultural Youth Ambassadors. European Youngsters can become EU Cultural Youth Ambassadors, using all the available opportunities and benefitting from a much more active and effective participation in the EU decision-making process.

⁴ Source : IYF, <https://iyfglobal.org/youth-engagement>

⁵ Source : Act for Youth, https://actforyouth.net/youth_development/engagement/

How to use the toolkit?

The toolkit is meant as a practical set of **indications on how to pursue active citizenship**. Starting from a set of good example of successful youth engagement practices, we'll provide concrete social media and event management tools, to finally conclude with a list of the newest european opportunities that support and promote youth activism.

The three chapters go as follows:

1. Good Practices

A set of good practices linked to youth democratic participation and active citizenship.

The topics included: how to be a change-maker; intercultural dialogue; environment; social entrepreneurship; being a EU ambassador.

2. Youth Engagement Strategies to promote EU values:

Golden rules and useful information for young people undertaking political activism (such as demonstrating, volunteering in associations and expressing their ideas through social media).

The topics: organisation of community events; use of social media, establishing partnerships, strategies for sustaining youth engagement.

3. European Opportunities

List of potential opportunities coming directly from the EU and promoting youth activism

1. Success Stories

1.1 How to become a change maker

Good Practices		
1	Name of the practice	Kecejme do toho (Have Your Say) - Structured Dialogue Czech Republic
	Main aim	Project Kecejme do toho (Have Your Say) aimed at providing structured participation and dialogue for young people between 15 and 26 on <i>policy</i> topics. It organised discussions, workshops, working groups and other kind of events, where young people discussed topics that impact them on national and EU level and engaged with policymakers. This is a best practice in youth-driven selection of topics and development of policy proposals. It engaged a wide population of young people using a unique mixture of online and in person activities, including local workshops, open air festivals, events in music clubs, bar camp, as well as formal discussions and consultations. All activities were based on principles of equality and partnership between young people, experts and policymakers, with the latter prepared on how to optimally discuss with young people.
	Actors/Stakeholders involved	Czech Council of Children and Youth, National Children and Youth Parliament, youth organisations, and student and university associations
	Geographical coverage (local/national/international)	National

	Activities	1. Looking for Topics – Young people suggested topics of interest both online and at events. This included a large launch event, such as an open-air festival in a park in Prague in the first year. The most frequently proposed topics were then identified and put to a selection vote online. 2. Information Base – Mini-analyses of the selected topics were prepared by youth involved in the project and published online. 3. Online discussions – On their website and on social media. 4. Workshops – Organised in various regions (usually 15-25 people). Ca. 3 hours, resulting in a draft opinion on the topic. 5. Discussions with Experts – A public event with 30-50 people. Youth presented their draft opinions and experts shared perspectives. Amendments could be made if all sides agree. 6. National Conference – Discussions on the outcomes of the workshops. It culminated in a final jointly agreed text that represented the views of young people throughout the project. 7. Presentation of Outputs - Opinions from the National Conference published online. Outputs receiving majority support in an online poll were presented to political representatives, ministries, media organisations and stakeholders.
	Outcomes	● Reached approximately 35,000 young participants over five years who proposed, discussed and voted on many different topics. Issues raised and discussed included university fees, youth unemployment and support for young families. ● Concrete policy follow-up was mixed. On university fees, they were the only youth group to present to a parliament committee and the Department of Education. On many other topics where they engaged with various experts and policymakers, their impact was hard to assess. Outcomes from the project were reflected in the state Youth Strategy 2014 – 2020 and cited in documents of the EU's EESC. ● With the establishment of a permanent Structured Dialogue with Youth by the Czech government in 2015, one of the project's initial goals, organisers decided to stop the initiative. Organiser also wished to avoid cannibalising funding sources from small local groups motivated by the project to do similar work.
	Sources	Website: https://www.kedith.gr/en/youth-4-youth-policy-making BORKOWSKA-WASZAK, Sylwia, and others (2020), « Good Practices of Youth Participation », Youth for a Just Transition project, p.10-11

		https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/eu_regional_and_urban_development/topics/documents/youth_for_a_just_transition_mid-term_deliverable_report_final.pdf
2	Name of the practice	Com'ON Cluj-Napoca - participatory budgeting project Romania
	Main aim	The main goal of Com'ON Cluj-Napoca is to develop social cohesion in the urban areas by empowering young people in developing and implementing ideas for their community. Additional aims were - to provide financial support for actions of informal groups of young people - to develop intergenerational trust in the urban community through the validation of ideas which appeal to the majority, - to develop trust between local authorities and the population by delegating decisions on public funds towards all members of society.
	Actors/Stakeholders involved	Young people aged between 14-35, Municipality (funds provider), process coordinator (legal entity such NGO), facilitators (youth people workers), partner organisations (promoting process and mentoring)
	Geographical coverage (local/national/international)	Local
	Activities	Awareness raising activities (via schools, regional media etc.) focusing on young people and the possibility to elaborate and implement small-scale ideas (max funding of 1,000 EUR) Sessions with young people and facilitators about how they perceive their communities and what initiatives they could take in their regions. Young people were encouraged to come forward with specific ideas regarding community action. To do so, they had to form groups composed of at least 3 persons and each of the informal groups could propose ideas to be implemented. Young people were assisted in developing their ideas further while the local council assessed the technical suitability (potential legal or logistical impediments) of the endeavours proposed. The municipality also provided help in adjusting those ideas in order for them to be eligible in the voting process. - Young people (above the age of 18) took part in a digital voting process regarding the allocation of existing funds for proposed initiatives.

		6. The initiatives with the most votes received funding and proposing groups organise and implement them while receiving the necessary support from local authorities and facilitators.
	Outcomes	• Young people received more than 120,000 EUR for their initiatives and the project mobilised 248 informal groups totaling over 750 young individuals. Some of the informal groups formed for the purposes of the project developed into youth organisations, such as environment-focused activist groups. • Out of 437 initiatives proposed, 117 received funding and almost 19,000 people in total participated in the voting process. One of the most prominent initiatives led to young artists receiving funding for public space artistic interventions. • Following this attempt, the city moved on to complete two more similar initiatives in which all residents were included, enhancing further the overall culture of participation
	Sources	Website: www.comoncluj.ro BORKOWSKA-WASZAK, Sylwia, and others (2020), « Good Practices of Youth Participation », Youth for a Just Transition project, p.38-39 https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/eu_regional_and_urban_development/topics/documents/youth_for_a_just_transition_mid-term_deliverable_report_final.pdf

1.2 Intercultural Dialogue

Good Practices		
1	Name of the practice	Different Cultures – Common Values Educational project on intercultural dialogue in schools. Implemented in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Turkey, and Tunisia, funded by Anna Lindh Foundation, and led by the project partner Alliance for Regional and Civil Initiatives (ARCI), Bulgaria.
	Main aim	In a world where people from all cultures and faiths are increasingly mixing, intercultural awareness is an ever more needed skill. Based on these observations, Different Cultures – Common Values was set out to promote mutual understanding among young people and minorities in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

		Another purpose was to encourage intercultural awareness, dialogue and mutual understanding among the young people of the Euro-Med region, so that they have respect for the culture specifics and to exchange common values.
Actors/Stakeholders involved		❖ Teachers ❖ Children at the ages of 14-18 years ❖ Representatives of different minority groups
Geographical coverage (local/national/international)		International
Activities		The activities of this Good Practice example included: ❖ Producing a Booklet with a methodology on conducting lessons on intercultural awareness ❖ Organising and delivering a training of coordinators of project partners ❖ Conducting a Focus groups with representatives of the target groups ❖ Planning and delivering lessons with children and young people in different themes according to the booklet, incl. discussion with the children ❖ designing a Catalogue for exchange of knowledge to increase young people's skills ❖ Preparing a closure lesson called "Ethno Happening".
Outcomes		The project was funded by the Anna Lindh Foundation, and it included contributions and participation from the Alliance for Regional and Civil Initiatives (ARCI), Bulgaria, Future Worlds Centre (FWC), Cyprus, Tunisian Association for Cultural Action (ATAC), Tunisia, and The Economic Research and Social Solidarity Foundation of the Balkan Immigrants (BISAV), Turkey. Based on this, the following outcomes can be noticed: ❖ Booklet with a methodology on conducting lessons on intercultural awareness ❖ Training of coordinators of project partners ❖ Focus groups with representatives of the target groups ❖ Lessons with children and young people in different themes according to the booklet, incl. discussion with the children ❖ Catalogue for exchange of knowledge to increase young people's skills ❖ A closure lesson called "Ethno Happening". The project directly benefited: ✓ 20 teachers (5 teachers per country), ✓ 200 children at the ages of 14-18 years (10 children per teacher, 50 children per country)

	Sources	✓ 40 representatives of different minority groups Name of the project: “Different Cultures – Common Values”, Project No ALF/CFP/2015/EDU/91 Period of implementation: 01.09.2016 – 31.08.2017 https://www.annalindhoundation.org/resources/good-practices/different-cultures-common-values https://www.facebook.com/pg/Different-Cultures-Common-Values-1141193652647059/about/?ref=page_internal
2	Name of the practice	Designing Dialogue (Croatia, Spain, Romania and Turkey)
	Main aim	The main aim of this Good Practice was to involve young people and decision-makers, as well as experts in public policy from 4 countries (Croatia, Spain, Romania and Turkey) in a transnational meeting between young people and decision makers, with the purpose to create coherent and needs-oriented model of dialogue to be further implemented on local/regional/national level, as well as to connect processes of Structured Dialogue and Model Dialogue with creating efficient youth strategies. Target objective: involve 46 participants, among which 32 young people, 6 accompanying persons and 8 decision makers/experts
	Actors/Stakeholders involved	❖ Young people ❖ Decision-makers ❖ Experts in public policy
	Geographical coverage (local/national/international)	International
	Activities	The activities of this Good Practice example included: ❖ Creating coherent and needs-oriented model of dialogue between young people and decision makers ❖ Connecting processes of Structured Dialogue and Model Dialogue with creating efficient youth strategies ❖ develop life skills which young people need to advocate become active, responsible and content citizens (e.g. organisational, conflict and problem solving, teamwork and leadership) based on Structured Dialogue ❖ Encourage active participation and intercultural dialogue ❖ Improving interest in socio-economic development and intercultural communication, as well as value diversity and respect other opinions
	Outcomes	The outcomes of this Good Practice example included: ❖ Model dialogue shaped through a set of workshops, where participants explored different dialogue approaches, roles of decision makers, methods

		❖ Model dialogue including 5 comprehensive steps (identification, strategy performance & control, project definition & planning, implementation, dissemination and evaluation) The Model dialogue was incorporated into a tangible result - publication - in order to visualise it and deliver to relevant stakeholders to encourage their exploitation of project results. Publication contains the following parts: definition of key terms (such as youth participation, active citizenship, dialogue), the EU model of dialogue - Structured dialogue, explanation of process of creating Model Dialogue (setting the agenda, selecting participants, preparatory activities, choosing dialogue approach(es), identifying potential issues, evaluation of performance), steps of Model Dialogue itself, menu of dialogue methods, final conclusion and contributions to the development of this result. It can be accessed here: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/project-result-content/b85f2f18-7439-47df-962f-251a63cd54e4/brochure_DesDi_Croatia.pdf
	Sources	Designing Dialogue https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2016-1-HR01-KA347-021987

1.3 Save the planet

Good Practices		
1	Name of the practice	K2Games - Learning by Playing Erasmus+ Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices- Strategic Partnerships for youth
	Main aim	The project aimed at making accessible, for youth workers and young people, several games as educational tools and methods in non-formal and informal contexts. The games, along with additional guidance, would help them acquire relevant sustainability-related competencies, while developing constructive, pro-active and empowering attitudes about environmental issues that impact human health and community welfare. The project sought to reach this aim by: 1. Understanding and sharing findings about when and how simulation games and board games can be used by youth workers as tools and/or methods in various educational contexts when working on education for environmental health and sustainable consumption. 2. Providing youth workers with know-how on developing simulation and board games as learning tools in education on this topic.

		3. Providing youth workers a wider youth worker community and young people with a collection of simulation and board games focused on issues related to the topics of this project, which are currently of most concern in the European region.
	Actors/Stakeholders involved	- Youth workers - Youth worker's community - Young people - Organisations working with young people
	Geographical coverage (local/national/international)	International
	Activities	- A series of focus group meetings with youth workers - Research on simulation and board games in non-formal education - Local meetings with stakeholders to test and improve the quality of project results
	Outcomes	The main outcomes of this project are: - 2 board games: K2 Pioneer City (cooperative boardgame) and K2 recycling Party (competitive card game) - 5 simulation games: K2 Air Quality, K2 City Gardens, K2 Waste Management, and K2 Climate Negotiations (2 in 1) - Guide on how to use (and develop) games as educational tools. The guide ensures that we don't only provide the fish, but also assist youth workers in catching their own fish, i.e. develop/use own games on environment, health and sustainable consumption.
	Sources	http://k2games.info http://k2games.info/games/pioneer-city http://k2games.info/games/recycling-party http://k2games.info/games/air-quality http://k2games.info/games/waste-management http://k2games.info/games/climate-negotiations http://k2games.info/games/city-gardens
2	Name of the practice	GEO-6 for Youth/UNEP's first fully interactive e-publication (International)
	Main aim	GEO-6 for Youth is a one-stop-shop for a young person to understand the state of the environment, what they can do every day to drive markets to adopt environmentally sustainable products and services and how to develop their skills and choose environmentally sustainable careers. The report provides background to help understand the issues, but most importantly shows how youth have the power to bring about transformative change for the environment. GEO-6 for Youth is UNEP's first fully interactive e-publication and provides engaging multimedia

	content and interactive features to inform, engage, educate, and lead to youth action. The report aims to: • Translate high-level, scientific messages on the state of the environment for a youth audience (ages 15 to 24), • Define how youth can bring about transformational change by creating and accessing environmentally sustainable jobs, • Identify daily sustainability actions that can change market dynamics to achieve an environmentally sustainable world by 2050.
Actors/Stakeholders involved	- Young people - Youth workers - Organisations working with young people
Geographical coverage (local/national/international)	International
Activities	The GEO-6 for Youth report is an interactive-e-publication, featuring interactive infographics, quizzes, videos and other activities to engage the young reader in learning more about environmental issues. GEO-6 for Youth is here to help understand environmental issues and how they relate to young people, but most importantly to show how the youth have the power to bring about transformative change.
Outcomes	Chapter 1 translates the messages of the main GEO-6 report by providing an overview of the current state of our environment and its implications to youth. The chapter covers the areas of land, biodiversity, oceans, freshwater, air and climate linking it to food, energy and waste systems. Chapter 2 shows possible future scenarios in the areas of air, biodiversity, land, freshwater, oceans linking it to food, energy and waste systems. Fictional characters will guide you into possible future scenarios for each of these systems. Interactive infographics helps this journey Chapter 3 presents a guide of actions for the youth to have a sustainable impact on the environment, achieve a circular economy and make a change. Daily and once-in-a-lifetime actions (and their impacts linked to food, energy and waste) are listed both on a personal and collective level. Many videos from activists and entrepreneurs are included to inspire the reader. Chapter 4 presents possible career paths, future opportunities through green jobs and shows how choosing a sustainable job or making a

		traditional job greener has a positive environmental impact. Engaging infographics are there to help navigate the issues.
	Sources	https://content.yudu.com/web/2y3n2/0A2y3n3/GEO-6-for-Youth/html/index.html?origin=reader

1.4 Social Entrepreneurship

Good Practices		
1	Name of the practice	Youthnest (Greece)
	Main aim	To tackle social challenges in Greece and abroad with an innovative approach. The Youth nest team believes that sustainable and holistic solutions for social challenges in education, environment, democracy, health, culture, and in every other aspect of our lives, require an innovative, collective and systemic approach and they have designed services to achieve such a meaningful change in Greek society and abroad.
	Actors/Stakeholders involved	Citizens, NGOs, Municipalities, Foundations, CSR departments, Research and innovation institutions
	Geographical coverage (local/national/international)	- Regional (north Greece) /National - International
	Activities	Youth nest is an NGO ran by a group of young professionals. The organisations offers services having social innovation as a key value: <u>Project management</u>: co-design participatory projects that respond effectively to the society's needs, engage citizens and contribute to systemic change. Projects vary from the transformation of schoolyards into accessible community spaces, to the interactive awareness raising for citizens regarding issues of sustainable mobility. The ultimate goal of every project is to create a positive social impact. <u>Service design</u>: empathize, ideate, prototype and test are the steps for effectively designing a new social service. The Youthnest's team has collaborated from the Municipality of Thessaloniki for the improvement of the social service "Help at Home", and with the international foundation "Robert Bosch Stiftung" for the creation of educational programs for the digitization of social services.

		<u>Workshops and training facilitation</u>: they offer trainings or facilitate trainings of other organisations. Training is offered onsite or online, and include workshops, bootcamps, hackathons and visual notetaking <u>Organisational development</u>: support of enterprises with a social character through co-design of strategies and skills development, so as to achieve a more systemic impact.
	Outcomes	Since its foundation in 2015, the youth nest team has trained approximately 2100 participants in workshops, has reached with its activities a total of 31.122 people and shaped partnerships with 82 organisations (institutions, companies and NGOs) with presence in more than 10 countries.
	Sources	http://www.youthnest.com
1	Name of the practice	AddioPizzo Foundation (Italy)
	Main aim	Promote of legality and solidarity culture against organized crime
	Actors/Stakeholders involved	The Addiopizzo business network brings together shopkeepers and entrepreneurs who are against « protection money » (i.e. paying mafia for racket). These entrepreneurs are, in turn, supported by thousands of citizens/consumers who reward them with their daily purchasing choices.
	Geographical coverage (local/national/inter national)	- Local – Palermo - National – outreach activities
	Activities	Addiopizzo's action strategy is based on three main areas of intervention: Assistance to Mafia victims 24/7 toll-free support number dedicated to report extortion attempts, usury, threats, damage, theft and other forms of mafia intimidation Critical consumption A network of Mafia-free companies, composed of shopkeepers, artisans and entrepreneurs who refuse to pay the pizzo. The network overcomes the sense of isolation and discourages any possible retaliation by the Mafia. Social inclusion & volunteering By fighting against economic and educational poverty, the outreach activities organized locally are linked to education and urban regeneration. They target children, teenagers and families and are aimed at improving their condition and preventing delinquency.
	Outcomes	Since 2004, Addiopizzo has been working in Palermo and Sicily to promote a cultural revolution against mafias. Individual and collective

		responsibility, participation, freedom, youth leadership, solidarity and social justice are the values in which Addiopizzo identifies. This foundation has contributed to the creation of a grass-roots campaign that unites economic operators and citizen-consumers in resisting the Mafia extortion racket and its linked power system.
	Sources	https://addiopizzo.org

1.5 Be an EU Ambassador

Good Practices		
1	Name of the practice	The Young European Ambassadors Initiative (YEAs) International
	Main aim	Raising awareness of the cooperation of the EU in the Region and helping with developing youth policies on working together for a better future
	Actors/Stakeholders involved	Young people, between 16 and 26 years old and from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, the EU Member States and the UK
	Geographical coverage (local/national/international)	International
	Activities	This Initiative started already in June 2016 being part of the 'EU NEIGHBOURS east' Project under the Open Neighbourhood Program of the EU. In 2021 there were already hundreds of Young European Ambassadors in the six mentioned countries from the EU's eastern partnership, the 27 EU Member States and the UK which means that there are now already Young European Ambassadors from more than 30 different countries. The YEAs are volunteering students, young professionals and leaders who are undertaking more than hundreds of activities across the involved countries and also online. Through the Initiative the YEAs gain opportunities of volunteering, career building and young leadership. They are taking part in and contributing to EU Events like European Youth Forums; Expert trainings in which they gain first-hand and detailed knowledge about the EU from Experts in EU Affairs (EU Officials, Diplomats, Journalists, Leaders of Civil Society and Companies); YEA trainings in which they learn to transfer their gained knowledge to peers while keeping up the high level of knowledge quality; community events and online activities.

	Outcomes	Through the Initiative the YEAs find the opportunity to meet new people who are like-minded while coming from so many different countries, and to develop further their personal skills. The Initiative also offers to the YEAs the opportunity to travel through their countries and to interact and exchange ideas with many others from their countries about the European Union, about the partnership their specific country is having with the European Union and about all the opportunities that are connected to the partnership between the European Union and their specific country. While being active in their communities, the YEAs are having the chance of showing their friends, family and country through spoken and written (e-)word the society and world they would like to live in and about which they are dreaming. In this way the YEAs are having a strong impact on the people around them and so always gradually further on their fellow countrymen, on all their lives and finally on the future of their country.
	Sources	https://www.euneighbours.eu/en/east/stay-informed/cards/young-european-ambassadors-eu
2	Name of the practice	European Climate Pact Ambassadors International
	Main aim	The main aim is to build a more sustainable Europe and commit to climate action.
	Actors/Stakeholders involved	The ambassadors of the European Climate Pact are people from different sectors of society from all over Europe and are all committed to climate action. They are individuals who are leaders in: local communities, networks, civil society organisations, youth and student initiatives, as well as mayors, other public office holders, opinion leaders and influencers, from across Europe. Across all categories: Ambassadors should have made a Climate Pact Pledge on behalf of their organisation/group. Ambassadors commit to respecting the Pact's values Ambassadors should be a resident of an EU Member State.
	Geographical coverage (local/national/international)	EU/International
	Activities	European Climate Pact Ambassadors inform, inspire and support climate policy and action in their communities and networks. They also connect their networks with others in the Climate Pact. The activities they undertake are:

	• Raising awareness of the causes and impacts of climate change • Promoting individual and organisational climate action in your network, including Pact pledging • Participating in public and private events as a representative of the European Climate Pact. • Communicating on your climate action and ambition and the Pact activities at large • Organisation of online and offline events and thematic discussions, such as Peer Parliaments • Organising activities related to climate and environmental action, for example, planting trees, car free days, information and awareness days • Connecting local climate activists with other relevant networks and stakeholders • Exchanging knowledge through peer-to-peer learning • Testing climate solutions so that they can be replicated and spread
Outcomes	Through the initiative European Climate Pact Ambassadors can gain access to a local as well as European-wide network of Climate Pact Ambassadors and to resources and toolkits on climate change. They also have the opportunity to gain visibility for their climate action and advocacy on the Pact website and social media content, as well as to participate in European Climate Pact events across Europe. The Ambassadors have dedicated access to online and in-person workshops with European Commission policy experts on climate action related topics, as well as ad-hoc capacity building support. Furthermore they can showcase their dedication to the fight against climate change, Inspire others to take climate action and to build a more sustainable Europe.
Sources	https://climate-pact.europa.eu/ambassadors/become-ambassador-or-friend-pact_en

2. Youth Engagement Strategies to promote EU values

2.1 Organisation of community events

Community events are excellent for promoting positive change, and there is opportunity for improvement in every community⁶. Event ideas for communities come in all shapes and sizes and may have civic, political, public, or educational nature. It can range from locally-attended gardening days to collective initiatives against a new ‘harmful’ law for the environment attracting thousands of people nationwide.

There are numerous types and formats of community events. Here are some examples:

- ★ Cleanup events: e.g. monthly cleanup events where people can meet, get to know each other, and work together to make a difference
- ★ A donation drive: collect items that individuals and families in your area may need e.g. school supplies, clothes, food, toys, books
- ★ Community training events: help locals to expand their knowledge to certain topics and acquire new skills
- ★ An arts and crafts festival: Why not engage with up and coming artists, musicians or people enthusiastic about handcrafts in your area and organise a festival for them to showcase their work?
- ★ A quiz night: you can bring together lots of different elements to ensure the night goes off to a great start. Ensure there are refreshments available, some good prizes for the winners, perhaps some entertainment for the break. The quiz can be straight linked to the cause you want to promote and can be a driver to raise awareness and understanding through a fun mode.
- ★ Gardening days: get together and beautify your neighbourhood. If there’s a green space in your area that has seen better days, why not organise a group of locals to restore it? Or why not promoting urban gardening on the terrace of a building?

Have you identified an issue that affects your community? How can you organize an event, bring people together and work collectively to improve certain conditions in your neighbourhood/city?

Before starting planning, define your aim and objectives for doing this event. Ask yourself:

- o Why do I want to hold an event?
- o Who is the event for?
- o Who is going to be involved?
- o How many attendees are you hoping to get?
- o What are the expected outcomes from this event? What do I want to achieve?
- o How long do I have to plan the event?

Then, start planning!

⁶ <https://plunkett.co.uk/> (planning a community event)

Below you will find certain steps that you should follow so that you can effectively organise (together with others) an event addressed to the needs of your community.

Step 1: Find some people to work with you - form a core group

If you are organising a community event, you probably don't want to do it alone; it's more fun to plan with others, and you can draw upon their ideas and experience to create an engaging experience. You can reach out to your contacts or recruit a team of volunteers to assist you in different phases of the event planning and execution.

Step 2: Explore the event possibilities

At the beginning, keep the possibilities wide open. You can make a list of possible events that are feasible to create and build upon each other's ideas. Keep always in mind what your event objectives are.

Step 3: Choose the event type and format

What should your selection criteria be?

- ❖ First, the event must be something that the local community will support.
- ❖ Second, the event must be one that you can manage and deliver, both in terms of resources, expertise, and time.
- ❖ Third, the event should be aligned for the social cause you want to promote and raise awareness/bring action

Step 4: Select the event date, place and time

In order to start planning all necessary activities to run, you have to identify with your core team a suitable place, date and time.

First, you must make sure that your core team, and possibly volunteers, are available to assist/participate in the defined date.

Second, you have to consider which would be a suitable time for your participants to attend e.g. if families/employees are likely to be involved, it would be better to organise your event in the evening, after the end of their regular work.

Third, you must consider national holidays or other relevant events in your area that may coincide with your date selection. It is better to avoid such days, so as not to jeopardise attendance rates.

Step 5: Define the necessary tasks

The tasks to be done will depend upon your particular event. Some common tasks in the context of organising events include:

- Publicity: door-to-door outreach, telephone calls, mailings, flyer distribution, club, or school announcements, and social media outreach.
- Finance: including budgeting for event equipment and material
- Site selection and arrangements: sound systems, computer/laptop, presentation tools, sanitary arrangements, food and beverages, etc.
- Activities: this means set-up, registration, schedules, contact exhibitors and/or presenters, event facilitation processes
- Post event: clean up, thank you messages, event evaluation

You may also want to recruit other people from the wider community to spread the news about your event; if so, you could send a press release to the local paper/website, distribute flyers and posters, and communicate your initiative to youth groups.

Step 6: Divide up the work

The principles here are that (a) everyone in the core team should do something, and (b) tasks should match up with personal preferences, skills, and available time.

For a clear task division, you can use a [task list](#) as a reference point. The core team should agree upon the assignments and everyone should have the names and contact numbers of all the key people involved. One should be the referent for the overall coordination to take place and it is important that the lines of responsibility are clear to everyone

For the task division, before, during and after the event, the RACI chart is another handy tool to use - a type of responsibility assignment matrix in project management. Find more info about how you can create your own RACI chart [here](#).

Step 7: Prepare a budget and identify other possible financial resources

This is an important step. Based on your needed tasks, you should make a list of all projected expenses even if you plan to cover some requirements e.g. loudspeakers, microphone with your own assets. And don't forget to explore all other possible ways for resources: Can you get corporate donations/ support from local authorities to help with expenses?

Publicity should also be an item of budgeting because you definitely have to spread the word! One should consider what can be achieved via organic reach (e.g. social media posts, word of mouth) and what can be invested for paid reach (e.g. a social media campaign) and production of event promotional material (e.g. leaflet, posters).

Step 8: Develop a timetable

Everyone should know who will do what by when. In other words, deadlines for completion should be set and achieved for each important task. One should also monitor those deadlines. It's everyone's job, but

especially the coordinator's, to make sure that tasks execution remain on course and that each task is finished. The dates for each task should be put in a table or chart: you can expand your task list or RACI chart to include such deadlines.

For some people, all this planning and timetable-drafting may seem to require too much effort, but careful planning is a key component to achieve a successful event. Careful planning will also assist you to avoid any last-minute pitfalls that could negatively affect your event.

Step 9: Do it! – The event day

Once you have completed the previous steps, you should be ready to hold your event. On the event day, it's usually a good idea to meet before the starting time with your event team to go through the schedule, to possibly take care of any last-minute details, to address any last-minute questions, and to get prepared for any contingencies. Using mobile phones or two-way communication systems are vital for people to stay in touch with each other.

While the event is up and running, the event team should follow the timetable as agreed in the previous step to ensure that all aspects of the event are covered. A person with problem solving skills (might be you or someone else from the core team) should be available on spot to help the event team/runners with any issues that might arise.

Step 10: Clean up

The event isn't over when the audience leaves. Almost any event will involve cleaning up and on the same day - removing rubbish and equipment, collection of signs, storing/ returning any equipment.

Step 11: Give thanks to your team and the participants

Giving thanks is part of an event follow-up; everyone who has helped in the organisation and execution of an event should be thanked after it is finished (ideally, throughout as well). This can be done via a personal phone call or message, an announcement in a local newsletter/website/social media, or an after party for all the volunteers/speakers who assisted in the realisation of the event.

Acknowledging people's contribution and thanking them is important for two main reasons: firstly, it's the right thing to do and secondly, when people feel appreciated, they are more likely to be available for another initiative. If their contribution is not recognised, they may not be keen on participating in a similar future event.

Step 12: Conduct evaluation of the event

In this last step, you need to analyse the event and evaluate what has been achieved in terms of your original goals. This refers both to the event team and the people who attended your event.

- ❖ Do a 'washing-up session' with the core team: at this meeting, you can discuss what went well, and what didn't go very well, and what could be done to make improvements next time.
- ❖ You can also send out an evaluation survey and ask your audience to rate their experience! If you have collected attendees' contact details you can send out an email with the satisfaction survey. Free tools to use: [Google Forms](#), [Free Online Surveys](#)

An alternative is to seek 'live' feedback from participants towards the end of the event via tools such as [Kahoot](#) or [Mentimeter](#). Committing to reflection and evaluation after the completion of an event is as important as committing to planning the event. It allows you and your peers to learn from the event and make decisions about other future initiatives.

2.2 Use of social media

- **How can social media increase youth participation?**

Today we live in a digital world, and most of our relationships have moved online to chats, messengers, social media, and many other ways of online communication. We do not see each other, but we do share our data; we do not talk to each other, but we give our opinions liberally. Social media are great technological tools not only for exchanging messages, but also for interactive communication and global participation. The list of social media platforms is growing, and well-known platforms are always evolving and adding new features, such as photo and video sharing, blogging, community building etc.

Young people tend to be the most avid users of social media, so if youth engagement is a part of your mission, social media and engaging with young people online should be a part of your strategic plan. Young people can bring valuable ideas and perspectives to the table and can help ensure the initiative will resonate with other youth. Through social media, they can share easily their opinion, without any obstacles. While there are many downsides to social media that we are well aware of, it is possible and important to create a space where young people can express their opinions and have access to vital information. With 90% percent of young people ages 13-17 reporting to have used social media, it only makes sense that some of the content you create should include their voice. In addition to being an essential space for information sharing, youth engagement on social networks can help young people feel informed, empowered, and represented.

In different forms of online social networks, several of their members have never met face-to-face, but they feel they belong to a group of people with similar interests and characteristics. Many social networking services can host virtual communities, since they bring together people linked by common interests that remain linked and involved for a long period, as they use the Internet as a new anthropological space where they share knowledge and learn. Virtual communities are built on social interactions, practices and relationships. Therefore, their success is not necessarily measured by the number of individuals that are part of it, but by the ability of their members to create social bonds and engage in online conversations or activities.

- **Useful channels**

The first step to recruit youth is to raise awareness about the opportunity to get involved. Youth note that the most useful ways of getting the word out to them include social media, newsletter articles, networks of professionals (youth advisory councils, youth workers, youth service agencies), community associations that serve youth.

Social media is popular among a diverse array of citizens, government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGO) and businesses around the world. It serves as a means for individuals to make new friends, for government agencies to interact with their constituencies, for NGOs to organize grassroots movements and for businesses to promote their brands. Youths can easily create digital groups and engage more people in a movement, by organising events, podcasts, develop discussions and share content spreading their message all over the world. There are a wide range of social media platforms, from social networking sites designed to link people with common interests through an online community, to sites designed purely for photo and video sharing. These platforms are constantly evolving and new platforms are emerging daily. Some popular social media platforms include Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn, Instagram.

Facebook

What are Facebook Groups ?

Facebook has two features for businesses to gather and build a community; Facebook Pages and Facebook Groups. But what's the difference between the two?

Facebook Groups have different purposes than Facebook Pages. Here are the main differences between Groups and Pages.

	Facebook Groups	Facebook Pages
Visitor Known As	Members	Fans/Followers
Posting Restrictions	Anyone can post	Only the page can post
Exclusivity	Exclusive options (Public, Closed, Secret)	Open to public
Advertising	Advertising is less tolerated	Lots of ad features

YouTube

What is apparent is that the most successful YouTube videos are ones in which the creator has thought carefully about how to keep their audience engaged. Thinking about the video length and its appropriateness to the genre is one important method adopted, as well as careful consideration of the number of cuts in the edit in order to keep the viewer interested. Most important of all is to have clear calls to action and to be proactive in asking people to like, share and comment.

- Users can search for and watch videos.
- Create a personal YouTube channel.
- Upload videos to your channel.
- Like/Comment/share other YouTube videos.
- Users can subscribe/follow other YouTube channels and users.
- Create playlists to organize videos and group videos together.

Instagram

- Audience : Primarily Millennials
- Visual platform. High-quality images and videos; user-generated content; advertising.
- It has a lot of different filters and editing options that allow users to create unique and interesting content.

TikTok

- Audience : Primarily Gen Z followed by Millennials
- Best for : Short-form, creative video content; user-generated content; brand awareness
- When you think of short-form video, you probably think of TikTok. The platform rose in popularity in 2020 and shows no signs of slowing down. It's one of the best platforms for community building, with marketers ranking it in second place behind YouTube.

Blogs

- Online communication platforms through which a blogger (the person who submits content to a blog), can regularly share stories, photos, videos or links according to the subject matter of the particular blog.
- Often likened to a journal, because most blogs are written in first person and offer a more personal narrative compared to content traditionally found on a website.
- A valuable tool for development. They allow organizations to easily expand beyond their traditional communications mediums and social networks, and curate a content rich platform for their followers.
- Organizations can share meaningful stories from the field through the personal voice of staff members, volunteers or partners, without the hassle of updating their website.
- They are also a great venue to share other news or information, relevant to the organization and its partners or stakeholders.

Examples of youth engagement

Youth in Action is a Programme set by the the European Union for young people. It aims to inspire a sense of active European citizenship, solidarity and tolerance among young Europeans and to involve them in shaping the Union's future. It promotes mobility within and beyond the EU's borders, non-formal learning and intercultural dialogue, and encourages the inclusion of all young people, regardless of their educational, social and cultural background.

Links:

- <https://www.facebook.com/youact/photos/a.128737850536331/128738020536314>

- <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=10158949937148295&set=g.17997359880>

Youth for Climate is a climate youth movement that seeks to limit the consequences of the climate and biodiversity crisis by uniting as a movement and exert political pressure while raising awareness in society. As a movement, they believe that it is highly important to share the same values in order to reach these goals. To limit global warming properly and create a system change, they believe that a better world for everyone should be created, in which these values are incorporated.

Instagram link: [youth.for.climate](https://www.instagram.com/youth.for.climate)

Cyprus Youth Council is the only youth organisation that represents both political and non-political organisations in Cyprus, since 1996.

The Cyprus Youth Council (CYC) was founded in 1996 as a non – governmental, non – profit organization. It aims at promoting dialogue and cooperation between youth in Cyprus and also connecting them with youth in Europe and Globally. CYC is in continuous cooperation with the European Youth Forum. Areas of interest, always in relation to youth, include human rights and equality, employment and social issues, active citizenship and life- long learning, non-formal education and youth policies.

Link : <https://cyc.org.cy/en/>

Voices of youth is an organization set up by UNICEF to help children from across the world exchange knowledge and ideas.

Link : <https://www.voicesofyouth.org/blog>

Useful tools for youth engagement

- 1) **Start a podcast.** Young people enjoy listening to podcasts because they got to hear different people's opinions and ideas. Many studies have been done on the benefits of podcasts, and what they do for people mentally. One study proves that podcasts stimulate mental imagery more intensely than watching or reading, and cause listeners to have to pay more attention. Since people listen to podcasts instead of watching them, it forces listeners to use their imagination and build the pictures in their mind. Thus, people who listen to podcasts regularly have a stronger and more vivid imagination.
- 2) **Listen in to the conversation:** Social media engagement is a two-way street. The conversation starts with you listening to what your audience is saying.
- 3) **Ask questions.** A very easy way to boost content on your blog, page or other social media page is to ask questions of your audience. Ask them what they think, their beliefs and aspects on various matters, or even ask them to fill in the blank question. Just to feel free to share their thoughts.

- 4) **Tell stories.** Stories have been used since the dawn of humankind to transfer knowledge in an engaging format. Content that tells stories is inherently more engagement to your audience. Whether it's in text, image, video or any other form does not matter as long as the story has an emotive appeal.
- 5) **Post on Fridays.** Research published in the Social Intelligence Report says that the most comments, likes and shares occur on Fridays (17% of all comments occur on Fridays; 16% of likes occur on Fridays; 16% of shares occur on Fridays.; Sunday is the least likely day to receive a comment on a post)
- 6) **Share visual quotes.** Visual quotes are one of the easiest content formats to create. They're also likely to get more likes and shares than other forms of content. All you have to do is pick an appropriate quote and use any image editor to paste it into an image. Upload it and you're done.
- 7) **Keep your posts to the optimal length.** Posts that are a certain length are likely to get more likes, shares and retweets. Here's the optimal length for content on social media networks.
 - Tweets: 71 – 100 characters
 - Facebook Posts: 40 characters
 - LinkedIn Posts: 25 words
 - Google+ posts: 60 characters
 - Hashtag: 6 characters
 - Title Tags: 55 characters
 - Blogs: 1600 words
- 8) **Use hashtags.** Hashtags started on Twitter and have now spread to Facebook, Instagram and Google+. Hashtags can make your content easy to search for and find, by anyone with an interest – even if they aren't following you. You can use hashtags from other youth communities, ngos, organisations related to your page and in this way you can engage new people and get connected with more people.
- 9) **Hashtag Challenges.** They allow brands to go where their target audience already is, speak their language, and be part of the culture. It's an unprecedented opportunity to amplify your brand voice and deliver participation in an entirely new way. For example:
 - #changemakers
 - #youthleader
 - #youthinaction
 - #youthpower
 - #youthleadership
 - #communityengagement
 - #socialimpact
 - #leadership
 - #youthprograms
 - #euvalues
 - #youngpeople
 - #youngpeoplematter

How to Measure Social Media Engagement?

Engagement refers to the amount of meaningful interaction a follower has with a piece of content – that is, the number of comments, shares, or to a lesser degree, likes on a social post. When an influencer has a high engagement rate, it indicates that their followers actually interact with and respond to their message beyond a surface level. Consequently, your campaign message will land with your target audience with more success.

1) Likes & Shares

The simplest metric you'll need to track are the number of likes and shares that your posts receive. Most social media platforms like Twitter and YouTube have copied Facebook's original "Like" feature, in addition to giving people the option to share content that they like or find relevant to their own friends or fans. Both of these options give you the opportunity to immediately get a sense of how your post is doing and to widen your reach exponentially as people share your posts with their circles of followers.

2) Audience Growth/Rate of Followers

Another obvious metric to keep an eye on is the number of followers you've gained over the last month, week, or even day. It's important to pay attention to the rate that you're obtaining followers. If you see a slow and unreliable trickle of people following your accounts, you may want to increase your posting speed. If you're losing followers, you should examine what has been shared or posted recently and question whether you need to adjust your strategy.

3) Followers vs. Following Ratio

In social media marketing, it's highly recommended that you follow other accounts that share the those interests that are related to your business or industry. But keep an eye on the balance between the number of followers you have versus the number of people you're following. If you have 88 followers, but you're following 300 people, this might appear desperate and could deter users from engaging with you. It's always a good idea to keep the numbers within the same ballpark.

4) Clicks Per Post

When sharing blog posts or third-party content, it is important to measure the number of times that users have clicked on the links you've included. This helps you determine how much traffic your social media efforts are bringing in and whether you need to post even more. It also shows you whether your content is aligned with your brand message and the target audience you're trying to reach.

Tips and examples of messages to prompt action

- Share quality content. Content should be honest and genuine to help build trust, and engaging to organically grow an audience.
- Set ground rules that you agree on as a group. Make sure the rules will make space for a respectful conversation.
- Practice active listening. As a group, talk about what it means to be an active listener. Consider doing a listening activity during one of your virtual meetings.
- Making meetings and events appealing to young people.
- Have a group of young people responsible for organizing a certain aspect of an event they're interested in. That way, they feel ownership of the project and the event will be more likely to attract other young people.
- Use events as a recruiting tool. You can either host an event specifically for young people, or make an effort to incorporate activities into general events that would attract that age group. Some ideas include inviting a local band with young members to play at an event, incorporating a volunteer component, or hosting an art competition.

- Bring diversity to your team. Even if group members aren't related, sometimes the same young people are consistently invited to be a part of community events. However, only reaching out to the most obvious group means that you may not bring much diversity into your team.
- To make space at the table for different youth perspectives, reach out to local schools, colleges, community centers, youth groups, and other places where young people are.
- Understanding how young people can contribute. The idea that young people don't have as much to contribute as adults is ingrained in our culture. And as adults, we often perpetuate the same things adults told us when we were young. Young people of all ages can make a contribution whether they go to school, work in a grocery store, or are a small business owner.
- We all have things to learn; young people and adults can learn from each other. As with any group member, find out what they're good at and challenge them to take it to the next level. If they are on the debate team, perhaps they'd be interested in helping to develop messages. If they are technically savvy, they may be able to help with some of the technical logistics of an event.
- Treat young people like they can be leaders as they are. Recognize that they can be leaders *now*, even though there is still room for growth.

2.3 Establishing Partnerships

In this subchapter, we want to depict strategies that young people can employ for achieving collaboration with other youth groups, NGOs, civil society organizations, policy makers and create a multiplier effect from local to national/international level.

Let's start with the **first step** needed in the process of establishing a new partnership:

- **How can you identify and reach out to other groups/organizations that can assist you with your cause?**

According to the project that you wish to put into practice you will need some **specific kind of partners** supporting you in the process of its development and implementation. Therefore, identifying the right partners requires first that you have clear in your mind which will be the **objective of the rising partnership**. Therefore, for example, if your project concerns the fostering of young people's activism through volunteering it is logical to try and have in your partnership some NGOs providing volunteering opportunities!

You should also take into account the **geographical distribution** of your partnership. It is something related to how ambitious under this point of view your project aims to be. In fact, if you want to reach an impact at national level, you should "just" ensure that all the relevant different contexts of your country (e.g. in Italy Southern and Northern regions have very different socio-economic contexts which might affect differently the results of the project) are represented within the partnership.

If the desired impact is, instead, international, the situation is a bit more complex: you cannot have representatives from all countries therefore you have to select representatives of the regions that you are

interested into. If, for example, you are targeting Europe you might try to have a partnership made of at least one organisation located in a Mediterranean Country, one from a Northern/Scandinavian one and one from an Eastern state. This will ensure the partnership different points of view, direct knowledge and possibility to operate at local level all things that are essential in tackling problems affecting (young) people at a super-national level.

When trying to make a connection with another entity in order to propose them to join your partnership you must be sure to have already defined a **project idea** that might give the other party at least an idea of which should be their role, if it suits their mission/values and help them decide if they should join or not. Of course the details of the project will be defined together by the whole partnership but a concept must be already there to get them in!

- **How do you keep collaboration 'alive' with the identified partners?**

Once the partnership has been set up it is important to establish a working **methodology** that allows every partner to contribute at best to the objectives of the group. **Roles and responsibilities** should be unequivocally distributed and understood by everyone. Usually, having a specific contact person for each member organisation is very useful as it gives everyone a point of reference with whom to discuss certain issues and topics.

Strictly linked with these last aspects there is the acknowledgment of each other's **expertise** within the partnership: as seen above, the selection of its members should be based on the **complementarity** of the competencies needed to fulfil the objectives of the project and therefore each partner's experience and skills should be respected and relied upon by the whole partnership. Needless to say that the setting of a **schedule** of the activities of the projects is an essential step that will guide the timeframe of partners' "activism". For projects of a certain complexity are used models as the GANTT chart⁷ but you could just set when each activity should start and finish taking into account the overall time "borders" of the project itself.

One of the best ways to keep the partnership « alive » is that of having frequent **meet-up** (also online) to update each other on the progress of the activities. In this way the organisations you are collaborating with will maintain high their interest in the project, keep working on it knowing that with a certain regularity they are going to present their progresses to the whole group. Meetings are also a great way to brainstorm and to find solutions to difficulties that might arise during the lifespan of the project. Creating relationships with actors of the **social context** in which the partnership operates is of paramount importance for ensuring the success of the project.

⁷ <https://www.gantt.com/>

- **What would be proper ways for establishing connections with policy- and decision makers and/or unite different actors such as community members/families, schools/universities, other formal or informal youth groups for initiatives in line with the EU values?**

Whichever is the project that you are going to implement, it will necessarily have some kind of **impact** on the context you operate in. Identifying this impact is one of the first operations that should be conducted (strongly linked with the already mentioned identification of the aim of the initiative) and will allow you to understand which are the **stakeholders** of your project. They are those groups who are affected (hopefully positively) by your actions and that you can involve in various ways:

- In an early stage they can help you to identify which are their needs guiding you in setting up the project itself;
- They can “pilot” your activities helping you to improve them before their finalisation; pay always attention to the feedback of your stakeholders!
- Although not as formal partners, community representatives (organisations, private people etc.) can still decide to support you in a number of ways (word-of-mouth, fundraising, suggestions networking etc.), therefore, be sure of finding ways to have your community involved!

Very similar is the matter concerning **Schools and Universities**: students might be very easily the targets of one of your initiative (both as students or as “just” young people), therefore you might want to develop a collaborative relationship with schools and universities. They usually are very interested in activities concerning **educational** methodologies, youth **engagement** and, in case of Universities, that suits the area of a faculty. They can be exceptional allies to reach at once a very large and often diverse audience and to provide you with support for conferences and other “official” activities that you might want to organise.

Concerning, instead, the establishment of connections with **policy/decision-makers** it is important to remain realistic and avoid trying to involve (excluding exceptional cases, of course) institutions at national (or higher) level. It is much easier, and probably meaningful, instead, to involve some institutional representative at the **local level** (it can be done by each of the organisations of your partnership through the contacts/network that they surely have) inviting them to take part to the project’s activity in correspondence with some of its milestones. It is also very common that policy makers are among the targets of some specific activities as the development of “policy suggestions” based on the analysis and the data collected in a project. In this way your initiative might get to have a much wider impact on the whole society!

2.4 Strategies for Sustaining Youth Engagement

From a political stand-point, youth engagement is important because **young people deserve the right to voice their own interests**. Civic participation is, in fact, the key for preparing young people to be the democratic active citizens we need tomorrow.

In this sense, young people must become **agents of their own development**⁸: instead of being passive recipients of policies, they should be **actively involved in shaping their surroundings**, while *interacting* with others (peers and adults) and *creating* their own opportunities strategically.

- **Why is that important?**

Through youth-led initiatives, **communities can tailor services** taking directly into account the voice and needs of youngsters. These are the *direct benefits of youth engagement*:

- Young people gain both **knowledgeable skills and self-esteem**
- Adults enhance their competencies and **increase their commitment towards youth policies**
- Organizations get public recognition, **improving programs and attracting funders**.

- **Youth - How to be engaged?**

The Covid19 pandemic has shown how much local communities benefit by youth services when **authentically embracing young people's innovation**⁹. Nevertheless, **sustaining youth initiatives** requires **planning, persistence** and **outreach activities** in order to build long-term sustainability. The planning processes involves the following steps :

- 1) **Understand the community's needs**

In choosing the social issue, you need to focus on studying the community's needs in depth. Being it sexual health, migrants' integration or environment – the first step is « counting the numbers ».

- 2) **Identify possible resources :**

As the final chapter of this toolkit demonstrates, the financial resources to fund youth initiatives are multiple – it is essential to choose the most appropriate one, i.e. the fund fitting to solve our need best.

- 3) **Crafting actions:**

To reach a goal, detailed planning is needed for calculating the steps forward wisely.

- 4) **Don't give up !**

Motivation and persistence is key to success, especially when obstacles come our way.

⁸ Source: UN, <https://press.un.org/en/2016/dsgsm933.doc.htm>

⁹ Source: PMNCH, <https://pmnch.who.int/resources/tools-and-toolkits/pmnch-covid-19-and-wcah-toolkits/adolescent-health/meaningful-youth-engagement>

5) Propose a reward for participation

Linking the commitment of either young people, youth groups or volunteers to a «participation reward» is fundamental for the retention of any youth-led initiative. The offer can be either tangible or not (further training ; cv acknowledgement ; physical (gifts or other rewards).

● Adults – how to facilitate youth engagement?

Among different **approaches to sustain youth engagement**, we propose two leadership-based ideas that would more directly help « adults » to engage with youth.

1. Form **youth advocacy groups**

The definition of « advocacy »¹⁰ is the act of speaking on the behalf of or in support of another person, place, or thing. Considering how hard it is for youth to feel heard, we argue youth advocates can make a strong difference in **empowering and engaging youth to be full partners in community management**. This happens because youth advocates would have the role of support *in getting peers in touch with professionals for support, speaking to service-providers on their behalf, navigating together complex socio-economic bureaucracy*.

2. Create **leadership opportunities**

Youth-bound leadership opportunities offer youngsters a purposeful role in **supporting the community at the front-line**. Whenever adults become « allies », both individuals and youth-serving organisations feel more empowered to champion **programs supporting young people's rights**. In this sense, good examples of leadership opportunities could be:

- **Local ambassador programs:** a local historical/cultural ambassador has the potential of bringing awareness to the other peers and the community at large. Fostering young people to exercise their agency and become first-hand contributors to local tourism strengthens self-advocacy and leadership.
- **Student-led opportunities:** Youth-clubs and student-led programs have a wide grouping potential, while actively emphasising self-directed education, creativity, and discovery.
- **Virtual Spaces:** Creating youth-engagement virtual spaces that are inclusive, flexible and fun has the potential of engaging even the most vulnerable students & families.

¹⁰ Source: Yourdictionary, <https://www.yourdictionary.com/advocacy>

3. European Opportunities

In which ways can you, as a European Youngster, participate in the EU Decision Making Process? In fact, there are many complementary ways for you to do so, much more than you would have maybe expected. Here you can find a full overview of ways in which you can participate and undertake action as 'EU (Youth) Ambassador' or Erasmus Ambassador.

3.1 The European Youth Portal and European Year of Youth

The European Commission designed a special EU Youth Portal where you can find all initiatives, ways and channels through which you as a European Youngster can participate in EU life, activities and decision making. A special place on this European Youth Portal is given to the year-long Celebration of 2022 as the European Year of Youth (EYY) with a special facility and medium on the website dedicated to this European Year of Youth to 'Voice your Vision' through an immersive audio experience.

2022 is the European Year of Youth, shining a light on the importance of European youth to build a better future – greener, more inclusive and digital. With plenty of opportunities to learn, share your vision, meet people and engage in activities all over Europe, the European Year of Youth is the moment to move forward with confidence and hope in a post-pandemic perspective. Find out what the Year has in store for you and join in the #EYY2022!' (quote from the EYY website)

3.2 Voting in Parliamentary Elections & getting in touch with EP Members

As you could read above in the explanation on EU Values by the European Commission, the foundational EU Value of Democracy is understood by the European Commission to be Representative or Parliamentary. This political system is indeed strongly in place both at the level of the EU with the European Parliament and at the level of the EU Member States with the EU Member State Parliaments that play also a crucial role in the EU Decision making process since these Parliaments control the Ministers who form by each subject the Councils of the European Union. Voting in the elections for the European Parliament and for your respective EU Member State Parliament, constitutes in fact your main EU institutional way to impact the EU Decision making process. So make certainly use of this right and as EU Cultural Youth Ambassador you are most warmly invited to encourage others in the circle of your friends and family to do the same.

You can also contact directly the Member(s) of the EU Member State Parliament (MP) and Member(s) of the European Parliament (MEP) you voted for and who got elected or otherwise MP(s) and MEP(s) you feel most connected with, and ask these MP(s) and MEP(s) if they can represent you in the specific Parliament by proposing and defending the personal idea you present to them while making yourself possibly known to them as one of their (potential) voters. This is exactly the practical

way in which the political system of parliamentary or representative democracy is designed: guaranteeing all EU Citizens an equal and free way to impact the EU Decision Making Process.

3.3 Writing your ideas proposal and advocating your youth ideas for the EU

And of course by writing a key note or article presenting the key elements of your personal ideas and proposals for the EU, and publishing this online (or on paper) through your personal or shared social media channels or through an official media channel, you can reach larger audiences quite easily. With such key note it is also more practical and easy for you to digitally contact public officials at local, regional, national and EU level for discussing and spreading your youth ideas further. Through your personal and shared social media channels you can as well continue to post shorter messages with key elements of your ideas to keep the attention on your ideas proposal. In the EU good ideas can be picked up quite easily at all levels, so try certainly your luck!

Your further strengthened advocacy and mediation skills (see the practical exercises of Module 5) will also greatly help you further with spreading your ideas and proposal as EU Cultural Youth Ambassador.

3.4 Forming a natural or legal Youth Organization

Also the creation of a natural Youth Organization (without legal statutes) or a legal one with official statutes can be a very interesting and practical tool and asset to support your messages and planned activities in line with your ideas as EU Cultural Youth Ambassador. Already a natural organization in which you gather like-minded youngsters, friends and/or family, can be very helpful to you in spreading your ideas and messages as EU Cultural Youth Ambassador and in reaching people and audiences you would otherwise not reach, for example by planning and having a real life or online event with your organization. After you have founded a legal/official NGO or Non-Profit Organisation you can also apply with this organisation to become an official NEB Partner.

3.5 The New European Bauhaus (NEB), the NEB University, NEB Ambassadors and NEB Youth Movement

You can influence the EU Decision Making Process with your personal ideas and proposals also by participating in an Activity, Event, Project or Initiative organized in the Framework of the New European Bauhaus (NEB): a major EU Initiative that combines through all its Activities and Projects the NEB Values of Inclusion, Sustainability and Beauty (Arts and Culture) and that is being co-created between the European Commission and a Partnership of now already more than 500 NGOs that were accepted by the European Commission to become a NEB Partner. European Youth will also most likely being engaged as Teachers, Students and NEB Ambassadors promoting NEB Values in Europe

and the World, through a NEB University / NEB Academy that is currently being created: a Network for the Education of all Ages, both Formal and Informal, on a series of key subjects. The European Youngsters engaged in these activities will also become Member and Part of a real and agile NEB Youth Movement. If you are interested in joining this NEB Youth Movement, you are kindly invited to send your candidacy in this regard by email to new.renaissance.kh@gmail.com

3.6 EU decision making and initiatives

The European Commission has the right to launch a legislative initiative that has to be voted upon by both the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union. Before launching such legislative initiatives or at the completion of a specific EU Program and/or Initiative, the European Commission organizes in almost all cases a public consultation through which all EU Citizens and thus also you can bring in your direct advices and recommendations on a certain subject that is at the heart of the specific EU Initiative or Program. Feel certainly invited and free to get also involved in the EU Decision making in this direct way as well. Among the initiatives we can include:

- **European Citizens' Initiative**

If you and/or the members of your youth organization are able to collect 1 million signatures of EU Citizens in support of a certain idea and proposal that you would like to see become an official EU Policy, you and/or the members of your youth organization have indeed the official possibility of starting an official EU Policy deliberation process that can indeed result into an official EU Decision. This possibility and process is organized in the EU Citizens' Initiative. Did you know you had this opportunity as an EU Citizen? To find the required 1 million signatures you can also get in contact with the European Youth Forum that gathers and supports all the youth organizations in the EU, and use facilities offered in the EU Youth Portal.

- **The Erasmus+ and Creative Europe Programs and European Projects**

And in the newly published EU Programs of Erasmus+ for Education and Creative Europe for Culture, youth organizations are playing an increasingly important role as part of a consortium that could apply for an EU Project under one of these Programs. In the content design of the EU Project Proposal, for sure your youth organization and its partners can incorporate many personal ideas and proposals that can influence also further the EU Decision Making Process. Even as an engaged Participant in an EU Project of the Erasmus+ Program, like you here with the EUROTHON Project, or of Creative Europe you are influencing future EU Policy and Programs already for sure.

- **The European Solidarity Corps**

The European Solidarity Corps allows you to perform a task or work with a great social impact and importance, most likely in another EU Member State, while the EU provides your housing and feeding during this time of solidarity work. There is probably no better way to make your mark on the direct lives of other fellow EU Citizens and on EU Decision Making while you gain experiences that allow you to formulate at the first hand input, feedback and advices that are of the greatest importance and significance to the European Commission for the direct actions, further development and evaluation of this and related EU Programs.

- **EU Traineeships**

Also a great way for European Youngsters to participate in EU Decision Making Processes is through the application for and participation in an EU Traineeship. The European Parliament, European Commission (offering the famous 'Blue Book Traineeships'), European External Action Service, European Council, Council of the European Union are all offering at regular basis a fair amount of available places for EU Trainees at the heart and in the midst of the daily activities of these respective EU Institutions, being all increasingly open to and interested in the input, ideas and feedback from the Trainees gaining experience at the EU Institutions. In this way are the EU Traineeships becoming a prominent channel of participation in EU Decision Making for European Youngsters. Some EU Trainees also start working officially for their EU Institution after the end and conclusion of their Traineeships.

EUROPEAN OPPORTUNITIES LIST

N	Name of the opportunity	Category (environment/socio-economic inclusion/democratic participation/health etc.)	Link
1	The European Youth Portal and European Year of Youth	Inclusion, democratic participation	https://europa.eu/youth/home_en https://europa.eu/youth/year-of-youth_en
2	Voting in Parliamentary Elections and getting in touch with Members of the European Parliament and EU Member State Parliaments	Democratic participation	https://www.europarl.europa.eu/portal/en
3	Writing your ideas proposal and advocating your youth ideas for the EU	Socio-economic inclusion/democratic participation	
4	Forming a natural or legal Youth Organization	Socio-economic inclusion/democratic participation	https://new-european-bauhaus.europa.eu/get-involved/call-partners_en
5	The New European Bauhaus (NEB), the NEB University, NEB Ambassadors and NEB Youth Movement	Environment/socio-economic inclusion/democratic participation	https://europa.eu/new-european-bauhaus/index_en https://new-european-bauhaus.europa.eu/get-involved/call-partners_en
6	EU decision making and public consultations	Socio-economic inclusion/democratic participation	https://ec.europa.eu/info/about-european-commission/service-standards-and-principles/transparency/consultations_en

7	European Citizens' Initiative	Socio-economic inclusion/democratic participation	https://europa.eu/citizens-initiative/_en
8	The Erasmus+ and Creative Europe Programs and European Projects	Socio-economic inclusion/democratic participation	https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/node_en https://ec.europa.eu/culture/creative-europe
9	The European Solidarity Corps	Socio-economic inclusion/democratic participation	https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity_en
10	EU Traineeships	Socio-economic inclusion	https://traineeships.ec.europa.eu/ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/en/work-with-us/traineeships https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/general-secretariat/jobs/traineeships/ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/traineeship-delegations-european-union_en