

RECOMMENDATIONS

ON DIGITAL AND PHYSICAL YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

PREPARED FOR :

National agencies on Youth,
youth organisations and
policy makers

Partners

act:onaid

για έναν κόσμο πιο δίκαιο

ELLEMFOKELIGT
AMVIRKE **act:onaid**

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— REALIZZA IL CAMBIAMENTO —

SÜDWIND

vdp

Lithuanian
development
cooperation
platform

Мрежа младих
МАНИФЕСТ

Alianza por la
Solidaridad

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Χ.Α.Ν.Ε.

Τρόπος ζωής για μια ζωή

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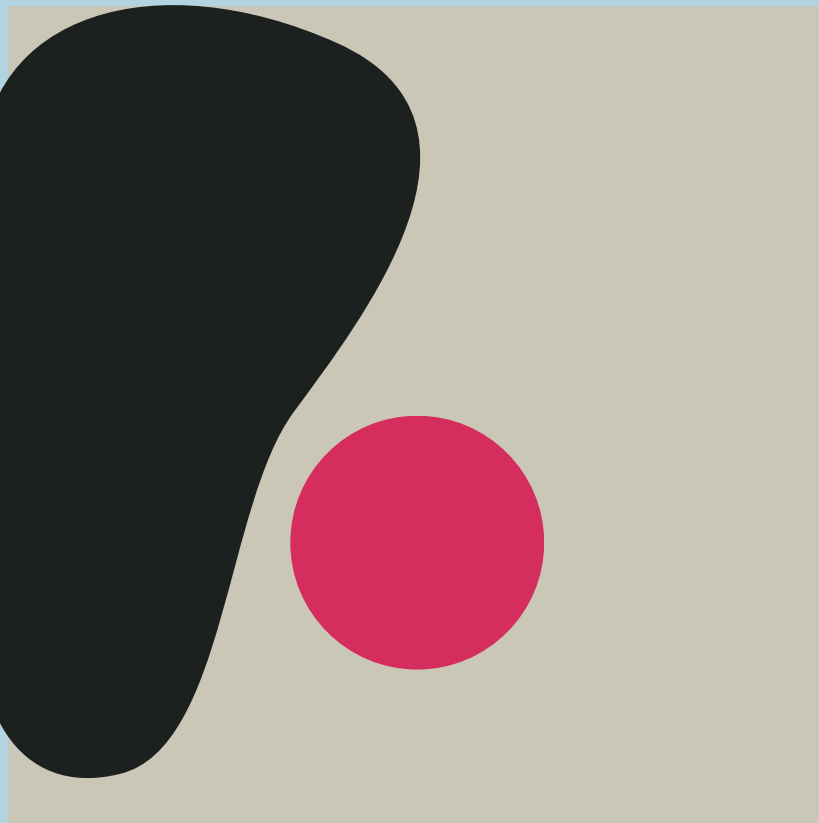
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BACKGROUND

Digital and smart youth work and mobility has emerged as a new trend and practice in youth field, as the use of innovative digital forms of participation increasingly motivates youth to engage in action-led initiatives and policy making. COVID-19 and its impact on youth sector has further underlined this trend, as a considerable part of activities related to “connecting, engaging and empowering” youth has been transferred online. This is thus a critical moment to shape the future of youth engagement in democratic and civic life at EU level in the digital but also physical space.



PROJECT & BACKGROUND

26% of young people testify that they don't engage in organized movements or associations, because they do not think these activities change anything or they don't have time (49%) (Eurobarometer 478).

Furthermore, the development of innovative digital forms of youth participation in civic and democratic life motivates young people to participate in action-led initiatives, policy making and volunteering.(Council of Europe 2017, EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027)

In this context, youth mobility is also influenced by the impact of digital means, taking into account the emergence of digital and smart youth work and mobility as a new trend and practice (Council of Europe Youth Partnership, 2020).

COVID-19 further destabilized youth work and sector, impacting youth mobility, youth policies related to engaging, empowering and connecting young people online, and youth involvement in democratic and civic life, which have been considerably transferred online in covid era.

Within this framework of a risk society, where risks and emergencies are continuous, young people, more than ever, need to be resilient and able to adapt.

This is thus a critical moment to act, to test the potential and shape the future of online and offline youth engagement in democratic and civic life at EU level, and digital youth mobility, so that young people acquire the necessary skills, and become motivated to contribute to prosperous, democratic and cohesive societies in Europe and beyond.

To respond to above-mentioned needs and challenges, ACTJUST Project provides a much-needed tested methodology and structured cooperation processes about the right mix of online and offline activities that enhances young people's engagement in civic and democratic life, volunteering and action-led initiatives.

The developed methodology and recommendations may support the work of youth organisations and National Agencies in the field of youth across Europe.



METHODOLOGY

CONNECT

ENGAGE

EMPOWER



ENGAGE

Training and inspiration

The training sessions have group and plenary sessions, podcasts, synchronised and unsynchronised training modules discussing about the knowledge received in each thematic area / module, and how it can be applied in the design of the action-led initiatives.

Online capacity building trainings

- Leadership skills
- Soft skills
- Advocacy
- Theory of Change

Skills

- How can I cooperate with others?
- How can I speak and inspire others with my idea?

Knowledge

- How experts see the issues we work with, such as gender, climate change, accessibility?
- How the local communities react to this idea?

CONNECT

Action Plan

Young people become a group and create a list of key tasks that need to be undertaken to achieve the particular goal or bring about the particular change. An action plan states what needs to be done, by when, and by whom. Action planning offers a number of important benefits when seeking to bring about change in youth lives:

- It provides an opportunity for reflection.
- It brings people together and enables you to utilize a broad range of skills and knowledge.
- It clarifies the objective.
- It builds consensus.
- It creates ownership and accountability.
- It clarifies timescales.
- It identifies measures of success.

Group Work and team building

- Physical Youth Mobilities
- Digital Youth Mobilities

Ideas

- How do I go from idea to action
- How my idea brings the change

EMPOWER

Mentoring

Youth mentors support young people to design, structure and organise the action led youth initiatives. During the mentoring sessions, young people will have the chance to discuss with their mentors about their projects' progress, risks and challenges they might face, team coordination and conflict issues, cultural issues and networking needs, and find solutions. Individual online but also offline mentoring sessions are also part of the mentoring process. Youth mentors support individually the youth of the core team, so as to keep everyone in the same page and solve any problems that the team might face.

Online and offline Mentoring Sessions

- Preparation and support
- Needs assessment

Planning

- Overpassing challenges
- How to continue with action
- Implementation

RESULTS AND CHANGE

Policy Hackathons

A multi-stakeholder policy hackathon is organised, where young people have the opportunity to present their projects/action-led initiatives implemented and the developed policy brief.

The aim of the national multi-stakeholder policy hackathons is to connect young people with relevant stakeholders and policy makers in the field, so that they exchange views, discuss about policy solutions based on shared EU values, present their ideas for new projects and receive further support to scale-up their projects.

Online and offline Mentoring Sessions

- Preparation and support
- Needs assessment

Planning

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- How to continue with the action
- Implementation

Recommendations

Engaging young people for a long period of time, especially when some projects last for more than one and a half year is very challenging. Keeping the motivation up and the engagement for the whole duration of the project can be accomplished by following some specific guidelines.

However, each situation is different and these recommendations are just proposals that can support youth NGOs in engaging youth groups in their projects.



Rec. 1. Balance between offline and online activities

Young people are used to be online many hours during the day for different reasons, either for school projects, reading, social media, gaming etc. Using digital means to enhance youth participation is a very important step to engage youth and motivate them to participate.

However, youth work is also an interactive world that needs the physical space. Combining digital means with physical activities will be an asset when designing youth participation activities.

Rec. 2. Give opportunity to all the young people of your group to travel

Travelling is a way of connected youth groups from different cultures and countries together. It brings youth in a common space where exchanging, learning and doing are priorities. Giving the opportunity to all the youth of your group take part in an exchange

Rec. 3. Identify one youth mentor

The youth mentor is the person who will support young people during the mentoring sessions. The youth groups should acknowledge that this person is present for supporting through the process, overpassing challenges and giving the rhythm in the group. It should be a person who knows about youth work, has communication and management skills as well as crisis management and risk assessment competences.

Rec. 4. Offer grants for youth initiatives

Young people have great ideas and initiatives but most of the times the process stops just in the idea as there are no funds to implement. Considering and offering grants for the implementation of the youth ideas/initiatives would be a boost for youth creativity and engagement.

Rec. 5. Offer certification of attendances or YouthPass

Certifications of attendances are also a must when involving young people in projects, seminars or trainings. This, because it can justify the participation in such initiatives and can be used in CVs.

Rec. 6. Offer space for exchanging, advocacy and campaigning

Offering an open space for good practices, new information and also space to act and participate will also support the motivation of youth to be engaged for a longer period of time.

Rec 7. Offer engagement with policy makers

Connecting or discussing with policy makers is most of the times a challenge. There are not few the times that young people feel that the policy makers are far away from the society and themselves and their voices cannot be heard. By offering the opportunity to meet and contact policy makers, is one way to motivate young people to support the project and their initiatives.

Rec. 8. Create a regular communication channel

Having a common communication channel with the youth group during the whole duration of the project is a must. Being available also most of the time will support the team to connect also informally and bound the group.

engaged!