



European research report

*Literature review and field research
on good practices*



Project	Youth sPEACEs. Urban spaces for active social participation and dialogue. ID: 101089823
Deliverable No.	4.1
Work Package	WP4
Author	Associazione InformaGiovani
Contributors	All partners (for the collection of good practices)
Status	FINAL
Date	29/12/2023



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

Co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or EACEA. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

Table of contents

Introduction	4
1. An insight into the research phase (WP4) in the “Youth sPEACEs” project	6
1.1 Aims.....	6
1.2 The research methodology and tools	6
2. Youth spaces promoting participation: frameworks, approaches and experiences	8
2.1 The EU legal basis and references.....	9
2.2 An overview of forms of youth engagement and participation.....	11
<i>Grassroots organisations as catalysers of youth engagement and participation</i> .	12
<i>Empowering youth through access to reliable information</i>	13
<i>The key concepts of youth participation</i>	15
2.3 The “places” of participation: youth spaces	17
3. Results from the Survey and the Focus Groups	18
3.1 The survey	18
<i>The questionnaire</i>	18
<i>The survey results</i>	19
<i>Comments on the survey results</i>	33
3.2 The Focus Groups	34
<i>Key findings from the Focus Groups</i>	35
4. Good practices of youth participation in the European public space	36
4.1 Protagonism and empowerment.....	36
4.2 Governance	38
4.3 Inter organisational cooperation	39
4.4 Values-based approaches.....	40
<i>Human Rights and Civil Rights</i>	41
<i>Inclusion</i>	41
<i>Accessibility</i>	43
<i>Sustainability and the Environment</i>	43
<i>Active Citizenship</i>	43
4.5 From a “silo approach” to “system thinking”	43
<i>Promotion of intersectionality</i>	44
<i>Intergenerational approach</i>	45
4.6 Youth spaces as safe spaces.....	46
<i>Mentorship</i>	47
4.7 Youth spaces as open spaces.....	49
4.8 Youth spaces and their interaction with the external community.....	50
4.9 Physical or digital? ...Or physical <i>and</i> digital?.....	52

- 4.10 Feedback loops.....53
- 5. Concluding remarks for drafting the Youth SPeACES Charter.....56**
- References.....59**
- Annexes61**
 - Annex 1: Survey questionnaire.....61
 - Annex 2: Prompts and topics for the focus groups66
 - Annex 3: Criteria to identify good practices67
 - Annex 4: Template to map good practices68
 - Annex 5: Case study structure70

Introduction

The present Report is developed in the framework of the “Youth sPEACEs. Urban spaces for active social participation and dialogue” project, funded by the European Union through the Erasmus+ programme. The project takes its moves from the data referring to youth participation in the EU democratic life (particularly, the 2019 European elections), which show a still low inclination to vote, with percentages ranging from 42% to 47% at the European level (excluding countries with compulsory voting laws). Statistical insights have prompted discussions among political observers and social analysts regarding “participatory apathy” among the youth.

However, such characterisations clash with the diverse reality of active citizenship experiences among young people, often constrained by an “adult-centric” perspective that narrowly defines participation as electoral involvement. Throughout Europe, various youth organisations and spontaneous groups challenge this narrative, presenting a rich landscape of unconventional youth participation expressions deeply rooted in their communities.

In this context, the “Youth sPEACEs” project pursues some objectives aligned with the European Youth Strategy. Firstly, it aims to engage an increasing number of young people in active citizenship activities, where they play a central role, bridging local and European dimensions. Secondly, the project seeks to connect different local youth spaces at the European level, recognising and enhancing their distinctive features while identifying ways to overcome limitations. Thirdly, it aims to empower and scale up these local initiatives, enhancing their positive impact within communities and enabling them to network effectively at the European level. Fourthly, the project intends to provide accessible and pertinent information about European institutions at both national and international levels, targeting specific demographics. Lastly, the project aspires to contribute to reflections on European youth policies, aiming to identify more effective tools for fostering connection and cooperation between local and continental levels.

The present Research Report has been drafted as part of Work Package 4: “Research on youth spaces and drafting the European Charter on youth spaces”, dealing with the collection and analysis of data and information useful for drafting and finalising the European Charter of Youth Spaces. The Report is aimed at providing an overview of models and forms of participation in the public life of young people in the European Union. Based on the described state of play, and following the steps described in the figure below, the original “European Charter on youth spaces” will be drafted.

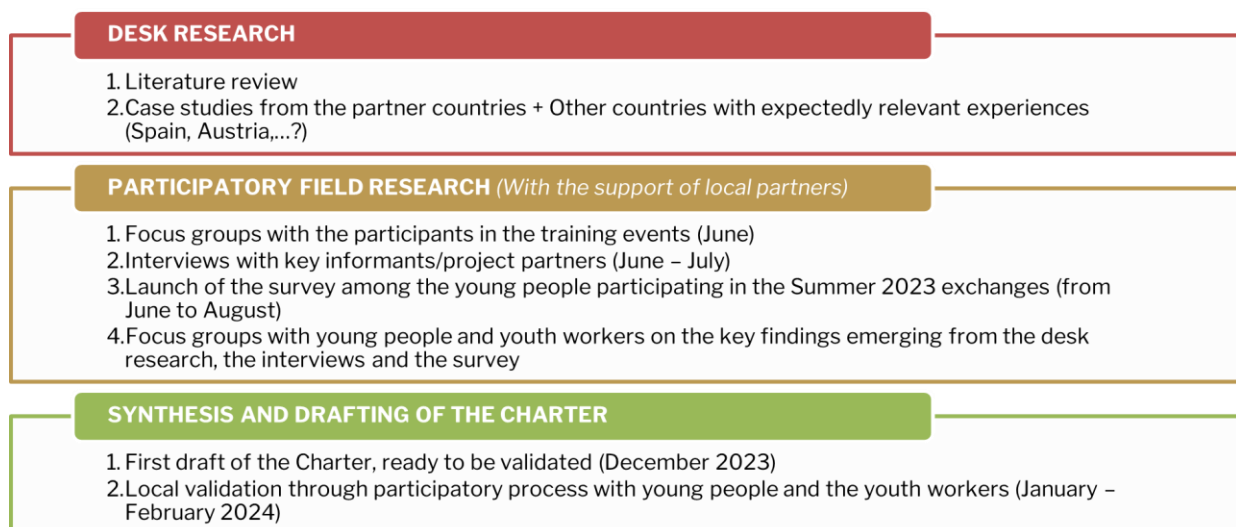


Fig. 1: Steps to the Charter drafting

Youth participation in democratic life is about individual young people and groups of young people having the right, the means, the space, the opportunity and, where necessary, the support to freely express their views, contribute to and influence societal decision-making on matters affecting them, and be active within the democratic and civic life of our communities¹.

As stated already in the Project Application Form, the daily experiences of youth organisations, informal groups, and associations across Europe demonstrate that *youth participation takes various unconventional forms*, which are often rooted in their communities and hold significant social and civic value. These unconventional experiences encompass a wide range of activities, from urban gardens and improvised skate parks to music studios in garages, reflecting the diverse ways in which young people engage with their surroundings and contribute to their communities².

These forms of re-appropriation, regeneration, and engagement in urban spaces challenge the traditional notion of youth participation as solely involving voting or formal political engagement³. The European Parliament has recognised the importance of engaging young people in democratic processes and has emphasized the need to facilitate youth involvement through various means, including structural support for youth civil society and local youth councils⁴. Therefore, the unconventional but meaningful forms of youth participation in Europe highlight the necessity of broadening the understanding of youth engagement beyond conventional political activities⁵.

In this scenario, in the “Youth sPEACEs” project we assume that there is a need to firstly know and understand, support and protect youth spaces.

By mapping, eliciting and disseminating extensive knowledge about existing experiences (comprising legislation, policy orientations, practices), we intend to provide the baseline to formulate an original European Charter on youth spaces, which will consolidate the advocacy process. Thanks to the Charter, it will be possible to encourage regular reporting and assessment of progress made in protecting and promoting youth spaces.

The present Report articulates in 5 Chapters:

1. Chapter 1, introducing the research methodology and tools.
2. Chapter 2, dealing with frameworks, approaches and experiences from literature
3. Chapter 3, presenting the results of the survey and the focus groups.
4. Chapter 4 dealing with frameworks, approaches and experiences from field observation and analysis (analysis of good practices).
5. Chapter 5, presenting concluding remarks and describing the key dimensions and features to be taken into consideration in drafting the Charter.

¹ Definition of youth participation taken from the SALTO Youth Participation Strategy (2020)

² <https://data.europa.eu/en/publications/datastories/understanding-youth-engagement-europe-through-open-data>

³ <https://edoc.coe.int/en/youth-in-europe/11008-insights-meaningful-youth-political-participation-in-europe.html>

⁴ [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2023/745820/IPOL_STU\(2023\)745820_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2023/745820/IPOL_STU(2023)745820_EN.pdf)

⁵ <https://edoc.coe.int/en/youth-in-europe/10301-meaningful-youth-political-participation-in-europe-concepts-patterns-and-policy-implications-research-study.html>

1. An insight into the research phase (WP4) in the “Youth sPEACEs” project

1.1 Aims

The research, planned within Work Package 4, aims at:

- Highlighting the *key elements of the policy framework* that define and support youth participation in the different forms of youth spaces.
- Examining the *different forms of participation* of young people in public life, particularly within their proximal communities⁶.

The research will focus on a range of activities, including volunteering, community activism, social media engagement.

1.2 The research methodology and tools

In this report we are *bringing together data collected from desk and field research*:

- a) On one hand, we are discussing information, data and arguments taken from academic literature, official policy documents, and grey literature,
- b) On the other hand, with a field research phase we have considered data collected from the project’s transnational survey and a number of meaningful experiences described by the project partners through the lens of the expert practitioners.

As regards *point a)*, for the **desk research** phase we have reviewed *existing literature* (comprising grey literature from past and running projects) and *open data sources* to identify real cases and experiences related to youth participation in public life.

The desk research is referring to the rich set of documents by:

International organisations, such as:

- The European Commission (The EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, with particular focus on the European Youth Goal No 9: “Space and Participation for All”, and the related seminal documents, such as the 2001 White Paper “A New Impetus for European Youth”).
- The Council of Europe Youth Policy and related resources.
- The OECD Youth Action Plan 2021.
- The SALTO initiative (specifically its *participation pool* resources).

⁶ The concept of proximal community refers to the physical and social environment that directly surrounds an individual or group. It includes the immediate geographic area, such as a neighbourhood, as well as the social networks, institutions, and resources within that area. In the context of youth participation in public life, proximal communities can provide important spaces for young people to engage in civic activities and develop leadership skills. For example, youth living in a neighbourhood with active community organisations and resources may have greater opportunities to volunteer, participate in local government, or organise community events. This can not only benefit the individual youth, but also contribute to the overall health and vitality of the community.

Initiatives and international and grassroots organisations, such as:

- The European Youth Forum (“Safeguarding Civic Space for Young People in Europe”).
- The Civic Europe platform.
- The Human Rights Education Youth Network.
- The International Child Development Initiatives.
- The Eryca Network and its European Youth Information Charter.

Then, with respect to **point b)**, the **field analysis** has been carried out in several steps:

1. The **survey**, aimed at collecting the experiences and views of young people (aged 14-30) on participation in youth spaces of different kind. The questionnaires were administered during the youth exchanges in Summer-Autumn 2023. With the survey, we intended to understand the impact of these experiences on youth’s perception of being an “active citizen” and to identify potential enhancements that can contribute to bolstering youth empowerment. The respondents’ valuable insights have aided in shaping a more comprehensive understanding of youth engagement, ultimately fostering an environment that better supports and empowers the younger generations. The questionnaire is provided in Annex 1: Survey questionnaire.

2. The **focus groups**, or **qualitative group interviews**, engaging the participants in the project’s information (and training) events organised in each territory in Spring 2023 (trainers, youth workers and young participants).

Depending on the groups’ expertise, different sets of questions were asked:

- To contextualise the different approaches for youth spaces considering past experiences and “lessons learned”, collecting the point of view of trainers, operators and young people who gathered in the information/training events at the partners’ premises.
- To share experiences in successful youth spaces/practices.

The used prompts are provided in Annex 2: Prompts and topics for the focus groups.

3. The collection of samples of **good practices** from the partner countries, describing youth participation, as defined and implemented in the framework of transnational projects. The purpose of this mapping and review of good practices has consisted in highlighting their main features and success factors, to be considered for the further construction of the project’s Charter.

The criteria to identify the project’s good practices are provided in Annex 3: Criteria to identify good practices, and the template to map and describe the practices is provided in Annex 4: Template to map good practices.

2. Youth spaces promoting participation: frameworks, approaches and experiences

The landscape of youth policies within the European Union (EU) is characterised by a division of responsibilities between national and EU levels. Youth affairs predominantly fall under the domain of national policies, rendering the prospect of EU-wide harmonisation hardly feasible. Consequently, *the EU's role in this context is primarily supportive*, allowing Member States the flexibility to address the specific needs of their respective youth populations.

Already in 2001, the European Commission stated its commitment to promote and support youth policies by means of its *White Paper "A New Impetus for European Youth"*⁷. The White Paper addressed the changing role of young people in public life by emphasising the importance of active citizenship and participation. It recognised the evolving role of young people in public life and advocated for their active participation, inclusion in decision-making processes, and access to resources and opportunities to contribute to society. The document highlighted the need for participation at various levels, from local to international, and in various forms, both active and representative. It also emphasised the importance of including young people in the decision-making process and ensuring that participation was encouraged and made accessible to all, including those facing difficulties and those not affiliated with formal organisations.

Furthermore, the White Paper acknowledged the strong message from young people about their desire to play an active part in society and their belief that exclusion of young people hindered the proper functioning of democracy. It also underlined the need to provide resources, information, and training to enable young people to play a more active role, while stressing that the right to participate should apply to all without discrimination.

In more recent years, the European Union has intensified its commitment to youth through various initiatives, underscoring its role as a facilitator and enabler. The most notable programmes in this regard are the *Erasmus+ Programme*, the *European Solidarity Corps* and the *DiscoverEU programme*. These initiatives aim to foster a sense of European identity, solidarity, and engagement among young people, transcending national boundaries.

In particular, the *Erasmus+* programme stands out as a potent lever for promoting common practices and initiatives. It facilitates – among other measures – educational mobility, exchanges, and cooperation among young people across Member States. Not only does Erasmus+ enhance individual skills and competencies, but it also contributes to the development of a shared European identity among the younger generations. Through direct experiences and interactions, participants gain insights into diverse cultural contexts and perspectives, fostering a sense of unity and commonality. This programme thus plays a pivotal role in harmonising youth policies by creating a platform for collaboration, knowledge exchange, and the co-creation of inclusive and effective policies that resonate with the realities and aspirations of European youth. In doing so, Erasmus+ exemplifies how EU initiatives can act as catalysts for unified approaches while respecting the varied and unique aspects of national youth policies.

In the EU there are plenty of policy documents and frameworks, and field work has been going on for decades, accumulating an extraordinary variety of methodologies, practices and forms of collaboration.

⁷ European Commission (2001): White Paper "A new impetus for European youth". 21/11/2021. [COM(2001) 681 final. Document accessible here: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52001DC0681>

2.1 The EU legal basis and references⁸

Articles 165 and 166 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) are the basis for EU action in the youth field. Action falling within the scope of Articles 165 and 166 is subject to the ordinary legislative procedure.

Article 165 of the TFEU provides for Union action in order to encourage the development of youth exchanges and exchanges between youth workers, and to encourage the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe. Article 166 enables the EU to implement a vocational training policy to support and supplement the action of the Member States. It tasks the Union with facilitating access to vocational training and encouraging mobility of instructors and trainees, particularly young people. In addition to these provisions, children and young people benefit from EU policies in other fields, such as education, training and health, or in relation to the rights and protection of children and young people.

As already mentioned, in 2001 European youth had already been at the centre of the European Commission's attention. The *White Paper on Youth*⁹ was intended as a response to young people's strong disaffection with the traditional forms of participation in public life. In order to help European Union (EU) countries and regions to take action for young people in Europe, the White Paper proposed a new framework for cooperation consisting of two components: increasing cooperation between EU countries and taking greater account of the youth factor in sectoral policies (e.g. employment and social integration, education and training, lifelong learning and mobility, the fight against racism and xenophobia).

On 26 November 2018, the Council adopted a resolution on the new *EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027*¹⁰. The text proposes that particular attention be devoted to the following points:

- Fostering the participation of young people in civic and democratic life.
- Connecting young people across the European Union and beyond to foster voluntary engagement, learning mobility, solidarity and intercultural understanding.
- Supporting youth empowerment through quality, innovation and the recognition of youth work.



Fig. 2: The Youth Goals in the EU Youth Strategy

⁸ <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/141/youth>

⁹ European Commission (2001): White Paper "A new impetus for European youth". *Op. cit.*

¹⁰ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:C:2018:456:FULL>

Clearly, youth policies cover multiple domains and sectors, engaging multiple players that represent public authorities and institutions (e.g. education and training, culture, social services, labour, healthcare, etc.), social economy entities (e.g. associations, NGOs, social economy cooperatives, etc.), private sector entities (companies) mirroring the many challenges and risks that young people face in their daily life. Coherently, an *integrated policies approach* has been adopted and used since the early 2000's.

Therefore, as shown in the figure below¹¹, *youth policy is a deliberate and planned cross-sectoral policy area*, in which entities active in the youth field collaborate with other sectors and coordinate services for youth – *involving young people themselves in the process*.

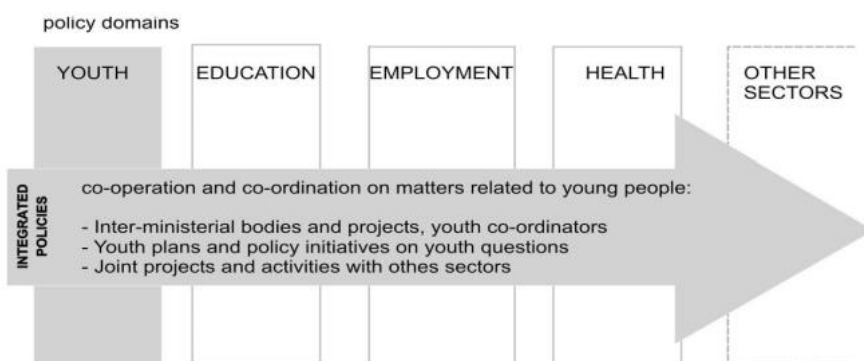


Fig. 3: Youth policy as a cross-sectoral policy area

In June 2021, as part of this strategy, the Commission appointed the first *European Union Youth Coordinator*, with the objective of enhancing cross-sectoral cooperation, as well as knowledge development and exchange on youth issues within the European Commission services. The EU Youth Coordinator works hand in hand with various stakeholders to ensure a coherent communication towards young people.

The following year, the European Year of Youth 2022¹² emphasised the pivotal role of young people in shaping a more sustainable, inclusive, and digitally advanced future. This significant year provided ample opportunities for learning, expressing visions and voices, connecting with others, and participating in activities throughout Europe. The European Year of Youth served as a moment to stride ahead with optimism and hope, envisioning a post-pandemic perspective full of possibilities.

Furthermore, the EU strategy 2019-2027, in supporting the development of harmonised youth practices across the EU, foresees a number of funding instruments, initiatives and facilities, such as:

- The Erasmus+ programme.¹³
- The European Solidarity Corps.¹⁴
- The reinforced Youth Guarantee.¹⁵
- The EU agenda for Child protection policies.¹⁶
- The Audiovisual Media Services Directive¹⁷ that ensures that minors are protected from content that may impair them.

¹¹ Council of Europe (2007): A European framework for youth policy

¹² https://europa.eu/youth/year-of-youth_en

¹³ https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/node_en

¹⁴ https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity_en

¹⁵ [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32020H1104\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32020H1104(01))

¹⁶ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52011DC0060>

¹⁷ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=celex%3A32010L0013>

- The European Youth Portal.¹⁸
- The European Youth Week.¹⁹
- The European Youth Capital.²⁰
- The Youth4Regions competition.²¹
- The Youth Action Plan.²²

2.2 An overview of forms of youth engagement and participation

Desk research highlights that throughout the European Union young people are experiencing a *tension between active participation in the democratic life of their communities, or cities or countries, and apathy*. There is evidence of a strong desire among many young Europeans to participate in democratic life. However, this desire is not always met by existing democratic institutions and discourses²³.

Indeed, there is a growing recognition of the need *to bridge the gap between youth participation and representation in the European policy-making process*²⁴. Efforts are being made to increase the number of young adults elected to match more closely the share of under-35 in Europe, with the aim of ensuring that the distinct concerns of younger generations are adequately heard and discussed in the decision-making arena. Therefore, the perception of “participatory apathy” among young people in the European context may be influenced by an “adult-centric” vision of participation, which is solely perceived as participation in voting²⁵.

Consistently with this view, the EC’s *Youth Participation Strategy*²⁶ states that youth *participation in democratic life can be both individual and collective*. Young people, rather than being apathetic and disengaged, are increasingly involved in *alternative forms of participation* that are complementary to traditional forms of participation linked to representative democracy.

These **alternative forms of participation** may include youth-led organisations, cause-driven social movements, campaign movements and youth activism, participation projects based on digital tools and digital spaces or communities, co-production and co-management, deliberative democracy projects, and young people finding new ways to use public and community spaces, among other approaches.²⁷

It is worth reminding that *traditional forms of participation* include activities such as voting, standing for election, joining a trade union, youth councils, youth forums, school councils, and some types of youth organisation.

Grassroots organisations in European countries play a crucial role in engaging young people through various initiatives and activities.

¹⁸ https://europa.eu/youth/home_en

¹⁹ https://europa.eu/youth/week_en

²⁰ https://europa.eu/youth/get-involved/intercultural%20understanding/being-european-capital-youth-or-culture_en

²¹ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/policy/communication/partnership-with-media/youth4regions_en

²² https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_22_5882

²³ https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/55896/1/Cammarts_Myth_of_Apathy.pdf

²⁴ <https://www.delorscentre.eu/en/publications/youth-representation-european-parliament>

²⁵ [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2023/745820/IPOL_STU\(2023\)745820_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2023/745820/IPOL_STU(2023)745820_EN.pdf)

²⁶ [Youth Participation Strategy - SALTO \(participationpool.eu\)](https://www.youthparticipation.eu/)

²⁷ [Youth-Participation-Toolkit.pdf \(participationpool.eu\)](https://www.youthparticipation.eu/Youth-Participation-Toolkit.pdf)

A **grassroots organisation** in the context of EU youth policies and initiatives refers to a community-based, bottom-up approach that empowers young people at the local level to address their needs and priorities. These are often NGOs and are driven by the community members themselves.

The *European Commission's Youth Action Plan for EU External Action 2022-2027* emphasises support for grassroots organisations and young activists to facilitate youth empowerment at political, social, and economic levels²⁸.

The *Council of Europe's "Youth Delegates" project* is an example of such an initiative, providing young people with the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes at the local and regional levels²⁹.

The *OECD* also emphasises the importance of engaging young people in open government through grassroots organisations to foster active citizenship among youth³⁰.

Grassroots organisations as catalysers of youth engagement and participation

Grassroots organisations frequently play a crucial role in fostering and facilitating youth participation in democratic processes across local, regional, national, and European levels. Within the framework of the EU Youth Strategy, specifically in the 'Engage' core area, the objective is to promote meaningful civic, economic, social, cultural, and political participation among young people. Supported by the EU, grassroots organisations undertake projects designed to encourage youth involvement in Europe's democratic life. These initiatives provide young people with opportunities to actively participate and learn about civic society, raise awareness regarding common European values, and foster dialogues and discussions between young people and decision-makers. The collaboration between EU authorities and grassroots organisations is essential, emphasising a sort of "subsidiarity liaison" that empowers local initiatives to drive youth engagement. Importantly, this type of subsidiarity also involves the flow of European economic resources in the absence of local/regional economic means, ensuring the sustainability and effectiveness of grassroots initiatives.

The European Parliament has recognised the importance of improving and facilitating youth involvement in democratic processes. It has adopted proposals to increase citizens' participation and youth involvement, ensuring that the voices of young people are heard and that their participation is effective³¹. Grassroots organisations, therefore, have a role to actively engage young people, youth entities, and other organisers of youth work in policies affecting the lives of young people on all levels, as well as to support and convey the EU Youth Dialogue to include diverse voices of young people in decision-making processes³².

Furthermore, the study "Understanding youth engagement in Europe through open data"³³ highlights that youth participation in civic society encompasses various activities, including volunteering, leisure, and cultural activities. Grassroots organisations, with the support of EU initiatives, work to encourage and promote inclusive democratic participation of all young people in society and democratic processes.

²⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_5884
https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/news-and-events/news/eu-launches-youth-empowerment-fund-new-partnership-worlds-largest-youth-organisations-support-young-2023-10-04_en

²⁹ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/congress/youth-delegates>

³⁰ <https://www.oecd.org/mena/governance/Young-people-in-OG.pdf>

³¹ [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2023/745820/IPOL_STU\(2023\)745820_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2023/745820/IPOL_STU(2023)745820_EN.pdf)

³² https://youth.europa.eu/strategy/engage_en

³³ <https://data.europa.eu/en/publications/datastories/understanding-youth-engagement-europe-through-open-data>

Empowering youth through access to reliable information

Wholesome and knowledgeable youth participation in the EU democratic processes (at different levels, covering the local, national and international level) largely depends on having *access to trustworthy and high-quality information*. A strong democracy fosters the availability and spread of accurate information, and this relationship is typified by a reciprocal influence whereby democratic processes flourish when citizens have access to reliable information. This encourages citizens to engage in various forms of civic participation, from community activities to advocacy for social and political causes. An informed citizenry is more likely to participate in public life, contributing to the vibrancy of democratic processes.

The relationship between the democratic process and access to reliable and quality information is symbiotic. This interconnectedness underscores the importance of fostering a media environment that prioritises accuracy and transparency, as pre-conditions of active participation of citizens in democratic processes.

Already in 1990, the European youth information network named “Eurodesk³⁴” was established. Operating as a pivotal support organisation to the current Erasmus+ Programme (and in previous decades, to the different EU programmes supporting youth education, training, and mobility), the Eurodesk network plays a crucial role in making information regarding learning mobility comprehensive and easily accessible to young individuals as well as those actively engaged in working with them.

The network is characterised by 39 Eurodesk Centres strategically positioned across 37 European countries, each interconnected with local information providers and multipliers.

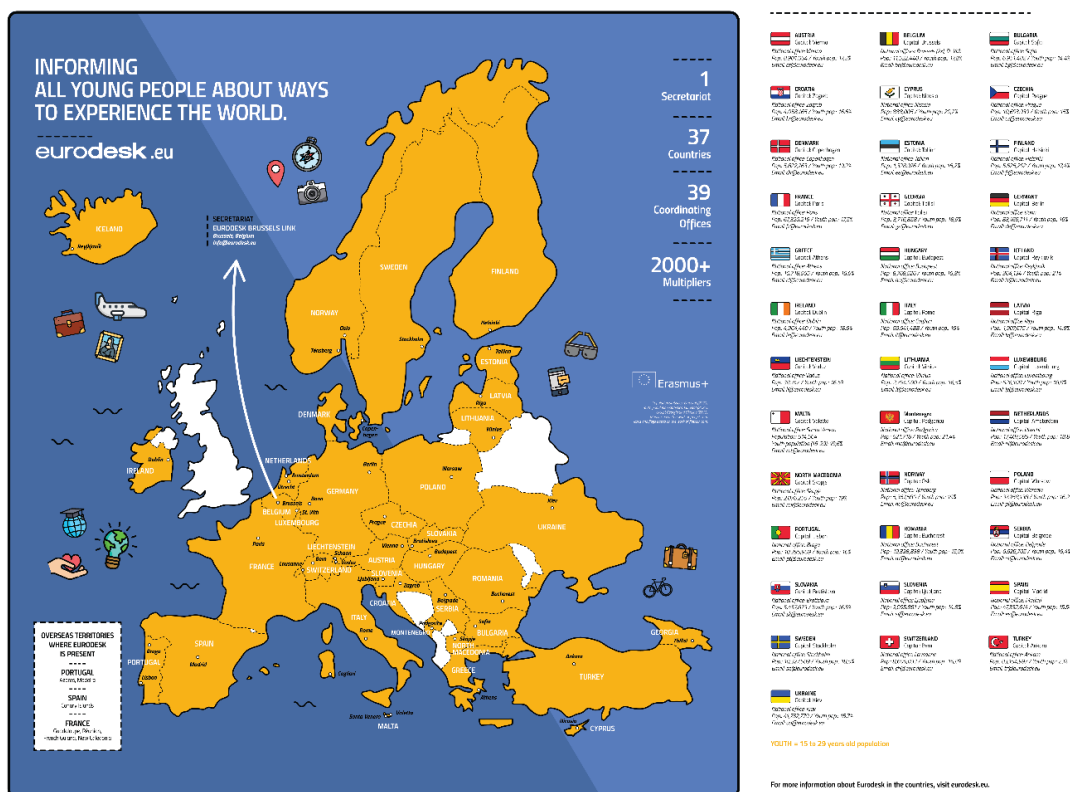


Fig. 4: The 37 Countries in the Eurodesk network

³⁴ <https://eurodesk.eu/>

This extensive network serves as a conduit for disseminating information about European opportunities, fostering awareness, and motivating young people to actively participate in civic life. Beyond its own infrastructure, Eurodesk collaborates with over 3000 “multipliers and ambassadors”. These individuals represent regional or local organisations dedicated to working with young people, providing valuable youth information, and offering guidance on various mobility opportunities. Eurodesk’s mission extends beyond dissemination, incorporating a commitment to ensuring the quality of its services throughout the 37 countries it operates in. To achieve this, Eurodesk provides its members with comprehensive training and support, equipping them with the necessary tools and access to youth information services. This approach ensures that the services offered by Eurodesk are not only extensive but also adhere to high standards of quality across the diverse European landscape.

The commitment to offer and promote trustworthy information is embraced by numerous entities across Europe as a strategic priority. In 2018, the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA) published the European Youth Information Charter, whose principles “are intended to apply to all forms of generalist youth information work. They constitute a basis for minimum standards and quality measures that should be established in each country as elements of a comprehensive, resourced, coherent and co-ordinated approach to youth information work, which is an integral part of youth policy.”³⁵ The nine principles presented in the Charter cover different dimensions that Youth Information Centres should comply with:

1. INDEPENDENT

- 1.1** The information offered is comprehensive, provides an overview of different options available and is based on pluralist and verified sources.
- 1.2** The information offered is independent of any religious, political, ideological or commercial influence.
- 1.3** Sources of funding for youth information do not compromise the application of any of the principles of this Charter.

2. ACCESSIBLE

- 2.1** Youth information services guarantee equality of access.
- 2.2** Youth information centres and services are easily accessible, attractive and visible to young people.
- 2.3** Youth information is understandable for young people.

3. INCLUSIVE

- 3.1** Youth information services are open to all young people without any form of discrimination.
- 3.2** Youth information services are free of charge for all young people.
- 3.3** Youth information centres and services strive to reach out to all young people, in ways that are effective and appropriate to different groups and needs.

4. NEEDS BASED

- 4.1** Youth information services are based on the needs of young people.
- 4.2** The information available covers all topics that matter to young people.
- 4.3** Each user is respected as an individual and the response to each question is personalised in ways that are effective and appropriate.
- 4.4** Youth information structures have enough human resources in order to guarantee personalised support and services.

5. EMPOWERING

- 5.1** Youth information services empower young people and foster their autonomy.
- 5.2** Youth information services provide young people with media and information literacy skills to act in a safe and responsible way
- 5.3** Youth information services promote active citizenship and participation.

³⁵ The European Youth Information Charter (2018): Preamble.

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/63e63a0eebd006803f20644/t/640a2e2bce568a43c63b75cf/1678388782099/EYIC_A4_English.pdf

6. PARTICIPATIVE

- 6.1 Young people participate in the production, dissemination and evaluation of youth information, at different levels and in different forms.
- 6.2 Youth information services offer platforms for peer-to-peer activities.
- 6.3 Young people are encouraged to give feedback as an integrated part of the ongoing development of youth information services.

7. ETHICAL

- 7.1 Youth information services respect young people's right to privacy, confidentiality and anonymity. Youth information services provide a safe environment for young people.
- 7.2 Criteria for selecting information are made public and understandable. The author and the purpose of the information are clear and visible.
- 7.3 All information produced or disseminated is accurate, complete, up-to-date and verified.

8. PROFESSIONAL

- 8.1 Youth information services are provided in a professional manner by trained staff.
- 8.2 Youth information workers have media and information literacy skills.
- 8.3 Youth information services co-operate with relevant stakeholders in order to identify needs, look for synergies, share expertise and make youth information visible.
- 8.4 Youth Information workers cooperate at local, regional, national, European and international level and share best practices and knowledge.
- 8.5 Youth information workers ensure that young people have knowledge and skills to use the digital services targeted to them.

9. PROACTIVE

- 9.1 Youth information services are innovative in their choice of strategies, methods and tools to reach out to young people.
- 9.2 Youth information workers are aware of new developments, relevant laws and keep themselves informed about trends among young people.
- 9.3 Youth information workers are proactive players in the media and information landscape to ensure quality youth information is visible.

It is to be specifically mentioned that in a digital age where information is abundant, media literacy becomes crucial. Well-informed citizens, who compose the different *publics*, can critically evaluate sources of information, discern between credible and unreliable content, and resist manipulation. *Media literacy* is a key factor in ensuring that citizens are not misled by misinformation or disinformation.

The key concepts of youth participation

Youth participation in democratic life is about individual young people and groups of young people having the right, the means, the space, the opportunity and, where necessary, the support to freely express their views, contribute to and influence societal decision-making on matters affecting them, and be active within the democratic and civic life of our communities³⁶.

Youth participation is about ACTION and VOICE. A participation project can focus on both of these things, or just one of them³⁷.



VOICE - Young people expressing their views to decision makers (such as politicians, policy makers, head teachers or community leaders). The aim is to encourage decision makers to make changes based on young people's views.



ACTION - Young people taking collective or individual action to make a change to the world around them. Rather than asking decision makers to make the change, young people lead the change themselves.

³⁶Definition of youth participation taken from the SALTO Youth Participation Strategy (2020)

³⁷ Definition and image taken from the SALTO Youth Participation Toolkit: <https://participationpool.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Youth-Participation-Toolkit.pdf>

Based on previous works and validation results, for the purpose of the “Youth SPeACES” project, we can state that a participation experience needs to have a connection with the following *founding concepts*:

The founding concepts of youth participation	Explanatory notes ³⁸
Solidarity	<p>Solidarity is grounded in a shared purpose or common goal. In the context of a youth project, participants come together with a collective objective, whether it is enhancing peer learning, fostering social cohesion, or addressing specific community needs.</p> <p>Solidarity encourages peer learning and collaboration among participants. It involves a cooperative approach where young individuals share their knowledge, skills, and experiences with one another, creating a supportive network for learning and personal development. A key element of solidarity is mutual support. Participants in the youth project offer assistance and encouragement to each other, creating a culture of support where everyone feels empowered to overcome challenges and succeed together.</p> <p>Participants take ownership of the project's success, contributing actively to its development and sustainability.</p>
Accessibility	<p>Accessibility starts with an inclusive design that considers the needs and preferences of a diverse group of youth participants. This involves creating an environment, both physical and virtual, that accommodates various abilities, backgrounds, and learning styles.</p> <p>Accessibility articulates in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>physical accessibility</i> (venues and activities accessible to individuals with different physical abilities) - <i>digital accessibility</i> (online platforms, resources, and communication channels are designed in a way that is usable and navigable for individuals with disabilities) - <i>language accessibility</i> (recognising and addressing language barriers that may exist among participants) - <i>financial accessibility</i> (considering cost implications and implementing measures to reduce financial barriers)
Inclusivity	<p>Inclusivity ensures that all members of the community, regardless of background or differences, feel a sense of belonging. In a youth project, inclusivity promotes an environment where everyone's voice is valued, and diverse perspectives contribute to the richness of the learning experience.</p>
Cultural sensitivity	<p>Cultural sensitivity is essential for ensuring that the project is accessible to participants from diverse cultural backgrounds. This includes considering cultural norms, customs, and languages to create an inclusive environment where all participants feel valued and understood.</p>
Youth agency (or protagonism)	<p>Only by gaining direct experience in leading or animating projects, is it possible to develop stronger “participation competences”. This is the spirit of the <i>learning by doing</i> approach. The methods and procedures of the project enable and encourage the real and meaningful participation of young people. The methods and procedures allow the input of young people in relation to the contents, agenda, strategies, methods and outcomes of the project. Ideally, the input of young people, gathered through the different methods and procedures, is carefully considered in the planning and in the next steps of the project.</p>
Vision for change	<p>The project enables young people to be civically active and/or to be involved in public decision-making. The participation of young people in</p>

³⁸ Some of the explanatory notes have been taken from the SALTO Youth Participation Toolkit and then adapted.

	<p>public decision-making processes is part of the expected outcomes of the project.</p> <p>The long-term civic engagement of young people, beyond the project itself, is promoted. Specific tools and strategies for civic engagement are explored; for example, advocacy campaigns, social movements or the new Erasmus+ Youth Participation action.</p>
--	--

2.3 The “places” of participation: youth spaces

The concept of “*places of participation*” in the context of youth policies refers to the physical and virtual spaces where young people can engage in civic and political activities, express their opinions, and influence decision-making processes. These spaces are essential for fostering a sense of belonging to the European project, building trust, and increasing youth participation³⁹. According to the Council of Europe, spaces for participation encompass the opportunities for young people to exercise their right to have a say and influence on issues that affect them, including family, school, local communities, public services, and wider government policy.

Youth spaces play a crucial role in providing young people with platforms to engage in civic and political activities, fostering a sense of belonging, and promoting their democratic and social rights. These spaces can take various forms, including informal self-managed spaces, youth centres, local community centres or hubs, creative studios and makerspaces, outdoor camps and recreational areas, youth-led initiatives and pop-up spaces, digital platforms. These spaces are often dynamic and responsive to the evolving interests of the youth involved. These examples illustrate the diversity of non-formal youth spaces, each contributing to the creation of environments where young individuals can socialise, learn, and actively participate in their communities. They are instrumental in promoting and ensuring young people's democratic and social rights, encouraging their social and political participation at all levels⁴⁰.

The key characteristics of youth spaces in the European Union include:

- *Adhesion to the founding concepts of youth participation* (as in § “The key concepts of youth participation”).
- *Promotion of democratic and social rights*: youth organisations and youth programmes within these spaces are important vehicles for promoting and ensuring young people's democratic and social rights, encouraging their social and political participation at all levels.
- *Opportunities for participation*: these spaces provide opportunities for young people to exercise their right to have a say and influence on issues that affect them, encompassing various areas of a young person's life⁴¹. Specifically, in youth spaces young participants are supported in taking the lead of their projects, encouraging them to take informed decisions about civic, economic, social, cultural, and political issues.
- *Safeguarding measures*: there is a focus on safeguarding civic space for young people, ensuring their rights to freedom of information and expression, freedom of assembly and association, and funding for youth civil society⁴².

The findings from the desk research on youth policies in Europe align seamlessly with the good practices that will be analysed and presented in the following Chapter. As a matter of fact, the identified policies serve as the foundation upon which the highlighted initiatives are built, embodying the principles and objectives outlined in the researched frameworks.

³⁹ <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/youth-spaces-and-participation>

⁴⁰ <https://www.youthforum.org/news/safeguarding-civic-space-for-young-people>

⁴¹ <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/youth-spaces-and-participation>

⁴² <https://www.youthforum.org/news/safeguarding-civic-space-for-young-people>

3. Results from the Survey and the Focus Groups

The primary objectives of the WP4 are to understand and map the various models and forms of youth participation in public life across the European Union and to articulate a comprehensive Charter that values, protects, supports, and promotes the specific form of *active citizenship* that youth spaces, both formal and informal, can help articulate.

This involved conducting a background survey to document patterns of youth participation in public life, including designing a questionnaire, building a thematic structure, testing and validating the questionnaire, and providing online training for local project contacts.

The survey engaged stakeholders and representatives of youth spaces and organisations in the project countries and beyond. Its outcomes have provided a valuable foundation for the project's overarching goal of drafting the "European Charter on Youth Spaces," offering rich insights into the preferences, challenges, and aspirations of young individuals actively involved in educational activities within youth spaces. The subsequent analysis of the collected data aimed to systematise information and construct a comprehensive report that is expected to serve as a valuable resource in shaping youth participation strategies and policies.

3.1 The survey

In the summer of 2023, a comprehensive survey was conducted in the frame of the "Youth sPEACEs" educational mobilities, to gather insights from the young people who participated in the planned mobility programmes. The questionnaire, administered through an online form, aimed to capture the diverse perspectives and experiences of youth actively engaged in these spaces. Participants were informed of the survey's purpose, seeking to understand and enhance youth participation in public life. Each project partner has access to the data specific to their country, enabling a nuanced analysis of youth perspectives and experiences within their respective contexts.

The questionnaire

The "Youth sPEACEs" project questionnaire was methodically structured to obtain detailed and comprehensive insights into the perceptions and experiences of young participants in educational activities. The variety of questions, each targeted to explore a specific aspect, has contributed to an in-depth understanding of youth engagement and the effectiveness of youth spaces. Here is a breakdown of the main dimensions:

Demographic and Context information:

- Initial questions (age, gender, country of residence, nationality, educational path) provided valuable demographic context for segmenting and analysing responses.
- Questions about participation frequency, types of activities engaged in, and the importance of youth spaces were structured to reveal different levels of involvement and the perceived impact of activities on personal and social growth.

Digital Aspects:

- Inquiry into the presence of digital spaces and the predominant activity in such spaces provided an analysis of the convergence between online and offline interactions, contributing to a better understanding of the role of technology in youth participation.

Motivations and Opinions:

- Questions probing reasons for absence from youth spaces, perceptions of activities conducted, and opinions on improving participation offered insights into the motivations, expectations, and perceived challenges among youth.

Experiences of Active Participation:

- Questions related to event organisation, coordination tasks, and collaboration with other participants highlighted experiences of active participation and emerging leadership among young individuals.

Socio-Cultural and Inclusivity Aspects:

- Inquiry into accessibility for people with disabilities, promotion of diversity, and proposed improvements reflected the project's focus on socio-cultural aspects and inclusivity in youth spaces.

Definitions and Awareness:

- Questions about awareness and definition of “youth active participation” sought to capture the conceptual understanding of key concepts related to youth participation.

Methods of Democratic Participation and Intercultural Exchange:

- Exploration of preferred methods of democratic participation and opinions on facilitating intercultural exchange emphasised the importance of civic participation and international collaboration.

Space for Comments:

- Including a space for final comments provided participants with the opportunity to express opinions, reflections, and ideas that may not have been covered by structured questions.

The variety of questions and attention to specific details have contributed to a comprehensive methodological framework that aims to capture the complexity of the experiences and opinions of young participants in the context of youth spaces.

The survey results

In total, **185 respondents** provided their points of view, returning complete and usable questionnaires. The respondents were mainly located in the “Youth sPEACEs” partner countries (as **countries of residence**):

- France: 35 respondents
- Poland: 33 respondents
- Italy: 27 respondents
- Greece: 25 respondents
- Portugal: 25 respondents
- North Macedonia: 17 respondents
- Sweden: 14 respondents
- Spain: 3 respondents
- Other entries: 6 respondents

It is worth mentioning that Polish, French and Italians were the highly represented **nationalities**.

3- In what country do you live?

185 Responses- 2 Empty

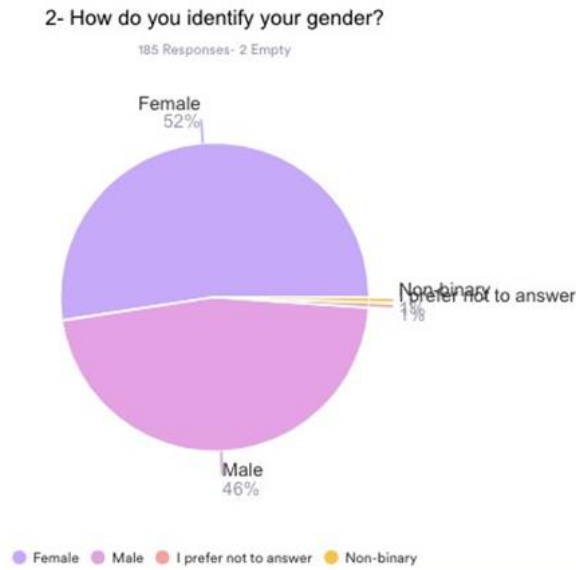
Data	Responses
France	35
Poland	33
Italy	27
Hellas	25
Portugal	25
North Macedonia	17
Sweden	14
Spain	3
Other entries	6

The **age** of the respondents was mostly between 18 and 21 years. The lowest age recorded was 14, the highest was 66.

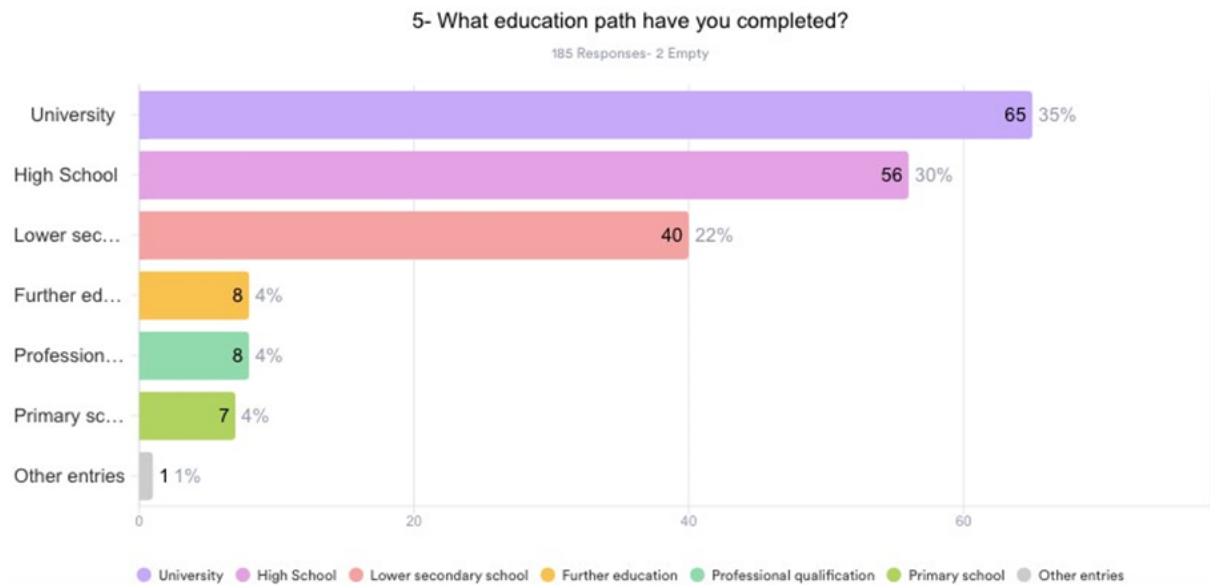
How old are you?

Data	Responses
18	25
21	18
20	14
17	13
15	13
22	10
16	10
14	10
23	8
Other entries	45

As regards **gender**, 52% of the respondents identified as female, while 46% identified as male. A small percentage preferred not to answer (1%), and an additional 1% identified as non-binary:



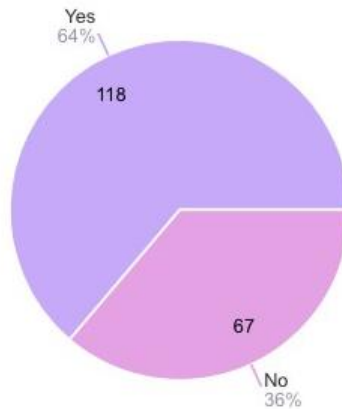
Regarding the **level of education**, more than 65% of the respondents had a medium-high level of education (high school and above).



The majority of respondents (64%) declared attending a youth space.

6- Do you attend a youth centre / youth space?

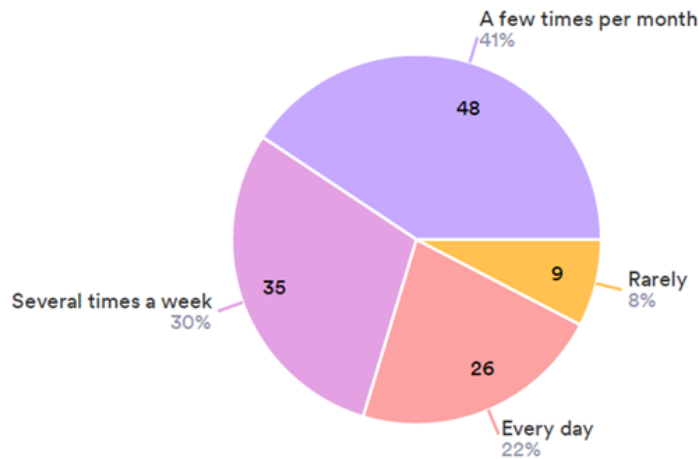
185 Responses- 2 Empty



Concerning the frequency of attendance at a youth space, the majority of respondents stated that they attend a youth space “a few times per month”, accounting for 41% (48 respondents), followed by “several times a week” at 30% (35 respondents).

7. How often do you go there?

118 Responses- 69 Empty

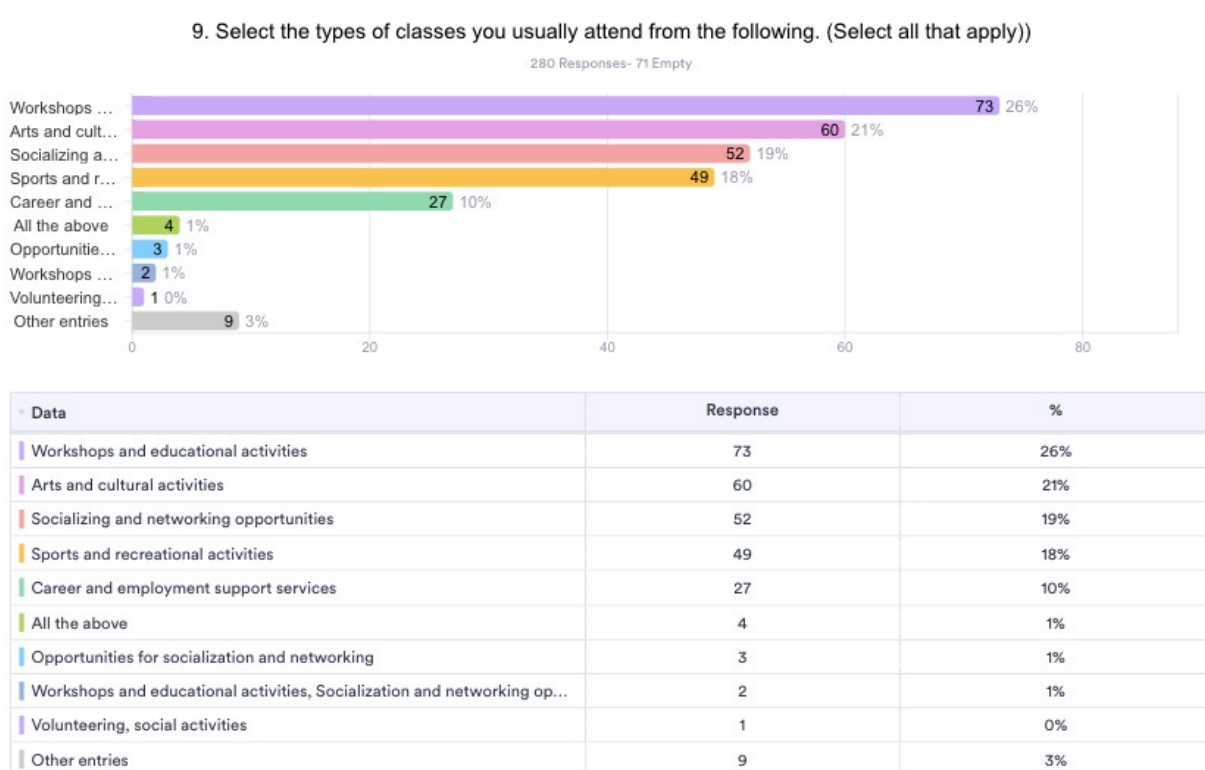


With respect to the distribution of responses regarding the characterisation that most accurately described the youth centre attended by the respondents, the option “an informal centre managed by an association” garnered the highest percentage of responses at 45% (53 respondents), followed by “An institutional centre (e.g., managed by the Municipality)” with 29% (34 respondents).



The most frequent types of activities attended by the respondents in the youth spaces were the following:

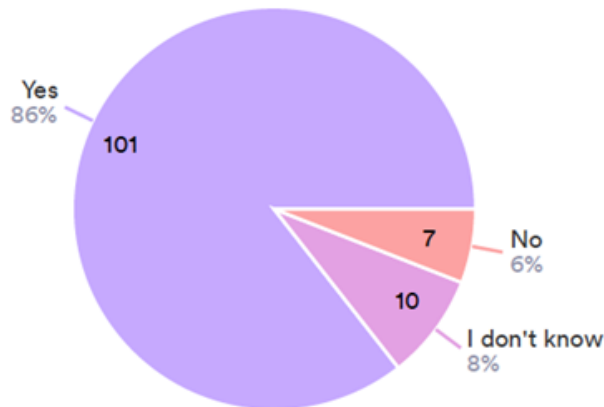
- Workshops and educational activities: 26% (73 respondents)
- Arts and cultural activities: 21% (60 respondents)
- Socialising and networking opportunities: 19% (52 respondents)
- Sports and recreational activities: 18% (49 respondents)



Regarding the digital spaces, 86% of the respondents indicated that the youth space provided for digital spaces.

10- Does the youth space also provide for digital spaces (e.g. on social media, web-blogs, etc.)?

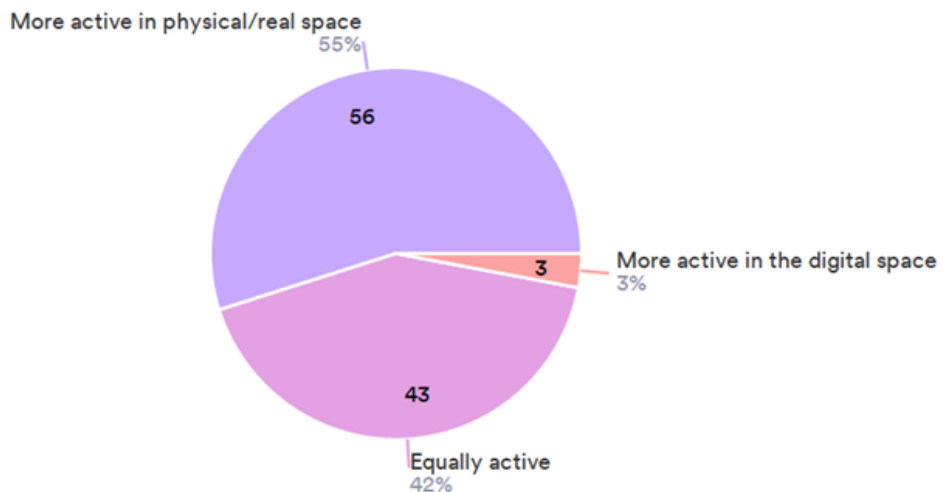
118 Responses- 69 Empty



Among those who answered “Yes” to the availability of digital spaces, 55% stated that they were more active in the physical/real space, while 42% indicated that they were equally active in both the physical and digital spaces.

10bis- If you answered "Yes" to the previous question... Are you more active in the real space, or in the digital one?

102 Responses- 85 Empty



These results indicate a high prevalence of digital spaces within the youth centres, with a majority of respondents being more active in the physical/real space compared to the digital space.

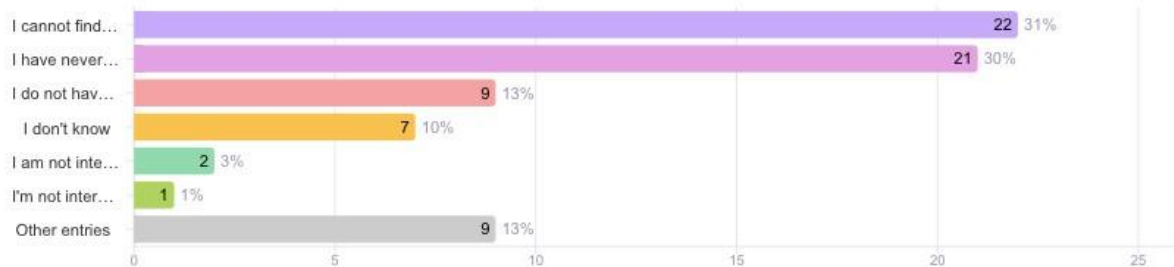
The following graph provides insights into the reasons why respondents may not attend or use youth spaces. The majority of responses indicated the following reasons:

- “I cannot find any youth space close to where I live”: 31%

- “I have never heard of this kind of spaces”: 30%
- “I do not have time to attend such spaces”: 13%

7.1. Why don't you attend or use youth spaces?

71 Responses- 116 Empty



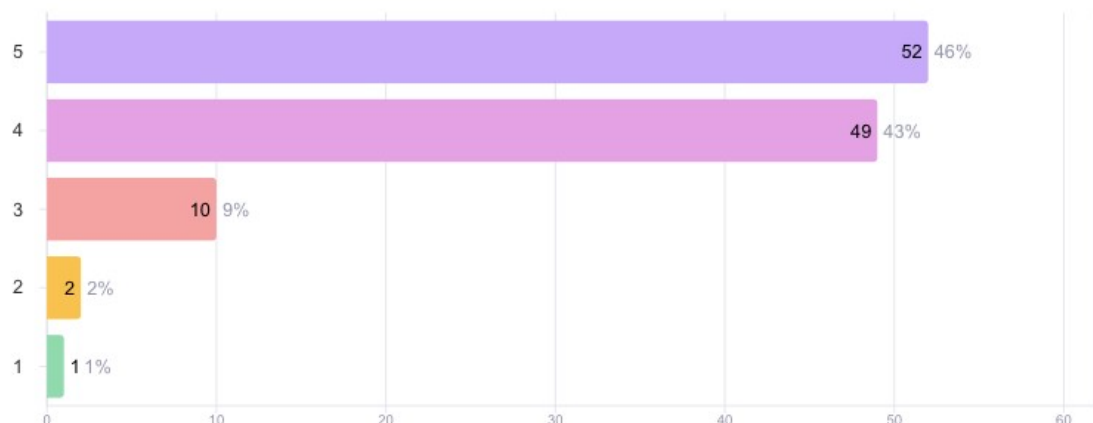
Data	Response	%
I cannot find any youth space close to where I live	22	31%
I have never heard of this kind of spaces for young people	21	30%
I do not have time to attend such spaces	9	13%
I don't know	7	10%
I am not interested	2	3%
I'm not interested	1	1%
Other entries	9	13%

These responses suggest that proximity, awareness, and time constraints are significant factors influencing the participation in the activities provided in youth spaces.

According to the survey, the majority of respondents (89%) rated the importance of using the youth space in the context of their **personal development** as either a 4 or 5 on a scale from 1 to 5. This indicated that the majority of respondents considered the use of youth spaces as highly important for their personal development and well-being:

11. On a scale from 1 to 5 - how important is using the youth space in the context of your personal development and well-being? Here we ask you to consider your overall personal development, also in terms of self-improvement and self-esteem growth

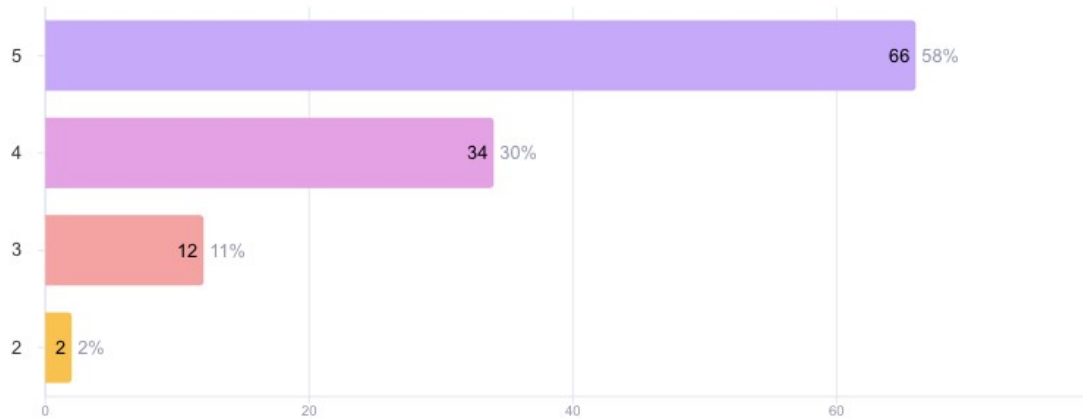
114 Responses- 73 Empty



Moreover, 58% of the respondents rated the significance of utilising the space for young people in the context of their **social development** as a 5 on a scale from 1 to 5. This substantial percentage indicates that a majority of respondents deemed the utilisation of youth spaces as highly important for their social development.

12. On a scale from 1 to 5 - how important is using the space for young people in the context of your social development? Here we ask you to consider opportunities to improve your ability to interact with peers and adults, work in teams, express your thoughts in public, etc.

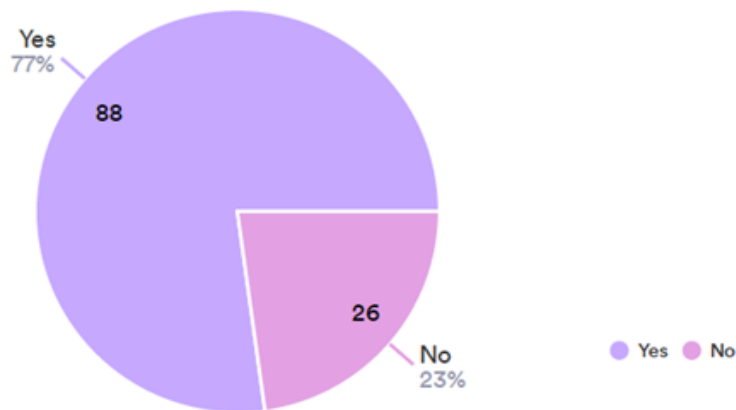
114 Responses- 73 Empty



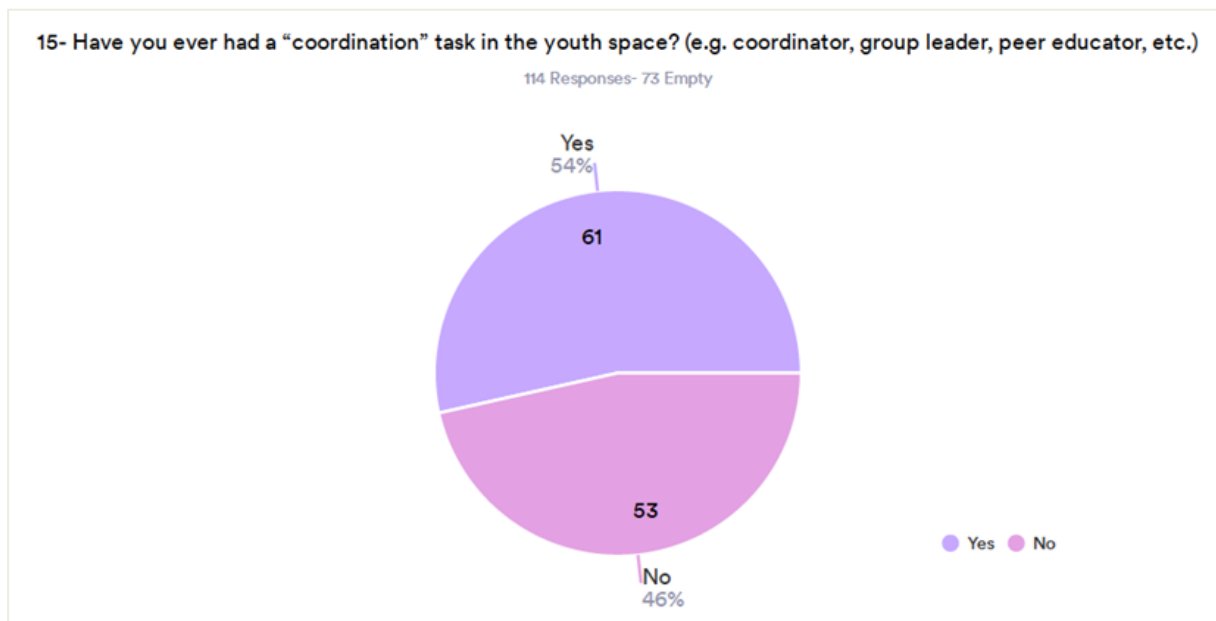
Regarding the **role** played in the youth centre, 77% of the respondents stated their involvement in organising or planning events/activities within the youth space.

13. Have you ever been involved in organizing or planning events/activities in the youth space?

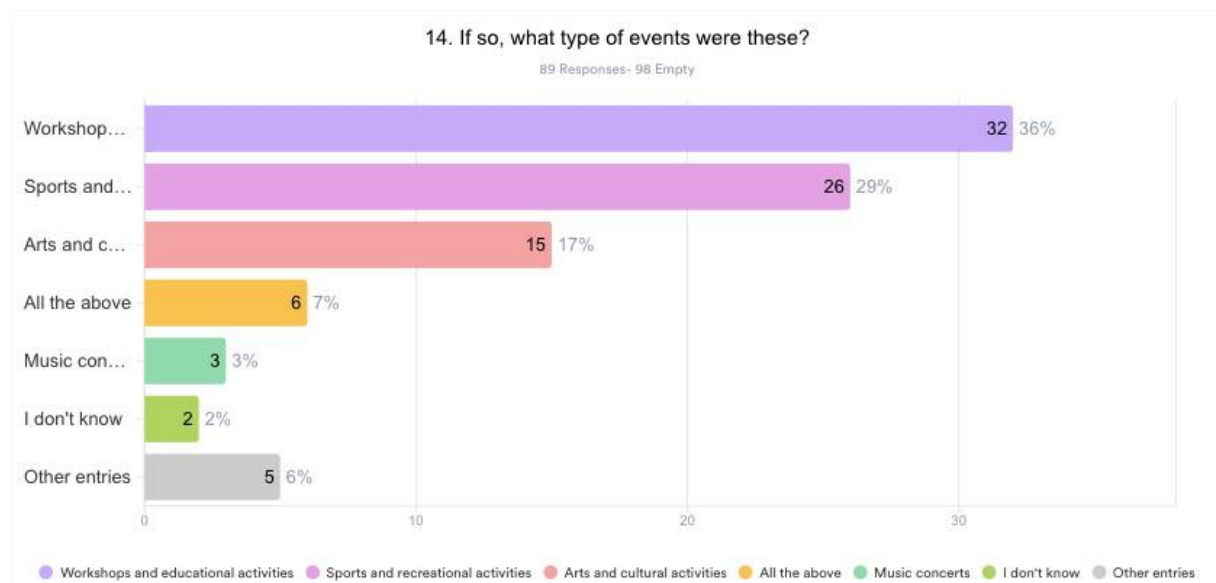
114 Responses- 73 Empty



This high percentage indicates that a significant portion of the surveyed individuals had been actively involved in **contributing to the organisation and planning of events** and activities within the youth spaces, suggesting a high level of active participation and engagement among the young people in shaping the provisions and experiences within these spaces. Furthermore, 54% of the respondents indicated that they had had a "coordination" task in the youth space, such as being a coordinator, group leader, or peer educator. This suggests a high level of involvement and responsibility in managing and facilitating activities within these spaces.



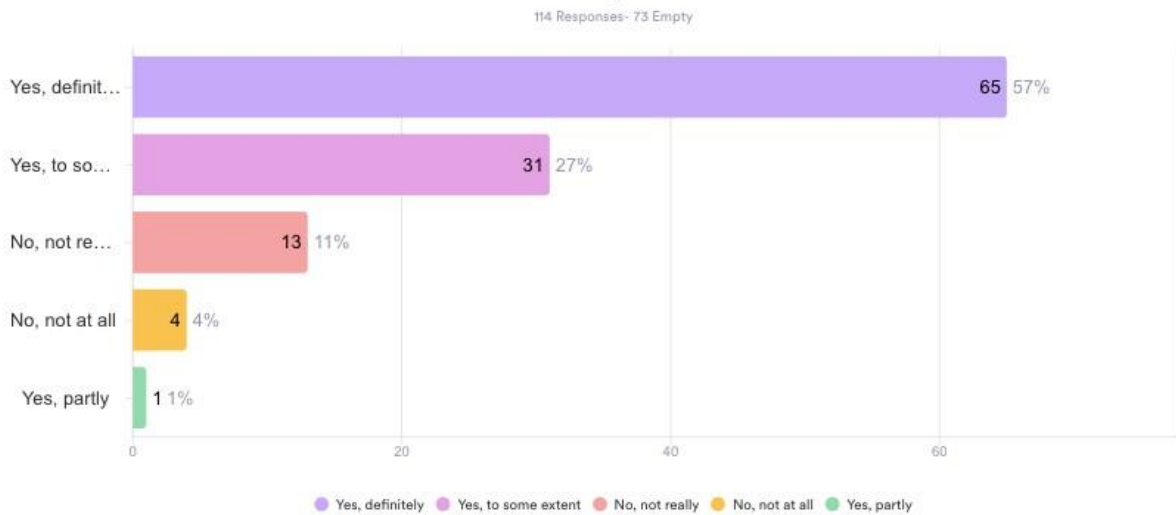
The most **common types of events** and activities that the respondents organised or planned in the youth spaces were workshops and educational activities (36%), followed by sports and recreational activities (29%) and arts and cultural activities (17%). Other types of events and activities that were mentioned included music concerts and other initiatives.



These results suggest that the young people involved in organising or planning events/activities in the youth spaces were interested in a diverse range of activities that cater to different interests and preferences. The high percentage of respondents who organised or planned workshops and educational activities also highlighted the importance of learning and skill-building opportunities within the youth spaces.

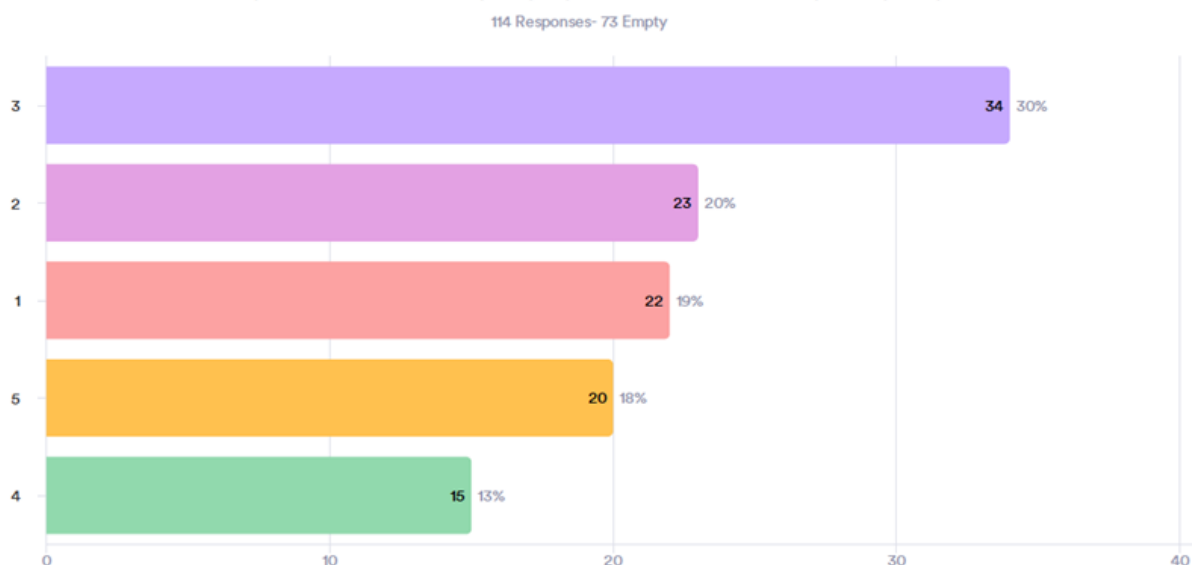
57% of the respondents indicated that they had had the opportunity to collaborate with others in the youth space to **find or create solutions, resources, or other initiatives** that met their needs and interests. This suggests that a majority of the surveyed individuals got actively engaged in collaborative efforts within the youth spaces to address their needs and interests, indicating a strong sense of collective participation and problem-solving.

16. Have you ever had the opportunity to collaborate with others in the youth space to find or create solutions, resources, or other initiatives that meet your needs and interests?

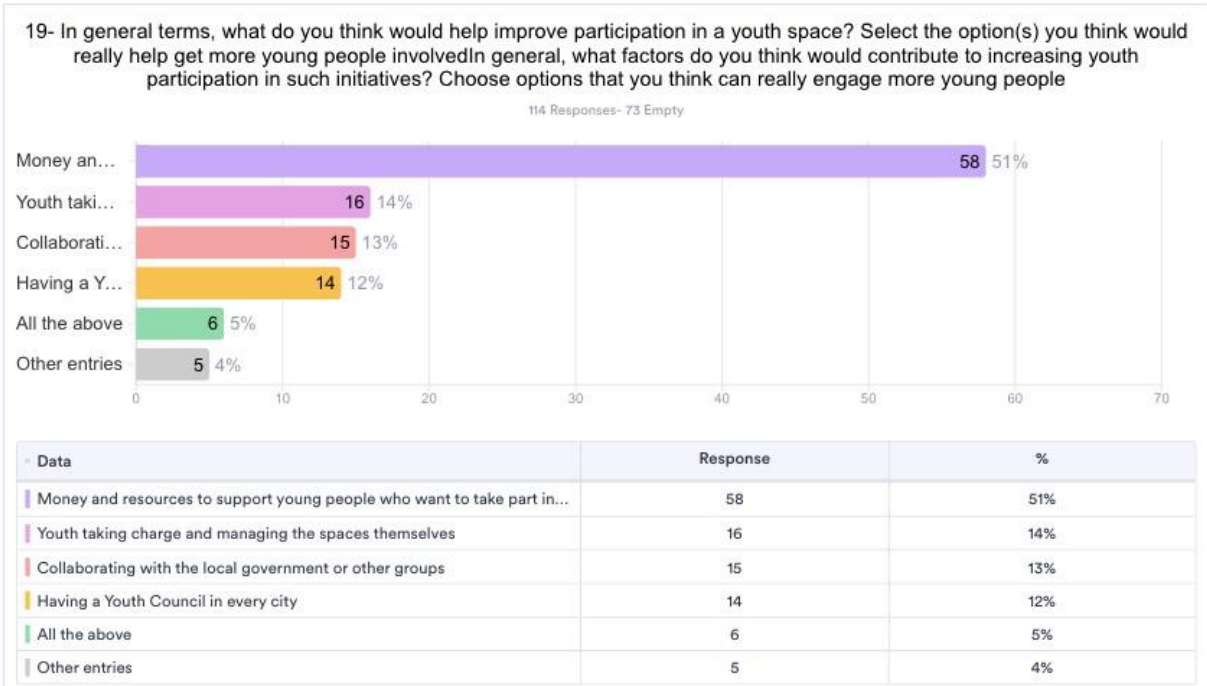


As regards the **accessibility for people with disabilities** of the youth space, 30% of the respondents rated the accessibility level as "3" on a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 stood for "very inaccessible"). It is worth mentioning that 20% rated it as "2" and 19% rated it as "1". These results indicate that the accessibility conditions could be an area of improvement for the youth spaces to ensure inclusion, equal opportunities and equal access for all individuals.

17- How would you rate the accessibility for people with disabilities of the youth space you attend?



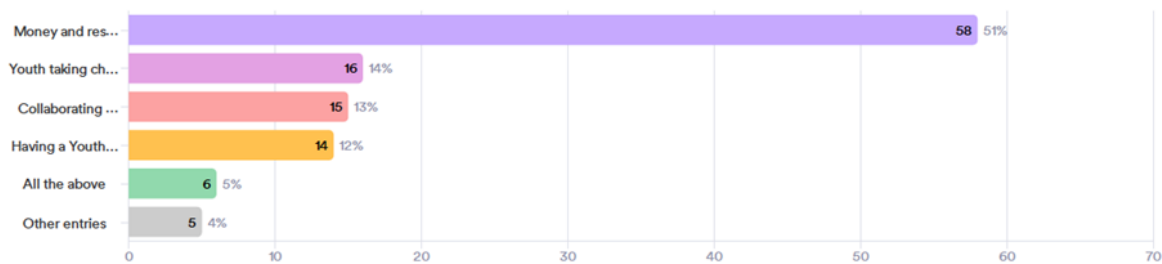
65% of the respondents expressed that the activities within the youth space effectively promote diversity, whereas 29% stated they foster diversity to some extent. A mere 4% of the respondents indicated that the activities do not significantly foster diversity. This implies that the majority of respondents believed the activities in the youth space successfully contribute to the representation and inclusion of individuals from diverse backgrounds, cultures, ethnicities, genders, and abilities.



The respondents provided several factors that they believed would contribute to increasing youth participation in such initiatives. The majority of the respondents (51%) indicated that providing money and resources to support young people who wanted to take part would significantly help improve participation in a youth space. Additionally, 14% of the respondents mentioned youth taking charge and managing the spaces themselves, 13% suggested collaborating with the local government or other groups, and 12% highlighted the importance of having a Youth Council in every city.

18- In general terms, what do you think would help improve participation in a youth space? Select the option(s) you think would really help get more young people involved. In general, what factors do you think would contribute to increasing youth participation in such initiatives? Choose options that you think can really engage more young people.

114 Responses- 73 Empty

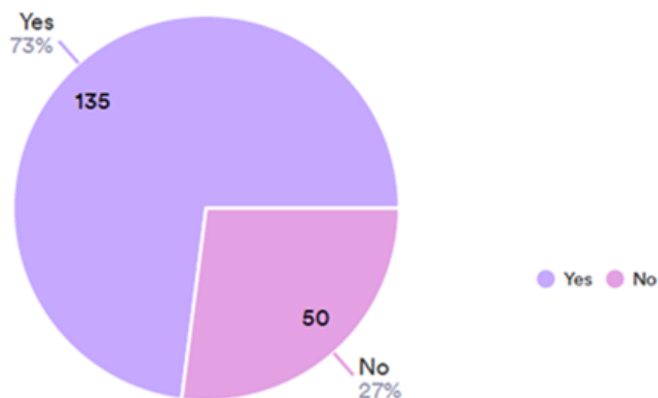


Data	Response	%
Money and resources to support young people who want to take part i...	58	51%
Youth taking charge and managing the spaces themselves	16	14%
Collaborating with the local government or other groups	15	13%
Having a Youth Council in every city	14	12%
All the above	6	5%
Other entries	5	4%

In the last section of the questionnaire, the concept of “active participation” was investigated from different perspectives. 73% of the respondents stated that they had heard of “active youth participation” in their everyday life, indicating a general awareness and recognition of the concept.

20. Have you ever heard of “active youth participation” in your everyday life?

185 Responses- 2 Empty

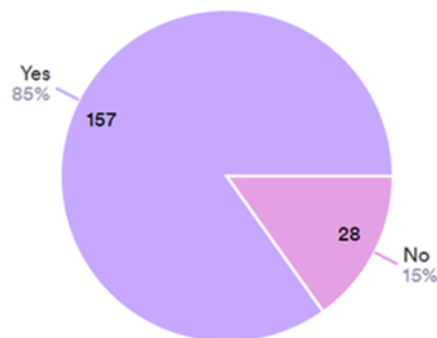


85% of the respondents indicated that they had been involved in some form of active participation, such as community events, political campaigns, volunteering, etc. Only 15% of the respondents said that they had not been involved in any form of active participation.

These results suggest that a significant portion of the surveyed individuals got engaged in various forms of active participation, indicating a potential interest and willingness to participate in youth spaces as well.

22. Have you ever been involved in any form of active participation? (e.g. community events, political campaigns, volunteering, etc.)?

185 Responses- 2 Empty



Responses to the open question “How would you define 'active youth participation' in just 3 words, referring to your experience?” reflect a diverse array of perspectives and priorities among the young participants.

Common themes encompass a commitment to social change and positive development, with a focus on organising events, participating in meetings, and engaging in volunteer activities. **Recurring concepts** such as inclusion, responsibility, and action underscore a collective desire for active involvement in the community. Some participants highlight the importance of youth voice and empowerment, advocating for participatory decision-making. **Values** like solidarity, friendship, and creativity emerge as crucial components of the youth participation experience. Additionally, there is a notable emphasis on learning, non-formal education, and civic responsibility.

With a perspective on how to enhance the role of youth spaces, the majority of respondents (37%) stressed the importance of establishing more international youth exchange programmes and initiatives to facilitate the exchange of good practices and learning among young people from different European countries. This indicates a strong interest in promoting cross-cultural interactions and knowledge sharing among youth from diverse backgrounds.

Additionally, 16% of the respondents highlighted the significance of promoting language learning opportunities to improve communication between young people from different European countries, further emphasising the value of linguistic and cultural exchange in facilitating collaboration and understanding across borders.

Comments on the survey results

The questionnaire provided significant data regarding youth spaces, their management, the activities offered, and the role of digital technology. The main findings are summarised as follows:

- **Use and Perception of Youth Spaces:** The data revealed that the frequency of use of youth spaces varies widely among young people, with some attending regularly and others sporadically or never. In terms of perception, most participants described these spaces as accessible and comfortable, indicating a generally positive environment.
- **Management and Activities of Youth Spaces:** Responses highlighted a high level of young people's involvement in the management and organisation of activities in youth spaces. Many young people actively participate in the planning and implementation of events, projects, and workshops, suggesting a strong sense of belonging and responsibility in the community. This aspect is particularly important to ensure that youth spaces remain relevant and effectively meet the needs and interests of young people.

In addition, the survey data showed the **respondents' positive perceptions about youth spaces in contributing to the personal and social development of young people**. Youth spaces emerge as dynamic hubs that go beyond providing physical places for young people to gather. They serve as catalysts for holistic development, nurturing social skills, personal growth, and a sense of community. The positive perceptions reflected in the survey data underscore the critical role that inclusive youth spaces play in shaping the future of young individuals.

Among the key aspects that stand out, the following ones are interrelated and hold particular relevance in a democratic perspective:

- **Personal Development:** Youth spaces are perceived as fundamental for personal growth. Young people see them as safe and supportive environments where they can freely explore and express their identities. Through various activities, both individually and in groups, individuals can discover their passions, strengths, and values. This self-discovery is fundamental to the formation of a strong and positive sense of identity. The positive atmosphere and sense of belonging fostered in youth spaces contribute to overall psychological well-being.
- **Skills acquisition and competences development:** Engaging in diverse activities within youth spaces offers young people the opportunity to acquire a broad range of skills. Whether through workshops, sports, or educational programmes, these spaces become arenas for skill development, encompassing leadership, problem-solving, creativity, and critical thinking. The acquisition of such skills contributes significantly to personal growth and resilience.
- **Social Development:** In terms of social development, youth spaces are seen as crucial platforms for socialisation and building meaningful relationships. Young people value them as meeting places where they can establish connections with peers who have similar interests. This aspect is particularly important for the sense of belonging and community, providing young people with a space to interact in a safe and supportive context. Furthermore, youth spaces serve as dynamic environments where young people can interact and engage with their peers. These spaces encourage the development of crucial social skills, fostering teamwork, communication, and the ability to navigate diverse social dynamics. As young individuals collaborate on projects, share experiences, and participate in group activities, they naturally build a sense of community. Many youth spaces actively encourage civic engagement and a sense of responsibility towards the community. Through volunteer projects, community service initiatives, awareness campaigns, and other initiatives, young people learn the importance of contributing to society, cultivating a sense of civic duty and social responsibility.

- **Digital dimension:** the data indicates that young people, while acknowledging the value of digital connection and engagement within youth spaces, also continue to recognize the importance of physical meetings and direct experiences. This implies that youth spaces, both physical and digital, should work in synergy to provide comprehensive and integrative platforms that meet the diverse needs and preferences of young people.
- **Empowerment and Participation:** Youth spaces provide a platform for young individuals to articulate their thoughts, opinions, and aspirations. This fostering of expression is crucial in empowering them to voice their perspectives on matters that directly impact their lives. Through open discussions, forums, and creative outlets within these spaces, young people find a channel to express themselves authentically. Empowerment in youth spaces extends beyond mere expression; it encompasses the cultivation of a sense of agency. Young individuals are encouraged to take ownership of their ideas and initiatives, realizing that their contributions are valuable. This sense of agency instils confidence and a belief in their capacity to effect positive change, both within the youth space and the broader community.

However, some responses highlighted concerns about **accessibility**. These may include physical limitations, such as the lack of suitable facilities for people with disabilities, or social barriers, such as an atmosphere that does not feel inclusive or welcoming to all groups of young people. These feedbacks emphasise the importance of continuing to engage in building a culture of accessibility and inclusiveness in youth work, reflected in youth spaces.

3.2 The Focus Groups

In May and June 2023, focus groups were carried out at the same time as local training activities on participation issues in youth spaces/centres. The main objectives of this research activity were:

- To contextualise the different approaches for youth spaces considering past experiences and “lessons learned”, collecting the point of view of trainers, operators and young people who will gather in the information/training events at the partners’ premises.
- To share experiences in successful youth spaces/practices.

The topics addressed in the focus groups dealt with: the characteristics of the experience in the youth space/youth centre; the evaluation of the activities carried out especially with regard to the barriers hindering participation; the consideration of the potential of each individual within the centres and possible commitments/factors for the success of a youth space/centre. At the end of the activity, a total of 13 focus groups were carried out, addressing different topic as shown in the following table:

Country	N° of participants	Topics addressed
Greece	9	Barriers to creating youth spaces, initiatives for active youth involvement, inclusion, accessibility, funding, social life.
France	40 (in 3 Focus groups)	Youth participation in society, youth involvement, criteria for creating inclusive youth spaces.
Italy	12	Role of youth spaces, addressing educational and social challenges, value of dialogue and youth/operator valorisation, participation obstacles, volunteerism's role.
Poland	9	Inclusivity definition and importance, barriers to youth inclusion, best practices for inclusive environments, addressing marginalised youth, transportation challenges, inclusivity in volunteering.

Portugal	30 (in 6 Focus groups)	Barriers (i.e. lack of information), increasing democratic engagement, the role of volunteering, best practices for youth spaces, importance of youth-led initiatives.
Sweden	8	Barriers to inclusion, significance of volunteering, fostering diversity, best practices in youth spaces, youth-led initiatives and activism.

Key findings from the Focus Groups

The focus group reports from France, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal, and Sweden for the Youth Spaces project collectively emphasise the importance of youth participation and engagement in society through different key factors as:

Promoting youth engagement:

The focus groups identified key factors for enhancing youth engagement:

- **Inclusivity and Accessibility:** Creating spaces and activities that are accessible and welcoming to all youths, regardless of their background.
- **Youth Exchanges and Travel Programs:** Utilising youth exchanges and travel programs to enhance accessibility and reach a wider audience
- **Active Listening and Dialogue:** Prioritising open communication and valuing youth perspectives.
- **Support for Youth Initiatives:** Encouraging and supporting initiatives led by young people.
- **Equal Access to Information:** Ensuring equal access to information, not limited to internet resources.
- **Influence of Role Models (or mentors):** Recognizing the significant impact that inspiring role models can have on youth
- **Volunteering:** Emphasising the importance of volunteering in personal growth and societal engagement.
- **Addressing Barriers:** Recognizing and actively working to overcome barriers like transportation, information gaps, and societal challenges.

The reports highlight the crucial role of youth spaces as hubs for education, social interaction, and community engagement. Each country's report sheds light on specific challenges and successful practices, underscoring the need for inclusive, accessible, and well-informed youth spaces to enhance democratic participation and societal contribution among young people.

The barriers to youth participation identified are:

- **Lack of transportation and information:** a common issue in many countries, hindering access to youth spaces and activities.
- **Busy lifestyles:** particularly noted in Greece, where education and extracurricular activities limit time for social engagement.
- **Financial constraints:** a challenge for establishing and maintaining youth spaces.
- **Micro-criminality,** affecting youth participation in Italy. It seems as if many participants in youth centres maintain dual lifestyles: one within the centre and an entirely distinct one outside, in the streets. Incidents have been recorded involving threats and damage to spaces, perpetrated by individuals who advocate for the presence of youngsters on the streets, as it facilitates easier enticement.
- **Language barriers and racism:** identified in Poland, affecting inclusivity.
- **Uncertainty around volunteering opportunities:** a concern in Portugal and Sweden, impacting youth engagement.
- **Physical barriers:** limiting accessibility for all youths.
- **Educational challenges:** hindering the adoption of good practices in youth spaces/ centres.

4. Good practices of youth participation in the European public space

The good practices presented exemplify the practical manifestations of the broader policy landscape, demonstrating how well-designed and effectively implemented policies can translate into tangible improvements in the lives of young people.

This connection underscores the importance of informed policy-making and strategic implementation, emphasising the need for a holistic and collaborative approach to youth development in Europe.

The collected good practices are:

- Casa da Juventude de Amarante (Portugal)
- United Societies of Balkans, Thessaloniki (Greece)
- Laboratorio Zen Insieme, Palermo (Italy)
- Associazione Culturale San Giovanni Apostolo onlus, Palermo (Italy)
- Espace Projet Jeunes – Centre Social La Pépinière, Pau (France)
- Movie Festival about Human Rights, Kielce (Poland)
- Municipal Youth Council of Kielce (Poland)
- Arena 305, Malmö (Sweden)
- Flamman, Malmö (Sweden)
- Hangar, Malmö (Sweden)
- Fryshuset, Malmö (Sweden)
- Malmö Dance, The Cultural Association Iver, Malmö (Sweden)
- Ensamkommandes Förbund, Malmö (Sweden)
- Save the children Malmö (Sweden)
- Fritidsgårdar, Malmö Municipality (Sweden)
- Föreningen Bryggeriet, Malmö (Sweden)
- RFSL Rådgivningen Skåne, Malmö (Sweden)

4.1 Protagonism and empowerment

Youth spaces actively involve young individuals in different forms, such as advisory groups, self-managed groups, and in community projects. In this way, these spaces become catalysts for youth empowerment. By providing platforms for active participation and decision-making, these spaces contribute to the development of engaged, skilled, and empowered young leaders who are invested in the well-being of their communities.

In the analysed good practices, there are several examples of empowering roles, such as:

- Participation in local youth councils/committees (advisory and consulting role). In advisory roles, they contribute valuable perspectives, ideas, and recommendations on issues affecting youth in the community. This involvement empowers them to influence decision-making processes and advocate for their needs.
- Participation in self-managed groups (i.e. neighbourhood committees). In these cases, young people discuss the challenges and resources of their territory, voice concerns, and establish priorities. This not only enhances their understanding of community dynamics but also gives them a sense of agency in addressing local issues.
- Participation in co-design and co-build urban regeneration interventions. Empowering youth through co-design and co-building urban regeneration interventions fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility. By involving friends and relatives, youth spaces become hubs for collaborative community projects. This hands-on involvement in shaping the physical environment empowers young individuals to actively contribute to the

improvement of their surroundings. Co-design initiatives offer youth opportunities to develop practical skills in project management, teamwork, and problem-solving. Through hands-on experiences, they gain a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in community development and urban regeneration.

The concept of *freedom with responsibility* within youth spaces encapsulates a dynamic approach to empowering young individuals. It involves entrusting them with leadership roles while providing a supportive framework through organisational supervision. It provides young individuals with the autonomy to lead, supported by guidance or mentoring to ensure a safe and empowering environment. This model not only allows for the development of essential leadership skills but also ensures a balance between autonomy and guidance.

Good practice	Empowerment and active role
<p>Casa da Juventude de Amarante Amarante, Portugal</p>	<p>Young people are empowered to take on active roles thanks to the principle “freedom with responsibility” where the youngsters take a leadership role with our supervision and support. Among the implemented activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Volunteering activities: the volunteers decide by themselves the activities they want to develop each week and lead the implementation. Also, they present to AMC ideas for their personal projects to be developed in the youth centre; - Cultural agenda: The activities offered to the local community are free of charge and 100% coordinated by the volunteers (design, implementation, promotion, etc.); - Projects: Youngsters organise by themselves (with our mentorship) the preparation of their participation in each project (create energizers, prepare intercultural nights, support other participants, etc.); - Internships: They have the chance (with our mentorship) to propose and influence/change their internship program to create a higher impact in the community or develop specific skills/competences. <p>Young people are not really taking an active role in the space’s decision-making processes which is managed by AMC that has a board of directors that undertakes the strategic decisions. Of course, in the day-to-day activities many decisions are taken by the different youngsters that are living and/or using the youth centre.</p>
<p>Laboratorio Zen Insieme Palermo, Italy</p>	<p>Various activities include meetings to decide on the interventions to be implemented in the neighbourhood (very often urban regeneration). On these occasions the children take on specific roles. Some of them also carry out peer-to-peer workshops. Currently three of our operators are ex-users, who grew up in the association and became operators after a training course.</p> <p>Every semester we choose the activities to carry out together with the children, to actively involve them in their own growth paths. There are two neighbourhood committees, one made up of families and another only of children, in which roles are assumed, responsibilities are taken on, dialogue is held with the institutions and decisions are made on the interventions to be implemented in the neighbourhood.</p>

Associazione Culturale San Giovanni Apostolo onlus Palermo, Italy	Overall programming of the Association's activities is carried out with the young people, regardless of their age but valuing their self-initiative and willingness to contribute to the common goals.
Municipal Youth Council of Kielce Poland	<p>The whole idea of the council focuses on civic engagement. One example would be consulting and debating a city development strategy or annual city-NGO cooperation plan.</p> <p>Monthly meetings where the council consults legal proposals of the city decisionmakers, committee meetings creating proposals on issues concerning youth, advising on events in the city that concern young people etc.</p>
Ensamkommandes Förbund Malmö Sweden	<p>It is a non-profit, party-political and religiously independent member-led association that was founded as an organisation in 2013 in Malmö. The association is today part of a national association with 19 local associations. The organisation was started and is run by unaccompanied minors and young new arrivals themselves and thus has a unique insight and trust among the target group.</p> <p>The organisation started with the aim of politically and practically working to facilitate and improve the lives of unaccompanied children and young people. It is important for the association that newly arrived young people can make their voices heard and represent themselves.</p> <p>The association's board consists solely of young people who have been or are unaccompanied minors, this to guarantee and protect their representation in the association and to ensure that Ensamkommandes förbund Malmö is really by and for unaccompanied minors and newly arrived young people.</p>

4.2 Governance

In several countries, including Italy, France, Portugal, Greece, Sweden, and Poland, youth spaces often operate under a *mixed initiative framework* involving public, private, and non-profit sectors. This collaborative model allows for a diversified pool of resources, expertise, and funding sources. However, this mix can sometimes present challenges in terms of aligning goals, navigating various regulatory frameworks, and ensuring sustained financial support.

The advantages of such mixed initiatives are significant. Youth spaces become points of connection with public social workers, forming a vital link between the public sector and the community. This connection enables the provision of essential services, such as guidance for job opportunities. Moreover, in instances where additional support is required, especially in sensitive matters like mental health, these spaces facilitate access to psychological support for both young individuals and their families. This collaborative approach enhances the overall impact and effectiveness of the services provided.

However, this mixed initiative approach also comes with constraints. The yearly planning cycle, often dictated by public authorities' budgetary constraints, can limit the ability to develop comprehensive, multiannual programs. This constraint can hinder the long-term vision and sustainability of youth development initiatives, requiring constant adaptation to fit within the confines of annual budget allocations.

In some regions, such as Sweden and Italy, there is a recognition of the value of *grassroots, informal initiatives*. These initiatives often emerge from within the community, driven by local needs and aspirations. They are characterised by flexibility, responsiveness, and a close connection to the community's pulse.

On the other hand, in Poland, there is a *more formalised structure for youth spaces*. These spaces operate within established frameworks, protocols, and bureaucratic procedures. While this formality may provide a stable foundation, it can sometimes lead to a more rigid system that might face challenges in quickly adapting to evolving community needs.

4.3 Inter organisational cooperation

A paradigm shift towards collaborative efforts is essential for a more comprehensive approach to youth development. Joint initiatives involving governmental bodies, non-profits, and private enterprises facilitate resource pooling and expertise sharing. Platforms that encourage the exchange of knowledge, research, and best practices among different organisations contribute to a more informed and effective strategy. Shared facilities, funding mechanisms, and support networks enhance the overall impact of youth spaces by leveraging the strengths of multiple organisations.

These features collectively contribute to creating dynamic and inclusive youth spaces in the EU, fostering an environment where intersectionality is acknowledged, intergenerational connections are nurtured, and organisational collaboration enhances the overall support system for young individuals facing socio-economic disadvantage.

In the analysed good practices, what are our partners?

- Schools
- Associations
- Social services
- Local public services for guidance, employment, further education (e.g. Missions Locales in France)
- Youth hostels
- European Youth Networks
- Partnerships within EU-funded projects, e.g. Erasmus+

Good practice	Partners in the community
Casa da Juventude de Amarante Amarante, Portugal	Our organisation is a member of 3 different European Youth Networks (IG Network, Lead by Nature, and Get the Net) , a common ground for collaborations and partnerships at EU level. At the local level since 2008 partnerships that allow our ESC volunteers to develop their tasks while doing their volunteering experiences. Recently, we started to establish protocols with local schools (primary and high schools) for volunteering activities, to assure the participation of their students and teachers in our KA1 and KA2 projects and, finally, to involve them in specific calls that we consider relevant to have their participation as partners or local stakeholders.
Laboratorio Zen Insieme Palermo, Italy	Our association has always worked with the local network. We collaborate with all the schools in the district, of all levels. We often convene discussion tables (which in reality the responsible public services should do) involving social services, associations, schools and other local entities.

Municipal Youth Council of Kielce Poland	The Municipal Youth Council cooperates closely with schools, school self-governments, NGOs and the municipality.
Associazione Culturale San Giovanni Apostolo onlus Palermo, Italy	<p>The Association is part of many institutional and non-institutional networks, so there are many educational opportunities available to young people. Networking represents an important operational tool, which allows young and not-so-young operators to grow, compare, connect, enrich themselves through shared experiences with other public and private social organisations. Memoranda of understanding, partnership agreements, conventions are the ways in which the Association collaborates, communicates, plans, promotes events and initiatives with the outside world.</p> <p>Participation in university events (conferences and lectures on educational methods), meetings with operators of associations that specialise in particular topics such as the Libera Association, Names and Numbers against the Mafia, Addiopizzo, Danilo Dolci Development Centre and many others. All young people are involved in the activities that take place in the many schools with which we partner and with which we organise specific meetings to develop skills.</p> <p>Moreover, in addition to participating in periodic planning meetings with the Association's operators, thematic training meetings are dedicated to them.</p>

4.4 Values-based approaches

Youth spaces in the European Union are built on values that embody a commitment to principles that shape the fabric of our society. These spaces can be depicted as bustling hubs where young people learn to embrace the essence of what it means to be part of something bigger, something grounded in fundamental principles.

Good practice	Founding values
Casa da Juventude de Amarante Amarante, Portugal	Since the beginning we've decided to stand for our values and principles no matter what was at the time the trend or preferences coming from society (mainly from youth). With time and coherency in our practices that showed to be a good decision as nowadays we are exactly recognised for that exact reason (a place with values, healthy approaches, where people stand before profit and sustainability prevails over economy).
Flamman Malmö, Sweden	<p>At Flamman socialt förebyggande centrum we work to promote positive societal development through social projects. Our organisation consists of a carefully constructed group with broad expertise and extensive experience in managing development projects at local, regional, national and international level. Here you will find project managers, political scientists, psychologists, conflict resolution specialists, behaviour scientists, economists, public relations officers and graphic designers.</p> <p>The Centrum is a hub with a devoted team that works for social development among youths.</p>

Associazione Culturale San Giovanni Apostolo onlus Palermo, Italy	Promoting active policies for building a new social welfare and improving the quality of life of the community living in the CEP-San Giovanni Apostolo, Cruillas and Borgo Nuovo districts.
--	---

The collected good practices reveal a set of common references, covering values and principles such as:

Human Rights and Civil Rights

Youth spaces' mission and operations are usually built upon core principles that refer to the promotion, protection, and fulfilment of human rights. These spaces operate with the fundamental belief that every individual is entitled to certain inherent rights and dignity, and they work to advance and safeguard these rights in various contexts.

These spaces serve as incubators for the next generation of advocates, instilling an unwavering belief in the inherent dignity and equality of all individuals. By fostering an environment that encourages open dialogue and critical thinking, youth spaces empower young minds to become aware of justice and equality.

Inclusion

In the rich mosaic of Europe's cultural diversity, youth spaces champion the value of inclusion. These spaces are designed to be welcoming to individuals from all walks of life, irrespective of background, ability, or identity. By embracing and valuing differences, youth spaces become catalysts for social cohesion, promoting a sense of unity in the midst of diversity.

An inclusive approach considers the needs of minority groups, such as migrants, second generations, LGBTQI+ community members, etc. Inclusive measures involve providing equitable access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. They also entail creating an environment that embraces cultural diversity and ensures that all young people feel welcomed and are actively involved in decision-making processes.

Good practice	Measures taken to ensure inclusivity among participants and accessibility
United Societies of Balkans (Local Volunteers) Thessaloniki, Greece	Inclusivity is ensured by having no financial barriers as activities are wholly funded by the organisation. The facilitators are gender-balanced. People with disabilities or specific needs are always taken into consideration for example for people that do not eat meat in events there are always other options. The sessions are bilingual, they happen in Greek and English and are written. During event preparation EVERYONE receives a role and is included in the decision making of the specific event. To make it more accessible to individuals from difficult backgrounds we employ a mentor who is also a psychologist in order to suggest ways that activities become more accessible. As mentioned above we also do the sessions in two languages and take into account the disabilities of the participants
Casa da Juventude de Amarante Amarante, Portugal	First of all in the selection process we consider heterogeneous groups to assure a wide diversity and representatives of all society (special needs, fewer opportunities, etc.). After, in the implementation of activities we offer a diverse range of proposals and methods to assure that all group feels included and identify a

	<p>learning process that fit specific needs (working in small groups, task divisions, specific tasks to highlight the role of some participants, rotation system in the decision-making process, role models among our staff and ESC volunteers, if possible, translations to mother tongue, etc.).</p> <p>Our Youth Centre is not only accessible to different forms of disadvantage as also assures that these target groups are involved in our activities (our main local partner is the disable centre with whom we collaborate in a daily/regular basis and we often contact the local high schools, mainly VET classrooms, to assure the participation in Youth Exchanges, Dissemination and Multiplier events, raise awareness sessions, testing and piloting project's methodologies, etc.).</p>
Laboratorio Zen Insieme Palermo, Italy	<p>Our association has always applied interventions that put everyone on an equal footing, adopting educational models aimed at non-competitive comparison and free expression. Educators very often work to untangle any friction that arises in assembly contexts between adolescents.</p> <p>Our association, working in one of the most marginal neighbourhoods of the city, exclusively involves users in a socio-economic disadvantage.</p>
Associazione Culturale San Giovanni Apostolo onlus Palermo, Italy	<p>The places where the activities are carried out are barrier-free, and the presence of a psychotherapist to supervise the operators allows everyone to have the opportunity to express their possible discomforts. In addition, the twenty years of experience of the operators allows them to refine their approach and reception methods.</p>
Movie Festival about Human Rights Kielce, Poland	<p>Social inclusion is important to our organisation, both during the implementation of this event and others. The theme of the festival itself strongly refers to issues related to supporting disadvantaged and minority groups. Hence our emphasis on making the event open to the needs of various guests - the catering we order is vegetarian and vegan and the place is adapted to the needs of people with disabilities. If necessary, we also organised shows with audio descriptions.</p> <p>People with fewer opportunities can get involved in the preparation of the festival and see portraits of themselves in the presented documents. We showed films about the Roma community, LGBT people, migrants, refugees, opposition politicians persecuted in their countries, people after mental health crises and recovering from addiction. Each of the groups mentioned was active during discussions regarding their problems and we tried to invite representatives of minority groups to each meeting so that they could speak about themselves "with their own voice".</p>
Fryshuset Malmö, Sweden	<p>Fryshuset in Malmö is a place for all young people where we offer fun and meaningful leisure activities in, among other things, sports, culture and creative creation. We also support young people in looking for a job and give advice on studies.</p>

Accessibility

Accessibility goes beyond physical entry points; it embodies a comprehensive approach to ensure that spaces, services, and information are usable by all individuals, regardless of their abilities, disabilities, or other diverse needs.

Addressed target groups	Types of accessibility needs
Special needs of people with disabilities	Physical accessibility Sensory accessibility Mobility considerations
Special needs of people with mental illness	Supportive environment Quiet spaces
Special needs of mixed groups	Inclusive programming Social inclusion

Whether addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities, considering mental health, or promoting inclusivity in mixed groups, accessibility is about recognising and valuing the diversity of experiences and abilities within a community or space.

Sustainability and the Environment

Youth spaces often integrate in their mission and operations the principles of sustainability and environmental consciousness. These spaces integrate eco-friendly practices, educational programmes, and initiatives that instil a sense of responsibility toward the planet.

Through hands-on experiences and environmental projects, young individuals within these spaces learn the importance of sustainable living and become ambassadors for a greener future.

Active Citizenship

Youth spaces in the EU are incubators for active citizenship, nurturing a sense of civic responsibility among the younger generation. Through civic education, community engagement, and volunteer opportunities, these spaces empower young individuals to actively participate in the democratic processes that shape their communities and the larger European landscape.

4.5 From a “silo approach” to “system thinking”

From the analysed case studies, it emerges that youth spaces can facilitate the transition from a “silo approach” to “system thinking”, representing a shift in perspective and strategy.

Silo Approach	System Thinking
The "silo approach" refers to a method where various components of an organisation or system operate independently and in isolation from one another. Each department or unit functions as its own "silo," focusing primarily on its specific tasks and goals without much consideration for how its actions may impact or be impacted by other parts of the organisation or system	“System thinking” is a holistic and interconnected approach that considers the entire system as well as the relationships and interactions between its various components. Instead of viewing problems in isolation, system thinking involves understanding how different elements influence each other within a broader context
In this approach, communication and collaboration between different segments are limited, which can result in inefficiencies,	System thinking encourages a shift from linear cause-and-effect reasoning to recognising feedback loops, dependencies, and the dynamic

duplication of efforts, and a lack of a holistic view of the entire organisation or system	nature of systems. It emphasises the interdependence of parts and how changes in one area can have ripple effects throughout the entire system
--	--

Moving from a silo approach to system thinking is crucial for organisations or entities aiming for a more comprehensive, efficient, and adaptive way of functioning. The shift toward a more interconnected and nuanced understanding of individuals and systems, fostering inclusivity and promoting comprehensive solutions, encourages the incorporation of other concepts into the operations of youth spaces, such as intersectionality and intergenerational connections.

Good practice	System thinking
Fryshuset Malmö, Sweden	Our activities include everything from dance, sport and music to social projects, training and labour market efforts. The focus is always on young people and their chances to grow and develop. The roughly 60 projects and activities are divided into the areas of Youth Culture, Example & Faith in the Future, Schools and Work & Entrepreneurship.

Promotion of intersectionality

Addressing the multifaceted nature of human beings, youth spaces must evolve to become safe and supportive environments that cater to the diverse needs of all genders. Initiatives encompassing age-specific considerations, educational opportunities, housing stability, and integrated healthcare services contribute to the holistic well-being of young individuals. By acknowledging the intersection between socio-economic factors and health outcomes, these measures aim to bridge existing disparities.

As regards *gender*, youth spaces set forth inclusive programming and facilities that consider the diverse needs of all genders, providing a safe and supportive space for young people. Tailored initiatives for different *age groups* within the youth spectrum recognise the unique challenges and opportunities faced by adolescents, teenagers, and young adults.

Good practice	Intersectional approach
Movie Festival about Human Rights Kielce, Poland	Activities we offer to young people include primarily participation in thematic workshops (introduction to human rights, current challenges related to the situation of migrants and refugees, religious diversity), organising the promotion of the festival (for several years, young people organised happenings through which they tried to draw the attention of passers-by to selected issues in the area of human rights) as well as participation in panel discussions (young activists, members of the youth city council, local and foreign volunteers)
Flamman Malmö, Sweden	In addition to our leisure activities, we also run several different activities that all focus on creating better conditions for the future of young people at local, regional and national level.
Malmö Dance, The Cultural Association Iver Malmö, Sweden	The Culture Association doesn't tolerate any racism, homophobia, sexism or any other discrimination. The festival should be a safe space for everyone who's attending. We believe in being a place of desire and joy but not without addressing complex issues and discussions!

Ensamkommandes förbund Malmö Sweden	Through a series of accessible and educational discussion meetings at our Meeting Place Otto in Malmö, we wanted to increase knowledge about issues such as the Swedish constitution, the constitution, the EU, municipalities and county councils and our electoral system. As questions and themes were developed by participants, the meetings also dealt with choices in relation to racism, feminism, foreign policy and history. The discussion meetings were led by experts in each field and were very successful.
RFSL Rådgivningen Skåne Malmö, Sweden	<p>We work based on a norm-critical and intersectional approach. The training covers all grounds for discrimination and examines how several different norms work together. Initially, we always go through concepts and norms and their consequences so that the whole group has the same foundation to stand on.</p> <p>If you want to systematically work with the health and living conditions of LGBTQI people in your workplace, we recommend our process training LGBTQI competence. It is developed based on local conditions in Skåne and is based on regional, national and international research as well as experience and knowledge from our various operations.</p>

Intergenerational approach

In some cases, the analysed spaces become dynamic environments where the bonds between generations are not just acknowledged but actively nurtured, fostering a sense of community and shared growth. This involves recognising and accommodating the unique challenges faced by adolescents, teenagers, and young adults.

Initiatives designed for young parents, with a specific focus on maternal support, childcare facilities, and parenting resources, contribute to a comprehensive intergenerational approach. Furthermore, the inclusion of mentorship programmes and interactions with influential figures such as experts and artists can enhance the developmental landscape for young individuals.

In *disadvantaged neighbourhoods*, these spaces become a sort of *community hubs* for leisure, education, social support and access to services. Families can find support, children discover a safe environment, and the community rallies together. These spaces make it possible to address challenges collectively, ensuring that every member of the community has a space to belong, regardless of age or circumstance. Within these spaces, children and minors are not just passive participants, but are active contributors. Hands-on activities, playgrounds, educational workshops, and other initiatives allow young people to express themselves, equally and without judgement.

For the youth, the support doesn't stop at the entrance. These spaces recognize the importance of familial support. It's not just about engaging the individual; it's about involving families in the journey. Workshops, family events, and collaborative initiatives ensure that the support network extends beyond the youth space, creating a holistic framework for growth.

For young parents, these spaces can also be invaluable resources, offering childcare facilities, dedicated parenthood pathways, and community-based networks of support. This recognizes the fundamental connection between youth well-being and family well-being, emphasising that measures for one cannot be separated from the other.

Good practice	Intergenerational approach
Hangar Malmö, Sweden	In 2013, the graffiti artist Ruskig Ångest was asked to paint 4 mothers for a music video. The group had found a place with large walls where the mothers could be painted. A huge venue in the middle of Malmö, as big as a hangar.
Malmö Dance, The Cultural Association Iver Malmö, Sweden	The festival is an effort to create a meeting platform that is accessible to everyone on equal terms. Meetings between different ages, gender, ethnicity, social groups, art forms, expressions, etc. We strongly believe that there is a positive healing power in these meetings and hope that we make the world a little more open, empathetic and understanding towards differences. The Cultural Association Iver has worked to promote street dance for both professionals and amateurs.

4.6 Youth spaces as safe spaces

Youth spaces are safe environments for growth, implying that learning often involves making mistakes. Within the youth space, young leaders are encouraged to take risks and learn from their experiences in a safe and supportive environment. The organisation plays a role in helping them process and grow from setbacks, especially with the activation of *mediators* (educators).

The concept of a *safe space* within youth environments involves deliberately cultivating an atmosphere that prioritises physical and emotional well-being. This entails not only physical safety but also the emotional safety of individuals, fostering an inclusive and supportive community. In this respect, also the arrangement of spaces is intentional in creating a sense of equality and inclusion. Circle time encourages open dialogue and equal participation, emphasising that everyone's voice matters. Non-frontal work avoids hierarchical setups, promoting a more democratic and collaborative learning environment.

Good practice	Measures taken to ensure the physical and emotional safety of participants
United Societies of Balkans (Local Volunteers) Thessaloniki, Greece	<p>The mentor helps with the emotional safety of the participants in regards to working within a team and guides them to experts if they need additional help working with them confidentially. Physical safety is ensured that activities have minimal to no contact and the space is taken care of accordingly. There are no tolerance rules on physical or emotional violence.</p> <p>The volunteers are encouraged to express themselves freely in the team. They work with specific facilitators that do not change throughout the year so they have stable ties with them. There is open communication between themselves and the rest of the participants. Lastly, they are personally introduced to the mentor in case they require their help.</p>
Casa da Juventude de Amarante Amarante, Portugal	The Youth Centre has the proper conditions to host and develop actions involving youngsters. It has a medical kit and among the staff expertise on both physical (first aid training) and emotional (social workers) aspects assuring the safety of the participants. Besides that, the space has permanent civil responsibility insurance and in every international project promoted by AMC we activate

	<p>personal accident insurance. Finally, the project coordinator and AMC's support team in each activity has extensive experience on this issue and can act according to the situation that needs to be faced (reinforced mentoring, accompanying to specific medical health care, etc.).</p> <p>The space fosters a comfortable environment for youth expression mostly by assuring a diverse range of activities and methods that allows all participants to express themselves in the way each feels more comfortable. Besides that, we have a regular monitoring and evaluation process based on daily or weekly meetings (circles or roundtables) that allow youngsters to express their opinions and feelings and by so influencing the decision-making process. These meetings use different methodologies, once again, to allow everybody to find their most favourable way of expression (talking, drawing, drama, using cards like dixit, etc.).</p>
Laboratorio Zen Insieme Palermo, Italy	<p>There are always at least two educators supervising the activities who guarantee freedom of thought in a climate of collaboration and settle disputes. We have always implemented inclusive and equal practices. Arrangement of spaces, circle time, never frontal work, non-formal educational activities: everything creates an environment of free thought where you do not feel judged and can express freely.</p>
Movie Festival about Human Rights Kielce, Poland	<p>Emotional safety during workshops is ensured by our trainers (people with pedagogical and psychological education) and monitored by moderators during discussions. We never invite people with radical views to talk about social problems and we apply the "no platform" principle to voices with homophobic, nationalistic and Islamophobic overtones. We are ready for dialogue, but not for propaganda.</p> <p>Youth are provided with space for expression both during the preparation of the event and during happenings that take place in the main squares of the city. So far, these have included mini-theatre performances, group dancing, musical performances and pantomime. The space in which we prepare our event is a place for groups of local and foreign volunteers, as well as a meeting space for various informal initiatives. Each of the groups mentioned is under the care of a coordinator/tutor.</p>
Flamman Malmö, Sweden	<p>At Flamman, we focus on the upbringing and development of children and young people. Children and young people can come to the centre's facilities (Flamman Ungdomarnas Hus and Flamman Girls Only) and feel seen and supported - regardless of their background.</p>

Mentorship

Mentorship plays a pivotal role in youth spaces, serving as a catalyst for personal growth, skill development, and empowerment. This support system becomes especially crucial when young individuals come from disadvantaged or conflictual backgrounds. The presence of mentors ensures that disputes are addressed promptly and constructively. Fostering a climate of collaboration involves organising supervised activities where young individuals can engage in structured interactions. This collaborative approach provides opportunities for conflict

resolution through shared experiences, guided by educators who facilitate open communication and mutual understanding.

Mentorship contributes to building resilience in young people by offering consistent support to face adversity, set and achieve goals, and envision a more promising future.

In the analysed good practices, different forms of *mentorship* are provided:

- *Informal meetings with operators* that help establish bonds of trust and connection. This setting allows for open conversations, where young individuals can discuss personal challenges, aspirations, and receive guidance on navigating various aspects of life.
- *Psychological consultancy desk*, addressing mental health needs. The inclusion of a psychological consultancy desk acknowledges the importance of mental health. Young individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds may face additional stressors, and having access to mental health support within the youth space ensures a holistic approach to their well-being.
- Participatory planning workshops involve young individuals in the decision-making process of youth spaces. This not only empowers them to shape the activities and programmes but also provides a platform for mentorship, as operators guide and support their active involvement.
- *Peer mentorship* is a powerful tool, especially for older youth who can share experiences and insights. Creating a culture of peer support within the youth space fosters a sense of camaraderie and understanding, where individuals from similar backgrounds can uplift and guide one another.

Good practice	Characteristics of the mentorship, guidance and/or peer-to-peer support programmes available in the youth space
United Societies of Balkans (Local Volunteers) Thessaloniki, Greece	Mentor has provided workshops on teamwork and helps balance the dynamics within the group while the facilitators help with guiding the activities.
Casa da Juventude de Amarante Amarante, Portugal	<p>At the Casa we do not have or run specific programmes for mentorship, guidance and/or peer-to-peer support. In any case, inside the Youth Centre there's dedicated offices led by public social workers that offer, for example, guidance for job opportunities or, when needed, psychological support to youngsters and their families.</p> <p>However, there are educational opportunities and skill-building programmes. Punctually, AMC in close partnership with local expertise institutions as IET (Local Innovation Centre) organises specific bootcamps about social entrepreneurship, social innovation, digital storytelling, etc. addressed to local youngsters. Also, every year we offer several training opportunities to our ESC volunteers (about Fair Trade, Organic Farming, Project management).</p>
Laboratorio Zen Insieme Palermo, Italy	<p>Youth safety is ensured by means of some groups and facilities: the neighbourhood committee; the Youth Committee; Informal meetings with operators; Psychological consultancy desk; Participatory planning workshops.</p> <p>The youth committee identifies problems, develops proposals, actively dialogues with the institutions: this favours active citizenship paths and stimulates attachment to the territory. The kids defend the neighbourhood from degradation and involve friends and relatives in the processes of recovering the area.</p>

Flamman, Malmö, Sweden	Safe Space Malmö is run by the Flamman Social Prevention Centre and works to protect democracy against all types of anti-democratic behaviour that can lead to violent extremism. Our target group is young people aged 13-29 and professionals who meet young people in their work. We work for young people to be seen and heard, to raise their voices and give them tools to influence. In this way, we also work to reduce the risk of young people ending up in anti-democratic environments.
Associazione Culturale San Giovanni Apostolo onlus Palermo, Italy	The young tutors present in the Aggregation Centre are almost all young people who attended the Centre as children and then acquired the desire and ability to make available to others what they have received and the talents they have recognised over time. There are young students who make their knowledge available to other students in educational preparation, sports, and the arts. The young people are supervised and tutored by the operators in charge of the activity workshops, operators to whom they can turn for any request for help or advice. There are also periodic meetings between the young people themselves and between the young people and the supervisor.

4.7 Youth spaces as open spaces

Youth spaces usually offer different types of activities to allow all participants to take part. Inclusive programming is encouraged, so to let diverse interests and abilities be engaged. Whether it is cultural events, art workshops, educational programmes, language exchanges, or sports activities, the goal is to provide a variety of options, ensuring that all participants can find activities that resonate with them.

Youth spaces value *free expression*, whether through art, music, or other creative outlets. They provide platforms for individuals to express themselves authentically, fostering a sense of belonging and acceptance.

Most of the described youth spaces as good practices recognise the importance of leisure and recreation. Creating a balance between structured activities and unstructured leisure time allows participants to *connect with others and socialise*.

Youth spaces usually extend their impact beyond their physical boundaries through community outreach. This could involve organising events, workshops, or initiatives that address community needs. By actively engaging with the broader community, these spaces become catalysts for positive change. In all cases, the youth spaces foster a culture of *non-competitive exchange and mutual learning*, where the focus is on personal growth and self-expression rather than on outperforming others. This creates an inclusive environment where individuals feel encouraged to explore their interests without fear of judgement.

A cornerstone of these spaces is the commitment to *breaking down financial barriers*. Access to youth spaces is facilitated without undue economic burdens, ensuring that every young person, regardless of their socio-economic background, can benefit from the opportunities and resources these spaces offer.

Good practice	Empowerment and active role
Associazione Culturale San Giovanni Apostolo onlus Palermo, Italy	The 'San Giovanni Apostolo' Territorial Community Centre is mainly aimed at minors and young adults, so it is designed with spaces and actions where young people can express their potential: sports workshops, film and photography workshops, music workshops. Workshops are often conducted by young people for young people.

4.8 Youth spaces and their interaction with the external community

Youth spaces serve not only as hubs for internal activities but also as platforms for meaningful engagement with the broader external community. This interaction involves strategic planning, community-focused actions, and initiatives aimed at fostering positive connections.

In youth spaces, young people can collectively brainstorm, organise, and plan external initiatives that contribute positively to the community. These can involve community clean-ups, small-scale regeneration projects, or campaigns addressing specific local needs, thus reinforcing a sense of ownership and care for the immediate surroundings.

In some cases, street infosessions provide a direct means of engaging with the community. By taking information sessions to the streets, youth spaces bridge the gap between the centre and the neighbourhood, sharing valuable resources, knowledge, and opportunities with residents.

Similar effects are generated thanks to the involvement in local festivals and other events as volunteers. Also sports events represent valuable opportunities to demonstrate a commitment to community well-being beyond the confines of the youth space.

Good practice	Opportunities for participation in the <i>external</i> community
United Societies of Balkans (Local Volunteers) Thessaloniki, Greece	<p>Examples of participation range from organisation on street infosessions in the streets of the city for the topic they choose, participation in local festivals as volunteers, participation in Marathons as runners and as volunteers, local and international workshops that improve soft and hard skills and many more. The process of decision making is democratic and participants are actively encouraged to involve, facilitators help them through non-formal methods of education and mentorship.</p> <p>Young people take an active role in the space's decision-making processes. All the volunteer group is open to all people who can participate physically in the space in Thessaloniki. The general theme of activities is given by the facilitators but the exact type of event. Details and way of conduct is left up to the volunteers. There used to be a leader in the working groups they split up but that role was abolished and currently there is no group leader. Meetings are weekly regardless of events, that way volunteers are engaged and have a sense of stability and routine. For every activity the working groups change.</p> <p>The members of the volunteering team have chance to work with international volunteers on projects. They can participate in member exclusive seminar; they can go on international training courses as the organisation's delegation. Before doing social related activities, they are provided with a seminar/workshop for example before an event that was about awareness of violence against women, they got to have a workshop with an NGO that</p>

	<p>supports women. They are networking themselves with other organisations we partner with also the staff here helps them as they are highly and diversely educated.</p>
<p>Casa da Juventude de Amarante Amarante, Portugal</p>	<p>Since 2008 we've involved in our activities around 6500 youngsters, 2000 of them locals. All these youngsters had the chance to know better the values we stand for and were informed about EU fundamental values and local/national/EU opportunities (that many took after passing by our youth centre). Some examples: We sent to Kenya one EVS volunteer (Diana) that created a significant impact in the local community where she was doing her volunteering experience (Kybera slums). With our support she organised a crowdfunding campaign in Portugal that allowed her to collect sufficient funds to open the first primary school for girls. She became so famous that started to be invited to talk in schools and soon found a job opportunity at the UN; We sent to Italy one ESC volunteer (Sérgio) that changed his way of thinking regarding his consumption approaches becoming more sustainable. When back to Portugal we supported him to apply to the local participatory budget (OPJ) with the idea to create the Urban Garden of Amarante (HUA). Surprisingly, or not, his idea won the OPJ 2021 and, nowadays, HUA is a reality supported by our ESC volunteers; In recent years, the Youth Centre has been invited to participate in the most valuable local festivity, a civil society-based initiative that celebrates local traditions and embraces diversity. This event is a unique opportunity for our ESC volunteers to interact with the local community and bring to the agenda important and sensitive topics such as Human Rights (LGBTQIA+, etc.).</p>
<p>Laboratorio Zen Insieme Palermo, Italy</p>	<p>Our association hosts a permanent youth committee in which young people discuss problems and resources of their territory, give themselves priorities and, when possible, interact with the institutions. Very often they implement co-designed and co-built urban regeneration interventions, involving friends and relatives.</p>
<p>Movie Festival about Human Rights Kielce, Poland</p>	<p>The entire event is organised thanks to the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights and the Regional Volunteer Centre and the Museum of Cultural Dialogue cooperate in its implementation. We also establish contact with organisations associating people from minority groups (Roma, rainbow, civic, migrant organisations) as well as with schools and universities in the region.</p>
<p>Hangar Malmö, Sweden</p>	<p>The property company Briggen gave Pärre Von Andreasson a personal space to create paintings in and on the entire property since 2013. Current property owner MKB Fastighet AB has accepted the agreement. ABF Malmö has been responsible for 6 Gallery Weekends in collaboration with Art Promotion between 2017-2022. During the first years, a working group was formed which carried out the arrangements on a voluntary basis. The working group then became the association CFUK. With support from ABF, MKB, Kulturstöd Malmö, HL-Store and EklundhPaglert publishing house, the activity was documented for the first time in the book Graffiti Hangaren 2013-2018. Kulturstöd Malmö has also contributed with two project grants during the Culture Nights 2018 and 2022. In cooperation with the Leisure Administration and Kul-I-Sommar, creative activities for children/young people were carried out for 5 weeks in 2020. The association CFUK will rent premises from the Leisure Administration in premises adjacent to the Hangar from 2022.</p>

	The association CFUK- Centrum För Urban Konst was established in 2007 but lay dormant between 2013 and 2019 when it was newly registered and has since been the owner of the process of starting and running an Urban Art Gallery in Malmö. The association's members have the task of planning and implementing all gallery nights on a voluntary basis.
Associazione Culturale San Giovanni Apostolo onlus Palermo, Italy	<p>There are many initiatives to encourage young people in civic activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The care of the outdoor environment through cleaning and tidying up outdoor places, often vandalised by young people of the same age; - Participation in and organisation of city events against organised crime; - Organisation of events on special anniversaries such as the remembrance of the Shoah, such as the signing of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child and Adolescent. <p>Often, it is the young people themselves who propose the participation and organisation of activities to raise awareness of social and environmental issues among citizens.</p>

4.9 Physical or digital? ...Or physical *and* digital?

The question of whether youth spaces should be digital, physical, or both involves a nuanced consideration of the advantages and limitations of each format. The key lies in recognising that face-to-face interactions are pivotal for building connections, while digital spaces can serve as valuable tools for continuity and extended sharing.

Indeed, youth spaces foster personal connections, trust, and a sense of community that is often challenging to replicate in digital settings. Hands-on experiences, group activities, and shared moments can only be realised in physical spaces, allowing for the development of both soft and hard skills.

However, digital spaces can provide a platform for continuity when physical gatherings are not feasible. They ensure that youth can stay connected, access resources, and participate in activities regardless of geographical constraints.

Many successful youth spaces adopt a hybrid approach, combining the strengths of physical and digital spaces. This allows for the benefits of face-to-face interactions while leveraging digital tools for extended collaboration, resource-sharing, and remote engagement.

Good practice	Empowerment and active role
Flamman, Malmö, Sweden	Extremkoll is Sweden's first digital platform against violent extremism and hate messages online. Extremkoll works to give young people knowledge and tools to resist extremist messages and propaganda online. Extremkoll operates through a digital platform with social media campaigns, information materials and digital training for young people and professionals.
Hangar Malmö, Sweden	<p>The goal is to promote future art, completely new activities and combinations of cultural expressions.</p> <p>The activities will be carried out live in the city and digitally online based on consultation and wishes from young people.</p>

	Feedback from young participants is collected through the website: https://cfuk.nu/
Malmö Dance, The Cultural Association Iver Malmö, Sweden	The association's website is used to collect participants' feedback: https://www.Malmödanceweek.se/info/about
Ensamkommandes förbund Malmö Sweden	The association's website is used to collect participants' feedback: https://ensamkommandesforbund.se/konkta-oss-2-2/

4.10 Feedback loops

Collecting feedback from youth has a twofold, essential purpose: on the one hand, it allows to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the space and to design continuous improvement measures; on the other hand, it gives youth a voice in shaping the programmes and the environment of the space. This process, facilitated through feedback loops and peer evaluation, not only empowers young individuals but also ensures that the spaces meet their evolving needs. They feel that the space is genuinely theirs, which, in turn, contributes to a positive and engaged community.

Peer evaluation adds another layer of valuable insight. Peers' evaluation can uncover aspects of the youth space that might not be apparent through other feedback channels.

Furthermore, feedback provides a quantitative and qualitative measure of the impact of youth spaces. It allows organisers to assess whether the space is meeting its intended goals and making a positive difference in the lives of participants.

Good practice	Channels for collecting feedback
United Societies of Balkans (Local Volunteers) Thessaloniki, Greece	After every activity there is a feedback session/talk and every month/2 months there is a general feedback activity using non-formal methods and SWOT analysis. It is a test drive that helps gauge the local community and understand the local community's needs. There is a significant decline in retention of volunteers due to the fact that university in Greece most of the time involves actually working simultaneously. The volunteers help with the visibility of the organisation and they develop their soft skills. Lastly, we have seen great personal development. Criticalities involve participation, reality and expectations difference of their time participating, funding from the organisation. The senior volunteers take more responsibilities and roles; eventually, some of them have been employed with full-time or part-time contract.
Casa da Juventude de Amarante Amarante, Portugal	We organise regular meetings with youngsters (participants, volunteers, staff) to evaluate and get their feedback to adjust activities/tasks according to it. Youngsters (volunteers in particular) also nominate among them a mediator that collects their ideas, critics, etc. and brings them to us in dedicated meetings. When needed, we have evaluation sessions led by our social workers to assure reinforced mentoring and specific support. Finally, we always conduct online surveys to our youngsters to get their feedback on the main items related with the activity they were involved in. Those evaluations are valuable to assure better reporting and adjustments in future similar activities. As regards the assessment of the effectiveness of the initiative, we must keep in mind that our work is difficult to evaluate and to calculate its impact in a short-term perspective. In any case some aspects can easily give us some hints about it:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The increasing number of youngsters interested in our activities/proposals, especially those involving mobilities (in the first years was very difficult for us to find local participants, but nowadays we have many more applicants than the vacancies available); - The increasing number of local partners willing to develop partnerships with us, either for volunteering activities in their spaces or to assure the participation of their target-groups in our projects (mainly KA1 and KA2 mobilities); - The increasing number of clients and people from the local community that frequents the space (bar, restaurant, free workshops we offer, etc.) that demonstrates the value of the space within the community (healthy and vegetarian food, organic products, free cultural agenda, etc.); - The various awards received in the last years (national and European) stating this initiative as a Flagship Project within the youth sector and as a Good Practice or Inspiration. <p>At this stage, we would point out the following critical aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relation with the public administration that owns the property and every 4 years (local elections) can take decisions that affect our long-term strategy and activity plan for the youth centre; - The general and recent increase of administrative and management costs (personal, equipment, external services, suppliers, etc.) together with the increasing difficulty to have EU funded projects with sufficient funds to overcome it (also not knowing what comes after 2021-2027 EU funding programs); - The lack of recognition of youth work by public authorities and society in general and the conditions in which the youngsters are coming to our activities (mental health, lack of guidance and family support, etc.). <p>As regards the capacity to handle these criticalities, AMC is recently joining new partnerships outside of the usual EU funding schemes (such as CERV, Horizon Europe, Life, etc.) to have a wider range of possibilities to fight back the increasing difficulty to have EU funded projects. In terms of staff, we are dedicating more quality time to address the conditions in which the youngsters are coming to our activities (having a social worker as reinforced mentoring and support with individual sessions).</p>
Laboratorio Zen Insieme Palermo, Italy	<p>The mediation of educators is fundamental (even though the work is often peer-to-peer) in promoting collective growth processes that put all participants on the same level. Disagreements often arise within the assemblies due to normal dynamics between adolescents, which make achieving the objective more complex. The role of the educator is to resolve disputes and sometimes this process requires several days of work. In any case, she always manages to mediate and make the spaces for discussion non-competitive, ensuring that the assemblies do not become places where the kids bring their likes and dislikes with them. This makes them more responsible and mature and helps them work in a political and institutional dimension.</p> <p>Sustainability and replicability are guaranteed by the beneficiaries themselves, who spontaneously propose the most functional intervention models on various other occasions.</p> <p>We have learned that bad dialogue with local families could lead to a disaffection with the urban regeneration paths, which is why we always pay particular attention to the involvement of people, with</p>

	<p>activities to disseminate the initiatives and collect doubts and proposals, so as to make the interventions participate at 360 degrees. Those who feel part of an urban regeneration process will tend to defend the regenerated spaces.</p> <p>Being very rooted in the territory, there is no shortage of opportunities for dialogue with the inhabitants, who often become passionate about the routes and take part personally in the implementation of the interventions.</p>
<p>Associazione Culturale San Giovanni Apostolo onlus Palermo, Italy</p>	<p>After each initiative, ample space is devoted to collecting feedback through plenary meetings, where each person expresses both strengths, to be enhanced and strengthened, and weaknesses to be reviewed, fixed or cancelled.</p> <p>In addition to plenary meetings, a more intimate space is also left with the operators in charge of the activity in order to give each young person (if they wish) more time to express their approval or disappointment.</p>

5. Concluding remarks for drafting the Youth SPeACES Charter

*“Then the Japanese eel takes about
A year to wind her way to fresh water”.*
Seamus Heaney

The research work we have conducted attempts to connect three elements that, in reality, are disconnected: young people, social spaces, and a document designed to organise the interaction between these two elements.

The project specifically aims to develop a Charter that can promote and enhance formal as well as informal spaces to support youth initiatives. It is assumed that in youth spaces, participants are empowered: this implies going beyond mere expression; it involves nurturing a sense of agency, whereby young people are encouraged to take ownership of their ideas and initiatives, recognising the value of their contributions. This sense of empowerment and acting fosters confidence and a belief in their ability to bring about positive change, both within the youth space and the wider community. Moreover, the perception of youth spaces as agents of empowerment is closely linked to active participation. Whether influencing the activities of the youth space or contributing to broader community initiatives, active participation nurtures a sense of responsibility and civic engagement.

Preliminary considerations

Before making some proposals with respect to the drafting of the Charter - based on the research presented here - some preliminary reflections are necessary.

Let's begin by examining the concept of *young people*. This term encapsulates a portion of the population within a defined age range and serves as a widely utilised criterion, significantly shaping the organisation of education systems, both in Europe and beyond. However, this classification, primarily reliant on age, tends to neglect other vital factors contributing to diversity, including *gender*, *cultural background*, and *social standing*. It is crucial to acknowledge that young people encompass a spectrum of differences, consequently representing diverse needs and perspectives.

Already in 2001, the EC's White Paper⁴³ while acknowledging the “age” factor and the demographic trend of an ageing population in Europe, also noted that there were differences among young people in terms of access to the labour market, education, family life, income, and other factors, and emphasised the importance of investing in youth as a key to achieving the political objective of making Europe “the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world.”⁴⁴

With regard to *space*, we would like to recall here how this constitutes a very rich and profound concept, so much so that in the social sciences, since the 1980s, there has been talk of a spatial turn, a definition that helps to understand how human beings should not only be thought of as *historical beings (time)* but also as *spatial (primarily geographical) beings*. Thinking in spatial terms raises awareness of the socially differentiated character of the world.

A much-debated theme in English-speaking sociology, for example, is the difference between *space* and *place*, where the former term refers to a system of heterogeneous relations while

⁴³ European Commission (2001): White Paper “A new impetus for European youth”. *Op. cit.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 73

the latter brings attention to the affective dimension; in turn, Sennett⁴⁵ introduced the difference between *ville* (the city in the physical sense) and *cit * (ways of life, mental representations) to analyse different urban dimensions, just as it is possible to take up Castells'⁴⁶ successful distinction between (technological) '*space of flows*' and '*space of places*'.

All of this is meant to illustrate how the spatial dimension, far from being obvious and trivial, harbours significant analytical and conceptual richness. This complexity must also be taken into account when formulating policies.

Turning our attention to the Charter, we acknowledge that, documents of this nature (please, refer to the list of sources provided in this Report) typically exhibit three readily identifiable elements.

- Firstly, they are generally authored or drafted by adults who perceive young people as undergoing transformation and in need of initiation into the world of freshwater, carefully prepared for them.
- Secondly, these documents are characterised by the inclusion of general principles and recommendations, neatly numbered.
- Finally, they adopt a formal, balanced, and sometimes prescriptive linguistic style. The question at hand is whether all of this represents a template to be replicated or something that should be scrutinised and challenged.

The observations and analyses carried out during this research phase offer further confirmation of the pivotal role played by youth participation in democratic processes, recognizing various forms of engagement. This approach emphasises the commitment to empower citizens, particularly the youth, in actively shaping their communities and democratic systems.

In the context of the "Youth sPEACEs" project, the concepts of youth participation, traditional and unconventional forms of engagement, and the creation of a European Charter on youth spaces are interconnected and aligned with the priority in the EU to support democratic processes and citizens' voices.

As highlighted in the good practices, youth participation involves granting young people the *right and means to freely express their views* and contribute to *societal decision-making*. This aligns with the broader commitment to ensuring *fundamental rights and freedoms* for all citizens, including the youth.

Creating *space and opportunities* for young people to engage in various activities, both conventional and unconventional, reflects a dedication to fostering inclusive democratic spaces. Recognizing the importance of providing *support* underscores the acknowledgment of the significance of structural support for youth civil society, as emphasised by various institutions. This commitment extends to offering resources and assistance to initiatives that promote democratic values.

Valuing *unconventional forms of youth participation*, such as urban gardens, skate parks, and music studios, is rooted in the understanding that youth engagement goes beyond traditional political activities. This reflects a commitment to embracing diverse ways in which citizens contribute to their communities.

⁴⁵ Sennett R. (2019). Building and dwelling, Penguin book

⁴⁶ Castells M. (1999). The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture, Blackwell Pub.

Challenging the traditional notion of youth participation as solely involving voting or formal political engagement aligns with the recognition of the need to broaden the understanding of youth engagement. This reflects a commitment to inclusivity and recognizing the multifaceted nature of democratic participation across various contexts.

The *intention to create a European Charter on youth spaces* serves as a concrete step toward consolidating the advocacy process. This aligns with the EU's commitment to facilitating youth involvement through structural support for youth civil society.

Observations for the formulation of the Charter

- (1) It is essential to delve into the **diverse identities** included within the overarching concept of youth, beside the mere reference to age. While they are undoubtedly connected by numerous aspects, they also exhibit distinctiveness when examined from different perspectives, such as needs or education. Introducing criteria like gender, for instance, could prove beneficial in formulating distinctions that aid in comprehending the subjects constituting the youth archipelago that the Charter will address.
- (2) The selection of a **linguistic code** carries significant importance in the utilisation of the Charter. While the document may be intended for an institutional (EU) setting, it must effectively communicate with 'young people' in a broader sense, rather than addressing adults. Instead of adhering strictly to the recommendation format, there's merit in exploring the use of a 'post' genre—a text message accompanied by images—tailored for an open and shared public sphere.
- (3) There exists a **substantial connection between social groups and the spaces they inhabit**. This relationship deserves emphasis within the overarching framework of the charter. Specifically, it is crucial to recognise that youth spaces need to be designed for young people and by young people. In this situation, these spaces extend beyond mere 'service' areas—containers for specific activities. There is an emotional and relational dimension associated with the utilisation of spaces, profoundly influencing the identity of young people.
- (4) The Charter will seek to coordinate youth activation in both formal and informal spaces, necessitating consideration of the **project dimension**. In this regard, it may also incorporate operational guidelines, significantly augmenting the impact of youth activism.
- (5) There might be the risk that **values** remain on an abstract level unless they are articulated with meaningful examples. Accompanying the enunciation of values with robust examples can enhance the credibility of the Charter.
- (6) Youth spaces need to be organised as **open and permeable environments**, if they are to go beyond being a 'reserve' and influence the wider social space. In this context, the Charter should provide for channels of communication and relations with other social communities.
- (7) The Charter ought to be a **flexible document** that communities of young people can nurture, revise, and evolve as a guiding framework for their activities. This approach transforms the Charter into a dynamic text, energised by the active engagement of the community, particularly of young people.

References

- Sennett, R. (2019). Building and dwelling, Penguin book
- Castells, M. (1999). The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture, Blackwell Pub.
- Granata, E. (2021). Placemaker. Gli inventori dei luoghi che abiteremo. Einaudi
- Vergani, E. (2022). Multi-agency. Gruppi collaborativi nella complessità Maggioli editore
- Vergani, E. (2009). Bisogni sospetti. Maggioli editore

International organisations and institutions

- Charter of European Youth Information Centres: <https://www.eryica.org/european-youth-information-charter>
- Council of Europe “Guide to Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)4 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to member States on youth work”: <https://okm.fi/documents/1410845/5384011/Youth+work+in+the+spotlight+Guide+to+Youth+Work+Recommendation/6ed2d3b7-cc21-230f-cdac-0faace652194/Youth+work+in+the+spotlight+Guide+to+Youth+Work+Recommendation.pdf?t=1590488888000>
- Council of Europe: Have Your Say! – a manual on the revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life: <https://rm.coe.int/1680702379> and <https://rm.coe.int/16807023e0>
- Council of Europe Quality Label for Youth Centres: <https://rm.coe.int/quality-label-brochure-en-2015/16806fcf1b>
- Council of Europe Youth Policy: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/youth-policy>
- Council of Europe resource centre: <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/youth-spaces-and-participation>
- Civic Europe platform (<https://civic-europe.eu/civic-europe/>)
- European Quality Label for Youth Centres - The European Quality Label for Youth Centres: European Youth Forum (“[Safeguarding Civic Space for Young People in Europe](#)”)
- [European Youth Goal](#) No 9: “Space and Participation For All”
- Human Rights Education Youth Network: <https://www.hreyn.net/>
- International Child Development Initiatives: <https://icdi.nl/projects/here-to-stay>
- OECD Youth Action Plan 2021 <https://www.oecd.org/employment/youth/The-Updated-OECD-Youth-Action-Plan.pdf>, <https://www.oecd.org/about/civil-society/youth/>
- Youth Forum: Charter on Youth and Democracy: https://www.youthforum.org/files/EU-Charter-on-Youth-and-Democracy_signed.pdf and <https://www.youthforum.org/news/charter-on-youth-and-democracy>
- Youth participation strategy: <https://participationpool.eu/resource/youth-participation-strategy/>
- Youth participation toolkit: <https://participationpool.eu/resource/youth-participation-toolkit/>

Erasmus Plus projects:

- Youth: participation and empowerment: How to encourage youth participation in Europe through volunteering, associationism and social entrepreneurship Training manual for youth workers and leaders (Project id: 2019-2-ES02-KA205-013528): <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2019-2-ES02-KA205-013528>
- Reinforced and upgraded youth group methodology on building healthy relationships (Project id: 2020-2-LV02-KA205-003201): <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2020-2-LV02-KA205-003201> and Policy recommendations: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/project-result-content/8020cb4b-f1cb-4cd1-9152-2f86bf5a0d9c/National_and_EU-level_policy_recommendations_ReGROUP_ENG.pdf

Annexes

Annex 1: Survey questionnaire

Survey for the participants in the “Youth sPEACEs” project’s mobility programmes - Summer 2023

Dear Respondent,

With this questionnaire, we would like to explore with you your experiences and your point of view about youth centres, or youth spaces. We would like to figure out how these experiences have influenced your idea of being an "active citizen", and how improvements can be brought in to support youth empowerment.

We are not asking you for sensitive information, and all responses will be anonymous and no personal data are collected

Completing this questionnaire will take you approx. 10 minutes... So, get ready to share your thoughts!

1. Please provide your age in years:
.....
2. How do you identify your gender?
 - Male
 - Female
 - Non binary
 - I prefer not to answer
3. In what country do you live?
.....
4. What is your nationality?
.....
5. What education path have you completed?
 - Primary school
 - Lower secondary school
 - Upper secondary school
 - Professional qualification
 - University
 - Further education
 - Other:

Section 2: EXPERIENCES, PERCEPTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS REGARDING YOUTH SPACES

6. Do you attend a youth centre / youth space?
 - Yes
 - No

If you answered "Yes" to question 6...

7. How frequently do you engage with the youth space?
 - Every day
 - Several times a week

- A few times per month
- Rarely

8. Can you describe if the youth space is:

- An institutional centre (for example, managed by the Municipality)
- An informal centre managed by an association
- An informal centre managed by a parish or other religious centre
- Self-managed by young people with the collaboration of a public authority
- Self-managed by young people in an occupied space
- Self-managed by young people in a private space
- I don't know
- Other:

9. What types of activities do you usually attend at the youth space?

(Select all that apply)

- Sports and recreational activities
- Arts and cultural activities
- Workshops and educational activities
- Socialising and networking opportunities
- Career and job support services
- Other:

10. Does the youth space also provide for digital spaces (e.g. on social media, web-blogs, etc.)?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

10.bis. If you answered "Yes" to the previous question... Are you more active in the real space, or in the digital one?

- More active in the physical/real space
- More active in the digital space
- Equally active

If you replied "**No**" to question 6...

7.1. Can you tell us why you do not attend a youth space?

- I am not interested
- I cannot find any youth space close to where I live
- I have never heard of this kind of spaces for young people
- I do not have time to attend such spaces
- I don't know
- Other:

7.2. In your opinion, what types of activities are typically held in a youth space?

(Select all that apply)

- Sports and recreational activities
 - Arts and cultural activities
 - Workshops and educational activities
 - Socialising and networking opportunities
 - Career and job support services
 - Other:
-

11. How important do you think that attending a youth space can be for your personal development and well-being?
Here, we would like you to consider your overall growth as a person, also with respect to self-improvement and increase of your self-esteem

Not important at all 1 2 3 4 5 *Extremely important*

12. How important do you think that attending a youth space can be for your social development?
Here, we would like you to consider the possibilities to improve your abilities to interact with peers and adults, work in teams, give "voice" to your thoughts in public, etc.

Not important at all 1 2 3 4 5 *Extremely important*

13. Have you ever been engaged/participated in organising or planning events/activities at a youth space?

- Yes
 No

14. (If yes) What kind of events or activities have you contributed to organise?

- Sports and recreational activities
 Arts and cultural activities
 Music gigs
 Workshops and educational activities
 Other:

15. Have you ever had a "coordination" task in the youth space? (e.g. coordinator, group leader, peer educator, etc.)

- Yes
 No
 Other:

16. Have you ever collaborated with other people at a youth space to find or create solutions, resources etc for your need and interest?

- Yes, definitely
 Yes, to some extent
 No, not really
 No, not at all
 Other:

17. How would you rate the accessibility for people with disabilities of the youth space you attend?

Very inaccessible 1 2 3 4 5 *very accessible*

18. In general terms, what do you think would help improve participation in a youth space?
Select the option(s) you think would really help get more young people involved.

- Money and resources to support young people who want to take part in international projects and initiatives.
 Youth taking charge and managing the spaces themselves
 Letting young people be in control of the spaces
 Collaborating with the local government or other groups
 Having a Youth Council in every city

Other:

19. In your experience, the activities in the youth space effectively foster diversity?
By diversity, we refer to the representation and inclusion of individuals from different backgrounds, cultures, ethnicities, genders, and abilities
- Yes, definitely
 Yes, to some extent
 No, not really
 No, not at all
 I don't know
20. Have you ever heard of "youth active participation" in your daily life?
- Yes
 No
21. How would you define "youth active participation" in just 3 words, with reference to your daily experience?
-
.....
22. Have you ever experienced any form of active participation (e.g., community events, political campaigns, volunteering, etc.)?
- Yes
 No
23. Which of the following methods of democratic participation do you find most effective? (Choose max 3 options)
- Voting in elections
 Participating in community forums or town hall meetings
 Joining or organising a strike or a protest
 Engaging in online activism and social media campaigns
 Volunteering for political campaigns or organisations
 Volunteering for different causes
 Creating or coordinating a youth movement/youth campaign
 Participating in school forums
 Joining or organising public demonstrations
 Other:
24. As a young European citizen, or a young citizen living in Europe, what do you think can be done to facilitate the exchange of good practices and learning among young people from different European countries?
- Establishing more international youth exchange programs and initiatives.
 Creating online platforms or networks to connect and share experiences.
 Organizing regular conferences, workshops, or seminars focused on cross-cultural learning and collaboration.
 Promoting language learning opportunities to enhance communication among young people from different European countries.
 Encouraging collaborations between youth organizations and institutions across Europe.
 Providing funding and resources for young people to participate in international projects and initiatives.
 Interactive training programs to help young Europeans understand and appreciate different cultures and work together.
 Other:

25. If you want to share with us additional comments or questions, this is the space!

.....
.....

Annex 2: Prompts and topics for the focus groups

These questions deal with some areas that can be covered during the focus group or the interview. **This is not a “structured” list of questions!**

ITEM 1: Focus on past experiences (ICEBREAKER)
- <u>What is your experience, or what role have you had in the animation of a youth space?</u>
ITEM 2: Characteristics of the experience
- Thinking about your current experiences, are the activities in the youth space facilitated/moderated in an effective way? (e.g., handling conflict, promoting negotiation, etc.)
- Have you experienced any difficulties/barriers to your participation (e.g., time, location, language, accessibility)?
ITEM 3: Overall assessment
- In your current experience, do you think you are adequately informed about the available activities in the youth space and how to have access to them?
- Is there sufficient opportunity for dialogue and discussion among participants? (<i>the space is inclusive and allowed diverse perspectives to be represented</i>)
ITEM 4: Perception and feedback on effectiveness
- How satisfied are you with your participation in the youth space you have just described?
- Do you feel that your inputs have been valued and taken into account during the activities?
- Were there any specific outcomes or changes that you feel were a result of your participation?
ITEM 5: Suggestions for the CHARTER
- In your opinion, what is the most important factor in ensuring the success of a youth space?
- In your opinion, what is the best way to ensure that the views of all participants are taken into account in the youth space?

Annex 3: Criteria to identify good practices

With the term “good practice”, we indicate an organisation, or a specific project implemented by the partner, or a specific service that complies with the following criteria:

Criteria	Explanation
1. Clearly defined objectives	The experience (this can be a centre, an informal space, a project, etc.) should have well-defined goals and objectives related to promoting youth participation, empowerment, and active citizenship
2. Innovative approaches	Highlight experiences that employ innovative and creative methods or strategies to engage and empower youth. The innovative character can depend on the context's features
3. Sustainability	Consider experiences that have demonstrated their ability to sustain their programmes and initiatives over time, ensuring long-term benefits for youth (e.g. financial/economic sustainability; integration with other existing initiatives to pool resources; etc.)
4. Inclusivity	Assess whether the experience is inclusive, reaching out to a diverse range of young people, including those from marginalised backgrounds
5. Community involvement	Examine how the experience engages with the local community and collaborates with other stakeholders, such as schools, local government, or NGOs
6. Youth activation / leadership development	Look for experiences that actively foster youth leadership skills, enabling young people to take on active roles in decision-making and community projects
7. Informal education and skill development	Consider experiences that provide informal educational and skills development opportunities that empower youth to make informed decisions and contribute meaningfully to society
8. Youth feedback and input	Investigate whether the experience actively seeks input and feedback from the young people it serves, ensuring their voices are heard in the planning and decision-making processes
9. Evidence of impact	There should be measurable evidence of the positive impact of the experience's programmes and activities on the lives of young people
10. Measurable Outcomes	Prioritise experiences that have well-documented and measurable outcomes related to increased youth participation, empowerment, and active citizenship, using both quantitative and qualitative data

Annex 4: Template to map good practices

- 1) Name of the Initiative/Space:
- 2) Location (City and Country):
- 3) Year of creation / foundation:
- 4) Status:
 - formal (institutional) initiative
 - informal (grassroots) initiative
 - mixed initiative (public/private/no profit)
- 5) Name of Contact Person:
- 6) Email for further contact:
- 7) Describe the primary objective/goal of the initiative:
.....
- 8) List and briefly describe the variety of activities and opportunities that are available at the youth space/centre
.....
- 9) Are young people empowered to take on active roles, even leadership roles, within the initiative?
.....
- 10) Provide examples of the opportunities for participation and active decision-making:
.....
- 11) Are young people taking an active role in the space's decision-making processes? If yes, please explain how:
.....
- 12) Describe the measures taken to ensure inclusivity among participants:
.....
- 13) Explain how the initiative is accessible to individuals with different forms of disadvantage:
.....
- 14) Explain how the initiative ensures the physical and emotional safety of participants:
.....
- 15) How does the space or program foster a comfortable environment for youth expression?
.....
- 16) Provide details of the mentorship, guidance and/or peer-to-peer support programmes that young participants can access within the space/centre (if any):
.....

- 17) Provide details about educational opportunities and skill-building programs offered to empower young people:
.....
- 18) Provide examples of how the initiative encourages youth to engage in civic activities (addressing the outer / external community):
.....
- 19) Describe the partnerships and collaborations with other organisations, schools, or public bodies and institutions:
.....
- 20) Explain the channels for collecting feedback from young participants (how you identify, process and discuss strengths and weaknesses/critical voices):
.....
- 21) How do you assess the effectiveness of the initiative?
.....
- 22) What are the criticalities that (may) affect the sustainability of the initiative?
.....
- 23) What plan is in place to handle these criticalities, also concerning funding, recruiting and staffing strategies?
.....
- 24) Please provide any additional information or comments that you believe are relevant to understanding the distinctive features of this good practice in youth participation:
.....
- 25) By sending this module you acknowledge you are aware of our privacy and data protection policy.
 yes
- 26) Please send me the final result of your work with list of best practices and study cases.
 Yes
 No

Annex 5: Case study structure

By structuring your data collection form in this way, you can systematically gather information about **initiatives and spaces promoting youth participation** while ensuring that you address all the critical criteria for assessing their quality and impact.

Distinctive features

Section 1: General Information

1. Name of the Initiative/Space:
2. Location (City and Country):
3. Year Established:
4. Status:
 - Formal (institutional) initiative
 - informal (grassroots) initiative
 - mixed initiative
5. Name of Contact Person:
6. Email Address:
7. Primary Objective/Goal:
8. List and briefly describe the variety of activities and opportunities that are available at the youth space/centre:
.....

Section 2: Youth Leadership

9. Are young people empowered to take on active roles, even leadership roles, within the initiative? Provide examples of the opportunities for participation and active decision-making:
.....
10. Are young people taking an active role in the space's decision-making processes? If yes, please explain how
.....

Section 3: Inclusivity and Accessibility

11. Describe the measures taken to ensure inclusivity among participants:
.....
12. Explain how the initiative is accessible to individuals with different forms of disadvantage:
.....
13. Explain how the initiative ensures the physical and emotional safety of participants:
.....

14. How does the space or program foster a comfortable environment for youth expression?
.....

Section 4: Mentorship, Guidance and peer-to-peer support

15. Provide details of the mentorship, guidance and/or peer-to-peer support programmes that young participants can access within the space/centre (if any):
.....

Section 5: Civic Engagement

16. Provide examples of how the initiative encourages youth to engage in civic activities (*addressing the outer/external community*):
.....

Section 6: Feedback Mechanisms

17. Explain the channels for collecting feedback from young participants (how you identify, process and discuss strengths and weaknesses/critical voices):
.....

Section 7: Education and Skill-building

18. Provide details about educational opportunities and skill-building programs offered to empower young people:
.....

Section 8: Collaboration

19. Detail the partnerships and collaborations with other organisations, schools, or public bodies and institutions:
.....

Section 9: Evaluation and Impact Assessment

20. How do you assess the effectiveness of the initiative?
.....

Section 10: Sustainability

21. What are the criticalities that (may) affect the sustainability of the initiative? What plan is in place to handle these criticalities, also concerning funding, recruiting and staffing strategies?
.....

Section 11: Additional Comments

22. Please provide any additional information or comments that you believe are relevant to understanding the distinctive features of this good practice in youth participation:
.....