

**Youth participation
at a local level**

Expert material



Something
Meaningful



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Expert material**

Written by: Kristjan Nemac, Magali Lansalot,
Mario Badagliacca

Edited by: Kristjan Nemac

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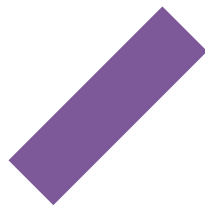
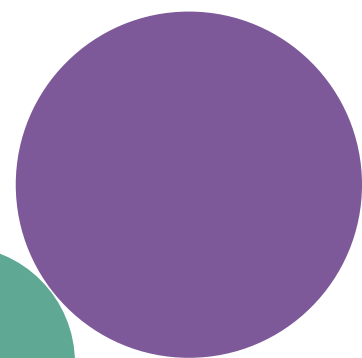
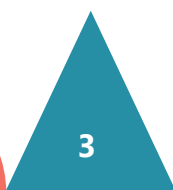
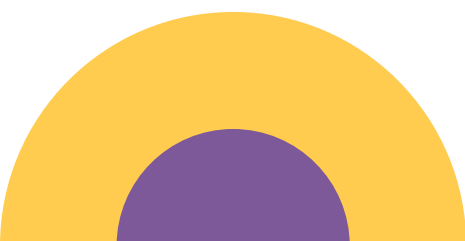


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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the project ADD Something Meaningful is to engage young people in greater involvement in participatory and decision-making processes in local communities. To successfully achieve this goal, we set out to work with young people as well as with local youth organisations and representatives of local communities, as a successful inclusion of young people requires work at different levels.

The first step that needs to be done is giving young people the opportunity by introducing some concrete mechanism for participation, but this alone is not enough. In addition, it is necessary to inform young people about the existence of the mechanism and convince them that participation is positive for achieving their goals, as strengthening trust in institutions and democratic processes is essential if we want to increase the participation of young people.

On the other hand, it is also important to raise the awareness of the representatives of the local authorities, who, unfortunately, are often distanced from the reality of young people and do not hear their voices. It is necessary to raise their awareness about the importance of involving young people in the local environment, and at the same time show them different ways to involve young people. Unfortunately, it happens far too often that despite the good ideas and mechanisms, which they manage to prepare, young people do not use the designed mechanisms. For this reason, good cooperation between representatives of local authorities and youth organisations which know how to involve local young people is essential.

Within the project, we will try to address these different levels by designing and promoting the use of the IDEATHON methodology in order to involve young people in decision-making processes and organising national and international advocacy campaigns, where we will aim to increase the level of awareness among both young people and decision-makers. To understand as much as possible the actual needs of young people and the level

of their engagement in the local community, to understand the possibilities that are already offered for youth engagement by the local authorities, and to learn about various good practices, research of the situation was conducted in each of the partner countries (Slovenia, Italy, France, and Finland).

As part of the research, we designed a survey for young people, in which we wanted to investigate the views and attitudes of young people towards certain social issues, their engagement in the local environment and active citizenship, and their attitude to life in their cities. In doing so, we also checked their knowledge of what is happening and the possibilities they have in the local environment, as well as their willingness to engage. The questionnaire was completed by 915 young people, which gives us a rough and relevant insight into their thinking.

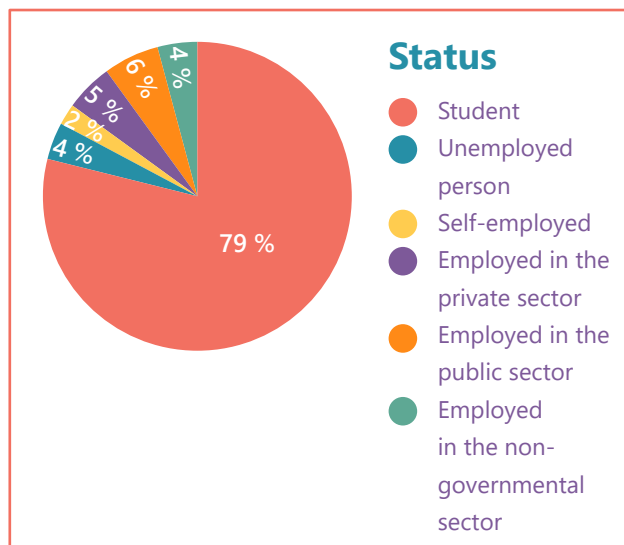
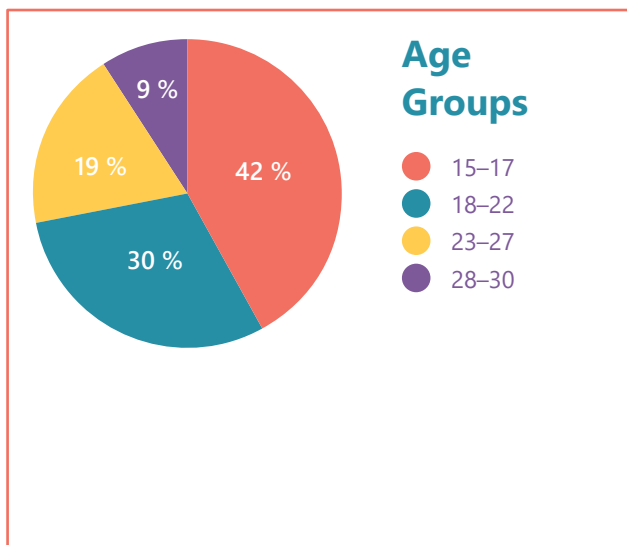
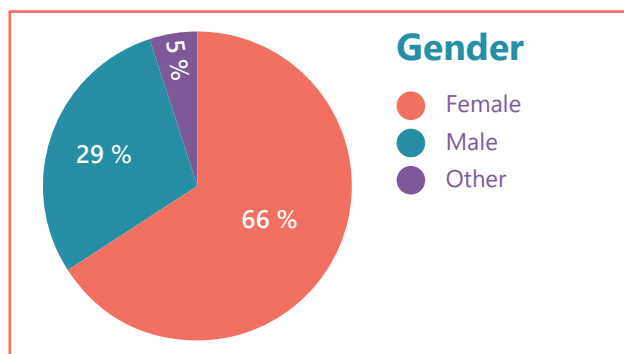
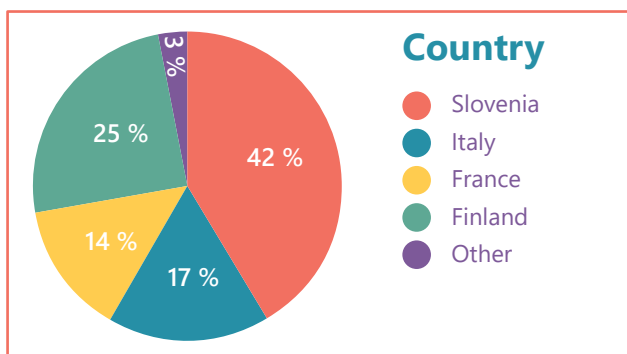
To obtain the views of local authorities, as part of the research, we conducted interviews with representatives of seven local authorities in four partner countries. The goal of the research was to find out the attitude of local authorities towards the issue of youth engagement in decision-making processes and to find out the mechanisms and tools they already use to listen to young people.

The third part of the research is aimed at learning about good practices in other partner countries around the EU. We are aware that there are already many good mechanisms for involving young people, and it would be unreasonable not to investigate what they are successful in and what could be improved. We wanted to derive some essential conclusions from good practices that will help us understand the needs of young people.

The goal of this research, in addition to the analysis of the situation, will also be to prepare some proposals for improving the participation of young people, which will take into account both the expressed needs of young people and the understanding of the effectiveness of existing mechanisms.

ANALYSIS OF THE YOUTH SURVEY

The survey of young people was conducted as part of the "I care" campaign and reached a total of **915 young people** from June 2023 to March 2024. The demographic characteristics of the respondents were:



Before continuing with that analysis is important to emphasise two methodological explanations:

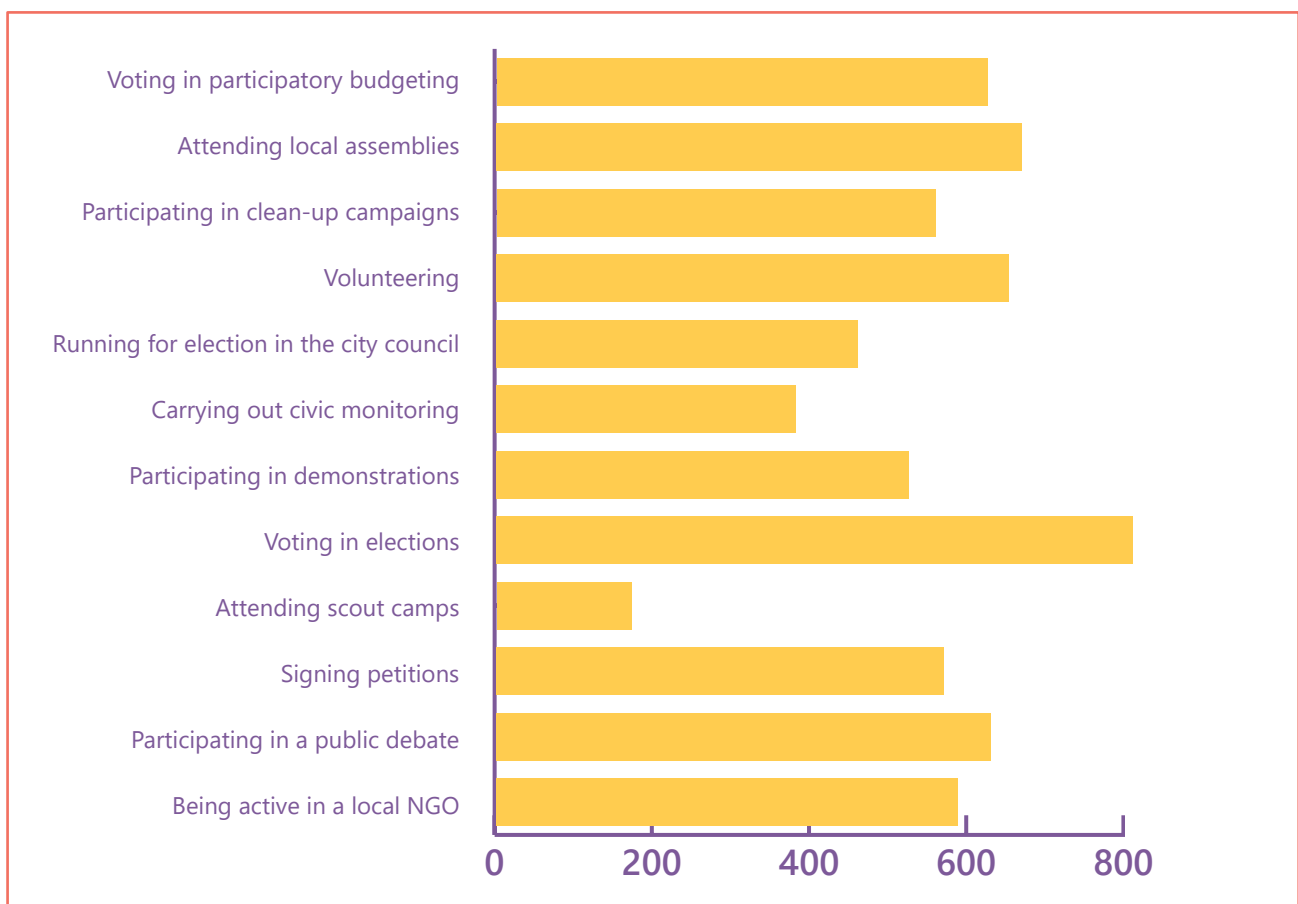
- ▶ The fact that the respondents were not evenly distributed between the countries impacted the possibility of the generalisation of the results, but in the analysis we strictly emphasised all the questions where the differences between the countries were shown.
- ▶ The fact that the vast majority were young people in school is due to the fact that we

collaborated with secondary schools and faculties to obtain as many responses as possible. This also gave us the opportunity to get answers from young people with different views and those who are not that engaged. Publishing the survey only on websites and social media would have led to only the most active young people answering the survey.

Section 1 – Intro questions

At the beginning of the survey, the respondents were invited to point out three words that, according to them, represent active citizenship. The words that appear most often relate mainly to electoral participation and following political events, as well as engagement for the common good and active participation in the community. In addition, they also highlight the awareness of their rights, duties, and responsibilities. This was followed by another warm-up question where they were asked to choose all activities that reflect active citizenship. The respondents had the option to mark several answers,

among which all actually demonstrated active citizenship. This question was added mostly to show the respondents the variety of citizen engagement. Most respondents identified "Voting in elections" as an activity of active citizenship (812), followed by activities such as "Voting in participatory budgeting", "Attending local assemblies", "Volunteering", and "Participating in a public debate", which were recognised by more than 65% of all respondents. Fewer respondents recognised activities such as "Carrying out civic monitoring" (41.8%) or "Attending scout camps" (19%) as active citizenship. Interestingly, activity in a local NGO was recognised as active citizenship in Finland (76%) and Slovenia (74.7%), but it is very poorly recognised in Italy (29%).



Section 2 – Views and opinions

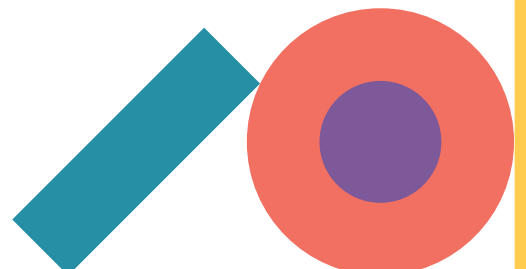
In the second part of the questionnaire, we checked mainly general areas of interest of the respondents, which express their general values and views on society. With these questions, we wanted to research which areas are familiar and important to young people.

When asked how important the listed aspects are in their lives, **the respondents mainly marked that “Living in a clean and pristine environment” and “Freedom of action and thought” are of the greatest importance.** On the other end of the scale, “Having power over others” was mainly marked as the least important.

The young people expressed the highest level of interest in “Public healthcare access”, “Educational opportunities”, and “Employment opportunities for young people”. The most “controversial” was the area of “LGBTQ rights”, where the respondents were the most divided: 30% of them marked this area as very important, while 11% of them considered it not important at all. Moreover, in Finland, this area turned out to be one of the most relevant for the respondents, while in Slovenia and France, it received a negative evaluation. **The area towards which the respondents expressed the least interest was that of active citizenship. This is an important finding to consider when thinking about engaging young people. Young people are in general not interested in active citizenship, which makes it difficult to reach and inform them about our activities.**

On the other hand, **many respondents expressed a strong preference for a greater influence of citizens in decision-making processes in the local environment and the pursuit of community interests over private ones.** Only respondents from Finland indicated a lower level of favourability, but it was still dominant. Although the answers to the previous question show that young people

are not interested in active citizenship, they still prove that the respondents believe that people should have more influence on strategic decisions regarding the development of the local environment.



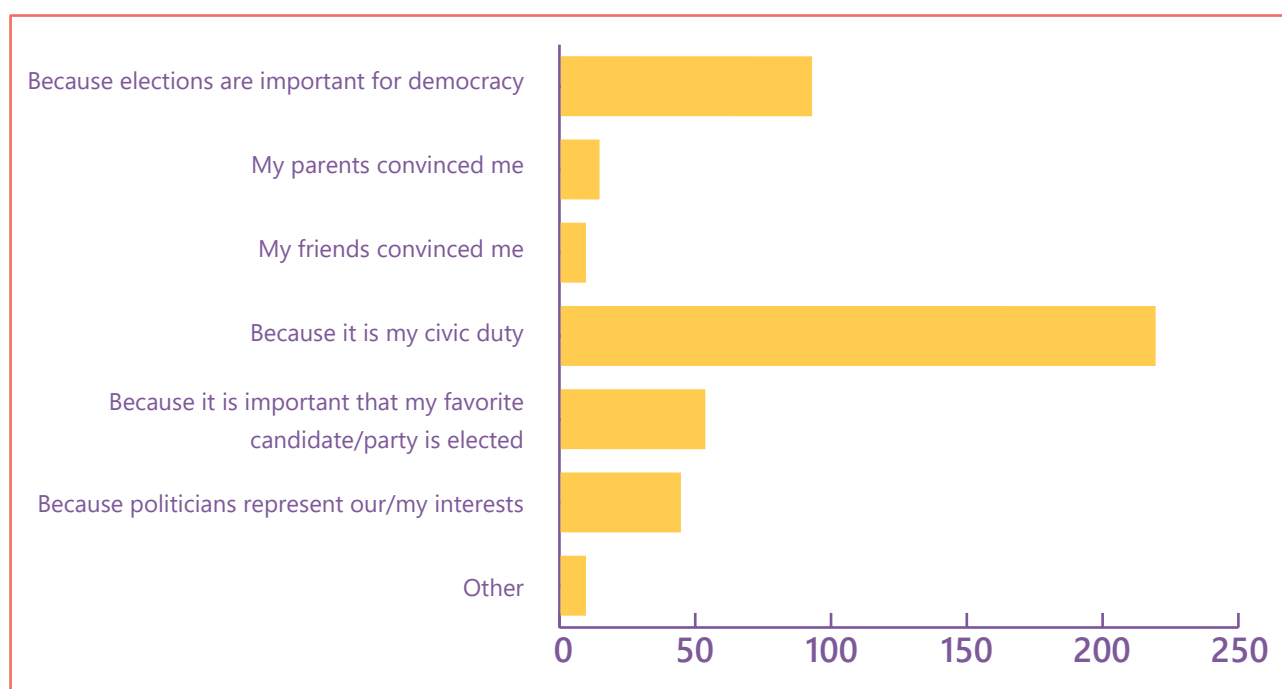
Section 3 – Engagement

The most extensive part of the survey was aimed at researching the respondents' civic engagement. **When asked to self-assess their knowledge about the political happenings in their country and about their civic engagement the respondents from Slovenia had in both cases the lowest and the ones from Italy the highest average.** The self-assessment average of the knowledge of political happenings for Slovenian respondents was 4.8 out of 10 and 7 for Italian respondents. The difference in the self-perception of their engagement was lower as the average of Slovenian respondents was 5, and 6.6 of Italian respondents.

Self-assessment of the knowledge of the political happenings and the self-perception of their engagement were compared within the age groups of the respondents. While the age group had no visible influence on the assessment of knowledge of political happenings, it influenced the assessment of the individual perception of their engagement. Young people in the age group 15-17 defined themselves as significantly less active

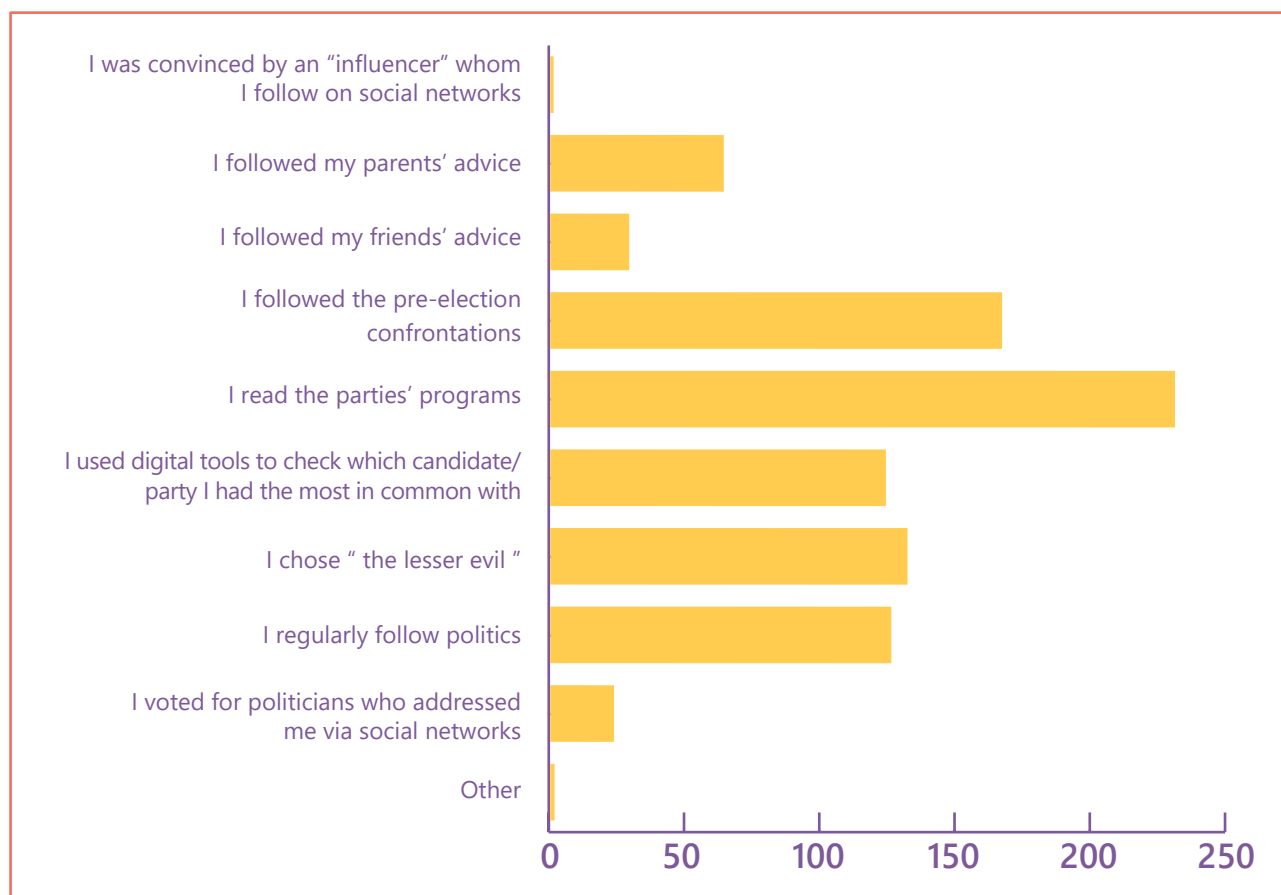
than young people aged 23-27 did. This is probably related to the perception of what active citizenship is, as we have seen that the majority defines active citizenship primarily as participation in elections.

Among the 915 respondents, most of them (441) have already participated in the elections, 351 of them did not have the right to vote in the last election, and 123 of them have not voted yet. These answers demonstrate a relatively high awareness of the importance of elections. Interestingly, a duty to society is cited as the dominant reason for participating in elections. 219 of the respondents answered that they participated in the election because it is their civic duty, and 93 because elections are important for democracy. For a little less than a quarter of the respondents, the main reason was to choose candidates who would defend their interests (53 marked "Because it is important that my favourite candidate/party is elected" and 44 "Because politicians represent our/my interests"). The influence of parents and friends on election participation is negligible, with a total of only 23 such answers. **It is interesting to see that respondents see elections primarily as a duty, as something they need to do as they are part of society, and less as a way to defend their interests.**



The vast majority of those who took part in the elections chose the candidate based on the read party program (231 responses). Relatively serious preparation of the respondents for the elections is also shown in the answers that they followed the pre-election debates (167), used some digital tools to check which candidate/party they had most in common with (124), or in the fact that

they regularly followed the politics (126). Some of them also pointed out that they decided to vote tactically and voted for “the lesser evil” (132). Other reasons were less highlighted. **The only exception is in Finland, where the respondents pointed out that they voted for politicians who addressed them via social networks (36% of respondents from Finland who went to vote).**



As an indicator of their interest in monitoring the political happening in their countries, we can see the fact that 45.8% of respondents follow some politician or political party on social networks. At the same time, it should be emphasised that the number of those who follow some politician or political party on social networks is higher in all countries except Slovenia. **Only in Slovenia, the share of those who do not follow any politician or political party on social networks is significantly higher, which is also reflected in a worse self-assessment of knowledge of political happenings.**

Among those who did not take part in the elections, the majority of answers were mainly linked to the reason that they are not interested in politics (27.6%), or that they feel like they don't have enough knowledge or information (27.6%). A third of those who did not vote also say that they would not vote under any circumstances, as they are not interested in politics.

If we now move to the questions about the involvement of the respondents in the various organisations we can see that there is a large proportion of those who were

student body presidents, took part in student councils, or in a student organisation (42.9%). The involvement was pronounced among respondents from Finland and Slovenia where the share is around 50%. The proportion of those who are active in NGOs is even higher (49.3%). Respondents in Slovenia lead the way here, where as many as 63.9% of them are/were involved in NGOs, while the fewest are in Italy, where the percentage is 36.1%.

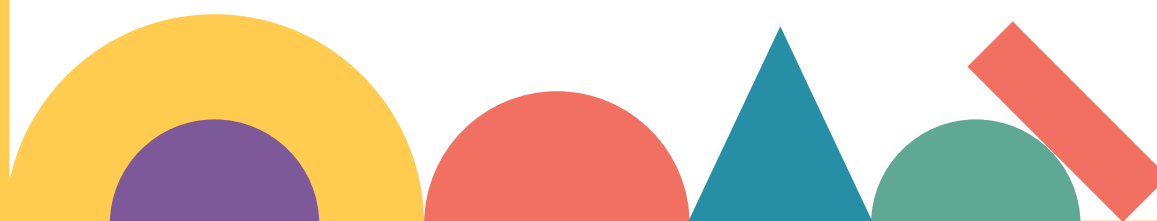
Despite the fact that we note a relatively high involvement in student bodies and non-governmental organisations, the answers regarding whether the respondents have ever thought of joining a political party are overwhelmingly negative. In general, the lack of interest in being involved in the activities of political parties was repeatedly highlighted throughout the survey.

The last questions of this part were intended as questions related to respondents' involvement in specific activities. **The majority of respondents say that they are involved in public life in the local environment mainly by participating in public events (48.7%), followed by signing petitions (34.1%) and through social media (34%).** So they selected mainly somewhat more "passive" forms of engagement, where they are primarily supporters of the content. One-fifth of the respondents answered that they are not involved in public life at all.

The respondents' partial passivity is also shown in the next question, where we asked them about the ways in which they would like to be active in the local environment if it could bring certain changes. The majority (slightly more than 50% of all respondents) answered through sustainable consumption (they would buy products from local

producers and support the local economy), by raising awareness among family, friends or acquaintances, and by spreading information via social media. However, slightly fewer of them were interested in activities that require more continuous engagement (regular meetings, regular participation, etc.). **The deviation was noticeable only among the Italian respondents, who highlighted above all: "I would like to be weekly involved in organisations that would have an influence on the local environment" and "I would regularly participate in local assemblies where we would discuss the placemaking of the local environment".**

Respondents were then asked about the frequency of involvement in certain activities. While 43% expressed that they do sports at least once or more a week and 37% are involved in activities in the field of art, the percentages for other activities are lower. 44.8% attend cultural events at least 1-3 times a month, while respondents attend other activities even less often. **81.6% of respondents answered "never" to the statement "I am active in party politics (meetings, activities organised by your party ...)",** which shows once again the disinterest in participation in traditional forms of political engagement.



Section 4 – Local environment

In the fourth part of the questionnaire, we focused on satisfaction with life in the local environment, their engagement in the local community, and knowledge about their possibilities.

Respondents from Slovenia, Finland, and France express a relatively high level of satisfaction with the environment in which they live, while Italians are moderately satisfied. It is interesting, however, that 63.1% of Finns said that they would move out of the place where they live, and as the main reason for this, they cite the desire to get to know new places. Even for those respondents from Slovenia (37.6%) and France (26.4%), who mentioned that they would move out, the dominant reason is to get to know new places, which corresponds to a higher level of satisfaction. In Italy, the majority of respondents (46.7%) said that they had not considered emigrating, while the 21.3% who would emigrate cited the lack of employment opportunities as the main reason.

Respondents in all countries expressed a high degree of agreement on the importance of involving young people in the decision-making processes of the local environment. Italian respondents give the highest importance to this, where the average rate of agreement with this statement is 9.4. In Finland, Slovenia and France, the average rate varies between 7.6 and 7.8. This fact was also reflected in some other answers, where Italian respondents showed a higher level of willingness to engage in the local environment. The main areas in which they would like to be more involved are: The organisation of events (sports, social...), the organisation of activities for young people, Environmental protection and sustainable development and Development and the organisation of cultural activities.

Despite mainly agreeing about the importance of involving young people

in the active management of the local environment, the majority of respondents (40.4%) admit that they do not know how much the municipality encourages the participation of young people. This proves that they are not well informed and they do not know about the possibilities in their municipalities. For this reason, the question regarding which channels they would like to obtain the relevant information from is really important for our analysis. **Most of them pointed out that they would like to get information through social media (721 respondents). From the respondents' point of view, social media is still an important source of information.** According to the data that the majority of respondents in Italy, France and Finland follow politicians or political parties, this type of information makes sense. However, as we have already seen these respondents are already more active and aware, so the question remains, how to approach those who do not follow similar pages and are not active?

Moreover, 33.8% of the respondents claim that the municipality does not encourage the involvement of the young people enough, while 25.8% claim that they do enough. For those who answered yes, we subsequently asked how the municipalities include them. Young people perceive the encouragement from the municipalities through the support for youth organisations, youth centres or the establishment of a youth council or other bodies through which young people can have a direct influence. The organisation of various events, both sports and cultural and entertainment, as well as some kind of arrangement and renovation of the surroundings, are also mentioned. **A very important point that has been highlighted several times is the inclusion of these contents in the educational system, and the importance of encouraging active citizenship already at school (inclusion in student bodies, etc.). Regular information and advertising of events via social media were also highlighted.**

As for the suggestions of how they would like the municipality to include them, they

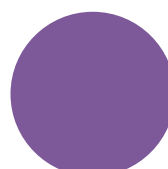
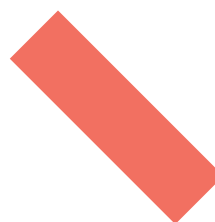
mainly pointed out a lot of things that some municipalities are already doing. For example, the respondents mentioned they would like to have participatory mechanisms, such as participatory budgeting. They mentioned higher and better funding of youth organisations, which would enable more projects for young people. In general, they say that they want more events, debates, and conversations on these topics, to spread knowledge, while at the same time fostering values and a sense of community. In fact, they suggest that these topics should be talked about more in schools, emphasising that they should be talked about in a fun way to attract young people. Similarly, they want the social media posts to be adapted in a way that appeals to young people.

The young people also pointed out that they want to work on concrete projects that will bring concrete and practical solutions. They want their ideas to be realised and to have a real effect. It has been expressed several times that they want to be “actually” heard. The feeling that they are not heard and that even if someone asks them something, they do not carry out the promised matters is very strongly present, which also results in mistrust of institutions. **It is therefore very important that whenever we have a participatory process we do not promise more than is possible and that we implement what we agree on.**

As the last important element for promoting engagement, they emphasise the importance of enabling autonomous spaces where young people can gather and act freely. **It was clear from the answers several times that young people do not want to be patronised but to be given the opportunity to try and learn on their own.** Among other things, we can point out one of the answers, where, on the one hand, a clear lack of confidence in the systemic inclusion of young people is perceived, and at the same time, young people are encouraged to become active:

“Provision of infrastructure for operation – space, finances, inclusion in decision-making processes and encouragement

and consideration of youth proposals, representation of young people; but in reality, all these things work within a system that will not allow for more than is beneficial to it, so the right answer is the autonomous organisation of young people!”



Main findings

The analysis of the questionnaire for young people gave us some important clues that we must take into account in our attempts to successfully engage young people.

The contradiction between two principal positions was repeatedly highlighted. On one hand, the young people repeatedly emphasised the importance of being heard and having more power in making decisions and shaping the local environment, but on the other, they were not prepared to engage in classic political institutions. Despite the fact that respondents showed a relatively high awareness of the importance of elections, they participated in the latter mainly out of a sense of civic duty and less as a mechanism for achieving their interests. In general, in several places in the analysis, we can perceive a lack of trust in institutions and a resigned belief that concrete changes cannot be achieved through participation in traditional institutions. As a result, they are not interested in participating in political parties either.

On the other hand, the desire to have more of a say in decision-making and regulation of the local environment is also strongly highlighted. However, how to activate the youth is very important. It can be understood from the questionnaire that young people want to be active, but they do not want older people to patronise them and just ask them for their opinion, they want to actively participate in the preparation of the content themselves. At the same time, it should be emphasised that they want to do this mainly in the fields that interest them. Young people are not interested in politics or active citizenship "in general", they are interested in participating in concrete issues so that they can see the results of their work. From this point of view, it makes sense to introduce participatory processes that will allow young people to see the results of their work. This will also significantly increase trust in institutions, democratic processes, and politics in general.

The last essential component that stood out was the need for better information. Young people are poorly aware of the possibilities of participation that they have in the local environment, which should not surprise us because they fall under the proverbial label of politics, which is uninteresting to them. The question of what to do in order to spread this information among young people is therefore essential. Among the answers, action through the education system and informing through social media were particularly emphasised. It is easiest to introduce similar issues through the education system since the vast majority of young people are included in it. However, the methodologies of the school system are often outdated, which is why it is very important to address similar topics to young people in more attractive and entertaining ways. Non-formal education activities and various experiential methodologies, such as IDEATHON, which we developed in this project, thus appear to be suitable ways to improve knowledge about participation.

When informing about the possibilities of participation via social media, there is a similar request to adapt the vocabulary and the method of information to be more attractive to young people. The vast majority of young people use social media and, as it was highlighted in the analysis, they want to obtain information through these media. However, we must be aware of the discrepancy between those who are already more active and follow similar topics and those who are not active and are not interested in such topics. Social media thus proves to be a useful tool for information, but the latter must not be limited to this level, as it will exclude many young people who are already more passive.

ANALYSIS OF THE SURVEY WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Overview of the results

The survey with the representatives of the local authorities was conducted from June to November 2023 and was composed of different questions, to get an overview of the specific local context in which the local authority is involved. The same questions, for all participants, gave a general overview concerning the main issues which should be improved and which are related to young people. The questionnaire aims to measure how much local public realities involve young people in terms of dialogue, listening, and tools aimed at measuring their needs and translating them into concrete policies. The aim is to analyse how direct/indirect democracy could influence youth participation at the local level, and if the municipalities applied specific methods.

In general, some of the common problems underlined by the surveys are the lack of social spaces and social interaction that can stimulate young people, the lack of cultural and educational activities, and the need for psychological support, especially after the Covid pandemic. In addition, the problem of demographic depopulation and emigration of young people to other places for study or work reasons seems common in the Slovenian municipality of Piran and southern Italy.

All municipalities are taking measures to improve the participation of young people. The very important role of youth organisations

and their interaction with public authorities and social contexts was emphasised, and also the importance of collaboration with other institutions, especially schools and families.

However, the lack of participation of young people is a widespread problem in all the countries involved. Except for Oulu and Divača, the main problem that is creating a barrier is the disenchantment and disconnectedness that young people feel in politics. Despite this, all municipalities have difficulty measuring the degree of participation and political involvement through precise indicators, which can help reshape youth policies in the area, as it is frequently not possible for the authorities to measure youth participation in political elections. The strategy of the municipalities to collect information to analyse the youth social context and political participation is based on informal feedback and opinions. The main tool to collect the information is interaction with representatives of organisations, youth centres, and commissions. Both Italian municipalities collect direct feedback from the youth through interviews, social media and digital platforms. But even in these cases, they cannot use analytical tools.

Finally, all the weak points that emerged are condensed into the lack of adoption of good practices by local authorities. Except for Pyrénées-Atlantiques and Municipality of Oulu, which has experience with the participatory budget for young people, and the Municipality of Ankarán with their scholarship for young people the other municipalities do not apply specific "good practices". However, they

understand the importance of having those and for this reason, they are planning to develop and test some new good practices in the future.

Local Authorities involved

The analysis involved 4 countries, represented by the following Municipalities and local authorities:

- ▶ Municipality of Oulu, Finland, Oulu's youth service representative.
- ▶ Municipality of Contessa Entellina, Italy, Member of the City Government, Tourism, Arbëreshë identity, productive activities, agriculture, equal opportunities, European funds, archaeological sites and school education representative.
- ▶ Municipality of Caravaggio, Italy, Member of the City Government, representative for culture, tourism and trade.
- ▶ Municipality of Ankaran, Slovenia, Social activities adviser.
- ▶ Municipality of Divača, Slovenia, Vice-Mayor.
- ▶ Municipality of Piran, Slovenia, Head of the Office of Social Activities.
- ▶ Conseil Départemental des Pyrénées-Atlantiques, France, Youth Policy Coordinator in the Sports, Youth and Voluntary Sector Service.

Survey analysis

1) What area of intervention do you consider most important for young people in your Municipality?

Despite the different contexts, some very clear common problems emerge. Among these, one of the problems that come to light are the lack of social spaces and social interaction that can stimulate young people, the lack of cultural and educational activities, the need for psychological support, especially

after the Covid pandemic. The youth service representative of Oulu, however, highlights the lack of real opportunities young people have for influencing the local policies and decision making. Even if youth emigration has been underlined by the Slovenian city Piran, this is a problem which also affects many municipalities in Southern Italy. However, Municipalities are adopting strategies to engage young people, using different methods. Some of them are improving participation through culture, sport and educational activities. Another strategy is to involve youth organisations, institutions and parents at different levels of the political process.

- ▶ **Piran:** Youth emigration; School dropout; mental health, especially after the Covid pandemic.
- ▶ **Divača:** Lack of social spaces for youth people and vandalism.
- ▶ **Ankaran:** Social space for youth people and lack of cultural activities.
- ▶ **Contessa Entellina:** Lack of social inclusion, cultural activities, and job search.
- ▶ **Caravaggio:** Social interaction among young people.
- ▶ **Oulu:** Mental health, loneliness, economic inequality, lack of real opportunities young people have for influencing the local policies and decision making.
- ▶ **Pyrénées-Atlantiques:** Citizenship, solidarity, and environment. The topics that have been chosen in 2023 are combating sedentary lifestyles, parent/teenager dialogue on digital technology, changing perceptions of disability, living together better in secondary schools and the environment.

2) How active are young people in the local context? What other tools of direct or indirect democracy do young people use to influence local public policies?

Even though all representatives underlined several problems affecting young people,

all municipalities seem to take measures to improve the participation of young people. The role of youth organizations, and their interaction with public authorities and social contexts seems very important.

- ▶ **Piran:** On the one hand, young people are not very active, but on the other hand, many youth organisations and programmes are full of participants.
- ▶ **Divača:** There are two associations that are very active in the local area, organising public events, village festivals, and charity events for young people, and they have good relations and communication. Both associations regularly apply for the municipality's "Improvement of learning paths" call for proposals and have been very active and successful.
- ▶ **Ankaran:** Recent elections can be used as an example for two indicators: 1) two "representatives" of young people have been candidates in the Municipal Council elections, one of them was elected; 2) another indicator of participation of young people in the local context is the so-called "Municipal Youth Programme", which was started by a group of young people who are managing a bar and organizing events at the Student beach ("Na Študentu"), with the aim of turning the beach into a place where people can socialize.
- ▶ **Contessa Entellina:** The young people of the municipality of Contessa Entellina are active through the institution of the Youth Council, which actively participates in leisure, cultural, and social activities.
- ▶ **Caravaggio:** In Caravaggio's context young people are usually part of public decisions as organized groups, mostly youth associations. The best way to change political matters is to join public structures during the election period.
- ▶ **Oulu:** Children and young people are taught to participate from a very young age, starting with early childhood education. Participation is done in everyday life.

- ▶ **Pyrénées-Atlantiques:** The Departmental level does not give so much the possibility to see how young people are active at the local level since the scale is quite wide. However, there are young people who have already been involved in civil society organizations, others for whom we can see that they have received an education related to citizenship.

3) Do you evaluate the participation of young people in local elections and their engagement in the local community? If you do, how? Please describe.

From this question it can be seen that municipalities have difficulties or do not have indicators and tools for evaluating participation in elections. Only Oulu expressed the percentage of the vote of young people.

- ▶ **Piran:** No data.
- ▶ **Divača:** No additional approaches to evaluate the participation.
- ▶ **Ankaran:** No data.
- ▶ **Contessa Entellina:** No data.
- ▶ **Caravaggio:** No data.
- ▶ **Oulu:** In the 2022 Oulu youth elections, the voting percentage was 39.5. Altogether 7168 votes were cast in Oulu's youth elections. Young people aged 13–19 are entitled to vote in youth elections. Representatives for Oulu's youth council are elected from there.
- ▶ **Pyrénées-Atlantiques:** There is no statistical data regarding that topic. We refer regularly to ANACEJ (Association nationale des conseils d'enfants et de jeunes / National Association of Children and Youth Councils) data.

4) Do you think there are barriers that limit the political participation of young people at the local level? If yes, what are they and what strategies have the local authorities adopted to overcome them?

The lack of participation of young people is a widespread problem in all the countries involved. Except for Oulu and Divača, the main problem, which creates a barrier, is the disenchantment and disconnectedness that young people feel in politics. Another problem is the relationship between the old and youth generations.

- ▶ **Piran:** In general, young people participate less in elections and political processes than older people. Another reason is probably disillusionment with politics.
- ▶ **Divača:** No, not really.
- ▶ **Ankaran:** Young people are not motivated to participate because society is increasingly apathetic, and everyone is looking out for vested interests. If they do not have a direct benefit.
- ▶ **Contessa Entellina:** N/A
- ▶ **Caravaggio:** The most important barrier I have met as a representative is to get the old generations to move on and let new people join decisional structures. The most effective strategy should be to have periodic generational change based on age and time of activity in the matter, with a certain time dedicated to formation.
- ▶ **Oulu:** Young people can participate. However, the situation in this regard has improved a lot, e.g. after the municipality joined the 'child-friendly city' project. There are many young people who do not find politics and influence important, and many feel that their thoughts and opinions do not matter.
- ▶ **Pyrénées-Atlantiques:** Not much work is being done on this subject.

5) How is the local authority supporting the engagement of young people? What methods are you using for supporting and improving youth engagement? Please, briefly describe the strengths and weaknesses of these methods.

All Municipalities are adopting strategies to engage young people, using different methods. Some of them are improving participation through culture, sport and educational activities. Another strategy adopted is to involve youth organisations, institutions and parents. Both of these levels are usually interconnected.

- ▶ **Piran:** The municipality places a strong emphasis on funding for sport and culture, supporting young people's involvement in such activities. Currently, as part of the process of drafting the Youth Strategy, the Mayor has appointed a Youth Commission, which consists only of youth representatives and also includes representatives of the Italian national community.
- ▶ **Divača:** Plan to publish a call for youth organisations next year offering €10.000 for supporting different projects organised by youth organisations.
- ▶ **Ankaran:** One of the methods which has proven to be the most successful is the municipal scholarship. In order to promote education, increase access to and attainment of higher levels of education, improve employability and actively involve young people in the local environment, the Municipality has adopted the Decree on Scholarships for Pupils and Students of the Municipality of Ankaran from which the vast majority of the youth can get a scholarship, with the amount depending on the student's activity.
- ▶ **Contessa Entellina:** Strengths: teamwork, discussion and listening; Weaknesses: training and social learning.
- ▶ **Caravaggio:** The best way to have people join public decisions is to have them plan for specific matters: giving them a final goal helps because they don't have the impression of being stuck from the beginning of their activism into a long-term commitment.

- ▶ **Oulu:** The city has an Oulu model of inclusion. It includes participation groups, the youth council and participation events.
- ▶ **Pyrénées-Atlantiques:** They have tried to develop formal partnerships that support the engagement of young people. For example, for the Youth Departmental Council, first, the secondary schools confirm that they agree with the fact that two of their students will be elected to participate in this Council. Thus, it means that they commit formally to make them available whenever there are meetings or events related to their mandate. In addition to that, each involved school appoints a contact person inside the school who is asked to design and implement follow-up methods between the Youth Departmental Council and the young people. They also try to communicate as much as possible with the parents. If the schools and the parents are not encouraging this participation, it is complicated to keep the young people active.

6) What are the tools that you and the local institutions are using to collect feedback and exchange ideas, points of view and opinions with young people affected by local policies? What could be improved in the phase of listening and collecting the opinions and suggestions of young people?

All municipalities use different ways to collect feedback and opinions. Mainly, the tools are interaction with representatives of organizations, youth centres, and commissions. In the case of both Italian municipalities, they collect feedback through social and digital platforms, interviews etc.

- ▶ **Piran:** They are working with youth organisations to set up a centre through which young people can communicate their wishes and suggestions, thus empowering such organizations to act as a link between young people and the municipality. One such hub is the EPI centre, through which they get information from young people about their needs.

- ▶ **Divača:** Call for a Youth Commission, as a new one needs to be set up for the new mayoral term. The Commission will be composed of two youth representatives, one representative from the municipal administration and one from an NGO.
- ▶ **Ankaran:** The municipality is organising various workshops according to their needs in order to hear the thoughts, expectations, and suggestions of the youths.
- ▶ **Contessa Entellina:** The tools we adopt to collect feedback are digital platforms, such as social media or meetings open to public debate.
- ▶ **Caravaggio:** Opinions and suggestions are collected through organised groups such as youth associations or using social media as a means to be reachable in a non-formal way.
- ▶ **Oulu:** Surveys, interviews, requests for opinions, at events, e.g., question hour for young people, municipal councilors delegated for young people in support of the youth council.
- ▶ **Pyrénées-Atlantiques:** They integrate discussions with the participants through The Youth Departmental Council and the “Young Ambassadors” initiative, but do not do much more than this.

7) What are the tools and mechanisms for translating the needs of young people and their participation into real policies?

Some of the municipalities are engaged in using informal methods, such as workshops, events, and public programmes. On the other hand, some of them adopt more formal tools, through the Youth Commission or having representatives, or funding projects for improvement. The connection between the Municipality of Piran with other municipalities on the periphery seems very interesting. Interesting as well is the method adopted by Pyrénées-Atlantiques involving representatives from secondary schools through the Young Ambassadors who get feedback on the policies.

- ▶ **Piran:** Workshops conducted to prepare the Youth Strategy and the Municipality of Piran have linked up various municipalities with widely dispersed rural areas.
- ▶ **Divača:** Through the Youth Commission, and through direct communication.
- ▶ **Ankaran:** The previously mentioned: various workshops that the municipality organises according to their needs.
- ▶ **Contessa Entellina:** Active participation in programmes; greater investments to create places of aggregation and conviviality; funding for youth projects; civic education in schools.
- ▶ **Caravaggio:** Having a representative inside the institutional structure able to explain and coordinate them.
- ▶ **Oulu:** Surveys, interviews, requests for opinions, at events, e.g., question hour for young people, municipal councilors named for young people in support of the youth council.
- ▶ **Pyrénées-Atlantiques:** They consult the Young Ambassadors to get feedback on the policies that the institution has in mind and we share with the elected people and the services the ideas and thoughts of the people we work with to influence public policies as much as we can.
- ▶ **Piran:** Many new things are in the pipeline and existing ones are being strengthened. Concerning youth emigration, the Municipality intends to involve young people in holiday (summer) jobs to introduce them to different apprenticeships and give them the opportunity to learn about different professions.
- ▶ **Divača:** The fact that we are open and accessible to young people and willing to help both organisationally and financially. We are confident that in a few years' time, we will have more examples of good practices.
- ▶ **Ankaran:** Various workshops, meetings with young people, and opportunities for summer work. And especially the scholarship that engages the youth in volunteering.
- ▶ **Contessa Entellina:** No data.
- ▶ **Caravaggio:** We are trying to introduce moments of discussion with representatives from youth associations and high schools.
- ▶ **Oulu:** Oulu model of inclusion/participation: [Youth participation | City of Oulu \(ouka.fi\)](#). The Municipality involves citizens in participatory budgeting. The residents of Oulu get to generate ideas, plan and finally decide how the city of Oulu can use the available budget (70,000 euros in 2023).

8) Does your municipality have any good practices that it uses to include young people in local policies?

From the answers below we can see that some of the municipalities do not apply any specific "good practices", but they understand the importance of having them, so they are actively planning to develop and test some new good practices. The exceptions are Pyrénées-Atlantiques and Municipality of Oulu, which has experience with the participatory budget for young people, and the Municipality of Ankaran with the scholarships for their young people which encourages them to engage in volunteering and other activities.

- ▶ **Pyrénées-Atlantiques:** Their institution has a participatory budget. Two projects could be elected only by the Youth Departmental Council, to make their voice heard and the Council visible. Specific communication towards young people to motivate them to propose their projects for this participatory budget. The members of the Youth Departmental Council have also created a video to encourage other young people to submit their project ideas (peer-to-peer)

ANALYSIS OF THE GOOD PRACTICES

The third part of the research that was led by partner organisations in different countries and at the European level aimed to identify and describe different good practices regarding youth participation at the local level. The results of the research gave each partner a better understanding of what participation by young people at the local level can entail, this phase was an opportunity to find out more about what was happening in their own area for each of the partners and to find interesting and inspiring components for the ADD methodology, which is at the heart of this project.

The research of good practices was conducted by each partner organisation. First of all, the partner organisations have agreed on what can be considered a good practice to be in line with the ADD methodology, with a specific aim to identify what could be inspiring for the next steps. Each partner organisation has led desk research and completed a prepared form where they briefly described the identified good practices and pointed out the main findings that could help them implement the project activities. In this analysis, we focused on different categories of good practices pointing out what we considered the most relevant and inspiring.

Project development

Name and country of the good practice	The essentials about the method	The strengths of the method
Largo alla Scuola Italy	<p>The Italian project team, led by CESIE, was established by a group of young professionals in collaboration with some local associations (Tu Sei La Città and PUSH). The aim was to design and implement a participatory co-design process that would involve a group of students and produce a prototype of the square where the High School Finocchiaro Aprile is based. The designed interventions were creative, low-cost, sustainable and easy-to-implement solutions, based on the principles and tools of Tactical Urbanism. It is a</p>	<p>The project can be considered innovative because the involvement of young people under 18 set in motion a bottom-up process of co-creating a public space. The process set off a participatory governance mechanism that led to tangible change in a common space with the involvement of the Municipality of Palermo.</p> <p>The main strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ participatory governance with a bottom-up decision-making and implementation process;

<p>Largo alla Scuola</p> <p>Italy</p>	<p>useful approach to bottom-up transformation processes of urban spaces.</p> <p>The final project was finalised with a practical redesign and co-creation of a square in front of a high school.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ participatory budget experience; ▶ involvement of public authorities.
<p>P.Y.C. – Palermo Youth Center – Villa Trabia</p> <p>Italy</p>	<p>PYC is a community center run on a volunteer basis by a group of more than 40 young who have made concepts such as solidarity, volunteerism, common good, culture, integration, peace and tolerance their own.</p> <p>The volunteers of The Factory and CSF organize numerous activities to restore urban decorum, upgrading some degraded areas, offering a tangible contribution to the growth of Palermo.</p> <p>The PYC, as social club of the non-profit cultural association ARCI, is composed of two decision-making bodies: the board of directors, which has the function of proposing, and the members' assembly. Annual strategies and programmes are therefore adopted democratically in assemblies open to all members.</p>	<p>What is interesting is that the centre is open during some months and gives the possibility to highlight the process and involve the people during a limited period of time, making it possible to keep the "energy" of the participants higher than during a long-term commitment.</p> <p>P.Y.C. Villa Trabia can be considered an innovative reality, because it is an important example of urban civic engagement which involves young people. It has opened a space for socialisation and civic education, as a focal point for public debate and cultural activities in the city.</p> <p>The strengths of the method:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Use of cultural events as tools of participation and civic engagement. ▶ Inclusive and open decision-making processes. ▶ Being a place of contact for city associations and local authorities. ▶ Giving the opportunity to actively use an urban green space that was abandoned.

Ljuba&Drago (mobile youth centre)

Slovenia

The objective of the practice was to include youth to participate in every stage of the project implementation, to exchange creative ideas, collaborate and gain practical knowledge, whilst converting an old disused city bus into a mobile youth centre.

The advantage of the Ljuba&Drago bus is above all mobility, as they can go anywhere where it is possible to park the bus. The current destination stations are the grey zones of the city, neighbourhoods where young people do not have as many opportunities to engage in cultural and artistic content. The mission of Ljuba&Drago is to connect the entire neighbourhood, which means that in addition to working with the local youth, they encourage neighbours and surrounding institutions to co-create the common pulse of both the neighbourhood and the city of Ljubljana.

The "Münchner Jugendrat" (Munich Youth Council)

Germany

The Münchner Jugendrat (Munich Youth Council) is a body of elected young people who advise the city of Munich on issues that affect them. It was founded in 1973 and is made up of 40 members, who are elected every two years by young people aged 14 to 21.

The objectives of the Münchner Jugendrat initiative are to:

- ▶ Give young people a voice in decision-making: The Youth Council provides a platform for young people to share their views and ideas on issues that affect them. This helps to ensure that their needs are taken into account by decision-makers.
- ▶ Increase the participation of young people in civic

The Münchner Jugendrat initiative can be considered an innovation for a number of reasons.

- ▶ It is a long-standing initiative that has been running for over 50 years. This shows that the initiative is sustainable and that it has been successful in meeting the needs of young people in Munich.
- ▶ It is a well-established initiative that has been evaluated on a number of occasions. The evaluations have found that the initiative is effective in giving young people a voice in decision-making.
- ▶ It is a scalable initiative that can be replicated in other cities and countries. The initiative has been

**The “Münchner Jugendrat”
(Munich Youth Council)**

Germany

life: The Youth Council encourages young people to get involved in their community and to make a difference. It provides them with the opportunity to learn about how the city works and to develop their skills and knowledge.

- ▶ Promote understanding and tolerance between young people and decision-makers: The Youth Council provides a space for young people and decision-makers to come together and discuss issues in a respectful and constructive way. This helps to build understanding and tolerance between the two groups.
- ▶ Empower young people: The Youth Council gives young people the opportunity to develop their leadership skills and to learn how to make a difference in their community. This can help to empower them and to give them a sense of agency.

adapted to the needs of young people in Munich, but it can be adapted to the needs of young people in other contexts.

- ▶ It is a transferable initiative that can be used to address a range of issues affecting young people. The initiative has been used to address a variety of issues, such as education, housing, and transportation.
- ▶ It is a sustainable initiative that is funded by the city of Munich. This ensures that the initiative will continue to be available to young people in Munich.

The Münchner Jugendrat initiative is an example of an innovative approach to youth participation. The initiative has been successful in giving young people a voice in decision-making and in making Munich a more inclusive and democratic city.

Here are some other reasons why the Münchner Jugendrat initiative can be considered an innovation:

- ▶ It is a participatory initiative that involves young people in all aspects of the decision-making process.
- ▶ It is a transparent initiative that makes the decision-making process clear and accessible to young people.

**The “Münchner Jugendrat”
(Munich Youth Council)**

Germany

- ▶ It is a collaborative initiative that brings together young people, decision-makers, and other stakeholders to work together to address issues affecting young people.
- ▶ It is an inclusive initiative that is open to all young people, regardless of their background or circumstances.
- ▶ It is a sustainable initiative that is designed to continue to be available to young people in Munich for many years to come.

**WHAT IS INSPIRING AND RELEVANT IN
LINE WITH THE ADD PROJECT**

- ▶ Highlighting participatory democracy and budget.
- ▶ Applying an initiative at a district level.
- ▶ It is important to develop initiatives that are easy to replicate.
- ▶ Using youth associations for urban redevelopment, working with the municipality and local authorities.
- ▶ Networking among existing associations, using cultural forms by involving local and non-local artists, policymakers, authorities.
- ▶ The participation of experts that make young people feel heard and to work better on some topics and realities.

Funding

Name and country of the good practice

Solidarity Project Workshops

Finland

The essentials about the method

The European Union offers to fund young adults for projects enhancing solidarity and The Peace Education Institute, in turn, offers support to apply for this funding. A group of at least 5 people (age 18–30 years) can apply for the funding for their project from the European Solidarity Corps.

During the virtual Solidarity Project Workshops, The Peace Education Institute will introduce previously produced projects, assist in outlining an idea to a project plan, clarify the EU jargon, and offer professional mentoring and assistance in filling out the application form.

In the workshop, the participants are encouraged to start building their ideas based on their dreams and their own utopia of a better world. What kind of change do young people want to be creating in the world and whom do they want to start the revolution with? The funded projects should be local, enhance solidarity, and be based on common European values.

The strengths of the method

The practice can be seen as innovative and especially valuable because it is based on the notion that the funder does not reach its target group, and on the other hand that the target group is excluded from the funder's goal with a practical solution (regarding the way the application portal works, and the language used in the form). The practice offers a very easy solution to a very challenging and big problem. Funders and young people seem to live in a different world and speak a different language – the workshop practice creates a bridge between them.

The goal is not primarily to empower young people, instead we trust that they do know what they want to do. They just get help to put it into words.

The strengths of the method:

- ▶ Better use of existing funding opportunities aimed directly at young people.
- ▶ Creating operational structures that promote equality in practice.
- ▶ Paying attention to minority youth and distributing resources more evenly between representatives of different groups.

**Public Call for the
co-financing of Youth
Programmes or Projects**

Slovenia

The objective of this public call is to encourage the active participation of young people and to support the implementation of programmes or projects that are implemented by young people for young people and contribute to the active citizenship of young people in the local environment and their personal development.

Some strengths of this method are the fact that there are info days and that the call is published twice a year, since it gives the possibility to new people to be involved in each round and communication made in between.

The involvement of youth workers is also an added value.

**The City Incubator
programme "Dream of
your place"**

Slovenia

The objective of the practice is to motivate and engage young people to learn and develop their creative ideas that would contribute to a higher quality of life in the local area.

The City Incubator is one of the Young Dragons' projects/ practices that create new models of collaboration between the city, public institutions, businesses, non-governmental organisations, and the community. It's one of the ambitious projects that go beyond the scope of everyday work with youth. It connects young people and the city at all organisational levels through ambitious ideas and turns young people's ideas into projects. The programme includes workshops, mentoring, and financial support for selected Ljubljana youth projects. The programme is intended to assist young people in charting their path to life and professional experience, all whilst contributing to a higher quality of life in the city.

Unlike regular entrepreneurial incubators, this one addresses young people exclusively and aims to engage them in participating to improve the quality of living in their city. In this way they are motivating young people to become more active in their local environment, they're sharing knowledge and experience with those, who have no experience with project development and implementation but have creative ideas that will have a positive impact and improve the quality of living in the city.

The city Incubator provides a safe environment for young people to realise their ideas. Mistakes are allowed, which gives the young people the opportunity and the courage to experiment and think outside the box.

Public call “Youth for the Progress of Maribor”

Slovenia

As part of the programme, young researchers from the upper grades of Maribor’s primary schools and secondary schools produce original research assignments and innovation proposals in more than 30 research areas. The application or submission of original research papers and innovation proposals are two independently considered areas of the competition.

The programme, which encourages and expands the creativity and innovation of young people, also teaches them independent research work and makes them aware of co-responsibility for the development of the environment in which they live.

This method is an innovation since it is a municipal programme that directly motivates young pupils and students to explore different scientific areas and arouses their interest in research work.

The main strength is the collaboration of different institutions.

WHAT IS INSPIRING AND RELEVANT IN LINE WITH THE ADD PROJECT

- ▶ This method could be proposed as a “going further” method for the projects implemented during the IDEATHON or as a proposal to work on new projects for those that will not be implemented.
- ▶ The well-developed collaboration with the municipalities and different organisations is inspiring, and it could be a goal for the sustainability of the ADD project.
- ▶ It is great that some workshops are prepared before the application of the project idea, so the young people can learn how to prepare a project. There could be a possibility to lead online workshops before

the implementation of the IDEATHONs, so that the participants gain the basis on how to prepare a project.

- ▶ The way things are addressed to target the participants in some projects is interesting. The focus is “to improve the quality of living in their city” so that the participants can adopt the mindset of having a positive impact on the community.
- ▶ Pupils in the last year of primary school and students from high schools are already active and interested in researching the local environment.
- ▶ The role of external commissions is relevant and can be a source of motivation for the participants.

Information

Name and country of the good practice

YouthMetre
Italy

The essentials about the method

The YouthMetre project empowered young people, encouraging them to be engaged and actively participate in EU Youth policy matters and to increase their public participation.

The project produced an innovative tool that gives young people access, via a digital data dashboard, to information about how well their policymakers are performing in different youth fields. Examples of best practices are presented in order to help authorities to improve their activities.

Through multiplier training activities YouthMetre directly provided youths with necessary skills and knowledge to improve and/or transform the effective implementation of policies and practices for youth by challenging policy makers, and addressing issues raised in the 2015 EU Youth Report.

The strengths of the method

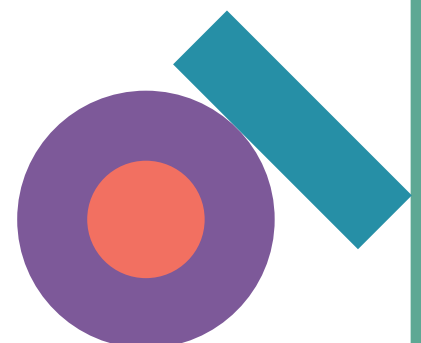
The Project can be considered an innovation for the activities of mapping and cross-use of indicators and data and for setting indicators that can be used practically by decision makers. It represents a big project for active involvement of younger citizens in decision-making processes and functions as a strong link between European institutions and young people. So, they are more inclined to critically observe and participate in public strategies and policies.

It gives the possibility to easily access data even if it needs to be updated regularly.

The representation of data with graphs and statistics, can be really attractive when tackling a project with both young people and local authorities, to share about realities, projects, wills ...

WHAT IS INSPIRING AND RELEVANT IN LINE WITH THE ADD PROJECT

The use of infographics and different indicators to get a wider view of the topic to be addressed can be really interesting when working with young people.



Evaluation

Name and country of the good practice

The Equality Key
Finland

The essentials about the method

The goal of The Equality Key is to act as an evaluation tool, which enables every professional in the youth field to monitor and evaluate the possibilities and effects of their own work tasks for the development of equality work and the achievement of its goals.

Every professional in the youth field can use the tool to review their own activities, regardless of where, how and with whom they do youth work. Everyone gets to assess the state of equality and plan and develop work from the perspective of different goals and measures.

You can use the tool independently to support the development of your own expertise and professional skills. The questions in the tool can help you identify areas for development and plan measures that promote equality in youth work. Another way to take advantage of this tool is to use it as part of the equality planning process of the work community. The Equality Key is a good tool for evaluating the current situation of equality.

The strengths of the method

This tool is considered innovative since it has answered real needs of youth workers who highlighted how much they needed support and space for joint discussions on the themes of equality.

With the participatory process and the constructive dialogue, the discussion about equality moved from the level of talk about equal youth work and general strategic goals to the matters that are relevant in the everyday work of youth workers – to a matter that concerns everyone.

WHAT IS INSPIRING AND RELEVANT IN LINE WITH THE ADD PROJECT

It could be interesting to use this tool to evaluate the IDEATHON model or to ask public authorities and youth organisations to analyse their work a little bit before using the model.

Dialogue

Name and country of the good practice	The essentials about the method	The strengths of the method
<p data-bbox="212 667 502 772">Connect Oulu – Trust Finland</p>	<p data-bbox="600 409 991 622">The goal of the practice is to create a space and implement a transformative social dialogue led by young people on topics relevant to young people.</p> <p data-bbox="600 667 991 1030">Dialogue was used to specifically examine how segregation and the marginalization it causes and possible violence resulting from gangs can be prevented. The focus of the work was also the question of how storytelling can be utilized in these dialogue processes.</p>	<p data-bbox="1042 409 1433 701">The practice and process was valuable as it actually succeeded in creating a space where for example parents and youth workers really started to discuss and share with each other their thoughts and points of view.</p>

WHAT IS INSPIRING AND RELEVANT IN LINE WITH THE ADD PROJECT

Including storytelling is an interesting approach to get to know better the participants, support them in knowing what can be interesting for them to work on in terms of topic, etc.

Digital

Name and country of the good practice	The essentials about the method	The strengths of the method
<p data-bbox="296 1821 419 1926">Backseat France</p>	<p data-bbox="600 1637 991 2040">Back Seat is an alternative media proposal based on the ambitious idea of devoting media time to politics for the younger generation, who often have a conflicting relationship with it. The programme is broadcast on Twitch, a streaming platform historically dedicated to video game players.</p>	<p data-bbox="1042 1637 1433 1966">Getting web personalities to talk about political issues is an innovation in its own right. Anyone can talk about political issues, and these conversations contribute to the proper functioning of democracy and the exercise of citizenship.</p> <p data-bbox="1042 2011 1433 2078">The integration of chat from Twitch into the programme,</p>

Backseat

France

The programme is hosted by a political communicator and streamer.

via live questions and polls in particular, has given the programme a collaborative dimension. The format, atmosphere and light-hearted tone of the programme play an interesting role in the 'normalisation' of the political and democratic issues addressed. These are no longer intellectual subjects reserved for the formally educated, but everyday topics for discussion.

Some other strengths are:

- ▶ The show takes place where young people are
- ▶ It includes a collaborative approach with a chat in which all the viewers can participate and ask questions.

Elyze

France

Elyze is a mobile app that was launched in 2022 for the occasion of the Presidential elections in France.

It works more or less the same way as the popular app "Tinder" which a principle of "matching" between the app user and the proposals from the candidates in the elections.

First of all, regarding the form of the tool, it is an innovation to have developed an app to tackle the topics of politics and to support the participation of young people in the elections.

Then, another innovation is that the tool is based on the programmes of the candidates, which never happens. Indeed, usually, people know the main opinions and ideas of the candidates, without knowing really what they propose in their programme.

It also helps to better understand all the challenges that are at stake when a Presidential election takes place.

<p>Elyze</p> <p>France</p>		<p>Thus, the app gives the users the possibility to think about what is interesting to them and not just focus on a candidate since the proposals are not clearly identified during the matching process.</p>
<p>Enfants 2022 (Children 2022)</p> <p>France</p>	<p>This initiative was developed for the occasion of the French Presidential elections in 2022.</p> <p>The aim was to organise online elections in national education establishments for minors (schools - advised from the age of 8, collèges and lycées) and those run by the Protection Judiciaire de la Jeunesse (Youth Judicial Protection Agency), on the initiative of teachers and educators who wanted to encourage the participation of the young people they worked with.</p> <p>This project has taken the form of a platform designed to give a voice to those who are not yet considered full citizens: children and teenagers.</p> <p>It took place at the exact same moment as the Presidential elections.</p>	<p>This practice is clearly an innovation at several levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ it creates a similar event for teenagers as for the general public, in a context that is really important: the Presidential elections; ▶ the fact that the informing about the results and votes takes place at the same time motivates the participants; ▶ the fact that young people are being involved before having the right to vote can have a great impact. ▶ adapting the language level and contents to the target group is essential.

WHAT IS INSPIRING AND RELEVANT IN LINE WITH THE ADD PROJECT

- ▶ Creating open spaces for discussions that are friendly and led by young people who are the same as the target group.
- ▶ The possibility of watching the show/ accessing the information later. It can reach other people who were not available at the moment of the show or who come to the page "by chance".
- ▶ The gamification to know better where we are at in terms of political opinions

is really interesting since it is not always easy to know. This approach could perhaps be adapted to question young people regarding their relation to active participation.

- ▶ Working on topics that are at the same time also relevant to the general public.
- ▶ Digital voting could be integrated in the voting phase of the IDEATHONS to get more feedback from other young people who are not directly involved in the project.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The analysis of the research part within the project ADD Something Meaningful, has brought about interesting indicators of the local participation of young people and their relationship with local authorities. It allowed us to map differences and similarities of the attitudes towards youth participation from the young people and representatives of the local authorities in partner countries and gave us information regarding the approach of the local authorities to involve young people in participatory processes and the possibilities for local participation.

One of the records that emerged, in almost every country involved, is the need of young people to be heard by local authorities and the importance of concrete tools to influence local policies. Not only concerning certain political proposals, but also possibilities of a direct engagement in preparation and implementation of projects that would satisfy their needs. These considerations are inspired by the need of young people to make decisions and shape the local environment. According to surveys, it appears that young people are not willing to engage in traditional political institutions, however, they wish to use new and innovative methods for participation in resolving some concrete issues.

The youth involved in the survey show a relatively high awareness of the importance of elections, however, they mainly see it as their civic duty and less as a mechanism for achieving their interests. In general, we also detected a distrust in institutions that results in the disinterest of the youth to collaborate with local authorities. Therefore, motivating young people to be more involved represents a significant challenge for local authorities. The research also showed that all the municipalities involved are using different methods to

collect feedback and opinions from young people, however, the discontent young people feel towards politics does not seem to find adequate responses from the local authorities and public institutions in general.

These considerations are also linked to the last point that emerges from the questionnaires and is related to information dissemination. Young people are little aware of their possibilities for participation in the local environment. Thus, it's very important to give the necessary attention to this issue. The use of social media for informing about the possibilities of participation in the local community was emphasised by the youth, as well as the role of schools in informing about and encouraging youth participation. However, there is also a clear need for more interesting and attractive approaches for a successful engagement of the youth.

In regard to the adoption of good practices, the responses show that, apart from a few, municipalities generally do not apply any specific "good practices". However, they are all well aware of its importance and are actively planning on developing and testing certain new practices. The last part of the research aimed to identify and describe various good practices regarding youth participation at the local level. The analysis showed that there are examples of good practices in each country involved. However, these are not implemented systematically, but rather appear as single experiences limited to local areas. Nevertheless, we were able to extract some important findings for successful implementation of good practices. In order to reach the youth and ensure better engagement, it is important to involve different actors such as schools, families, youth organisations, and local institutions. It

is important to create an open and safe space where youth can express their opinions during the implementation. It is also important to use different non-formal methodologies that support the creativity of the youth, as well as certain elements of gamification and digital tools.

In conclusion, considering the results of the analysis described in the previous paragraphs, there are certain recommendations to keep in mind when involving youth in the decision-making processes. These recommendations are designed to improve the youth participation, and to help public institutions and organisations in planning activities that involve young people.

1. If you already have experience with some good practices, think about how you could adapt them to your context.
2. Start involving young people from the first step to precisely identify their needs. Nobody understands their needs better than them.
3. Use the communication channels that are popular among young people. New technologies and social media allow for more engaging and faster communication.
4. For greater engagement of the young people collaborate with schools, youth centres, youth organisations, sports clubs, etc. Young people that are already involved in such organisations are already active and interested in researching the local environment.
5. Youth cannot be taken in general as a single target group. Use different communication strategies to approach different target groups of young people. Collaborate with different kinds of organisations. Use different communication channels and tools (social media, posters, flyers, direct promotion).
6. Aim at becoming aware of who is already present in the activities and who is not, whose voice is heard and whose voice

is not yet. Pay attention to the structural factors and assumptions that either enable or prevent the realization of equal participation of all young people.

7. Use non-formal methodologies to support their creativity, group work activities to build their teamwork skills, and gamified approaches to stimulate healthy competition between groups. Choose the suitable methodology based on the target group involved. Consider the possibility of collaboration with experienced trainers or trained facilitators.
8. Prepare informative workshops to familiarise the youth with the topic and methodologies.
9. Create an open and safe space where everyone can express their opinions. Use team-building and playful activities (“ice-breakers”) to relax the participants before moving on to serious work.
10. Work on issues that are as concrete as possible. The youth are not interested in politics in general, but they are triggered by specific issues.
11. One of the most negative indicators of the analysis is young people’s discontent with politics and distrust in the political institutions. This is why the feasibility and sustainability of the prepared ideas are extremely important for a successful implementation of a participative process.

