

# Fostering Youth Participation: Achievements and Insights from the New Power in Youth Strategic Partnership

(2021–2024)



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# Executive Summary

The New Power in Youth (NPIY) Strategic Partnership, coordinated by the Estonian National Agency for Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps (ESC), played a crucial role in promoting youth participation in democratic life from 2021 to 2024. This partnership aligns with the EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027, focusing on engaging, connecting, and empowering young people to become active citizens.

Over the past four years, the NPIY partnership implemented three key work packages aimed at enhancing youth participation:

**Work Package 1** introduced the Erasmus+ and ESC Youth Participation Strategy, supporting youth organisations through capacity-building workshops, online project challenges, and international project labs. Notable outcomes include the successful engagement of numerous participants in various training and project development activities, resulting in a significant number of quality youth participation project applications.

**Work Package 2** focused on the strategic development of youth participation at local, national, and European levels. It involved researching youth participation trends, facilitating peer learning sessions among National Agencies, and promoting best practices. The engagement of young people in the work of National Agencies has been a highlight, with initiatives aimed at integrating youth voices into decision-making processes.

**Work Package 3** aimed to enhance cooperation between non-formal and formal education sectors to support youth participation. Actions included mapping existing cross-sectoral practices, fostering partnerships and understanding the competence needs of professionals in both sectors. The 2023 Cross-Sectoral Forum and the analytical paper on 'Youth Participation and Citizenship Education' contributed to a deeper understanding of the relationship between youth participation and civic education.

The impact of the NPIY initiative is evident in the numerous resources produced, including publications and videos, and the positive feedback from participants across various activities.

The NPIY Strategic Partnership successfully created a framework for youth empowerment and participation, setting the stage for continued engagement and collaboration in the years to come.



# Four years of NPiY in numbers: A summary

The achievements of the New Power in Youth (NPiY) Strategic National Agencies Cooperation over the past four years.

In total, it published three research reports (one in WP3 and two in WP2), one analytical paper, and one forum/event report. More than 400 participants actively engaged in various formats of our activities. Eight partnership meetings were organised, four of which were residential. Overall, 27 activities were implemented, both online and offline, across 13 formats. Additionally, eight residential events focused on youth participation were hosted in collaboration with NPiY partners (CY, DE, EE, IT, LV, NL, and RO). From 2021–2024, the NPiY partnership brought together 13 actively involved partners, including 10 National Agencies—BG, CY, DE, EE, FI, IT, LV, NL, RO, and SL—and three SALTO Resource Centres—SALTO PI, SALTO ID, and SALTO SEE.

**27 activities**  
(online and offline)  
**13 different formats**

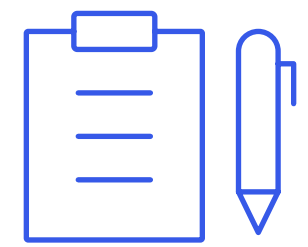


**8 residential events**

**1 Analytical paper**

**1 Forum/event report**

**3 Research reports**



**400+ participants**  
actively engaged



**8 partnership meetings**  
(4 residential)

**13 partners**  
(10 National Agencies and 3 SALTO Resource Centres)



**SALTO Resource Centers:** SALTO Participation & Information, SALTO Inclusion & Diversity, SALTO South-East Europe.

# Summary of resources produced



## Publications

This section provides an overview of all the written publications mentioned throughout the report, offering easy access to them in one place.

NPiY published various long-format LinkedIn articles, including a summary of the ['Training Dive into Youth Participation'](#), an article detailing our workshop, ['Working Across Sectors and Learning from Each Other'](#), which took place during the Participation Forum 2024, and the article ['From rhetoric to reality: involving young people in management and implementation of the programmes'](#).

We also published regularly on the [ParticipationPool website](#), featuring articles such as ['Insights from the European Seminar for Trainers and Experts on Participation, Cyprus'](#) and a detailed account of the ['Dive into Youth Participation TC 2023'](#). Additionally, we covered the ['Youth4Democracy Stakeholder](#)

[Meeting'](#), which focused on co-designing initiatives with young people, and provided insights in the article ['Elevating Youth Involvement in Organisations: Insights from the German and Dutch National Agencies'](#). We also promoted inspirational resources related to youth involvement in the work of NAs, namely ['Get Inspired to Improve Your Outreach with Youth Participation – Case Study of the Dutch National Agency'](#) and ['Sharing the Power with Young People in the German National Agency'](#). What is more, we published various articles related to our activities, for example, ['The Pool of Experts and Trainers on Youth Participation Launched, 2024'](#) and ['Empowering Youth Participation in Democratic Life: Insights from the New Power in Youth Cross-Sectoral Forum, November 2023'](#).

Furthermore, we released a comprehensive report summarising the conclusions from our [Cross-Sectoral Forum](#). In addition, we published an analytical paper titled ['Youth Participation and Citizenship Education: A Cross-Sectoral Perspective'](#). We also produced three research reports: 'Mapping Cross-Sectoral Practices', ['Mapping of Direct Youth Involvement in the Work of National Agencies'](#), and ['A Matter of When and How, Not If'](#), which explores the involvement of young people in the decision-making processes of National Agencies.



## Videos

Between 2021 and 2024, NPiY published various videos on its YouTube channel. [One playlist features six videos](#) in which representatives from different institutions discuss the significance of the Strategic Partnership 'New Power in Youth' for their organisations. Another [playlist showcases participants of the Project Lab 2023](#) sharing their experiences in the programme. We also have a [playlist dedicated to the 'Dive into Youth Participation' training](#) that took place in 2023. Additionally, a [playlist of 14 videos features participants from the Cross-Sectoral Forum](#) discussing the importance of youth participation and how it can be further strengthened. We encourage you to subscribe to the [NPiY YouTube channel](#).



## Social media

We regularly maintain our accounts on Instagram and LinkedIn. Through these platforms, we primarily share information about our activities, publish open calls for initiatives, and promote our reports and publications. Additionally, we provide useful insights into youth participation from various external sources. Follow updates from New Power in Youth via [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#)!

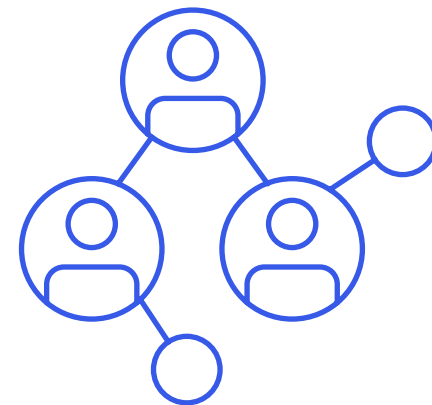


# Youth Participation Definition

*'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 communities.'*

[Youth Participation Strategy](#)

# Introduction



The partnership functions as a framework to support and advance initiatives aimed at increasing the quality of youth participation at all levels. It operates under three overarching objectives, which translate into three distinct work packages:

The Strategic Partnership 'New Power in Youth' (NPIY) serves as a vital framework for fostering youth participation in democratic life. NPIY is a partnership coordinated by the Estonian National Agency for Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps (ESC), in collaboration with SALTO Participation and Information. This unique collaboration brings together various stakeholders dedicated to youth empowerment, focusing on strengthening the youth participation dimension within EU youth initiatives.

NPIY is designed to enhance youth participation in democratic life. It aligns with the EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027, which focuses on three core areas of action: Engage, Connect, and Empower.

This specific Partnership contributes to the goals of all three areas, with a primary focus on engaging young people and encouraging them to be active citizens. The vision of young people for the future of Europe is articulated in the European Youth Goals.

## WP 1

Introducing the Erasmus+ & ESC Youth Participation Strategy and supporting youth participation projects through E+ & ESC programmes.

## WP 2

Supporting the strategic development of youth participation in democratic life on local, national, and European levels.

## WP 3

Enhancing the partnership between the non-formal and formal education sectors to better support youth participation in democratic life.

## Work Package 1:

# Introducing the Erasmus+ & ESC Youth Participation Strategy and supporting youth participation projects through E+ & ESC programmes



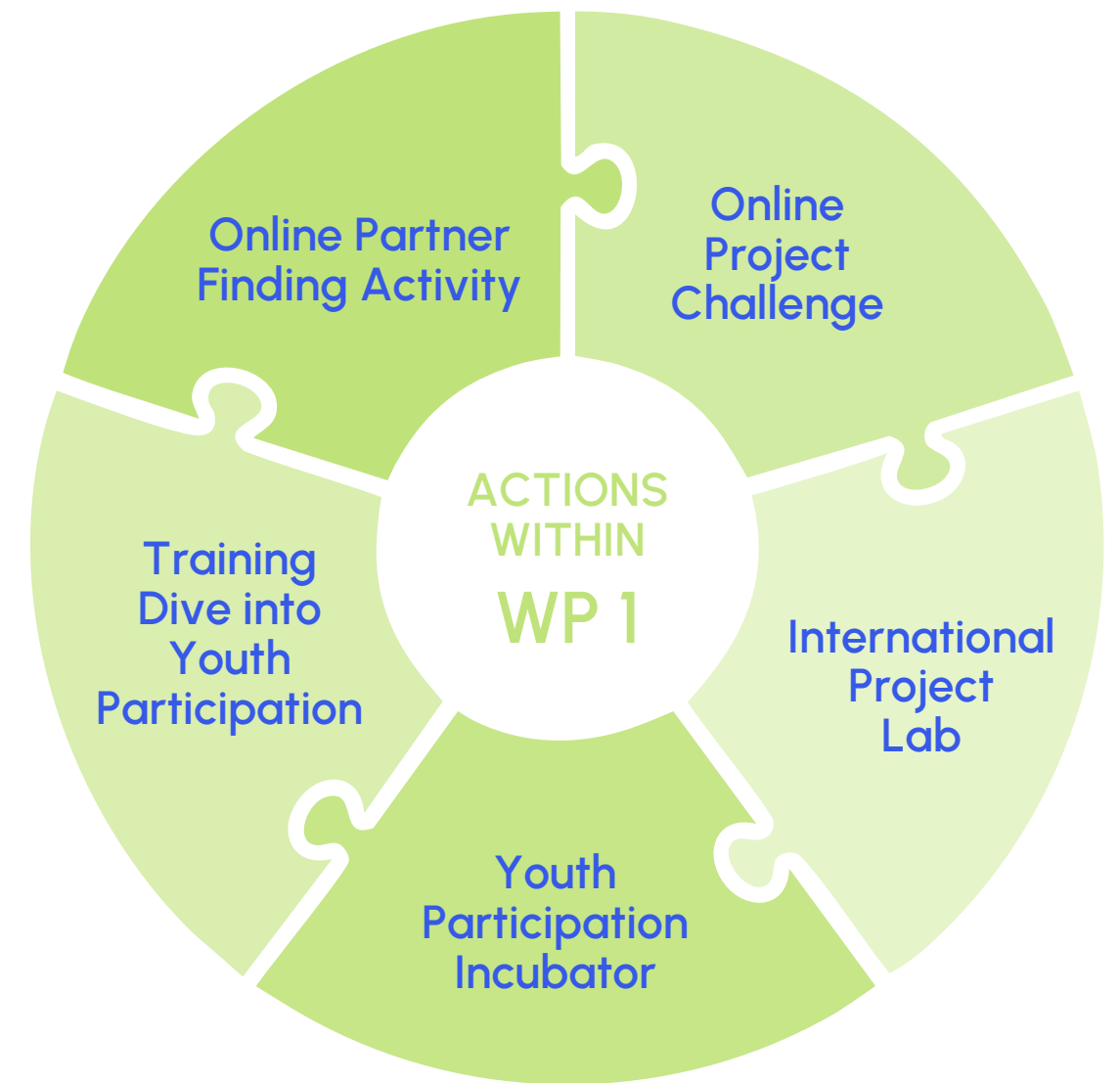
### AIMS

The first work package focuses on introducing the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps (ESC) Youth Participation Strategy while supporting youth participation projects. It aims to develop the capacity of youth groups and NGOs to create impactful activities and raise awareness of EU youth policies and Youth Goals. This work package runs from the beginning of 2021 until the end of the EU Youth programme period, supporting the launch of the new programme generation and enhancing the quality of youth participation projects.



### ACTIONS

Specific actions within this work package include organising capacity-building workshops for youth organisations/informal groups, developing informational resources about youth participation, and conducting outreach activities to engage young people with fewer opportunities.



# Online Project Challenge

**AIMS** The Online Challenge – Youth Participation Projects aims to challenge and support those interested in submitting their projects focused on youth participation by the annual February deadline of Erasmus+ or the European Solidarity Corps (ESC) through a tailored learning & mentorship programme.

**EDITIONS** There have been four editions of the Online Project Challenge so far, which include the years 2021/2022, 2022/2023, 2023/2024, and 2024/2025, all of which were conducted online. All editions have been opened to the entire NA network, with participants selected from various countries within the NPiY partnership and beyond.

**STRUCTURE/METHODOLOGY** The process consists of two elements: joint online training days and tailored, quality support from mentors, who help participants transfer project ideas into applications. The main methods in every online meeting were input from trainers or other experts and group work in breakout rooms. Elements from Howspace (an online platform) were used from the 2023/2024 edition onwards as a support tool to provide resources, manage communications, facilitate discussions, and measure feedback.

**TARGET GROUPS** The target groups for this activity are potential beneficiaries who have little or no experience participating in Erasmus+ and ESC projects, including youth workers and youth leaders, with no age limit. During the editions, the online challenge has evolved from being dedicated exclusively to youth leaders to encouraging the involvement of both

youth workers and young people, while also involving the wider organisation and its partners in the entire process of developing the project. This change has emerged as it has been observed that in order to develop sustainable initiatives that ensure both meaningful youth involvement and impactful participatory projects, wider involvement is needed across the organisation, not just the involvement of the person primarily responsible for writing the project.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES** During the Online Challenge, participants learn about youth participation and participatory approaches, as well as the quality elements of an Erasmus+ / European Solidarity project. One of the main aims in the past editions was to develop the concept and write participation projects that fit one of the three following formats:

- 1) Erasmus+ KA152 – Mobility of young people
- 2) Erasmus+ KA154 – Youth Participation Activities
- 3) European Solidarity Corps ESC30 – Local Solidarity Projects

**IMPACT AND RESULTS** The Online Project Challenge had a significant impact over the years. In four editions of the Challenge, NPiY received **399 applications**, resulting in the selection of **176 participants**, with **120 attending** and **35 projects submitted** as part of our mentoring framework. Please refer to the comparative Table 1 for specific numbers from each edition.



| Edition   | Submitted applications | Selected participants | Participants attended | Number of projects submitted |
|-----------|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| 2021/2022 | 124                    | 22                    | 12                    | 5                            |
| 2022/2023 | 70                     | 50                    | 24                    | 5                            |
| 2023/2024 | 85                     | 50                    | 30                    | 10                           |
| 2024/2025 | 120                    | 56                    | 54                    | 15                           |

Table 1: Engagement trends in the Online Project Challenge.

The data in Table 1 reveal some trends in participation and project submissions over the years. While the number of applications varied, the overall trend shows a steady increase in engagement, **with a notable rise in the number of projects submitted** in the most recent edition, indicating growing interest and commitment among participants to develop and present their ideas. This suggests that the challenge is effectively fostering innovation and collaboration within the community.



# Online Partner Finding Activity

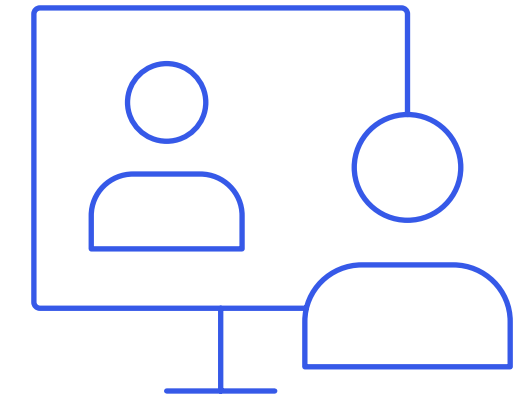
**AIMS** The Online Partner Finding Activity aimed to foster quality Erasmus+ projects focused on youth participation. It served as a platform for youth leaders and youth workers to connect, collaborate, and develop project ideas that could be submitted for the February 2024 Erasmus+ deadline.

**EDITIONS** The activity has two editions, which took place on 24 January 2024 and 24 January 2025. Similar to the Online Project Challenge, this activity is open to the entire NA network.

**STRUCTURE/METHODOLOGY** The activity was designed for potential applicants with clear project ideas centred on youth participation, as well as potential partners interested in joining these projects. Participants from the Online Project Challenge who were selected in a given year to develop their project ideas through a participatory approach also had the opportunity to join the Online Partner Finding Activity. Each organisation or informal group was required to register one person to introduce a project idea. The event was primarily conducted in small groups and online breakout sessions to facilitate networking and collaboration.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES** Participants had the opportunity to meet and learn about other relevant organisations and informal groups interested in youth participation. They networked to find quality partners, learn about various project ideas that could strengthen their partnerships, and received tips and tricks on further developing their project concepts.

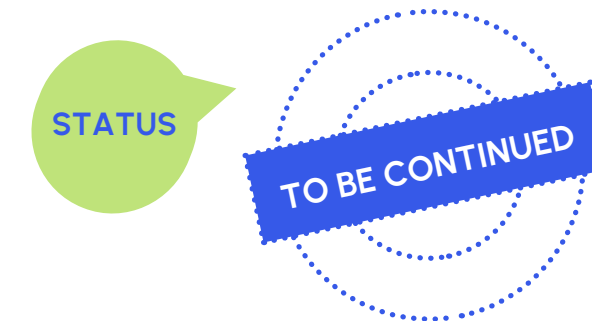
**IMPACT AND RESULTS** The two editions of the Online Partner Finding Activity received **245 applications**, from which **140 participants** were selected, and **89 attended** the event. Please refer to the comparative Table 2 for specific numbers from each edition.



| Edition   | Submitted applications | Selected participants | Participants attended |
|-----------|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 2023/2024 | 129                    | 70                    | 30                    |
| 2024/2025 | 116                    | 70                    | 59                    |

Table 2: Engagement trends in the Online Partner Finding Activity.

The data in Table 2 reveal a **trend showing the growth in participants attending** our event.



# Training Dive into Youth Participation



## AIMS

The Training Dive into Youth Participation aimed to enhance the skills and knowledge of youth workers and young leaders regarding quality youth participation. It focused on providing insights into implementing quality youth participation within organisations and projects and offered specific support for those interested in projects that could be funded under the Erasmus+ Key Action 154 'Youth Participation Activities'.

## EDITIONS

This training course has had two editions so far. The first edition took place from 23 to 26 October 2023 in Bonn, Germany, while the second edition was held from 23 to 26 September 2024 in Leusden, the Netherlands. Two additional editions are planned: 2025 in Italy and 2026 in Finland.

## STRUCTURE/ METHODOLOGY

The Training Dive into Youth Participation typically spans four days and includes a variety of interactive sessions designed to enhance participants' understanding of quality youth participation. The event features practical sessions on youth participation and participatory approaches in the youth sector, as well as thematic sessions exploring the Erasmus+ Key Action 154 'Youth Participation Activities'. Participants have the opportunity to engage in discussions on implementing quality youth participation in various settings and are offered a platform for exchanging best practices and experiences. The programme also includes networking sessions to establish international partnerships and collaborations. Key activities involve self-reflection exercises, creative showcases of participants' projects, and collaborative

explorations of quality criteria in youth participation. Throughout the training, participants grapple with critical questions related to youth participation, deepening their understanding and paving the way for future action.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

In all editions, participants gained a deeper understanding of the various forms of youth participation and their implications. They identified quality elements based on personal experiences and acquired practical tools to implement youth participation initiatives in their organisations, including the Youth Participation Strategy and Toolkit. The training fostered enhanced networking opportunities, allowing participants to establish international partnerships that extend beyond the course.

## IMPACT AND RESULTS

The 2023 edition received **170 applications**, from which 25 participants were selected, and 22 attended. The 2024 edition attracted **483 applications**, with 25 participants selected and 23 attending. Feedback from participants highlighted the supportive environment and meaningful connections forged during the training, equipping them with the confidence and tools to facilitate youth participation activities within their own contexts. Starting with the 2024 edition, a specific focus has been given to the inclusion dimension, ensuring that young people with disabilities receive tailored support to participate meaningfully in all event activities.

## STATUS

**TO BE CONTINUED  
ANNUALLY AS AN  
NA NETWORK TRAINING**

# International Project Lab



## AIMS

The International Project Lab 'New Power in Youth' aimed to support the quality development of Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps projects focused on youth participation. It sought to enhance understanding of participatory approaches and explore citizenship in the European context, particularly in relation to young people's engagement in their communities and decision-making initiatives. Targeted participants included youth leaders representing youth organisations or informal groups, as well as youth workers aged 18–35 with some experience in project management.

## EDITIONS

The International Project Lab was conducted in two editions: the first in 2022, which included online sessions and a residential event held in Durres, Albania, from 6–10 June 2022, and the second in 2023, which also featured online sessions along with a residential event in Bucharest, Romania, from 19–24 June 2023.

## STRUCTURE/ METHODOLOGY

The Project Lab combined online sessions with a residential event to create a comprehensive learning experience. It included two online sessions, each lasting two hours, and a residential event followed by an online session. Additionally, three hours of

mentoring were dedicated to developing project ideas following the event. The programme featured thematic inputs and non-formal learning activities that focus on youth participation and citizenship. Participants had opportunities to share and exchange local themes, enabling them to discover commonalities among their experiences. Furthermore, the Project Lab provided opportunities for partner-finding and project development within the frameworks of Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

Participants gained insights into the Erasmus+ Programme and the European Solidarity Corps, specifically regarding Youth Exchanges and Youth Participation Activities. They also developed skills related to project management and participatory approaches.

## IMPACT AND RESULTS

In 2022, **42 applications** were submitted, resulting in the selection of 25 participants, with 20 ultimately attending the event. In 2023, the challenge received **70 applications**, leading to 20 selections and 16 attendees.

## STATUS

**DISCONTINUED. MORE EFFORTS  
HAVE BEEN ALLOCATED TO NEW  
CAPACITY-BUILDING FORMATS**

# Summary of Work Package 1

Started in 2021

5 residential events

11 activities

5 different formats

250+ participants



# Testimonials

*'As the online facilitator, I found myself on a learning journey that proved deeply rewarding. The community-building tool used managed to foster vibrant discussions and facilitate connections that led to concrete project ideas. Witnessing participants navigate project planning was inspiring and reaffirmed my commitment to fostering collaboration and positive change in the youth community.'*

– Facilitator of Online Challenge 2023/2024

*'This was one of the most impactful experiences I have had in about six years. The spark has been reignited in me.'*

– Participant of 'Dive into Youth Participation TC' in 2023

*'I'm really happy I could join this programme. It has been extremely helpful, and it really gave me more motivation to develop this way in my life. The meetings were really good, and the online platform was just amazing. I've never seen such an online platform. Good job. You are really making a change in people's lives.'*

– Participant of the 2024/2025 edition of the Online Challenge

*'Thank you! It was an authentic programme for learning and enjoying.'*

– Participant of Youth Participation Incubator from Italy



# Work Package 2: Supporting the strategic development of youth participation in democratic life on local, national, and European levels

## AIMS

The second work package aims to develop national approaches that prioritise youth involvement and engage young people in different contexts. This work package runs from the beginning of 2021 until the end of the programme, enabling participating National Agencies to be frontrunners in implementing youth participation as a long-lasting priority.

It directly contributes to Aim 5 of the Youth Participation Strategy: Encourage National Agencies and other actors to involve young people when making decisions about the management and implementation of the programmes and take a quality approach to youth participation when doing so.

The second strand of this work package, the development of a Pool of experts and trainers on youth participation, also aims to develop the understanding and implementation of youth participation, strategically bringing together professionals in the field. The Pool also supports the implementation and development of other aims and activities related to the partnership.

## ACTIONS

The work package encompasses various actions, including conducting research, facilitating peer learning sessions among National Agencies, and promoting practices that enhance youth involvement in National Agencies and among other stakeholders.

The second strand of this work package involves learning activities and tools, meetings, trainings, and seminars with and for trainers, researchers, and experts on youth participation.



Figure 1. Types of actions organised within Work Package 2

# Involvement of young people in decision-making

The 'Engagement of Young People' action, as part of Work Package 2, represented a strategic process aimed at involving young people in the work of National Agencies (NAs). This engagement unfolded through a series of international meetings, with three meetings held between young people and NA staff between 2021 and 2022. In 2022, a European mapping exercise was conducted to collect and promote existing practices, challenges, and suggestions for the further involvement of young people in institutional decision-making. In 2023, the focus shifted to peer learning and the involvement of international experts to further support NAs in their efforts. In 2024, the initiative continued to build on the previous outcomes, successes, and challenges faced by both the organisations and young people involved. Until 2024, an estimated 30 young people were actively involved in the work of NAs and SALTO Participation & Information (PI) within the partnership. The impact extended to inspiration and learning for other National Agencies and relevant stakeholders. Additionally, within this framework, two inspirational articles have been published on [www.participationpool.eu](http://www.participationpool.eu), highlighting successful youth involvement stories from Germany and the Netherlands. An online webinar was also organised to facilitate further discussion and knowledge sharing on the topic.

## RESEARCH

As part of the 'Engagement of Young People' initiative, two research actions were conducted in 2022 and 2024. In 2022, interviews were carried out with eight National Agencies (NAs) and SALTO Resource Centres (RCs), alongside a mapping initiative entitled 'Walk the Talk', which focused on direct youth involvement in the work of NAs for Erasmus+ Youth and the European Solidarity Corps. This mapping, conducted from April to November 2022, explored existing practices for involving young people in organisational decision-making, identified challenges,

and proposed potential solutions for improvement. The report highlighted various forms of youth involvement, including youth representatives on steering boards, temporary steering groups, and permanent Youth Advisory Boards, and aimed to inspire organisations to integrate youth participation into their structures. In 2024, participatory action research was conducted involving three young people as co-researchers, along with further interviews with NAs and SALTO RCs (management and direct staff representatives). The insights from these research initiatives were presented at the 2022 Youth Participation Forum and the 2024 Participation Forum, as well as in dedicated webinars involving the wider NAs network. The two research reports have been published and are available online. New activities, including peer-to-peer learning activities, are planned for 2025.

## [Inspirational Practices – National Agencies and Youth Engagement](#)

During 2024, two articles were published to showcase good practices for effective youth involvement in decision-making. They highlighted two different experiences: how the German National Agency (JUGEND für Europa) directly involves young people in their work through the Advisory Board, and how the Dutch National Agency for Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps engages young people in various activities, including, but not limited to, communication by the Agency.

The German National Agency established a Youth Advisory Board to ensure meaningful youth participation from the planning phase of projects. This initiative promotes diversity and aims to avoid tokenism by actively involving young people in decision-making processes. By fostering a supportive environment where young voices are valued, the agency implemented changes that enhance its outreach and effectiveness in engaging youth.

Meanwhile, the Dutch National Agency emphasised the importance of communication and outreach in engaging diverse

young people. Through the Youth Ambassadors initiative, young individuals provided insights on improving the agency's communication strategies and project designs. Their involvement revealed significant barriers to accessing information about opportunities, highlighting the need for more accessible outreach to bridge the gap between informed and uninformed youth.

## MEETUP OF YOUNG PEOPLE

As part of the participatory research process exploring the various types of involvement of young people in the decision-making of National Agencies, an international meeting was conducted, gathering six young people with experience in this area to analyse preliminary research results and ideate on the further development of the partnership. Some of the suggestions when it comes to the further involvement of young people in decision-making of National Agencies and SALTOs included, but are not limited to, paying attention to involving young people with diverse backgrounds, having this involvement as a real priority and genuine commitment, diversifying the forms of involvement and the methods of engaging, communicating honestly about National Agencies' efforts and limitations, as well as furthering this involvement to the programme level and collaborating on their improvement in the future.



# Pool of Experts and Trainers on Youth Participation in Democratic Life



## OVERVIEW AND ORIGIN

The 'Pool of Experts and Trainers on Youth Participation in Democratic Life' was initiated during the European Seminar for Trainers and Experts on Participation and held in Larnaca, Cyprus, from 9 to 13 October 2023. This seminar, organised by NPiY, aimed to connect trainers and professionals dedicated to fostering youth participation across Europe. The event brought together 27 professionals from 17 European countries, focusing on exploring methodologies and concepts that promote participation and civic engagement in democratic life. The seminar had several key objectives, including gathering experts from the Youth sector and the Education and Training sector, fostering mutual understanding between these sectors, and cultivating collaboration among participants. A significant outcome of the seminar was the idea to establish a pool of experts and trainers to enhance youth participation across Europe, which was further developed in a follow-up meeting and through online communication, aiming to better address the needs and ideas of the experts and trainers.

## OPEN CALL

Open Call – Pool of Experts and Trainers on Youth Participation in Democratic Life: An open call was issued on 1 March 2024, inviting researchers, educators, trainers, and other specialists to join the Pool of Experts and Trainers. The Pool aims to support the implementation of activities within the NPiY

Strategic Partnership and advise on decision-making processes. Members of the Pool were expected to provide support and services, including training, facilitation, research, and consultancy. They would also contribute to the quality and development of NPiY activities, engaging in knowledge sharing and professional development. Planned activities for 2024–2025 included participation training, international research, and the development of resources related to youth participation. The development of the Pool of experts and trainers is intended as an activity by itself, furthering knowledge, critical view, self-reflection on the topic, methods, tools, and activities on youth participation. Its main aim is to support the implementation of activities and enhance the advancement of youth participation as part of the Erasmus+ priority of participation in democratic life, common values, and civic engagement.

## LAUNCH OF THE POOL

The Pool of Experts and Trainers was officially launched on 30 July 2024, with 31 experts from diverse backgrounds as members. The Pool is designed to be a space for both experienced and junior trainers, experts, and researchers to collaborate with the Partnership, as well as to develop their own competencies. A total of 106 applications were received, and 31 experts were selected to join the Pool. During their first online meeting, members shared their interests and expectations for the development of the Pool. They expressed a

desire to explore participatory methods, address the participation of young people with fewer opportunities, and investigate underrepresented areas of youth participation.

## DEVELOPMENT

The Pool has continued the work, including regular online communication, sharing ideas, methods and tools, meeting online with NPiY partners, and leading self-organised Peer2Peer learning activities. From 2024–2025, members of the Pool of Experts and Trainers will have the opportunity to engage in various activities, either as volunteers or on a contractual basis, tailored to the needs of the New Power in Youth (NPiY) partnership and individual partners and advised and developed by the Pool members themselves. The Pool members will continue to cooperate with the partnership to enhance youth participation in democratic life and collaborate on national activities led by NPiY partners to strengthen capacity-building efforts between the non-formal and formal education sectors.

The Pool is planned to function until the end of 2025. Its follow-up will be determined based on feedback from its members and the needs of the NPiY partnership.



# Training of Trainers Online (ToT)

## AIMS

The primary aim of the 'Power to You(th)' online training was to enhance the capacity of youth workers and youth leaders to empower young people with fewer opportunities. The training sought to promote inclusive youth-led participation within organisations by implementing projects under the Erasmus+ Youth and European Solidarity Corps programmes. The training took place online from 7 March to 12 May 2022.

## STRUCTURE/ METHODOLOGY

The training was structured into four phases. The Introduction Phase allowed participants to get to know each other and explore the concept of empowerment. The second phase, the Exploration Phase, allowed participants to dive deeper into empowerment and explore strategies for promoting it within their work. The third phase, the Local Implementation Phase, was a self-managed phase where participants implemented empowerment activities within their organisations. Finally, the Impact of Empowerment Activities & Closing Programme offered a platform for participants to evaluate the training, reflect on their learning journey, and identify the next steps. The training consisted of a mix of live group



online sessions and self-managed tasks, supported by an online community space designed to enhance learning.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

Participants gained an understanding of the concept of youth empowerment and its relevance to youth-led participation. They reflected on their roles as youth workers and the impact of their organisations on empowering young people. They discovered the value of Erasmus+ Youth and European Solidarity Corps projects as tools for empowering young people. Additionally, they experienced and shared effective tools, methods, and good practices that could be applied in both face-to-face and online settings.

## IMPACT AND RESULTS

The training aimed to create a long-term impact by equipping youth workers with the skills and knowledge necessary to foster empowerment among young people with fewer opportunities, thereby increasing inclusive participation in their organisations.



# Testimonials

*'Thanks to becoming involved in the work of the agency, I learned a lot about the opportunities. This gave me the feeling that I can also participate, and since then, I have been involved in two Erasmus+ short-term projects and went to Krakow, Poland, for an academic exchange. I'm now promoting all of this to other people. I realise over and over again that most of them have no idea about these possibilities. When they hear what's available for them, their eyes light up.'*

– Comment from a young person involved as a youth ambassador in the Dutch National Agency

*'Another common mistake is to include young people in the process too late, when most projects or plans have already been designed, and major decisions have been made. Meaningful participation requires involving young people from the start, from the planning phase. They know better than anyone else what they need and how they need it.'*

– Participant of our discussion with young people involved in the work of the German National Agency

*'First, it not only investigated young people's roles in decision-making thoughtfully but also actively involved a team of young people throughout the research process – from designing and conducting interviews to analysing and interpreting data, as well as revising the paper and sharing the results. Hence, the research itself is an example of effective youth involvement! Second, the study provides a valuable overview and inventory of existing structures and bodies that implement and promote youth participation within National Agencies, using a case study methodology. Third, the research offers highly valuable insights into young people's experiences and needs when involved in decision-making. This information can help other National Agencies start or enhance the involvement of young experts. Moreover, other state and international institutions should view these findings as inspiration to act on Aim 5 of the Youth Participation Strategy.'*

– Young co-researcher commenting on the research on the involvement of young people in the decision-making of National Agencies



## Work Package 3:

# Enhancing the partnership between the non-formal and formal education sectors to better support youth participation in democratic life



### AIMS

The third work package strategically aims to enhance cooperation between the non-formal and formal education sectors to better support youth participation. It aims to foster partnerships and capacity-building activities that create a shared understanding of youth participation across different educational contexts. This work package spans from 2023 to the end of the programme period, with a focus on building capacity among professionals in both sectors.

### ACTIONS

Specific actions include mapping existing cross-sectoral practices, organising reflection events for both educators and youth workers, identifying key competences that enable professionals in both sectors to support meaningful youth participation, as well as supporting partnerships within the framework of Erasmus+ and beyond.

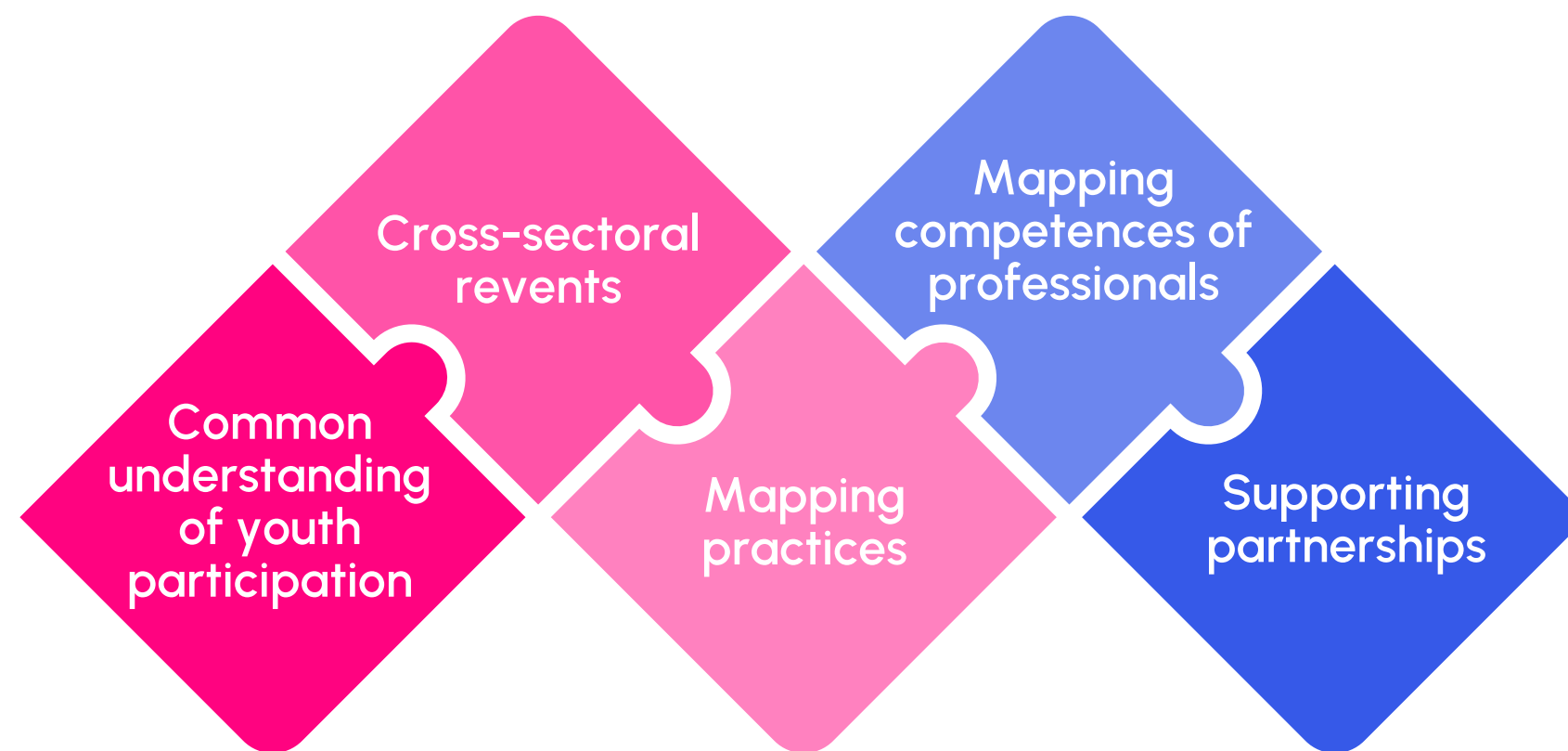


Figure 2. Types of actions organised within the Work Package by the end of 2024

# Cross-Sectoral Forum

**AIMS** The Cross-Sectoral Forum aimed to enhance understanding and collaboration between the youth work and civic education sectors. One of the key objectives was to foster a shared understanding of youth participation in democratic life across both formal and non-formal sectors. Additionally, the forum created a space for inspiration, mutual learning, and sharing of best practices among participants. Another important goal was to identify the competencies necessary to advance cross-sectoral cooperation. Finally, the forum aimed to inspire professionals to explore collaborative projects under the Erasmus+ Programme, encouraging innovative partnerships and initiatives.

**EDITIONS** The first edition of the forum was organised in November 2023, involving several National Agencies for Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps, and hosted by the Latvian National Agency. It brought together 40 experts from Estonia, Latvia, Slovenia, and the Western Balkans. A second edition is planned for April 2025 (in Latvia), building on the recommendations of the first edition.

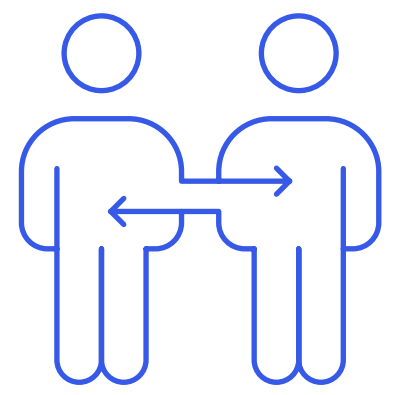
**STRUCTURE/METHODOLOGY** The forum featured discussions, interactive sessions, and presentations focused on the role of young people in various sectors. It emphasised the role of collaborative learning and the development of strategies for cross-sectoral cooperation.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES** Participants gained insights into effective practices for youth engagement and the importance of integrating civic education with youth participation. The forum served as a platform for sharing experiences and developing actionable strategies.



**IMPACT AND RESULTS** The forum underscored the crucial connection between youth participation and civic education, highlighting the importance of informed and engaged citizenship. It resulted in 10 recommendations aimed at enhancing collaboration between the two sectors, focusing on training, integrated curricula, experiential learning, and the validation of youth contributions.

A comprehensive report is available for more details, including a summary (shorter) version: <https://participationpool.eu/resource/cross-sectoral-forum-on-youth-participation-in-democratic-life-report/>



# Analytical paper 'Youth Participation and Citizenship Education: A Cross-sectoral Perspective'



## CONTEXT

The paper was created for the NPiY Partnership and presented at the 2023 Forum on Cross-Sectoral Cooperation, aiming to foster a shared understanding of youth participation in democratic life across both formal and non-formal sectors.

## AIM

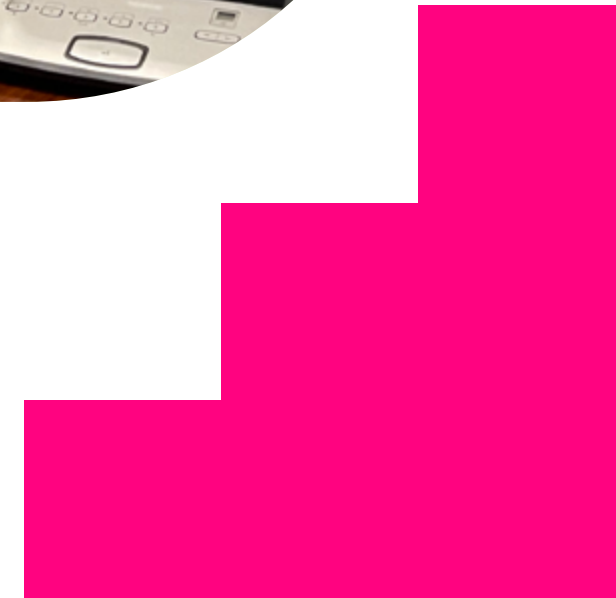
This paper examines the concepts of youth participation, civic education, and their intersection. It served as a starting point for those who looked to engage in cross-sectoral initiatives and could be used as a practical resource that bridged the two sectors.

## KEY ELEMENTS

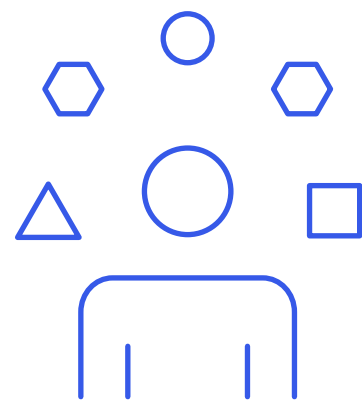
The initial section of the paper examines the meaning of youth participation and its interpretation within the non-formal/youth sector. The following section explores the concept of citizenship education and its understanding within the formal

education sector. While both youth participation projects and citizenship education aim to enhance democratic engagement among young people, they differ in focus. Citizenship education primarily develops competencies for future engagement, whereas youth participation projects often support immediate influence and action. The paper concluded by highlighting the differences and similarities between the two concepts and sectors. Additionally, it proposed guidelines for collaboration between formal and non-formal education sectors, highlighting the importance of recognising the distinct yet overlapping nature of youth participation and citizenship education. It encouraged shared practices and the use of experiential learning methods to enhance democratic engagement.

Discover the full analytical paper: <https://participationpool.eu/resource/analytical-paper-youth-participation-and-citizenship-education-a-cross-sectoral-perspective/>



# Mapping Cross-Sectoral Practices



## CONTEXT AND AIM

The Mapping of Cross-Sectoral Practices activity aimed to identify and analyse inspiring practices of youth participation in democratic life through cross-sectoral cooperation. This initiative sought to engage both young people and the professionals working with them, focusing on practices that stimulate and promote youth participation in democratic processes. The methodology involved a comprehensive survey designed to collect data on various projects exemplifying collaboration between the non-formal youth sector and formal education sectors, such as schools, higher education, adult education, and vocational education. Key focus areas included the exploration of cross-sectoral cooperation, engagement with target groups, promoting youth participation, and utilising innovative and experiential learning methods.

## KEY ELEMENTS AND RESULTS

The study revealed significant trends and challenges in cross-sectoral projects, particularly in the collaboration between youth and school education. Many initiatives integrated participatory approaches within school curricula, linking classroom learning with real-world applications. Projects such as Participatory Budgeting in Schools allowed students to engage in decision-making processes. Digital tools were also leveraged to enhance accessibility, as demonstrated by the On the Way to Parliament project, which utilised interactive platforms to connect students with policymakers.

Despite these successes, challenges such as institutional resistance to non-formal methods and varying digital competencies among students persisted. The study highlighted the importance of

flexible and adaptable learning approaches, recommending that projects be designed to fit varying institutional settings and community needs. Additionally, the integration of non-formal education methods, such as role-playing and experiential learning, proved essential in fostering engagement and skill development.

By mapping these practices, the 'Mapping Cross-Sectoral Practices' initiative aspired to highlight effective strategies that can be replicated and adapted to enhance youth participation in democratic life across contexts. The report outlines **nine thematic recommendations** aimed at fostering youth participation and leadership development, promoting equitable learning environments, and ensuring the sustainable and impactful implementation of cross-sectoral initiatives.

Read more: [Link to the report](#)

# Workshop 'Working Across Sectors and Learning from Each Other' from the Participation Forum 2024



## AIM

The primary aim of the 'Working Across Sectors and Learning from Each Other' workshop was to enhance understanding and strategies for effective cross-sectoral collaboration between the youth work and civic education sectors. During the workshop, the work done by NPiY as part of WP3 was shared, including efforts to support cross-sectoral cooperation and map successful practices. Additionally, the workshop looked to identify the key challenges to effective collaboration, ultimately aiming to foster a more integrated approach to youth participation across various sectors. This workshop took place during the Participation Forum, organised by SALTO Participation & Information with the support of NPiY, in Tallinn, Estonia, from 27 to 28 November 2024.

## IMPACT AND RESULTS

The workshop systematically discussed the barriers to cross-sectoral collaboration, together with representatives of NAs from both sectors (Youth, and Education & Training), which can be summarised as:

- **Limited opportunities for collaboration:** A scarcity of spaces and opportunities for organisations across various sectors to connect and collaborate.

- **Age restrictions in the youth sector:** Communication challenges in the youth sector that may inadvertently exclude individuals over the age of 35, impacting overall participation.
- **Translating participation to real-life applications:** Uncertainty regarding how to support participation from project-based settings to real-world applications.
- **Fragmented agencies:** Separate agencies within a country often struggle with cooperation and effective communication.
- **Knowledge gaps:** A notable lack of understanding among National Agency (NA) staff concerning the significance of participation across sectors.
- **Awareness of target group needs:** A limited understanding of the diverse needs of various target groups.
- **Perception of cross-sectoral collaboration:** The prevailing notion that cross-sectoral collaboration is perceived as an additional task rather than an integral component of functional work.
- **Time constraints:** Overwhelming routine tasks and work overload that hinder collaborative efforts.
- **Political infrastructure:** The political landscape within the countries significantly influences the capacity for effective collaboration.
- **Geographical proximity:** The physical proximity of agencies, NGOs, and stakeholders affects collaboration, impacting both time and financial resources.
- **Lack of knowledge on collaboration methods:** Uncertainty regarding effective collaboration strategies, including available opportunities and agendas.
- **Perception of extra work:** Collaboration is frequently viewed as an additional burden contingent upon individual motivation and the feasibility of integrating it into existing job responsibilities.
- **Understanding of e-participation:** A pressing need for a more comprehensive understanding of e-participation.
- **Imagination and knowledge deficits:** A lack of knowledge and creativity concerning collaborative possibilities.
- **Funding challenges:** The risk that funding mechanisms prioritise sector-specific projects over cross-sectoral initiatives, including within Erasmus+.

# Testimonials

*'For us, this is really an event of key importance. It's one of the few platforms where we come together from different sectors, and we actually acknowledge that we are all working with the same young people, just from different perspectives, in different contexts, different spaces... but we shouldn't forget that there is so much that we can do in collaboration (...) to actually get better results.'*

– Karin Öövel (from the Estonian National Agency), participant of the International Forum 'Enhancing Youth Participation through Cross-Sectoral Collaboration'

*'It is important to see what other organisations are doing, how they are doing it, and how we can make this bond with other sectors clearer and stronger.'*

– Jane Kõrts, Young participant of the International Forum 'Enhancing Youth Participation through Cross-Sectoral Collaboration'

*'It's quite a celebration of many teachers, youth workers, and different representatives of various institutions coming together. We are bringing all this knowledge that they have, with the hope that they will be networking and bringing the knowledge and inspiration back home.'*

– Ilze Jece, one of the facilitators of the Cross-Sectoral Forum on Youth Participation

*'I have really enjoyed it because the topic is relevant to me. One of the most important things was networking. There were also very interesting lectures.'*

– Ivo Visak, Young participant of the Cross-Sectoral Forum on Youth Participation from Estonia



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