



European Network of Regional
and Local Youth Platform

HANDBOOK

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FRGUMBRIA **FORMA.Azione** srl
FORUM REGIONALE GIOVANI



CASCAIS
2018
EUROPEAN
YOUTH
CAPITAL
CAPITAL EUROPEA DA JUVENTUDE



Fundația Județeană pentru
Tineret Timiș



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL



European Network of Regional
and Local Youth Platform

Introduction

ENRYP – European Network of Regional and local Youth Platforms is an Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic Partnership project held from 1st March 2017 to 28th February 2019. At local and regional level, the 7 partners of the ENRYP project have identified the need to increase direct communication among young people, especially the ones active in youth platforms (be they councils, forums or parliaments), in order to share ideas and exchange good practices related to topics such as youth participation, active citizenship, EU awareness and identity.

In this context, the ENRYP project has worked to develop a space for young people to share ideas and exchange practices, in order to increase youth participation at local level and to strengthen capacities and skills. This has also led to an increased international dimension of the partner organisations involved and the request from young people for organising more mobility activities. Through the implemented activities, young people involved as well as partner staff members were able to:

- exchange good practices on youth participation, active citizenship, EU awareness and identity, and social inclusion, including country-based strategies on how to approach them;
- discuss about values and principles that should lie at the foundations of regional and local youth platforms;
- establish the ENRYP as a multi-stakeholder network and virtual space for young people, public authorities, youth workers and academics;
- register an increased participation of young people at local level, in their communities, and interest in strengthening the international dimension of organisations.

ENRYP was carried out by 7 partners with different profiles: two youth forums operating at regional level from Italy and Romania (Forum Regionale dei Giovani dell'Umbria and Fundatia pentru Tineret Timis), 2 municipalities from UK and Portugal (Manchester City Council and Camara Municipal de Cascais), a CSO – Europa Jovove Egyesule in Hungary, FORMA.Azione srl VET and AL training centre from Italy and a youth research centre from Finland – Finnish Youth Research Network.

The main activities involved:

- collecting good practices related to the topics of the project, of which 21 on paper and more than 40 learned, shared and discussed by young people at local level, during the blended mobility activities and online;
- 5 transnational project meetings held in Perugia (IT), Manchester (UK), Helsinki (FI) and in Timisoara (RO);
- 14 staff members during the short term training held in Kecskemet (HU), that was preparatory for the two blended mobility activities with young people;
- 31 participants during the blended mobility in Cascais (PT) and 30 during the one in Timisoara (RO);
- a validation process related to the key concepts of the ENRYP project (youth participation, active citizenship, social inclusion and European awareness) applied by countries involved in the project and support for the realisation of the European network in the long run.
- communication and dissemination towards over 5.000 people.



Results:

- country-based short-term strategies on how to raise awareness of young people about the functioning of youth platforms in other countries, to inform on good practices and the need to build a functional European wide network as a space for sharing ideas on issues that are concrete and meaningful for young people;
- elaboration of a long-term strategy related to the European network with a vision and goals to be pursued in the following 5

years together with the identification of its members and stakeholders;

- raised awareness about the importance to approach the network from an online and offline perspective, identified by participants as crucial aspect in order to maintain connections and continuity;
- a collection of good practices that allowed young people to reflect about the diversity of the contexts;
- a validation document that guarantees the quality of the results of the ENRYP project;
- commitment of partners in order to further support the network in strategic actions to guarantee its sustainability.



Roadmap ENRYP project

March 2017 – starting of the project

April 2017 – kick-off meeting in Perugia (IT) (getting to know each other + tasks and responsibilities of partners)

August-September 2017 – staff training Kecskemet (HU) (tools, methods to approach the blended mobility activities)

October 2017 – project meeting in Manchester (UK) (good practices and local stakeholders)

January 2018 – blended mobility of young people in Cascais (PT) (sharing good practices and input for the ENRYP platform)

April 2018 – project meeting in Helsinki (FI) (reporting and follow-up on the blended mobility) + dissemination of ENRYP project during Allianssi Cruise – international programme

September 2018 – blended mobility in Timisoara (second input to ENRYP platform and action plans at local level)

January 2019 – final meeting in Perugia (IT) (sustainability and follow-up: plans for ENRYP2)



Validation process

Introduction

Based on the ENRYP-project plan the task of FORMA.Azione srl (IT) and Finnish Youth Research Society (both are referred as validators in the following text) in ENRYP-project was to guarantee the quality of the results of the ENRYP-project, so that those are:

a) valid in respect to the key concepts of the ENRYP-project (youth participation, active citizenship, social inclusion and European awareness) and easily applied by other countries;

b) support the realisation of European network in the long run.

We as validators concentrated on the following outputs: two pieces of reports of Blended Mobility's (referred as Portugal 2018 and Romania 2018), the results of the group

work produced by young representatives in the project meeting (Italy 2019) and the report of the good practices collected during the project (includes 21 good practices, referred as Good Practices -report). We also participated in person in several meetings during the project, meaning the possibility to support the quality of the process also from inside. The aim of the validation was to help ENRYP-project to produce quality-level guidelines for building of the European network. For that reason we first analysed the material already mentioned above. Then we summarised the content by offering a list of minimum standards or principles to be adopted by structures working especially at local and regional level related to youth participation, active citizenship, social inclusion and European awareness.

Blended Mobility (BM) Portugal 2018

Learning outcomes of Blended Mobility in Portugal 2018 includes reflection of all core themes of the project. Table 1 shows the answers of the BM participants to a question "I found out that..." used in feedback forms; the contents of the table have been categorized by the validators.

Active citizenship (as personal and collective competence)	Social inclusion	European awareness	Youth participation (structures)
<i>The young is the power.</i>	<i>Not everybody works the same way.</i>	<i>Other countries have better youth structures.</i>	<i>It can be done more to improve youth participation.</i>
<i>Also youngsters can be active in projects making.</i>	<i>We all have the same goals, no matter the different backgrounds.</i>	<i>How youth council are in Europe.</i>	<i>There are a lot of things to do, and many ways to do it.</i>
<i>We have the same opinion about activism.</i>	<i>There are way more different opinions.</i>	<i>Some cities don't get what they want.</i>	<i>There are a lot of NGO's who are always ready to help and offer support.</i>
<i>Heart working is more important than hard working.</i>		<i>Youth programs are differently organized.</i>	
<i>Communication is important! The way we transmit an idea, influence the less or more success of idea.</i>		<i>There's a lot of projects in Europe that I didn't know about.</i>	
		<i>Peers from other countries have similar problems.</i>	

Blended Mobility (BM) Romania 2018

Blended Mobility in Romania 2018 continued the work started in Portugal by “formulating a set of minimum requirements that help the building and the functioning of youth platforms at regional and local level” and “principles, mission and vision and an action plan” for the European network. Also the best practices collected during the project were shared by the participants, which “helped the group a wider understanding of what youth involvement /participation is in each country” (Romania 2018).



In BM report from Romania the vision of ENRYP is described as follows: “connect young people and representative bodies across Europe”, followed by a mission: “By creating an online and offline platform where all young people, without discrimination, have their needs expressed and represented, share practices, develop skills and attitudes, have access to professional, social and educational opportunities, become more actively involved in society aiming for a better, more inclusive and just/progressive society. Action plan produced included for example actions that tackle social inclusion and encourage respect for human rights. In Table 2 both the results of the BM in Portugal 2018 and Romania 2018 related to thoughts about the European Network are included.



	Vision & Mission Network structure	Representatives	Team & Partners/ Beneficiaries & Connections to decision-making	Resources	Duties/ Needs expressed
Thoughts about the European Network produced by the young BM participant (P= Portugal 2018, R= Romania 2018).	Capable of strengthening the European cooperation among local youth platforms and able to promote the empowerment of young people at local to global level (P). European youth council: Network between European Cities and NGOs (P). Creating platform to promote opportunities for the education and both personal and professional development of young people (R).	Young representatives from local level (P). Ensure young people of all backgrounds to have access to the network (R).	Team: experts, professionals, volunteers, teachers, representatives (R). Partners/beneficiaries: schools, states, NGOs, municipalities, universities, EU, informal groups, individuals (R).	Web-site: information & meetings in person once or twice a year and regular online meetings (P). Trainings days, lessons in schools embedded in curriculum, workshops, fairs, family days, sessions for low-budget families, mentoring/tutoring, extra scholarships for disadvantaged	Increase participation beginning from the local level (P). Promoting opportunities that already exist for young people. Organisations who advertise, should engage in dialogue with young people, methods to promote youth voting registration across Europe, change perception of politics (R). Educating adults how to engage young people (R). Increase of employment ratio, leisure opportunities for young people (R). Implementing programs about social inclusion (P). Supporting and encouraging youngsters to develop their

	<p>Partner countries should get the support of local, regional or national councils or authorities to provide the link between young people and decision-makers (Romania 2018).</p> <p>Timeframe: platform/development 3-6 months, becoming EU certified platform (2-3 years), promoting the platform (increasing the number of organisations) (R).</p>		<p>Beneficiaries: in long-term society, in short-term individual (R).</p> <p>Connection to decision-makers: the network should invite relevant decision-makers depending on topic discussed (R).</p>	<p>youth (R).</p> <p>Lesson plans/training schedules, materials, IT/Media, infrastructure, trained staff, funding, youngsters, sponsors, needs analysis, information (R).</p> <p>Funding: Erasmus/EU funding, municipalities (R).</p>	<p>mindsets (P).</p> <p>To educate formally and informally youngsters in the following areas: unbiased political awareness, "life lessons", practical skills, environment, mental health, lifestyle, how to support disadvantaged people for them to be more involved and empowered citizens (R).</p> <p>Education regarding EU awareness Share cultural specificities (P).</p> <p>Education regarding globalization, global warming, etc. (P).</p> <p>Raising awareness about political/social/cultural problems (P).</p>
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Good Practices

Young people interpreted the value of collection of good practices as material or process: "Showing an alternative perspective by embracing interpersonal and inter-organisational co-operation" (Romania 2018).

In the following the framework for evaluating participatory innovations, including the aspects of inclusion, meaningfulness, legitimacy, deliberation, effectiveness, enlightenment developed by Geissel (2013, 22) is used as basis for reflecting how the core issues of youth participation, active citizenship, social inclusion and European awareness of the good practice examples collected in ENRYP were tackled. One example per country was chosen, keeping the variety of the practices in mind.

Children in Care Council, Manchester, United Kingdom was raised because of its ability to increase social inclusion by offering arena for meaningful participation for looked after children and young people. It offers possibility to influence over the services they use and for the decision-makers a direct communication with children and young people in care. Work with decision-makers ensures that the changes desired are also put into motion.

The way **Cascais Youth Participatory Budget in Portugal** is organised in school environment is also genial for supporting social inclusion by promoting greater involvement in the school culture and to improve the school's relationship with the community. By starting of distributing some decision-making power to pupils and students of schools and educational institutions, process of participatory budget has also pedagogical aims related to develop the competences linked to active citizenship, enlighten of young people about how the democracy works and how they can have their say in it.

The co-designing and coming into act of the **Regional Youth Law** in Italy, allowed young people representing the Umbria Youth Forum and other young people active in CSOs to engage in discussions with local authorities (the Region and other municipalities). Together they approached topics related to participation, active citizenship, the vote for 16, rights to housing education, work and mobility. It serves as an example to empower other young people from other regions or countries to create connections with decision-makers and make their voices and needs heard.



Deliberation means jointly in-depth consideration from different points of view. In **Kecskemét, Hungary**, the **Day of the youth dialogue** is organised once a year. Both young people and decision makers have been fully engaged to have a good quality discussion with each other thanks to the dedicated person in organising and leading the event. There still is a problem in the city that young people are leaving after finishing the school, a very typical problem for many cities especially in the eastern Europe, but now at least the communication about the needs of everyday life of young people already exists. It is important to create opportunities of working together for a better future of the city. Continuity of organising the events offers also possibility to monitor the implementation of the commonly negotiated ideas.

Local youth strategy accepted by Timișoara local council, Romania, offers a good example for other local and regional authorities at European level, about more systematic and effective approach to social inclusion and youth participation. The structure of the strategy consists of three main pillars: a) public sector creating 'a society for young people', b) enabling the personal and professional development of young people by a variety of actions: counselling, formal education, non-formal education, sports, culture, leisure and tourism, collaboration and integration among young people and c) empowering 'Young People for Society' by offering youth participation possibilities for being active in environmental, ecological, social and economic matters. Timisoara is the first municipality in Romania having a local youth strategy and the strategy itself was produced by participatory methods with young people.





Lessons learned and challenges

The ENRYP-project was aimed to producing a living network and knowledge resources aiming to build the European Network of Regional and Local Youth Platform (ENRYP), which “in five years, is known throughout EU/Europe of being active, having expertise and plenty of success at European level in promoting interests of young people and their participation at local and regional level” (Italy 2019). With regard to the experiences and knowledge gained during the ENRYP project, we’ll like to offer the list of minimum standards or principles to be adopted by structures working especially at local and regional level related to youth participation, active citizenship, social inclusion and European awareness. This list also outlines the character the ENRYP network can dedicate itself to promote for. In the future, there is a need to better define:

1. Preconditions, quality of the processes and the decision-making of the youth participation structure
2. Inclusiveness principles, such as the freedom to express opinions, the distribution of power, empowerment and openness for dialogue and learning
3. A recognised and transparent process on how to become member of youth participation structures. Young people, maybe by themselves or supported by youth workers or by their peers active in local/regional youth networks, should be able to understand membership regulations, criteria of selection, the principle of representativeness, identification process of needs and actions and what values do they carry with them.
4. How to relate with decision-makers at local and regional level and advocate for young people’s rights
5. Mapping of training/competences’ needs for young people, youth workers and decision makers related to interpersonal skills, communication skills, skills and specific competencies related to youth participation, youth representation, active citizenship, social inclusion and establishment of youth networks
6. As a final remark the issue of age within youth forum/councils/parliaments should be considered, related to the decision-making process and participation. The country partners have different views and experience, starting from the UK which considers young people as persons up to the age of 18, although in the last years extended it to those up to 25 years of age, to Italy or Romania where young people are defined as persons from 14/15 up to 35 years of age. Indeed, based on the age group established to participate in the decision-making process, it is necessary to ensure its continuity, avoiding conditions whereby those who have the power to take decisions, may actually be outside the membership, due their advanced age.



We as validators think that ENRYP project did run purposefully and it fulfilled the objectives named in the Erasmus + project proposal. There is a relevant need for having a European-wide network established also in the future – we hope that the invest in ENRYP carries on with continuity.

In Kajaani, Finland on 28th of February 2019

In Perugia, Italy on 28th of February

Anu Gretschel
Senior Researcher, Ph.D.
Finnish Youth Research Network

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Testimonials

On 22-29 January 2018, I took part in the ENRYP project, held in Cascais. During that period I had the opportunity to compare myself with the youth realities of different countries, but above all to see the working methods of youth organizations in other countries and try to form a network that included young people from different countries including mainly those who joined the project. At that time, we had the opportunity to participate in the celebrations of Cascais European Youth Capital 2018, and we attended the concerts and various initiatives that took place those days.

We worked together and exchanged good practices of our associations, and we tried to understand how youth associations can become more and more part of the decision-making power with regard to political decisions that are taken in matters

concerning young people.

We also tried to create a sort of blog where we could write in groups, composed of different young people from different countries and we tried to create a future web platform to connect youth organizations from all European countries and where make proposals and stay updated on what happens in other European countries in the area of youth issues.

The experience was very formative, as well as being a moment of sharing and aggregation of young people, which gave me and to the participating the opportunity to share our feeling as

young Europeans, divided by countries but united under the idea of a young and inclusive Europe.

(Sara Jouhari, Italy)



After the two blended mobility of ENRYP I realized some long-term impacts in the local level. One of them was the visibility of the Hungarian partner organization (Future of Europe Association). I think the project helped to raise the visibility of the organization; more young people get to know the aspirations of it which helps to develop their future. The other long-term impact is the development of the local network between the local organizations which resulted a common project with one of the local communities and the organization.

There is one more long term impact in the participant's level, which is the raising of the EU and democracy awareness and the development of language skills. These skills help the participants to increase own projects or to use the network for further personal development.

(Rebeka Anna Szél, Hungary)

I only have good things to say about the ENRYP project. The idea of exchanging ideas, initiatives and creating connections between 5 different European cities soon caught my attention. I met amazing people, each with a different life path, but all of them with a genuine interest in the active participation of young people in society.

It was a unique opportunity that proved to be important for my development as a person and an active part of society.

(Margarida Carvalho, Portugal)

In September 2018 I had the privilege to represent Manchester at the ENRYP summit in Timisoara, Romania. The week was an absolute triumph. Working with representatives from respective cities in Portugal, Italy, Hungary and Romania was insightful and mind opening. I come from a suburban community on the outskirts of Greater Manchester, where child poverty is high and disillusionment with the European project is also high. Connecting with people from all works of life from across the continent was a new experience for me, learning about each other's experiences and comparable youth structures was really useful to learn to bring back home. I began the week with an open mind, but relatively pessimistic. As the week progressed I became dedicated and believing in a European digital and physical platform for sharing youth participation best practices and experiences. I would be absolutely thrilled to be given the opportunity to develop this project further, I believe the concept is within reach.

(Lewis Nelson, United Kingdom)



I wouldn't believe that I could learn so much in a single week. For me, the ENRYP project has meant a one-week training session using methods like: discussions, brainstorming, group work, presentations and reflections. The main purpose of this training was to create a structure of the youth participation platform and to create a general action plan to be followed in the future. Within this project, I met beautiful and determined people with whom I had the pleasure to work, to evolve. We all had our contribution, we respected and appreciated each other's opinions, we learned together and we managed to set up a real team.

(Monica Similie, Romania)

I participated in the ENRYP project almost as a bet. I was looking for a formative journey, something new. I contacted Adina, the representative from Perugia, who proposed the trip to Timisoara in September 2018. I was curious, I knew I would have travelled with people I didn't know and that I would have met only few days prior to the departure. I was worried, I don't hide it! My very first thought was about the language, and this experience helped me overcome my anxiety about English. Concerns and worries have quickly been set aside over the days by the positive feelings transmitted by the activities.

I shared my room with a Hungarian girl. This is one of the aspects that most surprised me, since I never shared my space with another girl, a stranger from another country. It was amazing how we could understand each

other and look together in mutual respect. I will remember and tell other young people about the desire to understand each other and to be spontaneous accomplices within the group! We asked ourselves the simplest things, such as "How old are you?" "What are you studying?" "How much have you travelled?" Gathering together with a goal in mind, with the only purpose to create harmony and synergy in the group was enough. So it was, not only in the activities carried out, but also outside, in the outings and in the spare time. I appreciated every single aspect of this experience, and I am thankful for the work of our trainers and guides. I'm so glad I had a similar experience and I suggest to think about such an opportunity to all those who are worried or sceptical as I was!!

(Vanessa Corallino, Italy)



The experience in Romania was amazing. It was interesting to talk to and start conversations with young people from different countries across Europe including Portugal, Italy , Hungary and of course Romania. We all fully participated in all the workshops and felt by the end of the week we were moving towards the development of a European Youth Network which will have a platform for grassroots organisations to share good practice.

The experience was extremely rewarding and we as the Greater Manchester participants were especially keen to move forward quickly and beginning the steps toward making the plan a reality.

I feel like we can contribute by engaging the 20 partner organisations (0 of which we felt should be the local authorities youth councils/ youth cabinet), and keeping in contact with our fellow ENRYP participants across Europe to ensure we are still all getting involved.

Finally, we believe it was very successful as we established a network or at the very least a plan for a network and made personal connections with our fellow European participants'
(Samah Khalil, United Kingdom)