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Community-led local development and ‘Future Challenges, Skills Needs and Effective Youth Engagement Methodologies for Community Led Local Development Practitioners’

Project Name: “Addressing youth skills and community youth inclusion processes to facilitate the next generation of young community leaders”

Project Acronym: Youth Led Local Development (YLLD)

The project aims to improve, through lifelong learning, the awareness, interest, knowledge and participation of young people living in rural and remote areas and facing socio-economic difficulties in civic participation and community-led local development activities, thus contributing to community inclusion, social innovation, sustainable growth and quality economic opportunities.

By involving, connecting and empowering young people, the project will strengthen cross-sectoral cooperation, creating synergies between different geographical areas and important actions for local communities across Europe.

*A note on language: in this toolkit, we generally talk about ‘groups’ and ‘organisations’, but we sometimes use the words ‘group’ and ‘committee’ interchangeably.

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Partnership organisations



Ballyhoura Development CLG is the lead partner and our Irish partner. Ballyhoura Development is a community-led Local Development Company, and a registered charity, which works with communities, families, individuals and businesses in the Ballyhoura region of East Limerick and North Cork. The company has successfully managed, coordinated and implemented a wide range of national and European projects and programmes since its establishment in 1989. Our Vision: An area with empowered, inclusive communities, and a diversified economy.

Find us on our website at <https://www.ballyhouradevelopment.com/> on Instagram @ballyhouradevelopment or Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/BallyhouraDevelopmentLtd>



Rightchallenge Association is a Portuguese NGO that aims to promote education as a means for social inclusion. It seeks to prepare people to intervene and participate in all dimensions of society, such as family, work, community and leisure through equal opportunities and sustainable development principles, promoting active, democratic and responsible citizenship of Portuguese citizens. Right challenge's activities are aimed to ensure access to quality non-formal education, while promoting the valorisation of human capital and generating value in organisations by providing integrated training services and working with policy makers and relevant stakeholders in these areas.

Find us on our website : [Rightchallenge - NGO - Education, Vocational Training - Social Inclusion](#)



ASCAE is our Italian partner. ASCAE is a young non-profit organisation, created by cross-sectoral experts, who want to support social promotion and activities to promote culture and environmental protection among European citizens, with particular attention on young people. The organisation applies the EU motto -United in Diversity- giving value to every local peculiarity and contributing to the common prosperity through transnational initiatives. Intercultural learning and sharing ethos led to the association's purpose.

Find us on our website:
<https://www.ascae.eu/en/ascae-en/>



Local Action Group Napoca Porolissum is a public-private partnership and operates like an NGO in Romania. The territory of LAG Napoca Porolissum includes 13 communes and 1 city. All of the Atlantic Technological Universities are located in the western part of Cluj County, mainly on the territory of Apuseni Mountains. The main goal of our association is to improve and develop its territory and its community through a bottom-up approach. Our focus related to the Local Development Strategy is based on the needs of our community, we support and implement projects with mainly European funding through LEADER Program.

Find more on our website and Facebook page:
<https://napocaporolissum.ro/>
<https://www.facebook.com/asociatiagal.napocaporolissum/>

Acknowledgements

The participants

31 young people participated. 8 from each partner country took part in the training, development and piloting of the Youth inclusion Toolkit. We wish to acknowledge the commitment, dedication and contribution of these young people. The project team wish to express our gratitude to the below young people for sharing their thoughts, attending the module training workshops, the international mobility training in Potenza and for supporting the development and piloting of this Youth inclusion Toolkit.

We commend these Young Rural Leaders on their dedication and contribution to the project.

Ireland eight participants, three male and five females ranging from 18 – 28 years of age.

TJ Toomey
Adam Croker
Manasi Jangam
Siobhán Rogers
Katie O’Dwyer
Niamh McInerney
Eimear O’Doherty
Matthew O’Rourke



Romania eight participants, two male and six females ranging from 18-30 years of age.

Dorottya Fekete
Daria Bogdan
Laura Corina Lazar
Daniela-Emanuela Lazar
Ovidiu-Claudiu-Ionel Iancu
Loredana-Iozefina Pleșa
Oana-Maria Vădan
Rareș-Daniel Pleșa



Italy eight participants, five male and three female ranging from 19-26 years of age.

Vito D’Elia
Rocco Dolce
Teresa Lo Tito
Andrea Calocero
Alessia Pignatelli
Davide Vito Vazza
Pasquale Macchia
Valeria Capobianco



Portugal seven female participants ranging from 18-30 years of age.

Alexandra Pereira
Beatriz Machiavelo
Francisca Mello
Inês Magalhães
Letícia Alberici
Matilde Arriscado
Sara Salgado





INTRODUCTION

Project ‘Youth Led Local Development’

Youth Led Local Development (YLLD) is an Erasmus+ project¹ that aims to increase youth inclusion in Community-Led Local Development across the EU. The Lead partner is Ballyhoura Development (Ireland), with partnership from Italy – ASCAE, Romania - Asociatia Grupul de Actiune Locala Napoca Porolissum, and Portugal - Right Challenge Associação.

The project will enhance awareness, interest, knowledge and participation of young people living in rural and remote areas and who face socio-economic difficulties, in civic participation and community led local development activities, contributing to community inclusion, social innovation, sustainable growth and quality economic opportunities. The project will do this by engaging existing community development organisations to understand the challenges of volunteer recruitment and succession planning, as well as perceptions/challenges of integrating young people into the community led structures. One of the core aims of the project is to develop, through codesign with groups, a toolkit to facilitate best practice in the integration of young people to community led local development structures.



CLLD: Definition

Community-led local development is an approach to the territorial development where local actors work in partnership to develop and implement actions and strategies responding to their own local objectives and needs, taking into consideration the potential and the strength of the territory, building knowledge and skills, supporting new ideas and encouraging cooperation helping to create viable and resilient communities. The expression “Community-led local development” (CLLD) has been introduced by the European Commission stems from a desire to change the traditional “top-down” approach: it aims to improve the quality of life and to address the lagging in the development of local communities in rural areas.

Community-led local development (CLLD) is situated within European regulations and funding models to pursue integrated local development goals on a sub-regional scale with the priority contribution of local forces. It involves local actors who come together in a mixed partnership (public-private); it provides an operational role (managerial and administrative) entrusted to the Local Action Group, which draws up a Local Action Plan which translates the objectives into concrete actions, by providing a technical structure capable of carrying out these tasks.

Considering the role of local communities to reinforce and contribute to the territorial cohesion, the EU, with strong support from the European Parliament has decided to facilitate and strengthen the use of CLLD for all types of territories (rural, urban, coastal) and various types of community needs (notably social, cultural, environmental and urban) (European Parliamentary Research Service).

For more information about the project please visit our Facebook, Instagram and website.

Facebook: Youth-Led Local Development

Instagram: ylld_erasmus

Website: <https://www.ballyhouradevelopment.com/pages/category/youth-led-local-development>

Youth Inclusion Toolkit

This Youth Inclusion Toolkit is presented as a practical aid in the integration and inclusion of young people in Community Led Local Development. (CLLD). Its purpose is to ‘Engage, Connect and Empower young people. To support community groups/organisations to include in their activities and structures as many young people as possible, drawn from the widest possible range of backgrounds and circumstances. The Toolkit is available in four languages English, Italian, Romanian & Portuguese.

Can be viewed or downloaded from the website:

<https://www.ballyhouradevelopment.com/pages/category/youth-led-local-development>

The development of the Toolkit aims to support increased youth participation in democratic life, social and civic engagement and ensure that all young people have the necessary resources to take part in society. To support the development of a greater understanding of requirements and perceptions of challenges and solutions to youth inclusion. It also assesses how young people’s ambitions, and the needs of local community groups can effectively be merged to sustain strong community-led organisations.

The Toolkit for Youth Inclusion in CLLD aims to support the facilitation of young people in community development delivery by providing a set of tools that community groups/organisations

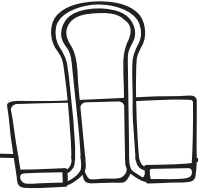
can use to integrate and include young people into their activities. Aiming to support inclusion through the sharing, spreading and strengthening of existing good practice in the area, and through learning from the partner countries.

- by helping community groups to increase the numbers of young people taking part in their activities and availing of services that they may provide;
- by promoting equality of access to community services, facilities and decision-making, with particular emphasis on increasing the involvement of young people who have tended not to take part in community activities and decision-making in the past;
- by supporting the long-term well-being of community groups, through suggestions for improving communication to and from the community, and for steps to help in recruiting, retaining and supporting young people as volunteers, whether for specific tasks or the overall work of the groups.

The toolkit has been developed through a series of workshops during the International Mobility in Potenza Italy with the four partner countries and 32 young people engaged in pilot training. In these facilitated sessions, participants have described and reflected on how they currently experience involvement in their community, and they have also suggested and considered possible new approaches to deepening community involvement. This document reflects the content of the workshops.

**The Toolkit includes a Youth Inclusion Charter as a resource that groups can sign & display to demonstrate and publicise their commitment to being inclusive of young people in their activities and actions.*





Four sections are included:

Section A

A description of the methods used to draw up the toolkit. This section provides definitions of concepts such as 'social exclusion' and outlines their relevance to community inclusion.

Section B

Recommendations for actions to improve youth inclusion, which were made during the process of drawing up the toolkit.

Section C

Suggestions from the participants. Community organisations may wish to consider acting on these suggestions in the future.

Section D

How to get young people meaningfully involved in community activities and decision-making structures



Youth Inclusion Charter

Youth inclusion, is about providing young people with equal opportunities and encouragement to be active participants in their community. To enhance awareness, interest, knowledge and participation of young people in community activities. There are several ways in which people may be involved, by providing opportunities for their voices and opinions to be heard through meetings, surveys and workshops, attending events, using services provided, actively supporting or helping with community activities, planning, organising and or by taking responsibility for the overall work of a community organisation.

We, _____, believe that the more young people who take part in our activities in any way, the better we will be able to respond to the differing experiences and needs in the community.

Therefore, we affirm our commitment for equal inclusion and strive to

- respect and welcome young people's involvement in our activities by engaging connecting and empowering them.
- be fair to all and encourage the participation of young people who have tended not to take part in community activities and decision-making in the past.
- co-operate with other organisations working for the good of our community, especially with those which share our commitment to youth inclusion.
- to create a strong network of young people, as a best practice in terms of active youth involvement.
- to define the needs and wishes of the young people in our community, by facilitating a process in which young people freely participate in all aspects of the organisation's roles.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Chairperson





GUIDELINES ON HOW TO MAXIMISE COMMUNITY INCLUSION

This section contains recommendations for how a community group¹ can include more young people in its activities. These should help any organisation to increase not only the total numbers of young people involved, but also the participation of individuals and youth groups who have tended not to take part in community activities and decision-making in the past.

¹ A note on language: in this toolkit, we generally talk about 'groups' and 'organisations,' but we sometimes use the words 'group' and 'committee' interchangeably.

Recommendations in this section cover the below topics

Helping community groups to increase the number of young people taking part in their activities

- Promoting equality of access to community services, facilities and decision making, with particular emphasis on increasing the involvement of young people who have tended not to take part in community activities and decision making in the past
- Supporting the long-term well-being of community groups, through suggestions for improving communication to & from young people in the community
- Steps to help in recruiting, retaining and supporting younger volunteers

SWOT ANALYSIS

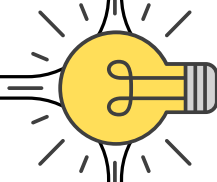


S

Strengths

W

Weaknesses



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Areas young people struggle to access: Challenges & barriers they face from own experiences.

Young people have their say:

These recommendations are based on the experiences of the 32 young rural animators. The exceptions are suggestions which emerged from discussions during the toolkit development process.

HAVE YOU FACED ANY PROBLEMS THAT MAKE IT HARD FOR YOU TO TAKE PART IN COMMUNITY PROJECTS IN YOUR AREA?

"Young people are not taken seriously by the people in charge and the government."

"Yes, it's difficult to balance work, university and life with the lack of opportunities."

"It's difficult to get information (the where, how, when) of how to get involved."

"Transport is an issue a lot is concentrated in the cities."

"Prejudice against young people in finding independent/ non-biased associations to join."

WHAT DO YOU THINK COULD MAKE COMMUNITY PROJECTS MORE INTERESTING AND EASIER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE LIKE YOU TO GET INVOLVED IN?

"Offering more community projects that are more relevant to young people."

"Modernisation of projects like virtual projects."

"Teamwork projects that are creative around practical projects like design and technology."

"Specific jobs/work to suit each participant's strengths and personality."

"Dedicated transport, social events involving food, information sharing on social media for how to get involved."

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT ANY COMMUNITY PROJECTS THAT YOU REALLY LIKE?

"Walkways around sports facility, like are safer and more accessible for exercise."

"Rural youth mental health project, tackled rural isolation and was youth led."

"Community centre helps the community."

"Animal shelter, its fun to play with the animals."

"Community project that supported kids with speech difficulties, it was cool to be able to help young kids with Autism be accepted in society."

"Giving out food, enjoyment because people are so thankful, supports integration and compassion."

DO YOU KNOW PEOPLE YOUR AGE WHO ARE PART OF COMMUNITY PROJECTS? ARE THERE OTHERS WHO AREN'T, WHY DO YOU THINK THAT IS?

"No not really, perhaps young people are afraid of stepping outside of their comfort zone, in fear of judgement."

"Yes. Some people have a lack of time, different motivations or interests"

"No opportunity in the area."

"Yes, I think those not involved don't know about ongoing projects."

"Yes. It's mostly because of the lack of people who can tell them about the opportunities."

"Giving out food, enjoyment because people are so thankful, supports integration and compassion."

IF A COMMUNITY PROJECT WANTED TO GET MORE VOLUNTEERS, WHAT COULD THEY DO TO GET YOU INTERESTED?

"Specially target young people and make it clear everyone is welcome."

"Be transparent, information about the work and what to do, and make benefits clear."

"Strong advertising including social media, being able to see the impact."

"More outreach with care, A community council for young people."

"Incentive, recognition, certificates, free food, if the project impacts young people, travel opportunities."

"Open day, food, transport to social events for participants to advertise it."

IF YOUNG PEOPLE LIKE YOU WANTED TO WORK WITH OTHER GROUPS/ ORGANISATIONS, WHAT KIND OF HELP OR SUPPORT WOULD YOU NEED?

"Links to school."

"Transport."

"Guidance needed but also trust, we have ideas but don't know how to carry them out."

"More awareness, social media presence, accessibility like easier guides for hoe to apply or join"

"Support from institutions, to make them more accessible with leadership and mental health support."

"Economical support, remove bureaucratic barriers, make it easier to contact local action groups for help."



Keeping people informed

If you want to include as many people as possible in what you do, then it is vital that you let the community know what you are doing and what is going on locally.

What do you need to let people know?

- Who you are – the organisation and key individuals
- What you do – your activities, events, or services
- About new initiatives by your group
- That you welcome all offers of help
- How to volunteer to help
- That getting involved can give people the chance to act on their own ideas
- About the vitality and energy of what you are doing
- About the activities of other organisations, and about local events and issues
- That the activities and services of the group are for all in the community.

How to do it?

Word-of-mouth: face-to-face conversation is by far the best way to keep people informed. But you can't talk to everyone, so you must use as many other methods as you can to spread accurate information. These are the ones that the participants find useful.

Communication is key

- Texts
- E-mails
- Social media, like
 - ◆ Facebook
 - ◆ WhatsApp
 - ◆ Snapchat
 - ◆ Tiktok
 - ◆ Instagram
- Website
- Noticeboards: at your own premises and wherever else is available
- Schools
- Publicity at your own events: talk to people and give out flyers
- Local Newsletters (and their equivalents)
- Local radio
- Local newspapers
- Your own newsletter
- Public meetings, 'town meetings', and open nights/days

**Make your organisation message clear, think of your
Mission and Vision statements:**

What we do - ???

What we want – to create change in the community.

How we do this - team building, Internships, mentoring program, workshops for kids, workshops for young people, Erasmus projects.



“Have confidence in young people give them a chance and watch them succeed.”

– Participant notes



COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

- Plan how to use social media platforms, so that things aren't 'hit and miss'.
- Appoint a 'Communications Officer'. (PRO)
- Use schools' newsletters to publicise the organisation's work.
- Group representatives can visit local sporting and cultural organisations, e.g. GAA clubs, musical societies, to ask them to pass on information on activities and events to their members.
- Group representatives to visit parents at schools and crèches, hand out flyers/newsletters and speak to them.
- Hold a 'volunteer night' to showcase what all the different local organisations do.
- Produce a directory of services.
- When meeting people from other countries, try to bring information leaflets that target them specifically, preferably written in their own languages.
- Committee members can approach young neighbours as one way of trying to build up contacts with wider communities from those countries.
- Put videos of the activities of the group and organisations using its premises up on Facebook and other social media to show young people what is going on.

Communication Strategy

Example of how to word it:

“If you are a young person living in our community, energetic, ambitious, open minded, creative and want to be have your voice heard. We want you to join our committee, organisation etc”

”



Getting people's views

For young people to feel truly included in the work of a group, they need to believe that their views are important and in some way influence what the group does. It is worthwhile for the group to routinely seek information and opinions from as many people as possible, and from as diverse a range of individuals and groups as it can reach.

What kind of things should you ask people?

- What issues do young people want addressed, what needs to be done about them, and how should progress be measured?
- What kinds of activities and events would young people like to see organised?
- What is good about what you're doing and about your community?
- How can you improve what you are doing?
- What skills do young people have that they would be willing to use for the benefit of the community?

What should you do?

- Actively seek young committee members from a broad spectrum of the community, for example, regarding background, interests, social class and geographical location; this way, the committee itself will represent the different views that exist locally
- Perform questionnaire surveys through
 - ◆ Social media, combined with
 - ◆ boxes in shops for people to submit their views and/or
 - ◆ an on-the-street survey
 - ◆ going through 'Survey Monkey' questions on-line with people at public events
- Organise public meetings, open days/nights or 'town meetings'
- Spend time talking to individuals to get their views
- Try to accept criticism and to learn from it
- Contact other organisations operating locally to get their views on issues and, in some cases, to seek the views of young people who encounter those organisations.
- Use a suggestion box to get the views of people who are using the group's premises.



- Group members should spend time talking to individuals to get their views.
- Put videos of the activities of the group and organisations using its premises up on Facebook and other social media platforms, to show young people what is going on. Then members of the group should speak to the young people.

Benefits: these methods will...

- Provide you with guidance from the wider community
- Give you more information
- Increase local awareness of your group
- Generate interest in your activities
- Send the message that you are open to what people have to say
- Increase the community's sense of ownership over what is happening



Supporting young people to be more involved

Every group wants to see the greatest number of people benefiting from its activities, events or services. Over and above involvement at this level, an organisation should try to get as many individuals as possible actively contributing to its work, to:

- spread the workload
- be able to replace the current group members in the future
- have diversity in the group, to help it represent the variety of experiences and opinions in the local area
- keep the group vibrant
- get fresh ideas for things to do in the community from new people
- expand the skill set of the group
- pass on the group's work as a legacy for the community.

The pool of individuals who may contribute actively becomes bigger as the group encounters more people, whether through spreading information on itself, seeking people's views, or providing activities, events and services that benefit community members.

Building skills for the future:

For the *National Volunteering Strategy*, “the benefits of volunteering go far beyond the actions involved and their impact on the beneficiaries. The full range of skills developed through volunteering and community action are important for a wide range of young people” (2021: pg. 23). Fostering youth inclusion is thus seen as a way of future-proofing the national workforce and developing skills that young people will carry through various roles in their lives (National Youth Council of Ireland, 2014).

For these reasons, the *National Volunteering Strategy* will explore making volunteering part of the national educational curriculum.



Promoting attendance at events and activities, and the use of services

- Ask individuals who already take part in activities or use services to encourage and support others to do so
- If you can, organise activities in buildings or outdoor spaces that are in the physical centre of your community: these tend to draw more people in
- Pay great attention to the social side of your activities, and give people loads of opportunities to chat over tea, coffee, biscuits and cakes
- Try to organise some activities that all age groups can take part in, to increase both mixing between generations and overall participation
- Use cultural or food-based events hosted jointly by different ethnic communities to bring people from diverse backgrounds together
- Organise activities for young children which target children from all communities, to encourage mixing of groups

Recruiting younger volunteers in general

- You have to actually ask the young people to get involved. That's the only way you will be able to recruit those who are willing to help but reluctant to make the first move, and those who aren't aware that their skills and experience could be of use
- Start by asking individuals to help with one-off events
- Organise a 'Volunteer Night or Open Day' (see Communication Strategy & Succession plan)
- Try to give people the 'right' amount of work to do not so little that it doesn't feel worthwhile, and not so much that it feels overwhelming
- To spread the workload, trust people to take on tasks
- If the group has premises, keep a 'volunteer register' on display there
- Organise for youth services to provide training for volunteers to run youth clubs and recruit the volunteers.

Succession: actively renewing your group recommendations.

- To thrive in the long-term, a group or committee needs to constantly renew itself by bringing in new members. Success is more likely if the group is widely seen as welcoming and open.
- To ensure on-going recruitment of committee members with the necessary commitment and skills:
- Develop a plan for how to pass on skills
- Introduce 'Membership' as a new standing agenda item at committee meetings
- When seeking new members, you will need individuals with certain skills
- If a young person indicates that they might be willing to join your committee in the future, arrange for them to 'shadow' a current member for a while: this is especially useful if someone feels they might not have the skills or the time to match what existing members do. (Mentoring or shadowing see Succession plan)
- Welcome newcomers when they join the group, and designate someone to meet them before and after each of their first few meetings (A mentor or buddy)
- When somebody is joining a committee to replace an existing member, the latter should support and 'mentor' them
- To avoid the problem of someone 'not wanting to let go', you can have a rule that no individual can hold the same position of responsibility on a committee for more than X consecutive years
- Appoint 'deputies' for every officeholder on a committee, or create joint positions
- A committee needs to be aware of the requirements of individual members for support in performing their roles.
- Encourage collaboration between roles of the committee so that one person is not always doing everything. For example, the secretary does not always have to be the minute taker.

Week 2-4

- Hold welcoming event to attract new members, where existing members share what they do.
 - ♦ Transparency: make sure all committee members and the community are aware of what is going on and why. What projects are being worked on etc
 - ♦ Open day for all community to showcase the committee members and what they do.
 - ♦ Explain the roles and responsibilities for each member.
 - ♦ Older members of the committee should share their knowledge and experience of the role honestly.

Week 4-6

- Social events to help new members integrate into the group.
- Create a volunteer contract for members.
- Provide mentorship opportunities between existing and new members.
 - ♦ During periods of shadowing there needs to be time allocated to check in with new members and get feedback.
 - ♦ Provide opportunities for training new members
- Develop a suite of workshops for volunteers to train each other in different areas and to upskill. Provide opportunities for learning in practice with current chairperson/committee members as they are leaving.

Week 6-8

- The existing committee should create a handbook for roles and responsibilities.
 - ♦ Encourage new members to put themselves forward for roles.
 - ♦ Create new social media profiles for the committee members.
- Handover meetings should be a process and not overwhelming, to ensure the current projects are continued and completed.
- Define and agree priorities for the year ahead.
 - ♦ Organise team building activities between volunteers and committee members.
 - ♦ Allocate time in meetings for review and feedback. To check outcomes were achieved or if not how to achieve them.
 - ♦ Hold a review every 3 months and at the end of the year.

The benefits of sub-groups

Sub-groups allow people to get involved in initiatives that interest them. They help to harness the energy and skills of people who may not want to get involved with every aspect of the organisation's work.

- If someone approaches your group with a worthwhile idea, or if they want to take an issue further, welcome and encourage them. A good way to do that is to set up a sub-group, and to give the initiator the key role in driving it.
- Try to keep very close and supportive relations between any sub-groups and the main committee. This can be done by:
 - ◆ provision of mentoring, induction and training to sub-group members
 - ◆ reports to and from sub-groups
 - ◆ ensuring that each sub-group has at least one member from the main committee
 - ◆ regular financial reporting from the sub-group to the committee
 - ◆ organising insurance for the activities of the sub-group.
- Agree the exact relationship between the sub-group and the committee from the start.

Running group meetings and public meetings

- Arrange seating in a circle or a semi-circle (if a 'top table' is needed for documents). This promotes greater dialogue between participants
- Try to keep meetings short
- Get a representative of the group to welcome each person who arrives at a public or general meeting
- In publicity material for AGMs, stress that people who go along will not have to join the committee or get a job.
- Combine public meetings with activities that will attract young people, e.g. A community fun day
- Ensure that there is time for people to talk to each other before the meeting start
- When someone puts forward a new idea, encourage them to feel that it's reasonable and welcome, so that everyone present will feel comfortable about contributing.

Meetings to which young people as well as representatives of areas and interest groups are invited.

Hold welcome meeting – existing members share what they do.

Have brainstorming sessions including young people.



Relationships and co-operation with other organisations

Co-operation between groups can bring gains both for the community in general and for the groups concerned. The experience of the participating groups suggests the following.

- Liaise with local youth groups and organisations.
- The important thing is to create an atmosphere of working together
- ‘Empire-building’ must be avoided
- Having an individual who is on the board/committee of two organisations can facilitate communication between them
- An umbrella body for local organisations can co-ordinate communication between all the organisations and the community.

Supporting the development of other groups

- Foster new groups
- If one of your sub-groups becomes an independent organisation, try to maintain a close relationship with it
- Provide venues for young people’s /groups’ activities
- If other groups lack experience and/or legal status, help them to prepare funding applications and/or submit them on their behalf
- Ensure that any funding application made through your organisation by another group is approved by your committee
- Try to make sure that any group or sub-group working under the auspices of your organisation follows your ethos
- Operate fair and inclusive procedures for giving access to your premises. Welcome their use by young people.



Measuring success

Youth-led local development refers to initiatives and projects that are led and implemented by young people within their communities. These initiatives can range from community service projects to social entrepreneurship ventures aimed at addressing local issues such as poverty, education, health, and environmental sustainability. Youth-led development empowers young people to take an active role in shaping their communities and provides them with valuable skills and experiences that can contribute to their personal and professional growth. It is an effective way to promote community engagement and social responsibility among young people, while also addressing critical social and economic challenges at the local level.

It is important for every group to take time to reflect on what they have done. It boosts the group to see what has been accomplished, and members can also identify what can be done better. To do this, success must be measured. A straightforward approach is to complete the following statement when starting out on any task, 'We'll know we're succeeding if...':

Measuring the success of actions in general

- Record:
 - ◆ numbers of people coming to events
 - ◆ numbers of people taking part in activities
 - ◆ numbers of people using services
 - ◆ the 'hit rate' on social media entries
- To get people's views on the quality of their experience at events and activities, use the following methods on the day:
 - ◆ recording of quotes from those attending
 - ◆ recording of quotes from the organisers
 - ◆ visual evaluation approaches, like the ticking of 'smiley' and other faces or an 'evaluation wheel'.
- Document how much coverage events get in the local media
- Use e-mail surveys
- Take the negative points from a public Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats (SWOT) analysis at a town or public meeting and, at a later similar event, ask for opinions on what the group has achieved in relation to them
- Repeat on-street and other questionnaire-based surveys to see how responses change over time, and to gauge local satisfaction with what the group is doing
- Hold open day events such as mentioned in the communication and succession strategy to hear the views of young community members in relaxed, informal settings

Measuring success in community inclusion

- Record
 - ◆ numbers of people coming to events
 - ◆ numbers taking part in activities
 - ◆ numbers using services
 - ◆ the composition of the group
 - ◆ new members joining the group yearly
 - ◆ new members joining sub-groups yearly
 - ◆ numbers helping at events and activities
 - ◆ new young people getting involved in helping at events and activities.
 - ◆ Use questionnaires and open community consultations to gather people's views on how well the group engages with them.

Measuring the success of the Youth Inclusion Toolkit:

- Document
 - ◆ how many groups adopt the Youth Inclusion Charter
 - ◆ how often groups consult the toolkit
 - ◆ to what extent, if any, young people's inclusion increases for groups using the toolkit (based on the indicators in preceding sub-section).
 - ◆ Gather feedback through the questionnaire.



The groups also spent time considering the advantages of getting more young people involved in their committees, drafted versions of the Community Inclusion Charter, and how the contents of the final toolkit should be organised.

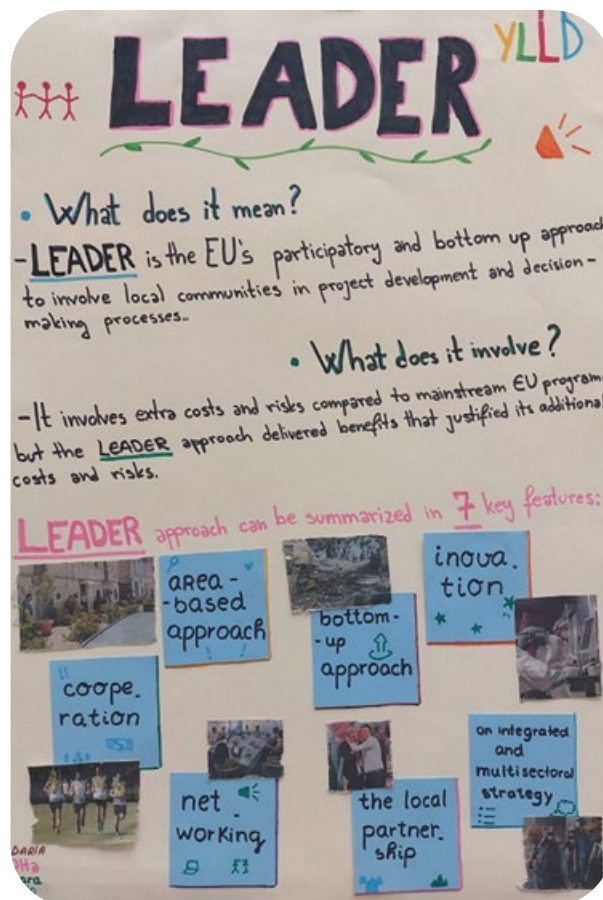
- How to get young people meaningfully involved in community activities and decision-making structures
- How to organise 'succession' in community groups, so that there are always new recruits to replace long-term activists.

How to get young people meaningfully involved in community activities and decision-making structures.

- Youth participation in decision-making works best when young people feel involved in the process.
- Mentorship programs and shadowing are a great way of mixing young people's energetic ideas with the knowledge and experience of existing members.
- Meetings could be informal.

Other examples of learning from elsewhere

The facilitators/ partners/youth workers along with the young rural animators drew on their own experiences to highlight approaches from other places which might prove especially useful in improving young people's community involvement.



OBJECTIVES

- ↳ Capitalising on similarities
- ↳ Increasing complementarities
- ↳ Reaching critical mass

COOPERATION

ROCCO
DOROTHY
TERESA
MATTHEW

Like a puzzle...
Fitting the pieces together in the best way

Working with one another's strengths in mind — eliminating weaknesses through teamwork

IS - WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS
- LISTENING TO ONE ANOTHER

COLLABORATION
TEAMWORK
GROUP EFFORT

KNOWLEDGE
FINANCING
MATERIALS
CONNECTION

CREATIVITY

idea generation through various art forms...

harvesting new solutions to existing problems

digitalization

use of technology

Maximising use of available resources

INNOVATION

People working together to develop and implement new ideas creatively

youth perspective

newer outlooks to old issues

fresh, new ideas

Knowledge is POWER

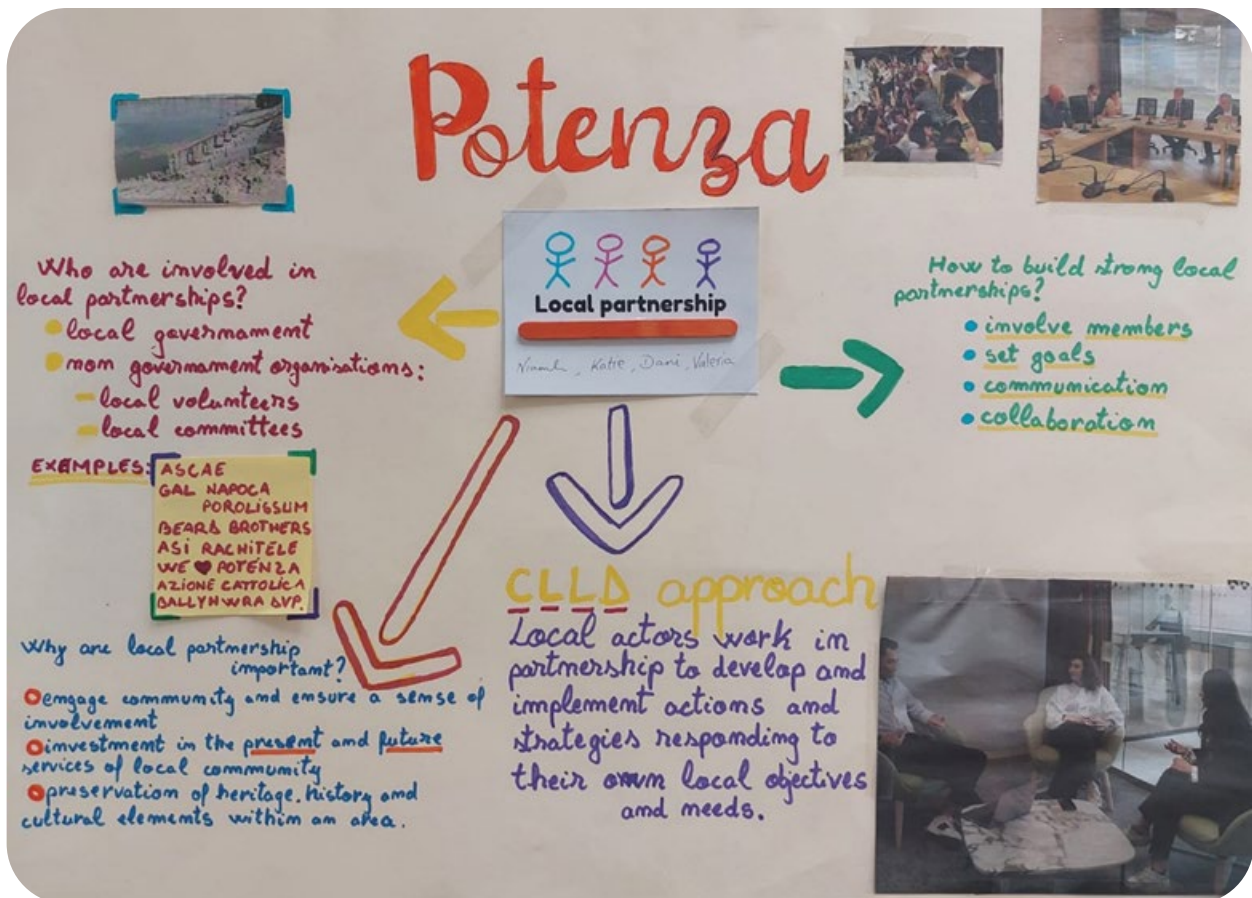
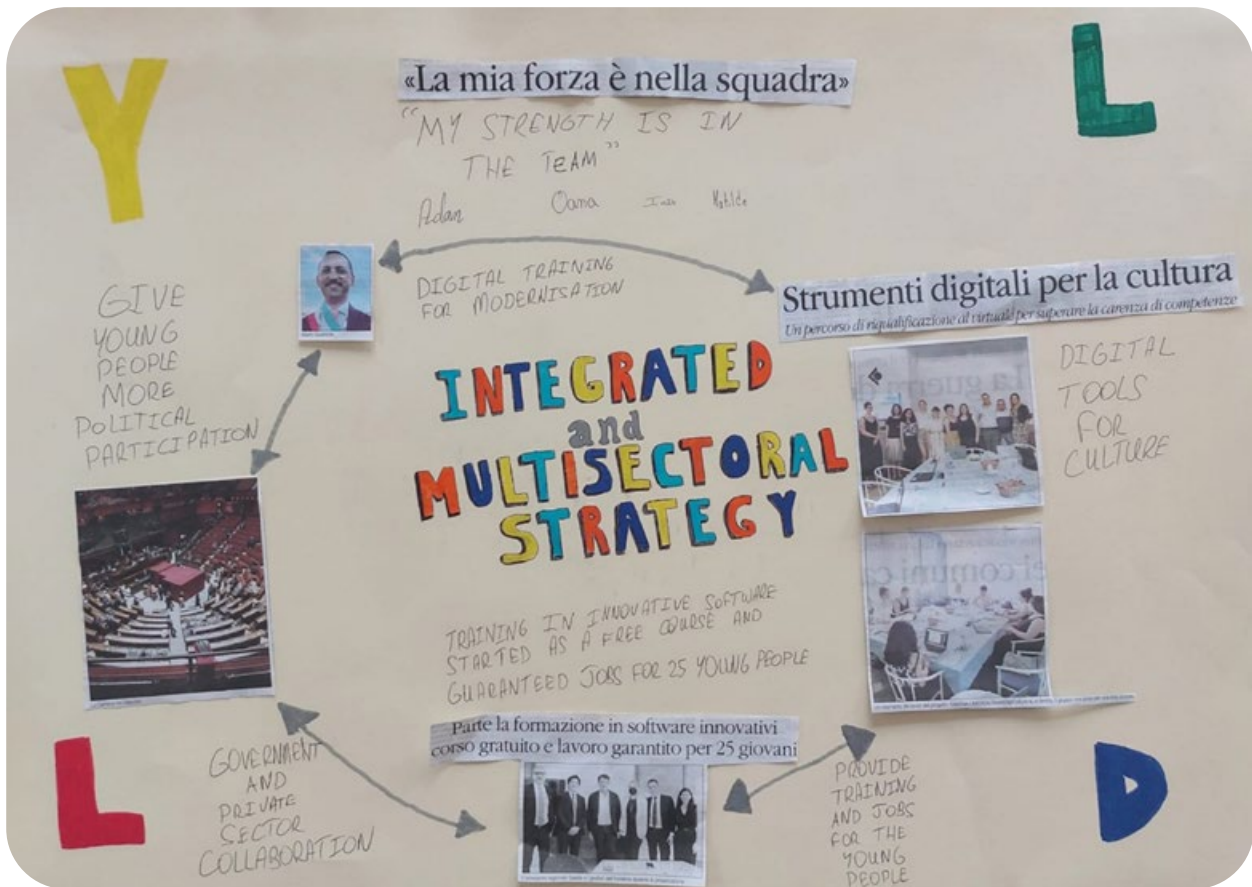
HIGHLY VALUABLE in an Adult-Centric Local Community

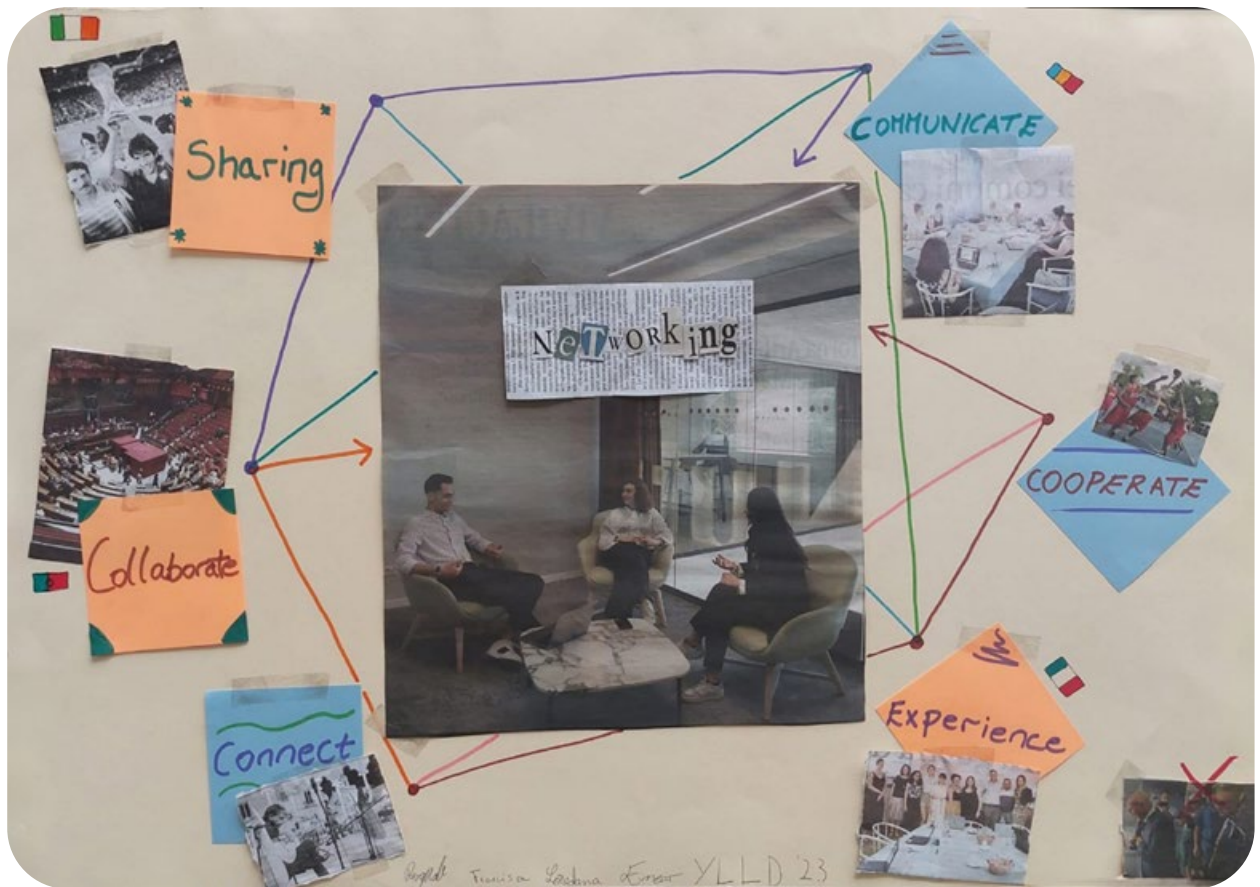
better use of time

Prevent anti-social behaviour

PRODUCTIVITY

Mavis Jangam
Alexandra Pereira
ANDREA CALOGERO
PESA GARE





SECTION B

Community inclusion and social exclusion

In addition, the experience of the young people involved in drawing up this toolkit other groups who tend not to be involved:

- young people in general;
- people living in rural isolation, especially those without their own transport;
- people in or around the 30- to 40-year age range, particularly those who are busy rearing small children.



To promote youth engagement, it is crucial to promote their involvement in the process, which can be achieved through participatory methodologies. Prati and colleagues (2020) offer an evaluation of an intervention based on Youth-Led Participatory Action Research (YPAR), which aims to promote positive development and civic engagement, demonstrating the benefits of this methodology in terms of social well-being and active citizenship of its participants. They define YPAR as a “form of community-based participatory research in which young people are trained to identify and analyse (through research) issues relevant to their lives, report to relevant stakeholders, and advocate for solutions or influence policies and decisions” (Prati et al., 2020, p. 1). It is based on the active engagement of young people in research on significant issues of concern for them, critical reflection and discussion to identify strategies for change and to develop alliances with relevant stakeholders to enact those changes. Thus, the youth involved is the owner of the project, which promotes their agency and psychological empowerment (Zimmerman, 1995) through the involvement with their community. Prati and colleagues (2020) summarise research that has demonstrated that these strategies benefit participants psychological and social well-being (the latter involving belonging to a community, trust in people, and a positive view of society), as well as agency, psychological, vocational/professional, social and ethical-moral development, critical consciousness, empathy, among other benefits. In their study, the authors found that, compared with the control group, participants in their intervention reported higher levels of social well-being, institutional trust and participation, and lower levels of political alienation, contributing to active citizenship. Thus, they conclude on the vital relevance of involving students in research on social issues that are important and significant to them (action that provides meaning and promotes empowerment), fostering critical analysis (through reflection on reliable sources and learning how to identify them) and develop possible measures to tackle these issues.

These are all important issues to consider when intervening with youth since, despite reports of disaffection, youth seem to claim for their rights and for being listened to (Ribeiro et al., 2015). Indeed, an important issue that Mackóva and Mejias (2020) identified in one of the youth groups they studied was horizontalism in the relationships within the organisation, in which all participants could propose and implement their ideas, no matter their role in the organisation. And this feature seemed not only to be valued but to have been one of the triggers for the growth of the organisation.



SECTION C

Suggestions from the participants for future actions

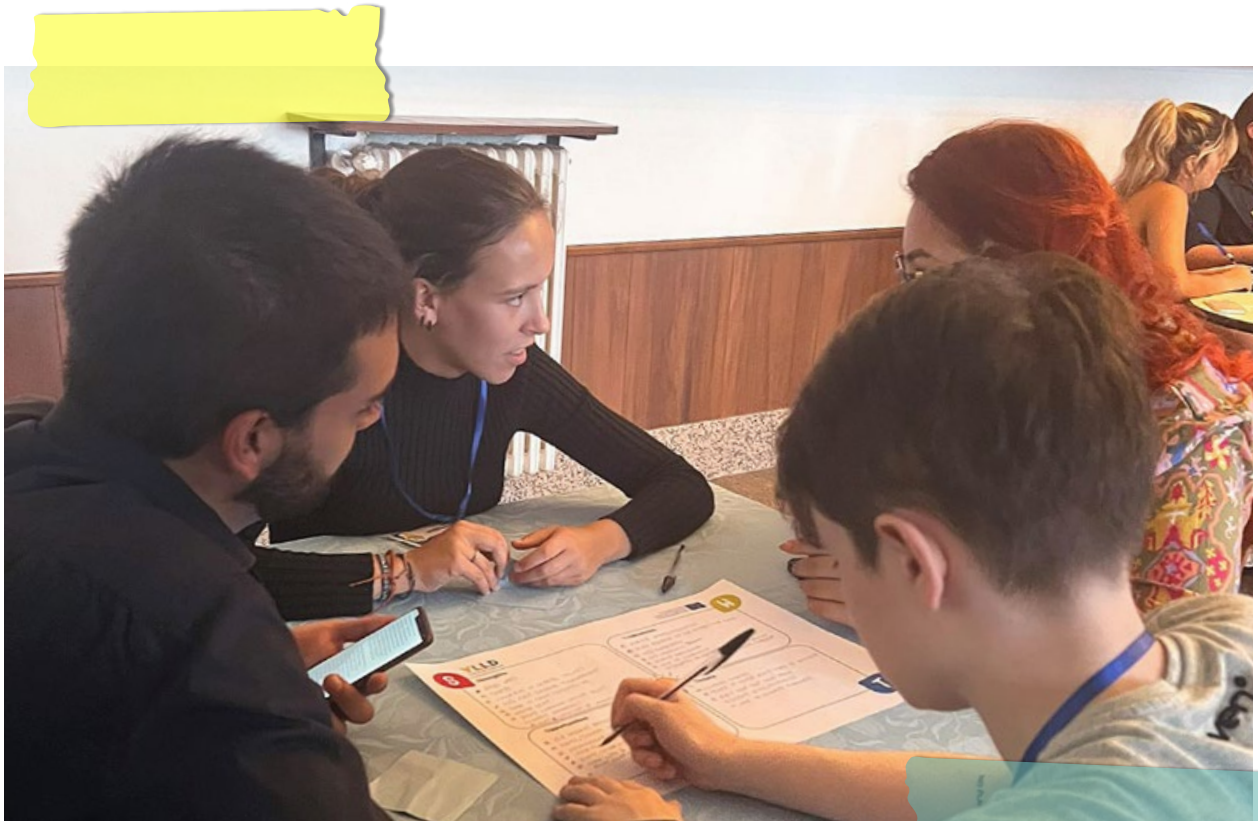
Helping people to be more involved:

Promoting attendance at events and activities, and the use of services

- Directly approach young people who do not participate in the organisation's activities and do not seem to be aware of its existence, to encourage them to take part in activities and programmes. Meeting people and talking to them is the best way to get them involved.
- Consider setting up a 'buddy' system, to get individuals who already participate in activities or use services to encourage and support others to do so too.
- Organise a number of events to get young people involved in the community, e.g. social events like family days, regular town clean-ups.
- When lobbying Politicians, Councillors and relevant State bodies for better services, involve young community members through a petition and by seeking letters of support from other youth organisations.
- Events which cater for several generations help to increase overall involvement: parents and grandparents are attracted because they are looking for things for their children to do; in the very long-term, children and teenagers may be more likely to help in community activities when they are adults, because of their positive experiences of childhood community events.

Recruiting volunteers in general

- Ask young people attending future public and town meetings to volunteer for various activities.
- With some adult support and advice, a youth club can be run largely by a committee of young people elected by the membership. This could be a good way to get young people involved in a broader committee: it sets up a hierarchy within the youth club, so that some of the young people become used to acting as spokespersons.



Renewing your group

- As part of an induction process young people, it would be good to pass on some of the group's history to them, showing them the passion that has gone into the organisation so far, in the hope of increasing the newcomers' enthusiasm.
- Organise celebratory events with young people, with the intention of gaining representation on your group from those communities.
- Identify and contact individuals from youth organisations and see if they would be interested in using the group's premises to run activities. Once relationships with those communities are established, seek representation from them on the group or its sub-groups.

Making use of sub-groups

- If sub-committees are set up to organise certain events or activities, having representatives on them from a range of other organisations should mean that helpers from those other organisations can be drawn on to assist in the actual running of the event or activity.
- One possibility would be for any event sub-committee to have one member of the parent group and one from each of a few other organisations. This should lead to the event coming to be seen as belonging to the whole community rather than just the group that initiated it.

SECTION D

Learnings from Elsewhere

How to get young people meaningfully involved in community activities and decision-making structures:

Involving young people in the organisation of activities:

- Inform the young people of the level of commitment required, including the duration of the process and the amount of time that they would have to give over to it.
- Explain the purpose of the organising group/committee clearly to the young people.
- Inform young people of the level of 'power' vested in the group; failure to do this can result in frustration and a breakdown in trust between young people and adults.
- Agree a group contract, which will allow for issues which may arise to be dealt with constructively.





To promote youth engagement, it is crucial to promote their involvement in the process, which can be achieved through participatory methodologies. Prati and colleagues (2020) offer an evaluation of an intervention based on Youth-Led Participatory Action Research (YPAR), which aims to promote positive development and civic engagement, demonstrating the benefits of this methodology in terms of social well-being and active citizenship of its participants. They define YPAR as a “form of community-based participatory research in which young people are trained to identify and analyze (through research) issues relevant to their lives, report to relevant stakeholders, and advocate for solutions or influence policies and decisions” (Prati et al., 2020, p. 1).

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These are all important issues to consider when intervening with youth since, despite reports of disaffection, youth seem to claim for their rights and for being listened to (Ribeiro et al., 2015). Indeed, an important issue that Mackóva and Mejias (2020) identified in one of the youth

groups they studied was horizontalism in the relationships within the organisation, in which all participants could propose and implement their ideas, no matter their role in the organisation. And this feature seemed not only to be valued but to have been one of the triggers for the growth of the organisation.

To conclude, the “CATCH-EYoU Toolkit – practices of active participation” developed within the Horizon 2020 project “CATCH-EYoU – Constructing Active Citizenship with European Youth: Policies, Practices, Challenges and Solution” offers tools to help young people prepare for participation in different contexts, foster their participation and engagement, as well as some insights into how to foster engagement. It briefly describes strategies used by some of the institutions they focused on, such as: negotiating differences between participants through a focus on communication, exchange of experiences and feedback; organising small activities throughout the year based on co-creation and participatory strategies in which all participate and then prepare a wider event; the need of support and guidance from older and/or more experienced people; among many others.

How to organise succession in community groups, so that there are always new recruits to replace long-term activists.

Factors underlying success in the constant renewal of a committee

- There is a large and constantly replenished pool of volunteers to recruit from.
- There is on-going identification of potential new members by the existing committee, in an informal but in a well-worked-out and quite systematic way.
- The committee members gain something from their participation: enjoyment; sometimes developing unexpected skills; a sense of achievement; and (more so in the past) the social element of involvement.
- Support and advice are available from ex-committee members who are still involved.





In general, the more an organisation achieves and the more awareness there is of its activities, the more people will take part in its activities, make use of its services, and help 'on the day' of events, thus creating a bigger pool of potentially interested people to recruit onto the committee. The following are some recommendations in relation to successful renewal of committee membership, drawn from the practice and research of organisations in a few countries.

- Develop a plan for on-going recruitment to the committee
- Set up a sub-group to implement the plan and report regularly to the committee
- Prepare a skills and experience audit of the existing committee/group to identify gaps to be filled by recruitment
- Identify and approach potential new committee members, BUT
- Also use open methods to recruit –
 - ◆ advertising
 - ◆ networking with other organisations
 - ◆ elections
- Use committee member 'role descriptions' which show what members are expected to do
- Avoid ending up with 'irreplaceable' or 'immoveable' leaders
- Get around the 'succession taboo', which is a serious reluctance on the part of many people to discuss potential leadership succession problems which may be difficult or painful to deal with
- Have an induction process for new members

- If new members have little previous experience of decision-making and responsibility, foster their capacity to participate: the chairperson and other members should seek to build their confidence by
 - ◆ providing induction training
 - ◆ keeping them informed
 - ◆ seeking their opinions actively, and listening to their responses
- Rotate committee positions and membership by setting time limits
- Set up real 'deputy' positions, e.g. deputy chairperson, deputy secretary, so that individuals are ready to step in if an officeholder is temporarily absent or leaves the committee
- If you have an equality policy, consider applying it to recruitment to the committee, to increase diversity within the membership
- Have written procedures and 'operations manuals', whenever possible, so that knowledge of how to do things is not stored only 'in the heads' of one or two individuals.

Sources:

Cyngor Gweithredu Gwirfoddol Cymru – Wales Council for Voluntary Action (2012) Faith and hope don't run charities (trustees do) www.wcva.org.uk/media/479632/faith_and_hope_don_t_run_charities_trustees_do_.pdf

Community Projects Centre (2008) Successful succession: sustainable leadership without taboos in the voluntary sector (Pontypool: Community Projects Centre)



Other resources to help promote Youth inclusion.

Café workshops

A 'cafe' workshop gets its name because it is set up like a café, with small groups of people talking together around tables in a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere. Every so often during a session, participants move between tables, forming new conversation groups. It works best when the organisers are trying to stimulate a genuine conversation among participants, with a diversity of opinions being expressed and new questions and issues being identified. The purpose is not usually to come up with agreed positions among all of those taking part.

See: www.theworldcafe.com

Youth Inclusion Checklist for community groups

- Is 'Communication to and from the Community' an agenda item at every regular meeting? If so, do you spend sufficient/significant time on it at each meeting?
- Have you a plan for on-going recruitment of young people to the committee/group?
- Is there a sub-group responsible for implementing the plan and reporting regularly to the committee/group?
- Do you have rules on the rotation of positions in your group? If so, to what extent do you implement them?
- How often does your group take time to review and reflect on its work overall?
- How often does your group seek the views of the young people in the community when making important decisions?
- How do you try to get the views of all young people in your community?
- To what extent do young people of the community not on your committee or its sub-groups get an opportunity to influence what the indicators of success are for your different initiatives?
- How will young people who are living in your community be attracted to become members?
- Do you discuss succession?
- Do you discuss leadership succession issues as a regular part of organisational reviews?
- Do you evaluate the risk?
- Do you have a vice chair with clear duties?
- Is there a maximum term of office for the Chair?
- Do you provide training to equip future post holders for the job?
- Do you have arrangements for mentoring younger volunteers?
- What percentage of your group/committee have joined in the past twelve months?
- Is membership of your group/committee skewed towards a particular age range? If so, is this because most of your work is aimed at people in that age range, or is due to something about the recruitment process?
- Have you in some way circulated information on who you are and what you do to all or most of the local community once or more than once in the last twelve months?
- Is there a forum where you can exchange information and ideas with other groups which are active locally? Do you use this forum once a year/more than once a year?

Some of the above questions are taken directly, or derived, from two reports from Wales

Cyngor Gweithredu Gwirfoddol Cymru – Wales Council for Voluntary Action (2012) Faith and hope don't run charities (trustees do)

Community Projects Centre (2008) Successful succession: sustainable leadership without taboos in the voluntary sector.



YOUTH LED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT



BALLYHOURA
DEVELOPMENT CLG



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
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