

Youth Meetings Movement

Guidelines on how to create
local youth meetings



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Welcome Community!

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” — Margaret Mead

In an age of division, hate speech and extremism few ideas are coming to find peace among communities. Further, our generation has seen a financial crisis (2008) and a pandemic raise (2020), events that made us feel more separated than ever.

After a lot of thoughts, Jose, Agata and Jorge, from Youth Peace Ambassadors Network, met in a bar in Cercedilla, and with a ‘pincho de tortilla’ (spanish omelette tapa) and a drink drafted the project that you are about to read!

The Youth Meeting Movement project was born!

This one year project was aimed to connect young people, make them see the value in community, in understanding how to gather them and to be spokes of youth voices. The outcome is this guideline, among the creation of beautiful open and respectful spaces all around Europe.

Of course this was not possible without the many people and associations that made this possible:

Associations

- Libre-pensadores de la Sierra de Madrid (LPS)
- Take Action Belgium - Belgium
- Centro Sereno Studio Regis (CSSR) - Italy
- Sende in Sado - Portugal

- YEU - Cyprus
- YPAN Poland - Poland
- Miško istorijos - Lithuania

And for all the participants:

- Agata Stajer
- Alexandra Quaresma
- Algirdas Dudutis
- Ana Sofia Vilares
- Andreas Charalambous
- Desiree Birinci
- Elisa Crescitelli
- Eukene Oquendo Briones
- Evelina Tiščenkienė
- Giulia Stefanelli
- Jorge Aguado Sánchez
- José Barrios Sevillano
- Julia Wozniak
- Kacper Miš
- Lambros Asvestas
- Laura Alčiauskaitė
- Lola Asensio de Cardenas
- Marta Gutiérrez Blasco
- Mutaz Tamimi
- Pedro Maria Pacheco
- Sara Rodrigues
- Silvia Cuccu
- Weronika Knowska
- Yelda Vedia Simsek

We also take the time to thank Youth Peace Ambassadors Network and its members, for your support, creativity, encouragement and ❤️ during this project and beyond.

You are our true community.



You can learn more in ypa.network

Introduction

The Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe states: "Participation in the democratic life of any community is about more than voting or standing for election, although these are important elements. Participation and active citizenship is about having the right, the means, the space and the opportunity and where necessary the support to participate in and influence decisions and engage in actions and activities so as to contribute to building a better society."

Considerable studies are in consensus that youth participation is changing its forms in recent years. Nonetheless, we see a decline in the participation of young people in representative democratic processes across Europe, such as voting and political party membership. This does not indicate that young people are not participating, instead the focus should be on the ways this participation is taking place. Another question to consider is the role young people can play in community development, as well as how they help to build fairer and more inclusive societies. The Erasmus + Programme and, more generally, European youth programmes over the last 20 years have had an increasing focus on youth participation in non-formal education contexts and with a transnational dimension, because more and more young people feel part of local communities but at the same time are looking for broader forms of identity in which they can recognize themselves and in which, consequently, they can participate.

In the context of new forms of participation, the sphere of community mobilisation, known as Community Organising in the United States, is gaining increasing interest. This is a deep model of working with local communities, which mixes elements of community development with

empowerment activities of natural community leaders and advocacy with movementism. It represents a new approach for the European context, especially in the West, which traditionally has a very rich and ramified civil society but at the same time is fragmented and unable to overcome divisions and particularisms. YMM fits into this line of action, investing in the training of young people as multipliers and organisers of communities and above all as activists for change.

Inherent in all definitions of youth participation are young people who form opinions, have agency, take action and finally, exert influence. But youth participation can go beyond this scope. It can create space for others to participate - more specifically, for local communities, minority groups, and the less represented, targeted by hate. The YMM project tried to take up precisely this challenge.

J.P. Lederach listed young people among the social groups that can be defined as 'peace potentials', i.e. all the groups that suffer most from the effects of the chains of direct, structural and cultural violence in societies and that could most benefit from building more equitable societies. And because young people would be among the first to benefit, they are among the groups most likely to be mobilised in community development processes in which they feel themselves to be protagonists. To fulfil this role, however, young people need to acquire knowledge, skills and strengthen personal attitudes that support them in sustaining these processes.

There are 20 competences described in the Competences for Democratic Culture, CoE publication, on which the trainings within the YMM project focused that are essential to be able to talk about quality participation for young people

There is also another element that we can not ignore as youth organisations engaged in youth work promoting a culture of non-violence: we are not the only ones who promote youth participation - sovereignists, identitarians, neo-fascist and extremist organisations invest heavily in youth involvement by offering simple and polarised answers to complexity. These often fascinate the youngest in search of definitive orientations and interpretations of reality, offering belonging, identity,

space for redemption, opportunities and the idea of being able to affect the reality around us, of being able to change with what young people are not satisfied. These are the natural competitors of Youth Workers and those who promote education for human rights and peace. It is necessary to build spaces for youth participation that are conflictual but constructive, empowering and not manipulative. YMM in its idea of creating a process and a movement, goes precisely in this direction.



Manifesto

The Youth meetings movement is self-proclaimed as a movement. Social movements are defined as networks of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and organisations, engaged in political or cultural conflicts, on the basis of shared collective identities.

The idea of a heterogeneous group of actors motivated by the need of increasing youth participation in the democratic processes by creating direct democracy spaces complementary to the indirect democracy institutions as a space for raising awareness about

the public affairs made us create a manifesto as a tool for unifying the efforts of the actors, continuing the foundations of the movement. It is a declaration of intentions and a tool for advocacy at local and international levels.

The manifesto has been distributed among the partners, organisations and individuals to informally sign up and disseminate the objectives of the movement. It was disseminated to the policymakers and institutions at the local and European levels as well. It is as follows:



The Youth Meeting Movement cultivates social responsibility, integration and democracy in action.

We believe that young people need to be empowered in order to undertake leadership on the local level and bring solutions to the issues that concern their betterment. For this reason, the project *Youth Meeting Movement* aims to equip young people, in search of sustainable and peaceful solutions with the needed agency and skills to achieve them.

We want to:

- Bring solutions on the local grassroots level
- Empower young people to become change agents in their local context and communities
- Implement participatory democracy in action with a bottom-up process through customised solutions to the needs of the local community

We aim to achieve them by:

- Developing the concept of community meetings and hosting them, as part of the programme
- Mediating conversation among different stakeholders, namely policymakers, institutions, and the local community
- Identifying and mapping the community needs by taking into account the local context
- Facilitating conversations by aiming to achieve peaceful change through creating an atmosphere of trust and support
- Delegating the change agency to young people through building capacity, networking and tools to approach conflict constructively
- Creating and disseminating innovative non-formal education tools to achieve scalable impact

We hope to bring wider change that can reach communities in Europe and beyond, by enhancing grassroots youth leadership at the local level.

Guide for facilitators.

The circle of Community meetings.

Organising a community meeting in your local community may seem to be a challenge. However, due to our experiences from this project we learned that it is a fun and effective way of meaningfully engaging with people around us.

To make it a nurturing process for you, as organisers, we have prepared a set of guidelines, explaining how to organise and implement a community meeting.

All the phases of the process

It is important to start with understanding the holistic process of organising and implementing a community meeting. This way, you would be able to envision next steps in your process, spot the risks and address them, plan the timings and engage people to support you at different stages.

We have identified the following stages of organising a community meeting:

1. Conduct a needs analysis
2. Choose the topics
3. Reach and select participants
 - a. How to choose a target group?
 - b. Announce a call for participants
4. Organise the technicalities
 - a. Use of public space
5. Prepare the participants
6. Engage in a discussion
 - a. How to engage the public?
7. Conduct an evaluation
8. Write recommendations
9. Reach out to policy makers
 - a. How to invite stakeholders? (example of invitation)
10. Review and finalise the process

Start the process again (as this process is similar to a circle - learning from one experience allows you to start a new one. It will serve as an improved version taking into consideration all the learnings you had).

1. Conduct a needs analysis
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Guide for facilitators.

Tips for facilitators

Choosing participants

Who to include?

Take into account the following aspects:

- Gender balance;
- Diversity in the group;
- Reflect on sub-groups of society;
- A certain age gap;

How to reach them?

- Prepare an info pack;
- Publicity through media;
- Engagement through stakeholders;
- Use personal and professional networking opportunities;

Resistance from participants

What could be the challenging behaviour of participants? Here are some examples:

- Prejudice and stereotypes towards each other;
- Being offensive without even realising;
- Creating exclusive atmosphere;
- Defensive participant;
- Not everyone is talkative;
- Some participants talk too much compared with others;

How would you address it? Here are some options:

- Set house rules;
- Take time to know each other;
- Have a diverse group;
- Try to be inclusive;
- The facilitator needs to be prepared for various behaviours;
- Conduct ice-breakers and team-building activities;
- Engage the participants in an equal way;
- Have various methods of engagement prepared;
- Do not be afraid of possible conflict;
- Practise active listening;
- Do not be afraid of silence;

Safe environment

How to create it?

What makes people feel safe?

What did we do at this training that made you feel safe?

- Create a safe space:
- Find common ground for setting the same reasons and objectives
- Organise and conduct ice-breakers/energizers
- Activities in pairs - build connection
- Have participants switch groups for multiple connections
- Validate feelings
- Learn how to listen

- Create a non-judgemental space (no prejudice) - conduct the exercise of taking steps
- Clapping and signs
- Making group rules (group agreements) and group meanings "e.g. potato"
- Show vulnerability
- Organise games (e.g. 21)
- Say "thank you" e.g. "for sharing"
- Make sure that everyone has a voice and adapt to each person's needs
- Have time for check ins (e.g. reflection group)

- What they have learnt in the process
- If they found it useful
- What to include in the future/ suggestions
- What other topics they would want to try
- How they can apply what they have learnt
- How are they motivated or inspired, moving forward
- How did they find the methodology
- Logistics: place/material

Tailoring to the needs

How will you map the needs of participants?

- Survey with open topics (voting), internet platform and flyers;

Which tools can you use?

- Offering general topics in this survey and sharing it with stakeholders and NGOs

How to choose the topic?

- In the call for participants we share the topics that were chosen more often so they can choose which ones they prefer

Debriefing and evaluation

How will you debrief the CMM?

Which techniques would you use?

How will you evaluate the CMM?

- Debrief and evaluation
- Feedback at the end of the session. Collective reflection of small groups.
- A form or survey to be sent after the session, so they can fill in and send it back to us afterwards
- Learning points at the end of the session
- Send conclusions to stakeholders, participants, and the media.

We want to know:

- If the topic was adequate
- If the content has brought value

Guide for organisers

After organising community meetings for one year in seven countries around Europe and based on the evaluations and testimonials received from the participants as well as the preliminary research of pre-existing experiences conducted, we are in position to develop guidelines for organisers of community meetings. This section is dedicated to the logistics guidelines of the meetings.



Use of public space

It is valuable to **think about the spaces in which youth participation happens** and how **spaces can enable or even inhibit it**. For example, it can occur in schools and educational institutions, where young people may be involved in a school's council or similar activities. It can happen in more public spaces such as a town square or street through volunteering, campaigning and street action, etc., as well as through activism in online spaces and forums. It can also happen within political institutions, such as in a municipality council, a political party, or a National or European policy making body, where young people might be involved in meetings with decision makers. We might also think of it as happening within a youth organisation or youth programmes, where young people could potentially be involved in the decision making process or contributing to how that organisation or programme is run.

The possibilities of public actions are limitless, and are only limited by ones' creativity.

Public actions & Events: Taking it to the streets.

Organising an activity or an event in a public space can enhance the communication of the message that one wants to share.

Remember:

- Invite the media / relevant decision makers
- Assign a responsible person to gather footage for social media - **Go 'live' using social media channels.**

Alternative forms of participation: This refers to any form of participation other than the traditional forms. By definition, new ways of participating can always be created or developed to provide an 'alternative' approach to what is already in practice. This makes the term somewhat subjective and dependent on context. Can be used to refer to: Youth activism which changes the way public spaces are used.

Tips:

- **Go where the people are:** Go to places where your target group usually spends their time to socialise. Your aim is to make the public see your message. Therefore, your **message should be compelling, clear, short & simple.**
- When you are in a public space, local laws are in place for 'maintaining public order'. Make sure you make a **risk analysis** of your actions and **ask for related permissions.**
- **Interact with people: Directly interact with people with your public event,** for example:
- **Invite people to your organisation,** show them your scope of work and give them the opportunity to get to know your group better. You might **organise an open day.** You may want to mention in the invitation that snacks will be served throughout the info day, vouchers distributed or any related benefits.
- You can **collect signatures for a petition on the streets.** It allows your volunteers to interact with people and hence, get a chance to discuss the topic and your main message. At the same time you will get a number of signatures that you can present to decision makers, showing the support of the public to the cause.
- You can organise workshops, information sessions, debates, and focus groups amongst others, about issues related to your target group. Creating a safe space will allow participants to actively engage in discussions.
- Organise intercommunal trips, camps, tours, excursions to **explore new places together** and break through stereotypes and hostile narratives.
- Form a group and a group chat on social media to facilitate and improve the communication between members and supporters of the cause.
- Encourage feedback about the used methodology and brainstorm for follow up activities and different tools, methods to tackle the same subject.
- Importance of outreach and ensuring that young people from a diverse range of backgrounds have information about and access to participation and processes.
- Strengthen outreach of information to marginalised young people, to ensure they are aware of the spaces, opportunities and experiences available to them.
- Ensure that marginalised young people are participating in all decision-making processes and are key players, particularly in processes concerning their own rights, wellbeing and interests.
- Ensure that young people in rural areas are actively participating in decision making processes.

How to choose a target group?

Target groups can be defined as a public to whom you want to communicate your messages and cause of action. When defining target groups, it is always a good idea to **think about their profile and their typical characteristics.** The more information you have on your target group, the easier it will be to shape the information that your organisation or initiative aims to tackle and choose respective channels.

Demographics: What is the age range of your target group, and their sex, level of education and general income; all of this is valuable data that can help choosing the right strategies.

Location: It is quite important to know in which area your target group lives; and it must be as specific as possible; if you choose to communicate to the whole of Europe or an entire country, this could be too broad and your communication can be dispersed.

Psychological factors: these can include lifestyle, ways of receiving information, recognising the values of your target group or knowing attitudes and beliefs.

Other factors: these can include the amount of power a person has in a community (e.g. maybe influencers are your target group and they have a significant amount of power), their social media usage, who they look up to (who is seen as a role model) and what they care about.

** Having information on what your target group already knows, thinks or does – with information on where they are located – is the basis for defining every target group.

Within your organisation or project, **there can be multiple target groups**. It is always a good idea to **brainstorm in order to find all of the target groups, allowing you to use pre-existing prototypes later on**. Choosing a diverse target group/audience, celebrating differences but also finding a common connection can generate versatile ideas and output - Engage a broader circle and find connections between young people, targeted diverse backgrounds.

Example of a target group: If you are a youth organisation working on entrepreneurship programmes, your target group can be young unemployed people who want to start their own business from your city/region. Their age range is primarily 18 to 30. They believe that the future is in their own hands and they should be independent and live without set limitations of traditional workspaces. They value freedom, flexibility and connections with others.

There are several methods that can be used to map target groups:

- **Stakeholder mapping:** Stakeholder mapping is used to define internal and external stakeholders and their level of interest and power in participating in the activities of an organisation. You can organise a brainstorming session with your CAT to detect them. Another option is to organise focus groups or interviews with key people in the organisation in order to identify them better (Dam, Siang, 2020).
- **Persona building:** Personas are archetypes of your target groups. The process of defining personas is usually used in design thinking methodology (Dam, Siang, 2020). In your team you can build your persona by answering some of the questions, such as:
 - What is their age?
 - What are the interests of the person?
 - What values do they likely hold?
 - Where does the person live?
 - What challenges does this person have?
 - What is their level of education?
 - What motivates your persona and what do they want to achieve?
 - In what region is your persona living?

How to engage the public?

Planning and Designing Community Engagement:

Community engagement works best when it displays an ongoing cumulative process enabling relationships and trust to build and strengthen over time. Individual engagement events should be planned and designed with this in mind and aim to contribute to the overall goals of the engagement process.

Community or voluntary groups may want to participate at different ranges of levels – from providing advice to co-designing the process and from undertaking some aspects of the engagement to delivering projects to meet some of the outcomes.

Inclusiveness Overcoming barriers to engagement.

When planning an engagement process you need to recognise diversity, identify any potential barriers and design the process to minimise barriers where possible. How (not) to exclude? provides a useful resource.

Potential Barriers to consider:

- The capacity and ability of different stakeholders to participate
- 'Hard to reach groups' such as young people, older people, minority groups or socially excluded groups
- Levels of community infrastructure
- Contested or divided communities
- Rural isolation
- Gaps in information
- Literacy and numeracy levels and dominance of oral culture

Design Issues to consider:

- Techniques and engagement methods to be used
- Need for independent facilitation
- Location and accessibility of the venue
- The number and type of engagement events
- Transport requirements
- Childcare needs
- Format and content of communication and publicity materials
- Use of interpreters and signers
- Need for outreach activities

When planning consider the following:

- **Communications:** Communication materials should be available in accessible formats and provided in alternative language(s) as appropriate. Given the strong oral tradition in many communities, events where individuals can discuss the issues first hand are invaluable. In order to maximise levels of participation, communication materials should use clear examples or case studies of how the issue or proposed plan is likely to affect different individuals and sections of society. Use existing community networks and forms of communication to publicise events and identify opportunities to align or hold combined events for greater impact.
- **Evaluation:** It is critical that any engagement process is evaluated on both an ongoing basis and post completion. Evaluation will provide valuable feedback for example, on the best methods for engaging with groups in a particular area or the most appropriate times or venues. These findings should inform your future engagement processes.

Methods & Techniques:

Some forms of community engagement are particularly good at encouraging participation and generating interest and ideas.

- **Art & Creativity:**

Art and Creative methods are appropriate where one wants to involve local people in expressing their views and generating ideas in a participative approach. They are a useful technique for engaging with people of all ages through education or school programmes, local community forums and resident or interest groups. They may be beneficial at the beginning of a community planning process to generate interest and raise awareness of the process.

Examples:

- **Vox Pox:** Short, snappy interviews with people in different locations and at different times (radio or television). Photographs of the results can be displayed and discussed more widely.
 - **Songs, poems, artwork:** Invite people to submit (possibly for a prize) a song, poem or art piece which describes their area, changes they would like to see, their ideal home or environment.
 - **TV game shows:** adopt and adapt popular TV game or quiz shows to generate interest and ideas, test local knowledge and/or understanding of project plans and processes.
- **Community mapping:**

Community mapping is a useful way of engaging people of all levels of capability. A variety of aspects can be mapped including land use, community assets, facilities, and transport options to develop a snapshot of an area. Mapping can be carried out using a variety of materials from chalk to sand.

- **Public Meetings:**

Public meetings provide an opportunity to consult large numbers of people. Meetings can be organised to allow for small group discussions with oral feedback. There are often opportunities for participants to set or influence the agenda and to ask questions. Small groups are an essential element of public meetings to engage people effectively.

Participants may feel unable to get involved or be unwilling to attend. As part of a series of events they can be a valuable way of sharing information and demonstrating openness and transparency.

- **Workshops & focus groups:**

Workshops and focus groups allow people to discuss their ideas in an open and relaxed atmosphere. They are useful methods for encouraging discussion among those who may feel less confident in a larger group. The main benefit is that participants or certain interest groups can be targeted and therefore those often excluded from a wider engagement exercise can be identified and invited to attend this type of event.

They can be designed to exchange information; to discuss the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of an idea or project; to obtain ideas and innovative thinking for a way forward for a project; or they can be specifically geared towards prioritisation and the production of an action plan. Focus groups by contrast are designed to specifically concentrate on a single issue or a programme of topics.

- **Forums:**

Forums can be a useful way of involving groups who are traditionally excluded from decision-making processes, for example young people. However, it is often the 'usual suspects' or those who are already involved in local groups who will participate

- **Web-based engagement:**

There are a variety of web based engagement processes to choose from such as online discussion forums and blogs, Facebook, online surveys, social networking, ratings and voting and digital interactive TV. Web based activities enable people to choose where, when and for how long they want to participate.



Standards for ensuring a quality and effective engagement process:

1. **The Involvement Standard:** We will identify and involve the people and organisations with an interest in the focus of the engagement.
2. **The Support Standard:** We will identify and overcome any barriers to involvement.
3. **The Planning Standard:** We will gather evidence of the needs and available resources and use this to agree the purpose, scope and timescale of the engagement and the actions to be taken.
4. **The Methods Standard:** We will agree to the used methods of engagement that are fit for purpose.
5. **The Working Together Standard:** We will agree and use clear procedures to enable the participants to work with one another efficiently and effectively.
6. **The Sharing Information Standard:** We will ensure necessary information is communicated between the participants.
7. **The Working With Others Standards:** We will work effectively with others with an interest in the engagement.
8. **The Improvement Standard:** We will actively develop the skills, knowledge and confidence of all the participants.
9. **The Feedback Standard:** We will feedback the results of the engagement to the wider community and agencies affected.
10. **The Monitoring and Evaluation Standard:** We will monitor and evaluate whether the engagement meets its purposes and the national standards for community engagement.

How to invite stakeholders? (example of invitation)

Step 1. Identification of stakeholders / Creating a map

The term stakeholder means “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation’s/project objectives” (Freeman, R.E. Strategic management: a stakeholder approach), whilst Bryson used a more comprehensive definition: “A stakeholder is defined as any person, group, or organisation that can place a claim on an organisation’s attention, resources, or output or is affected by that output (Bryson, J. Strategic planning for public and non-profit organisations).”

From these definitions, stakeholders can be identified as individuals, groups or organisations that have some kind of relationship with our project, or whose interests can be positively or negatively affected by its implementation. Stakeholder mapping is important for the success of our projects and/or activities. It is a starting point to develop strategies and to obtain the necessary support, as well as to adequately manage expectations, maximising positive influences and mitigating possible negative aspects.

These strategies may include but are not limited to the following:

- Suggest stakeholders participation in project activities or events;
- Improve communications strategies on information about the project;

- Collaboration with third parties so they can positively influence one stakeholder;

Mapping categories:

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| • High Power | • Keep satisfied |
| • Low Power | • Managing closely |
| • High Interest | • Monitorin |
| • Low Interest | • Keep informed |

As stakeholder identification, we understand the specific definition of a person or organisation, as well as the recognition of the degree of power and possible interest in the project. The power or level of influence is the ability to influence the project and activities, its execution, definition, approval or any other basic aspect. The level of interest or positioning helps us understand if the actor is interested or not in the project. The collection of information on interested parties has been very useful and can also be used in the future for other activities and/or projects, always taking into account that mapping is a dynamic tool where number, power and interest of stakeholders can change quickly.

Stakeholders can be:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Internal | • Individuals or Groups |
| • External | • Users |
| • Learning centres | • Volunteers |
| • Public Administrations | • Students |
| • The media | • Team members |
| • Private institutions | • Board/ Management |

Step 2. Example of invitation:

(general but can be adjusted based on the type & profile of stakeholders)

Email communication:

To whom it may concern, (if you are contacting someone specific/ or a specific department, it is a good idea to direct the email to them...)

My name is , I am..... (Name of initiative / its main values & actions / your role, and brief professional background)....

We take the liberty of contacting you to share/ propose... an upcomingEuropean project.... that we have the opportunity to organise on (date) or/and partners in.

We are looking to identify influencers and organisations that can contribute (purpose of letter to specific stakeholder) for ex: the project’s visibility, dissemination (social media and personal contacts), as well as to invite you to participate in the project when the Call for participation opens.

The topic of the project might be of interest to you, sinceidentify and mention why this might be something they will be interested in....

Attached you can find a document that describes the specific objectives of the project, its methodologies and activities (a PDF with more specific information/ objectives/ practical matters about the project).

Please do not hesitate to contact us for clarifications both regarding your involvement and the project itself.

Kind regards,

In attachment, make sure to include:

- Logos of project and partnership.
- Communication channels / website - social media accounts to further show your scope of work.
- If activities were already implemented, make them visible: Provide hyperlinks.

Step 3: Congratulations! You have a meeting with a potential stakeholder.WWW

Meetings with stakeholders / Planning - Reporting:

The aim of the template below is to report the meetings and contacts with high-level stakeholders in each country for making the project public, increase its visibility and analyse the importance of promoting young people's sense of initiative.

Name and surname(s):		Name of the organisation:		Person in charge:	
Date of the meeting:		Duration			
Location:					
People who attended the meeting: (Participation List)					
Main topics of the discussion:					
Conclusions:					
Add links of your webpage/social networks about the visibility given to the meeting:					



Description of our experience

Italy

1. What did you do, how many participants

1 Youth Meeting - 15 participants

2 Youth Meetin - 8 representatives of associations

2. How did the local context affect the meeting

The local context facilitated both meetings thanks to the collaboration of the municipality, which is willing to give voice and space to young people, and helped us with the mapping of the territory. The associations have been collaborative and reactive to our proposals.

3. How did you do the communication before the meeting,

CM1 - Internal communication through "Informagiovani" of Settimo (that is a helpdesk for young people in the Municipality of Settimo)

CM2 - We decided to spread the communications through an e-mail from our informal group that we called "attuagiovani" and we have opened an instagram page where, in addition to communicating the events, we spread the results. We have spread communications in a stand at an event where we made flyers about YMM2 and activities in which we collected some reflections from young people on both barriers and stereotypes towards them.

4. Did you send the outcomes to any stakeholder?

At the moment the work is in progress because we have plans to do activities with young people of

the individual associations that we have identified in the area, but the outcomes are communicated on the instagram page and in some events organised by the municipality, for example at an event promoted by Democracy Reloading.

5. What was its reaction or response?

The personnel that were involved were interested and open to dialogue and thanks to the positive response in January we plan to meet them individually and then create a common event in which we involve young people of all these associations to speak together about the barriers on the territory.

6. Which space were you using and how could it affect the dynamics?

CM1- In the first meeting we decided to do it in a room inside the library which is a safe space for aggregation and youth meetings.

CM2- In the second case we used a space that was obtained and created thanks to the activity of an association of Settimo Torinese called "Tavolo Giovani". This space is inside a park and is used as a place for entertainment and youth aggregation.

7. Super quick overview of the methods used, if something worked very well or very badly. Mention the topics that appeared during the meeting.

CM1- We proposed activities using the methodology of non-formal education and some of the tools learned during the training in Madrid, for example the line-up activity (yes or no).

CM2- For the second meeting we offered an aperitif. We created a circle and tried to make the

participants feel comfortable with some music in order to realise a nice atmosphere. We introduced ourselves together with the realities and we collected their proposals trying to put them in communication with our goal.

8. Did you drafted a document, conclusions or recommendations,

We created two presentations. The first has the results of the activities of the CM1, and a second one with the description of the associations that decided to collaborate with us and their aims and the activities we are going to do.

9. Did you disseminate the conclusions? How?

For the moment we don't have conclusions but the upgrades are constantly shared on the instagram page of Attuagiovani (<https://www.instagram.com/attuagiovani/>).



Portugal

1. What did you do, how many participants?

The Portugal team did a Meeting about Pollution at the Employment Center of Setúbal for a class for an Environmental Managing Class. We had 24 participants aged between 20 and 50.

2. How did the local context affect the meeting?

N/A

3. How did you communicate before the meeting?

We talked with the institution "SEIES" in the Centro de Cidadania Ativa in Setúbal. We had a meeting to explain our project about Pollution (our objectives) and they let us know that there was a class of Environmental Managing that would be interested in welcoming us to their class for our community meeting.

4. Did you send the outcomes to any stakeholder?

Not yet.

5. What was its reaction or response?

We had a positive feedback from the participants, however they expressed the need for more time for each activity (we had 2 hours total).

6. Which space were you using and how could it affect the dynamics?

We used a classroom in the Employment Center and used the 2 hours time from a class. The classroom was very packed with computers and

tables, which made it difficult to move around and even create a circle. The room disposition also made it difficult to see everyone at the same time (meaning we sometimes had our backs to some participants). The good part was that there was a white board with a projector, so we used images and wrote around it.

7. Super quick overview of the methods used, if something worked very well or very badly. Mention the topics that appeared during the meeting.

We used for an introduction the Dixit game cards to decentralise the attention from the self on the presentations and to get to know them based on the choice of the card. Then we used the Conflict Tree to assess the problems inherent to Pollution. We started with individual trees, then moved to groups of 5 and ended with a debate/ reflection between everyone based on the 5 main trees (from the groups) and tried to find common grounds. After the debate/reflection, we created a list of propositions of things to change to present to the Municipality of Setúbal.

8. Did you draft a document, conclusions or recommendations?

We made a google forms document to assess the feedback from the participants. We haven't analysed it thoroughly yet.

9. Did you disseminate the conclusions? How?

We will have a meeting with the institution SEIES to let them know how the community meeting went and then we will share with the rest of the participants (including the propositions) and to the municipality.

Spain

1. What did you do? How many participants?

We organised two youth meetings. In the first one 12 people came, in the second one 23 people. The first one was oriented for teenagers, so they could have a safe space where they could speak without feeling any pressure from parents or other adults.

The second one was for all ages, young and old people, but mostly young people came.

In both meetings we used the world cafe method so we spoke about 5 different topics. We split people into five groups so all of them had 20 minutes per table to discuss and express their opinions and proposals for each topic.

2. How did the local context affect the meeting?

We created an Instagram page: YMMsierra and we shared the information of the events through LPS Instagram too. We also printed posters for each meeting and we shared it all over La Sierra. We asked participants to write us an email to confirm the participation and to ask doubts in case they had them, especially for the first meeting that was with minors.

We also wrote people from the City Hall to come and be part of the assembly.

All the proposals were written and sent to each of the participants and for the city hall and other institutions that involve policy makers, politicians.

3. How did you communicate before the meeting?

We created an Instagram page: YMMsierra and we shared the information of the events through

LPS Instagram too. We also printed posters for each meeting and we shared it all over La Sierra. We asked participants to write us an email to confirm the participation and to ask doubts in case they had them, especially for the first meeting that was with minors.

We also wrote people from the City Hall to come and be part of the assembly.

All the proposals were written and sent to each of the participants and for the city hall and other institutions that involve policy makers, politicians.

4. Did you send the outcomes to any stakeholder?

Yes, we shared the outcomes with the Council of youth and participation. He came to both meetings and helped us reach more people.

At the end of each meeting we wrote everything that came up in the event and he shared it in the City Hall of Cercedilla.

5. What was its reaction or response?

It was positive. They were engaged and actually they told us it was a great idea. They had the resources but sometimes they didn't know what young people wanted or what they expected them to do. It's complicated to hear young people's voices. They are not used to being involved in the decision making process because no one usually asks for their opinion, so they liked the idea of building bridges of communication.

6. Which space were you using and how it could affect the dynamics.

We had our first meeting in the garden of Luis Rosales, which is a public building for cultural

purposes. It was a good space because it was quiet and we could go inside when it was getting colder. The second time we did it in a public park and it was also good but we did not have any space to go inside. So I think it was better in the first place.

7. Super quick overview of the methods used, if something worked very well or very bad. Mention the topics that appear during the meeting.

First we did some ice breakers as some people did not know each other. We spoke about the power of assemblies and their expectations about this one. After that we decided the topics we would speak about in a democratic way:



In the first meeting (for teenagers) we tackled:

- High school, integration and diversity.
- Technologies and social media
- Culture, ecology and youth participation
- Sports and other hobbies in la sierra
- Discrimination and bullying

In the second meeting (for everyone at any age) the topics where:

- Transportation
- Ecology and proposals for sustainable tourism.
- Art, culture and sports in La Sierra
- Protecting human rights (Housing, sexual orientation rights, dignity, jobs)

We did two meetings using the world cafe method. We split into several groups and each one went to a table with a topic. After 20 minutes they rotated to the next table and on until everyone could give their opinion on every topic. There was a facilitator in each table that wrote down everything. So then when the next group of people would go to the table they could see what was already there.

At the end of the session we made a big circle with everyone and read them all for everyone to hear what other groups said.

8. Did you draft a document, conclusions or recommendations?

Yes, we drafted a document for each meeting dividing it between the different topics that were discussed and with all the conclusions from all the participants and sent it to them and we also sent them to the workers in the City Hall of Cercedilla.

We also made another document with the proposals that we could start working on as a group without the support of other institutions.

9. Did you disseminate the conclusions? How?

Yes, we sent them to all the participants and to other people that were interested in this project that could not be there so they could see what we had done.

And for the city hall we sent an email with the documents with all the conclusions for both meetings but for the second one we went there and exposed all the proposals, budget (if needed), and ideas. This was definitely a good thing to do and that we will do for the future meetings.

Lithuania

1. What did you do, how many participants?

1 Youth Meeting: We did a half-day workshop on inner (and outer) ecology and mental health with several different activities. We had 15 young people participating.

2 Youth Meeting: We did a non-formal stress management workshop for high school students. We had 20 young people participating.

3 Youth Meeting: We did a half-day workshop about mental health and learning different stress coping-techniques. We had 14 young people participating.

2. How did the local context affect the meeting?

1 YM: Post-covid period was a challenging experience for many young people in Lithuania. In such times, the proper awareness of mental health and this topic is very important. We used forest as a potential “escape” from everyday worries and for implementing the idea that nature is a strong resource for strengthening mental health.

2 YM: We worked with young people, aged 17-18 years, who are experiencing quite a lot of stress at school due to the upcoming exam period. Therefore there was a request from them to have something focused on stress management and resilience.

3 YM: There have been a lot of global events (e.g., Covid-19 pandemic, War in Ukraine) which caused a lot of distress, fear and anxiety in Lithuanian society, including young people. We tried to introduce them to the healthy ways to cope with this extra stress.

3. How did you communicate before the meeting?

For the communication among the team leaders and partners we used digital technologies for constant communication (e.g., phone, messenger, WhatsApp chats, etc.). For communication with the young people we used social media (Instagram and Facebook) to invite young people to our youth meetings.

1 YM & 3 YM: We created an open event on social media of “Miško Istorijos” where everyone interested were able to register for the event. Also, we used our professional and personal contacts to invite young people who might be interested in these activities.

2 YM: one of the team leaders has direct personal contacts both to the administration of the high school and the young people and it was easy for her to talk with these groups and arrange the time and venue for the meeting.

4. Did you send the outcomes to any stakeholder?

1 YM: We invited the representatives from other strong Lithuanian youth NGO to participate in the event and they joined us.

2 YM: We delivered a short overview of the outcomes to the school administration after the meeting.

3 YM: We invited youth leaders who are actively involved in youth work to join us in our meeting and they did.

5. What was its reaction or response?

1 YM: They were positive about the workshop, were involved in the activities and promised to join the next ones if possible. Also, they promised to talk about the experience in their own networks.

2 YM: Very positive, they found the workshop useful for the students and invited us to organise some more if we are up to it.

3 YM: They were positive about the event and actively participated in all activities and expressed the willingness to collaborate in future activities. Also, they promised to share the experience they had with their own networking.

6. Which space were you using and how it could affect the dynamics?

1 YM: We did the workshop in the forest which helped participants to relax, to escape their everyday worries and be more mindful of the present moment. Also, nature helps people to feel more united and connected as there are no other distractions.

2 YM: We did the workshop with the students at their school. They knew the place very well, so they were feeling safe and cosy. It also helped us gather everybody in one place at the same time.

3 YM: Because of the cold weather in March, we had to organise indoor activities. We rented a very cosy and bright hall with enough space for the activities, including the ones requiring the movement.

7. Super quick overview of the methods used, if something worked very well or very badly. Mention the topics that appear during the meeting.

1 YM: What we did: introduction, team-building (by setting up the fire and preparing the space), safe space creation, mindfulness exercises, meditation, creative getting-to-know-ourselves/each other better exercises, group discussions (we used the common lunch as the method for non-formal discussions), song creation, reflections in the group.

Topics that appeared during the meeting: the realisation that other people see ourselves differently as we do, the importance of introspection and self-awareness, mental health awareness, nature appreciation, food :)

What went very well: the venue, the safe space, the group dynamics, the discussions, the activities, the lunch and bonfire :)

What went not-so-well: we expected more participants, time management

2 YM: What we did: introduction, mood check, creative exercise on stress management, discussions in small groups and in a big group, a bit of theory (up to 7 minutes).

Topics that appeared during the meeting: stress, going out of the comfort zone, getting to know ourselves and others better by **knowing their** personal stories, recognizing the importance of internal resources when it comes to stress coping.

What went very well: it was a friendly atmosphere, time-management, and discussions.

What went not so well: one person was late and it was a bit difficult to get him fully involved.

3 YM: What we did: introduction, names game/ team building, coping stress through movement (dancing), coping stress through art (having a collaborative big painting which was painted by all participants), progressive muscle relaxation run by a professional psychologist.

What went very well: the environment was very suitable for such activities, there was a nice feeling among the group, young people were very motivated to participate in all activities.

What went not so well: One of the Lithuanian YMM team members couldn't participate in the event because of the last minute emergency but the workload was divided among the other two members and the members of "Miško Istorijos", so eventually it went well. Also, the flow between the group painting and relaxation activities didn't go as smoothly as expected, but this was perceived as such by one of the organisers, and the participants were happy about it.

8. Did you draft a document, conclusions or recommendations?

Not yet.

9. Did you disseminate the conclusions? How?

We disseminated the activity and its outcomes to social media (facebook and instagram), to our YMM family, and among the circle of our personal and professional networks.

We are also planning to disseminate this guide among our social media, professional network and partner organisations.



Cyprus

1. What did you do, how many participants?

Community meeting between young members of different communities in Cyprus - Youth and the Cyprus Issue

2. How did the local context affect the meeting?

Covid (testing, restrictions to cross, number of participants, to mask or not to mask), partition (different realities, checkpoints opened after a year of being closed "due to" covid), language barrier, terminology setting due to sensitivities.

3. How did you communicate before the meeting?

We shared our meeting on our page and we followed up with a personal approach. We created a registration form in order to select the final group of participants. Due to limited registrations we included everyone.

4. Did you send the outcomes to any stakeholder?

YMM, YPAN, YEU, Home for Cooperation

5. What was its reaction or response?

In the first Community Meeting people expressed that they were remotivated to engage with the

Cyprus Issue and appreciated discussing the topic with people from both sides in a structured and constructive way. On the other hand we did not explain the format/duration from the beginning and we had some critical feedback for that. Also, with the tape activity we did not make it clear that stepping forward is associated with privilege.

In the second Community Meeting all of the above critical feedback was dealt with appropriately and only positive feedback was received, especially for the tape activity.

Participants express how they were guided to engage with the conflict through the position of people from other backgrounds that was unknown to them. They appreciated having to consider the challenges of the Cyprus problem for other people of their generation with different identities to theirs but also some participants were stimulated by having to engage with the consequences over themselves too. Many participants chose to get involved with Hade from then onwards.

6. Which space were you using and how it could affect the dynamics?

Home for Cooperation - within the buffer zone, the only place everyone in the island can meet due to political barriers and sensitivities over 'crossing to the other side'. While it is the only accessible place it is also a safe space for people to come together and discuss the Cypriot issue and the cooperation between communities.

7. Super quick overview of the methods used, if something worked very well or very bad. Mention the topics that appear during the meeting.

Name games - meeting each other - introduction, Tape Activity, Conflict Tree in small groups (roots,

main part and "branches" of different issues), dissemination in group discussion - Q/A & feedback

8. Did you draft a document, conclusions or recommendations?

9. Did you disseminate the conclusions? How?

8 & 9. Taking under consideration the feedback from the participants we changed the approach of our initiative. As a team we were excited by the motivation of participants to get further involved and we created new spaces for individuals and groups to take action on different projects that have to do with the general aims and philosophy of Hade. The event was also shared by the Home for Cooperation a few months after through their social media page as an example of peacebuilding events hosted in the 'Home'.

Poland

1. What did you do? How many participants?

Noticing a burning problem of social polarisation in Poland, we decided to dedicate our workshops to this problem. The workshops were engaging participants in a discussion about social polarisation in everyday life and the problem of discrimination. Workshop participants had the opportunity to exchange experiences, learn methods of combating social polarisation, including the tool of Non-violent Communication and had the opportunity to prepare recommendations for decision makers regarding this problem.

During the first workshop that took place offline on 4th September 2021 we had 3 participants. During the online workshop that took place online on 18th January 2022 we had 9 participants.

2. How did the local context affect the meeting?

Poland's society is extremely polarized, with widespread discrimination and a lack of tolerance. All of the participants have dealt with polarisation in discrimination in their families, businesses, universities, and other settings, making it easier to continue the conversation on this topic. During the first workshop, we were able to witness certain characteristics of polarisation and conflicts since there was a participant who represented ideas that were notably different from those of the other participants. Participants noted the development of information and social bubbles, as well as a lack of contact or discussion forums for people from various backgrounds and perspectives on important societal issues.

3. How did you communicate before the meeting?

We met in Warsaw for a planning meeting and then continued the planning process online via Whatsapp and Zoom meetings.

For the first meeting, we announced a call for participants 10 days before the event. Previously, we created a Facebook fan page and event and promoted it through Facebook ads, sharing on dedicated youth groups, and sharing on our personal social media. The event was also shared on the fanpages of the Youth Peace Ambassadors Network and our former partner, the Polish Forum of Young Diplomats. We established an application deadline. After the date of the deadline, we sent them by mail the infopack with all the information: introduction

about the project, timetable, meeting hour and the address of the venue, what they needed to bring, guidelines of what was about and a general agenda of the day.

Concerning the second meeting, we contacted the Vice-dean of the Polish Naval Academy's Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences with the proposal of organising a workshop for their students. We sent the details of the YMM project as well as the detailed workshop program and were invited to conduct a workshop for a group of first-year human resource management students.

4. Did you send the outcomes to any stakeholder?

We did not send them written conclusions, but the second workshop was held at the Polish Naval Academy in the presence of the Vice-dean of the Polish Naval Academy's Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, who stated that they are interested in collaborating with them in the future as well as creating a space for social agreement and discussion for academy students. We intend to send her the results of our project.

5. What was its reaction or response?

She was actively participating in the workshop and was looking forward to future collaborations with us.

6. Which space were you using and how it could affect the dynamics?

We had an opportunity to organise the community meetings both offline and online.

We used the space of "Stacja Muranów" for the first workshop - it was a nice, comfortable, and functional space in the centre of Warsaw with access to a projector. It was a small cafe-like space

that had a positive impact on group integration and informal education. The fact that we met in person has also had a positive impact on communication and direct discussion among participants. We could also improve our integration by taking advantage of the coffee and lunch breaks. At the same time the fact that our session took place in person and in September (before the start of the academic year in Poland) had a big influence on the number of participants as only 3 people had participated in the 4th September workshop.

The second workshop was held online for a group of Polish Naval Academy students. We were initially concerned about whether it would be possible to integrate informal education into the Academy's mandatory classes. Fortunately, we were able to create a safe environment while also engaging and integrating the group as much as we could online. The fact that our session was held online increased the total number of participants, but it also reduced the number of active participants. Students used to non-engaging university classes were hesitant to participate actively in our session, and we ended up with only about four active workshop participants. It also had an impact on the entire process because we were unable to organise reflection groups or team building exercises.

7. Super quick overview of the methods used, if something worked very well or very badly. Mention the topics that appear during the meeting.

Sharing personal experiences and Q&A - great way to get to know each other better, learn about different experiences, and connect people who are sharing in small groups. It is a good idea to encourage curiosity and use active listening tools.

We facilitated an NVC workshop and engaged in active listening.

Mapping the solutions to social polarisation in Poland and identifying ways to act individually and collectively to bring us closer to the ideal world

Feedback session - sharing of the day's experiences and learning points

Questionnaire and discussion of feedback

8. Did you draft a document, conclusions or recommendations?

Conclusions:

- It was a well-prepared project on an important topic that was tailored to the local context.
- There is undoubtedly a need to organise more meetings in Poland to combat social polarisation in our country.

Recommendations:

- Adapt the date of your community meeting to the local reality - weekends, academic year, and not scheduling meetings during public holidays or exam periods all have a positive impact on the number of participants.
- Establish the ground rules/community contract with the participants.
- Provide resources for people who want to learn more about the issues you're addressing.
- Save time for discussion - this is the main reason for organising the community building, and it is always a bonus to the entire session.
- Make the meeting more task-oriented by organising it online.

- When the sessions are based on an online discussion, the participants are usually hesitant to actively participate in them.
- They are more likely to participate if they have a task to complete and a goal to achieve.
- Include everyone.

9. Did you disseminate the conclusions? How?

We have not done so yet; instead, we intend to send the results of our entire project to participants and the Polish Naval Academy. We will also share it on the Youth Peace Ambassadors Network Poland's social media.

Belgium

Hug & Tell the period is a project - supported by the Youth Meetings Movement - that focuses on co-empowering people in the local community to communicate about menstruation, challenge taboos, express needs and feelings, create connections, unfold tensions and navigate conflicts, in order to find solutions to make the experience of menstruation more bearable in different areas of life (with family, partners, friends, health services, schools, universities, workplaces...).

Throughout the community meetings or workshops, and through diverse group dynamics and tools, participants had the opportunity to meet other people for whom menstruation is also an important subject in their lives. They were able to share experiences and listen to others with empathy and respect. In Hug & Tell, we trust that each experience is unique, worth embracing, and valid to share. We believe that together people can co-build a

safe space to enable vulnerability and develop empathy - and that with all of this, co-create amazing movements.

What did you do? How many participants?

Hug and Tell - the Period had two Community Meetings in Brussels, and two workshops developed during two different youth trainings: one in La Sierra de Madrid - "Let's talk! - training on sexual health, gender and human rights education", and another one in Mayotte.

For the two community meetings in Brussels, the plan was to create a group composed of 2 facilitators and a maximum of 8 participants. On the other hand, in La Sierra and in Mayotte, the groups were composed of the number of participants that were present in the training taking place, and one facilitator only. In La Sierra there were around 25 participants, the number of participants in Mayotte was unrecorded.

For the **first community meeting in Brussels** organised on the 18th September, from 10h - 17h (7h day). We opened a call for anyone between 18 and 35 years-old who identifies with the project. The open call was done in English, and a full day of activities was prepared in English. We shared the call on social media, and contacted organisations that worked with young people (e.g. local planning familial). The 4 participants at the meeting identified as white cis-women, their age varied between 22 - 25 years old, all were expats, and they were people close to us on a personal level (friends, friends of friends, people from the same work environment). We organised a full day of activities, an introduction and feedback session and energizers, with time for a long lunch break, and some extra breaks throughout the day. The main activities were "The group contract", "Wanna know", "Ideal world" and two workshops, one on NVC and one on Active listening. These activities are described below.

The **second community meeting in Brussels** was held on the 20th November from 14h30 to 18h30 (4h day). For the second open call, we reformulated our aim to “anyone between 18 and 35 years-old who identifies with the project, meaning people who menstruate + those “who care” in order to co-create a more inclusive and diverse group of people. Compared to the first call that was done only in English, the second call was also translated into French, and the workshop was prepared in order to make it possible to speak in English and/or French. The group of 6 participants was composed of cis-women from different ethnic backgrounds, their age varied between 20 and 33. Most were informed about the meeting through social media and or mutual friends of ours, and were deeply interested in the topic of menstruation. We organised an afternoon of activities, with an introduction and a feedback session, small breaks and energizers. The activities were the “group contract”, “Wanna know”, “Ideal world” and “automatic writing”.

In the context of youth trainings, the settings differed on what concerns the number and diversity of participants, encouragement to participate and the duration of the activities.

On what concerns the Hug & Tell workshop in La Sierra (end of september 2021), the participants were chosen beforehand by the organisation of the larger training and all were invited and strongly encouraged to participate in a 1h workshop organised by Hug & Tell - the Period. There were about 25 participants, menstruators and non-menstruators, identifying as cis-women, cis-men and non-binary people, from different cultural and ethnical backgrounds, different nationalities within Europe, aged between 17 and 35, with different approaches, experiences and knowledge about menstruation.

The session started with a small introduction of what Hug & Tell is, and on the importance of creating space to open the communication about menstruations. After, there is space to discuss how to create a safe space together around the topic, and the participants co-create a group contract with preferred communications styles, expected attitudes, safe words and other interaction elements that help them feel safe. Then, the main activity for this session was “Wanna Know”, an activity in which each person writes down questions that come to their mind about menstruation, and the experience of menstruation, on different post-its. These post-its with questions are then thrown on the floor, in the centre of the circle composed of all participants. The group naturally creates small groups of 3 and one person from each small group picks random post-its with questions from the centre of the room. Then each group is asked to sit together and go through the questions, making sure that everyone has the chance to express themselves on whichever question(s) they would like to pick, and also making sure that no-one is forced to share experiences against their will. At the end of the exchange, the small groups sit back in a large circle and share how the experience was for them, what questions grew in their heads, what feelings or information they will keep from this experience. The feedback for this session was very positive, people felt connected with one another, most enjoyed sharing different experiences around menstruations, listening, asking questions about how others lived through their periods. The participants had an overall comfortable, engaging and connecting experience, independently of the fact whether they do or do not menstruate.



Guidelines for hug & tell meetings

Before the meeting:

We had an **open call** explaining what our project is, what activities will be done during the meeting, how long it will take, and other relevant details. We used social media to share it and a google questionnaire for people to apply. This questionnaire included some questions to understand people's expectations, language preferences, and their idea of menstruation.

Infopack: we send to each applicant a link to an infopack giving more information for the day. We include the presentation of Hug & Tell and information about the place where our meeting will be done.

Introduction: Presentation of the project and the group, using the blob tree to assess how people feel and what their expectations are, and to help people open up to one another.

Group contract - verbalise and write down on a large sheet the group's needs and expectations for co-creating a safe space in which everyone is heard and respected. On our end, we made sure that the following is included:

- Can we use the words **period** and **menstruation** throughout the training? Is everyone comfortable? This is the perfect environment to try out using it as much as possible.
- Let's talk about "**people who menstruate**" vs "women" - some trans men menstruate, some women and trans women do not menstruate (by choice, by medical issues, linked with their age...)
- **Needs** to be fulfilled: respect, validation, emotional safety, trust, consideration, support, understanding
- **Tools** to use: NVC, active listening, kindness, love, avoid judging, use eye contact, validate people's experiences and feelings even if you don't identify with them, use "I statements"

- How to ensure **inclusion**? Be aware of people around you, about the space we take, and support sharing.
- How to make silence in the room, how to show agreement, how to ask to take the floor, respect turns
- Talk about **consent and boundaries** when sharing experiences. Feelings, opinions, ways of seeing the world are super welcome. Traumatic experiences are valid and important, and because they are linked to trauma, they should always be shared with professionals. Please use trigger warnings in case you want to share potentially triggering experiences. Notice your body when you are listening to other people's stories (if you feel uncomfortable, speedy heartbeat, waves of warmth, teary eyes, tension... it might be a sign that the content is triggering for you, if you need it to stop, you can intervene in a respectful manner or take a moment for yourself)

Q&A - "Wanna know" - Writing down questions that other people will reply to, and reply to questions that other people wrote down. We create mixed groups, and people get to ask things they've always wanted to know about how other people live their period, what they would like to see in people around them, social spheres, how they were raised on the subject...It is a great activity to get to know each other better, get to know different experiences about menstruation and create connections between people by sharing answers to questions in small groups. It is also good to foster curiosity and use active listening tools in a safe environment. It's okay not to answer questions if you have not gone through the experience, or if you don't feel like answering that specific question, it is an opportunity to take this moment to learn about different experiences. There is then a small debrief with the whole group.

NVC and active listening workshops - small workshops to explain the basics of NVC and active listening, using

participatory activities to help integrate the theory.

Ideal world - Mapping the ideal world and finding ways to act individually to get closer to the ideal world, each participant shares their hopes for the future and is empowered to act toward the hopes shared by the group.

Automatic writing - great activity to go back to our own experience, focus on ourselves after a day of sharing and listening. For 5 minutes, the participants are encouraged to write down whatever is going through their minds in that moment, without stopping, reformulating or crossing out the text. At the end they are free to keep the text to themselves, or to share it (or parts of it) with the group.

Feedback session - sharing the experiences of the day and how participants feel, using the blob tree to see how the participants feel "before and after" the day.

Feedback questionnaire a couple of days later (anonymous or not) to assess in a more objective way how the day went and how each activity has an impact on each person.

Online community - Slack to build an online community post-meetings with all the participants who are interested to keep a connection, share resources, share events, co-create new movements.

Throughout the day, we also had **breaks** to engage in a more casual way and to take some alone time if needed. We also used **energizers** such as the **cheering moment** (the participants that want to, can go in the middle of the circle and say something they are proud of that day, everyone else cheers for them).

Conclusion

Recommendations:

- An introduction that is small and straight to the point helps get into the subject and helps normalise the topic of menstruation, gives some idea of what will happen throughout the day and of the core values of the project.
- Use participatory activities that focus on connection, sharing, listening, empathy and co-empowerment.
- Co-create a group contract, to help co-create a safe empathetic and respectful space.
- Be flexible - keep some activities which are secondary and can be cut from the agenda, adapt to the groups needs, add extra breaks if needed
- Have a feedback session in person during the debrief session and later send the participants an online questionnaire to retrieve post-experience feedback. Our questionnaire asks the participants to rate the usefulness of each activity, and gives space for comments; it also asks about needs and expectations that were fulfilled or not fulfilled and asks to rate the facilitation.
- Create an online community to keep connections (e.g. on slack), share resources, share events, co-create new movements.
- Breaks help create safe space, relax, give the participants more control on the subjects they would like to talk about, and reconnect on other levels.
- Prior to the day (using an infopack for example) invite people to bring a snack to share during the breaks. It helps create connection and gives a strong feeling of participation.

- Make the workshop accessible (e.g. open to everyone who cares, use different languages in the open call and during the meeting if needed, respect people's time, and choose days where people are more easily available, make sure to keep time for breaks, use an easy and clear vocabulary).

What did not work / what worked less well

- A full day of activities - difficult to get people applying. It is better to have a half a day of activities (around 4h or 5h) to make sure the group connects but doesn't get too tired at the end of the day.
- NVC and Active listening workshops - worked for some people, less for others, if using these workshops, it is important to make sure to find/explain a connection between the topic of the project and the workshops.
- One of the biggest challenges has been to find participants, how to have a diverse group of participants, and reach people far from our own bubble.

Testimonies of participants

The Youth Meetings Movement (YMM) was led by young leaders coming from Belgium, Cyprus, Italy, Lithuania, Spain, Poland and Portugal. We asked these young people, who were the heart of this project, to tell us about their experience, feelings, learnings and personal discoveries from being a part of YMM. Here is what they shared with us.



Belgium: **Alexandra Quaresma**

When I joined YMM it was because I felt that I had the will and motivation to create new projects with youth but something was missing. I felt the need for clear and efficient tools to work with young people, to moderate sessions and make the best out of these projects.

The YMM project helped me find simple ways to get participants to connect with one another on a deeper level quickly and naturally. It is a good example of how peer-to-peer education and horizontal moderation helps co-create safe spaces to share experiences, learn from one another, and create change on an individual and social level.

The YMM project, and the implementation of Hug & Tell the period, has been a way to understand how important it is for people who menstruate, and people who care about the experience of menstruation, to get together and simply share experiences with one another, ask questions and imagine ways that they can make a difference, on a short and long term. It is a project that focuses on empowering people to co-create networks and projects to make their world safer on what concerns menstruations.

I would love to see more people coming to these meetings, more people creating similar spaces, and more people talking about the specific needs of people who menstruate, especially through intersectional lenses. I would like these meetings to be more diverse and inclusive in order to share more knowledge and find better solutions to make it easier for everyone to menstruate.

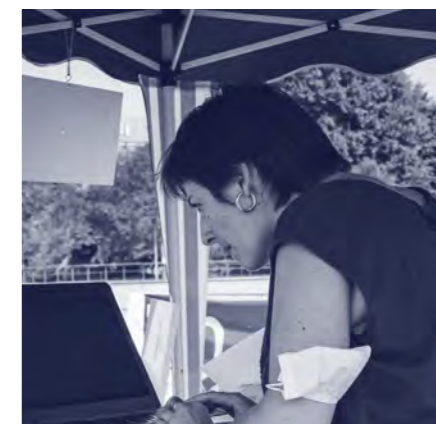


Cyprus: **Desiree Birinci and Lambros Asvestas**

As participants from Cyprus, we decided to join the Youth Meetings Movement (YMM) because we wanted to meet more active young people from across Europe and learn how to work better with our local community. The YMM was especially interesting to us because participants were expected to be already engaged with organisations in their own country beforehand. During the project, we in fact learnt about community meetings with new tools and concepts through fun, artistic activities while building meaningful connections with other participants. Not only were we empowered with knowledge and motivation to continue our engagements upon return, but we also understood the concept of non-formal education which allowed us to have direct take-aways for implementing workshops of our own within our local community. We also appreciated the creation of safe spaces in youth work and the importance of actively-sought reflection and feedback sessions in order to facilitate these and improve our own workshops.

Youth work on sensitive and complex issues can at times feel difficult or demotivating. We can feel like we are not making much of a difference or that we don't know how to. The YMM project helped us channel motivation and build our capacity, both through the activities and the energy of the participants, to continue being active on the ground with the youth and society in our own local context. We have so far implemented community meetings among the youth in Cyprus, curated and moderated non-formal workshops and reached out to fresh faces within the capacity of our local organisation.

We aim to continue our work in this way, aiming to have a multiplier in society and inspire more people to engage socially and politically with the context surrounding them.



Italy: **Elisa Crescitelli**

I decided to participate in the project because in the course of my studies I became passionate about the topic of participatory and decision-making processes. Furthermore, I have always considered the participation from below and the activation of citizens to be important. An aspect that I consider fundamental in countries that declare themselves democratic.

I really liked both the training and exchange of perspectives part of this project that we had in Spain. It was an important moment to understand from a theoretical point of view how to organise a community meeting, how to make it inclusive, a safe place, how to network, but above all it was a very beautiful experience from a human point of view, the group in a little time has proven to be active and collaborative.

In addition, I really enjoyed being able to interact with many people with different backgrounds, stories and experiences in the Settimo area. Being able to facilitate groups of different people and at the same time being able to learn something new at every occasion.

Thanks to the work of our informal group “Attua-Giovani” we have managed to create a solid network between associations that have recognized our work in the area and we have also aroused interest in the participation at local level of many young people who have decided to collaborate with us through different activities. We still have a project to carry out with the young people of the “Croce Rossa” on the theme of intergenerational relations in their association and with an informal group “QuokKattivi” that deals with professional training in the Settimo area. Furthermore, we have recently started carrying out activities with the young people of the Fenoglio refuge on Settimo, with the aim of involving these young people in the various associations in the area according to their interests and needs.



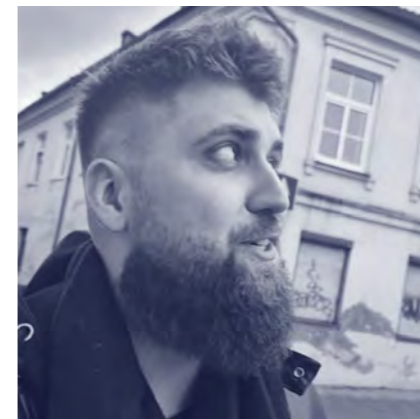
Italy: Giulia Stefanelli

The strength of our group is certainly the solid network that we have managed to create in the area. A territory that already had many active associations and also an interest on the part of the Municipality in their activation and participation in the process of population growth and development. This taught me the importance of relationships for growth and participation in a territory. Relationships, in fact, convey material and immaterial resources, information and support communications which thus do not disperse and are always or almost always listened to. Relationships are also fundamental for involving citizens in activation processes from below.

The path started with “Attua-Giovani”, however, is not finished yet, precisely because it is a path that we hope will last over time and consolidate in the area. Surely a further change that we would like to implement is to be able to involve other young people who collaborate with us to carry out the various projects and who want to enrich the group, but also the territory of Settimo itself, with their experiences and knowledge.

I decided to participate in the project to get involved, to learn and discover both professional and personal parts of me. In addition, I love discovering new places, traditions, cultures and people and combined with the theme we addressed it seemed to me to be the perfect experience. I liked discovering and realising that language is not the only means of expression and that it is not and should not be a limit, an obstacle to knowledge. In fact, through the various activities I experienced first-hand how difficult it is to communicate if you do not have full knowledge of a language and how difficult it is to find other tools. I also liked the atmosphere that has been created, a climate of sharing, friendship, knowledge, training and even emotion. Certainly there are personal and other professional achievements. On a professional level, I learned a lot: mapping a territory, collaboration, needs analysis, “networking”. On a personal level I have grown. The activity on emotions was certainly one of my favourites and helped me to really understand them, to give importance to them, to analyse them and make the most of them. Also, the experience in general motivated me a lot in realising that we can do a lot, each of us can, just believe in it, collaborate and really want to bring about

a change. Experience has given me a lot: a great desire to get involved, to discover and to always be on the move. In those days I was afraid, during training, maybe I didn’t fully experience it, but that fear, that insecurity also helped me to see everything from a different point of view than my usual one. I have observed, I have listened and I think this is more important than speaking at times. I am very fond of my community, my biggest dream is to make all citizens love those we have in this city because love motivates people, “moves” them and only through love can a community really change. Without love you can propose a thousand things but they will never be truly heard by everyone, they will never be completed to the maximum.



Lithuania: Algirdas Dudutis

The first time I heard about this project and YMM in general was from my dear friend Solveiga. She shared information about this project and put me in contact with Laura Alčiauskaitė, who was the coordinator of our Lithuanian group. I was looking forward to this Erasmus+ training course because the theme and project itself was something new and exciting for me. Since it was not

my first rodeo (I have been participating in Erasmus+ exchanges already for the past 3 to 4 years, but never been to a training course before) I thought I knew what was coming to me and I couldn’t wait for the project to start. The program itself was rather challenging – information packed and made me open up my mind on the wider view on the topics and problems from the different countries. The tools and methods I learned there helped me grow as a person and they were also useful for organising the local community meetings back home in Lithuania.

I believe that our Lithuanian team managed to reach and get the local participants involved in the topics that were important to them. I am not sure about the group meetings longevity, yet I think these meetings were on point. As a participant of YMM, I widened my world view on different topics, improved my organisational skill, as well as public speaking skills (it was hell of a challenge). I really hope that in the future young people, who participated in our local community meetings back home in Kaunas, will be able to make their own community meetings for the issues that they are facing.



Spain: **Marta Blasco**

I decided to participate in the Youth Meetings Movement because I felt it was a perfect opportunity to learn new mechanisms to bring the community together in understanding, empathy and strength to evolve towards a healthier and stronger community. The project helped us, as a group, to create together these new mechanisms and ways to manage assemblies for small localities. I love my community but I have to admit, there is not much youth participation in community issues, there was no space for meeting and discussion. The project has helped us formulate and create this space where young people can express themselves freely and work for improvement.

We were able to facilitate three meetings in la Sierra, where we were able to create a dialogue and build listening, understanding, unity and peace among the various young members of the community. Through these meetings we were able to gather the different needs and experiences from the community, in order to later build - in dialogue and agreement with different institutions - new mechanisms to meet these needs and rights of the youth population of la Sierra. I feel that we were able to involve, connect and train young people in

democratic processes at the local level, although this is a process that is still ongoing, we've seen how young people in my community really do have concerns and desires for improvement, our community is full of people who believe in a healthier and more caring community, make art and work for improvement together. During the meetings we discussed various issues concerning the community, such as the economic situation for young people, housing, artistic and cultural events, inclusion of diversity etc. Different ideas and visions came to the surface to improve and make small changes little by little.

The most beautiful thing about the project for me is that it has planted a seed in each of the participants' minds, it has motivated, empowered and enabled us with the necessary tools for us to continue the process for improvement, it has reminded us that we are together in the cause. The diversity of the contexts in which the meetings are taking place offers a diversity of results, information and experiences, all unique and different, attending to the specific needs of each context, all complementary and useful to understand what mechanisms work best and what are the issues of interest and concern in the different communities. I want to mention that the work of the partners in the different countries is admirable and I feel very grateful and fortunate to work and develop this beautiful process with such beautiful souls.



Poland: **Weronika Knowska**

I saw the YMM project as an excellent opportunity to exchange ideas with colleagues from other countries, to learn methods of implementing study sessions, and to organise a project that would engage young people in our local reality based on this knowledge. I liked the idea of organising training for trainers and putting the structured follow-up activities of the training session into action. What I liked best was building a community among the YMM participants and having a "support group" we could contact throughout the project.

Back home in Warsaw, Poland, we were able to organise two community meetings with workshops on the topic of combating social polarisation in Poland. We have also reached out to the authorities at the Polish Naval Academy, who are willing to work with us in the future. This formula of organising and implementing local youth meetings, I believe, should be used to organise more projects. Training with people and seeing us all implement meetings on a local level based on the knowledge and skills gained from the training and follow-up calls was truly incredible. I became a member of the YMM community, where I could share my concerns and ideas

about the project, and I had the invaluable opportunity to receive support and feedback from other participants. It teaches us not to rely solely on our own resources, but to seek assistance and different perspectives from our colleagues from other countries.

In the future I want to organise more projects and community meetings about our country's social polarisation. There is definitely a need for that, and there isn't much space in our country for dialogue and understanding - it's time to create some.



Portugal: **Sofia Vilares**

I decided to participate in the YMM project through an invitation of a friend and since it was nothing like what I usually participate in, I decided to go for it!

The thing that I enjoyed the most about this project was probably the self-realisation of how so many different countries find common grounds in such particular

and specific themes regarding human rights. It was an enjoyment to discuss this theme but at the same time a preoccupation, since being human and just living in an equal form of life is still a topic of discussion...

I think I clearly understood with this project and with the community meetings, that a lot of people have the same opinions... But sometimes, they stay quiet because there's no validation from their environment. So, being able to take part in that validation towards other people, also validated myself and made me more empathic in trying to understand others.

I would like to continue to do community meetings within my community in Sende and maybe explore some topics that are more specific and controversial. I would especially like to bring awareness to my age group about being vocal in real life and real time. Social media is only a part of everything we can do!

Testimonies of YMM participants

Besides the young leaders, we also asked some local young people, who participated in YMM events in the seven countries, to share their experiences with us. Here is what they told us:

"It felt good to feel mutually seen, heard, and understood. I for sure felt like I learned more about myself and other girls within their countries' realities (...) It allowed us to share our views on needed changes in our societies for a healthier and happier life for everyone (both people who menstruate and don't). It was a beautiful process to see how our ideas just grew more and more. Then it felt empowering to know that no matter how small our steps may seem, if we are united in these efforts it will make a difference. We are our own and each other's support"

Katerina, Brussels (Belgium)

"When in community meetings like these, the coordinators make sure that everyone is relaxed by starting with an energizer! The energizers really help people let loose and can even bring us closer to each other. By doing this, we establish a trust, where there is no right or wrong answer. It is an amazing experience and you learn a lot from others. Active listening was one of the main outcomes from my experience at the community meetings. Listening to others actively is what makes a great community meeting!"

Despina, Nicosia (Cyprus)

"The meeting was particularly well structured, interesting and intense. Through Giulia's monologue, the world café's and all the other activities everybody managed to bring something home, from new points of view to entire experiences."

Axel Masoero, Settimo Torinese (Italy)

"When I attended the project, I wasn't expecting much. Few people, nature around, but it turned into a good way: a little group of people created a warm, welcoming, and friendly environment. After building a roof from rain, a fireplace for gathering - it looked like a cozy place to be part of. Then, we have talked about nature and our connection with it, and really, we tend to forget the nature which is surrounding us, we dive our heads into city noise, getting tired of it and don't even notice it. The project made me understand to love myself more and have my quiet time only with myself more often."

Nerijus Raštikis, Kaunas (Lithuania)

"I felt really motivated to see how groups of different people unite together to discuss local issues. I think creating a community is needed to fight for our needs as a society."

Peras, Cercedilla (Spain)

"For me the workshop was an interesting and important experience that has shown me patterns in my own behaviour I haven't seen before. Moreover, the workshop leaders made sure to create a safe space for discussion, which became a perfect example of NVC in action."

Wiktor Knowski, Warsaw (Poland)



YOUTH MEETINGS MOVEMENT (YMM) is a project financed by the European Union's Erasmus+ Programme (KA2).

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