

Stimulating, enriching and enhancing youth participation with the Certificate of Civic Engagement

Name of the organisation

ULB Engagee

Website of the organisation

<https://engagee.ulb.be/>

Location of the organisation

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Good practice aspect(s)/themes of youth work

- Non-formal education/-learning
- Volunteering/voluntarism
- Recognition/validation of learning
- Active citizenship/activism

Good practice category

Concrete tool

Good practice aim & purpose

The Certificate of Civic Engagement objectives are :

- Address the increasing number of young individuals eager to actively participate in civil society. They seek preparation prior to on-field engagement, and aspire to have their societal engagement recognized and valued.
- Stimulate youth civic action by offering a range of volunteer missions.
- Support on-field engagement, both individually and collectively, empowering young individuals to develop solutions autonomously in response to encountered challenges.

- Value citizen participation, formally recognize and validate acquired competencies. Beyond the 10 extracurricular credits and the obtained certificate. Young people are guided to identify their achievements and learn how to articulate them for future recruitments.
- Facilitate the meeting of engaged youth to encourage sharing, mutual assistance, enthusiasm, and the exploration of different horizons.

- Enable young people to take action, feel useful, and contribute to positive solutions.
- Prepare young individuals for employment: the acquired cross-cutting skills, along with the establishment of a network, ease their professional integration. The improved self-awareness informs their professional project.
- Contribute to a more inclusive, green, and sustainable Europe through the realization of all young people's volunteering efforts. A 150-hour volunteering commitment allows for genuine involvement and highly appreciated assistance within formal and informal associations.

Good practice description

The Certificate of Civic Engagement represents an innovative tool of non-formal learning incorporating online courses, participatory workshops, and hands-on experiences.

As part of CECi, we:

- Make online course modules available. These are based on real-life cases and a variety of audiovisual aids. These are divided into 4 modules developed with the help of experts: commitment and social issues, running an association, project management and communication.
- Support young people in their volunteering in a non-profit organization. ULB Engagée is on hand to make sure that these volunteer placements run smoothly, and that the experience is as fulfilling as possible for the young people involved.
- We run participative workshops combining the development of skills and knowledge, putting young people in touch with inspiring people, using collective intelligence and enjoying moments of relaxation.
- We mobilize and support associations so that they can offer mobilization opportunities for young people, and so that they can take part in the development of their actions.
- We collect youth's portfolios, make sure they are complete and submit all documents to the jury members who will decide on the validation of the certificate for each young.
- We organise the ceremony during which each youth will be recognised for their civic engagement – on stage, with a diversified audience of around 400 people.
- We communicate on CECi to promote it towards youth and civil society, and search for funding to ensure the project's perennity

Good practice result & concrete effects

Young people participating in CECi position themselves as actors in building the world of tomorrow. These activities contribute to strengthening their self-confidence and are a source of well-being and personal fulfillment. Currently, 93% of participants say that this certificate has contributed to acquiring useful skills for their engagement and professional life. The young integrate into a community of engaged students and meet the various actors of civil society. Our survey shows that all participants feel more motivated to engage after participating in CECi.

CECi stimulates civic participation, particularly by giving young people the opportunity to engage sustainably, up to 150 hours within a maximum of two years, in solidarity projects. For organizations hosting young volunteers, this is an opportunity to collaborate with motivated, trained, and supported individuals. They also gain a fresh and external perspective on their activities.

By 2025, 180 young people will have participated in civil society and completed the equivalent of 15 full-time jobs of volunteering within approximately 100 partners, formal and informal associations. The assistance provided covers all sectors of society and is primarily carried out in the Brussels-Capital region. However, some internships have already taken place in Wallonia and other European Union countries (Erasmus students).

Good practice chapter of the European Charter on Local Youth Work

Organisation and practice