

Engage Youth platform

Name of the organisation

DYPALL Network

Website of the organisation

www.dypall.com

Location of the organisation

PASSEIO ESTE LIBRO QUE VOS DEIXO LO, 8500-356 FARO, Portugal

E-mail address of the organisation

info@dypall.com

Good practice aspect(s)/themes of youth work

- Participation of young people in decision making
- Policymaking processes, methods and tools

Good practice category

Concrete tool

Good practice aim & purpose

Youth participation in decision-making processes has increasingly become a key element in creating inclusive, sustainable, and youth-friendly policies. Across Europe, several models have emerged in order to engage young people in shaping decisions that directly impact their communities, regions, and nations. These platforms, which include youth councils, parliaments, advisory boards, co-management bodies, youth ambassadors schemes and more, offer young people a space to express their opinions, provide recommendations, and actively contribute to governance. By fostering environments where young people can collaborate with policymakers, institutions, and other stakeholders, these models aim to empower youth and ensure their voices are included in crucial decision-making processes that affect them.

Despite this, meaningful youth engagement remains inconsistent across different sectors and regions. To bridge this gap, various mechanisms of youth participation have popped up, offering different levels of involvement, from advisory roles to full co-management in decision-making bodies. Understanding these models, their strengths, weaknesses, and different approaches to implement them is crucial for policymakers, organisations, and institutions seeking to empower young people effectively and integrate a youth perspective into their approach. This practice provides a tool for practitioners, youth workers, local authorities, and young people to create meaningful youth engagement processes

Good practice description

The [Engage Youth platform \(https://engage-youth.com/\)](https://engage-youth.com/) supports public and private institutions to understand better what model of youth engagement better fits their needs, objectives and resources by providing an Assessment tool and information about the recommended mechanism that comes out as the results of their self-assessment, as well as an Action plan grid.

Youth engagement can take many forms, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach. That is why the Engage Youth platform introduces eight key mechanisms to help the users find the one that best fits their goals and context:

1. youth councils
2. youth parliaments
3. youth advisory boards/panels
4. youth co-management bodies
5. youth delegates and ambassadors
6. youth grantings
7. youth ad-hoc meetings
8. consultative mechanisms

The platform is built on the grounds “Qualitative guidelines for mechanisms of youth engagement” published by DYPALL Network and its partners in 2025 within an EU-funded project “Climbing the Ladder: Fostering a Culture of Youth Engagement”. There are many ways to categorise youth participation structures, having in mind that representation is a crucial element to take into account across all formats. Whether through elections, nominations, or open applications, it is critical to reflect on who is involved and who they speak for. These mechanisms can serve different functions, ranging from civic education to shared governance, that are interrelated. Educational mechanisms aim to develop young people’s capacities for civic engagement, leadership, and critical thinking. These structures are often designed to be training experiences, where young people learn about policy processes, institutional structures, and advocacy methods without necessarily having a binding role in decision-making. Youth also get equipped with a large set of skills, from public speaking to project design and implementation. Youth councils (especially in their more consultative form), youth forums, youth grantings, and youth parliaments have this aspect more evident. The value of these approaches lies in their emphasis on inclusion, skill development, and raising awareness about democratic processes. On the other hand, decision-making mechanisms position young people as co-creators of policy or strategy, ensuring direct influence or control over specific processes. These include youth co- management bodies (where youth and adults share power), but also youth panels. In these formats, young people are not only consulted but also actively shape outcomes, distribute resources, or influence institutional directions.

Good practice result & concrete effects

The platform was launched at the end of 2025 so it is still a relatively new tool.

The concrete effects of using the Engage Youth platform are primarily meant to be visible in the way institutions approach the design and implementation of youth participation structures. First, the tool helps decision-makers move from informal or symbolic consultation towards more structured and sustainable participation models. Many municipalities and organisations initially express interest in creating youth participation bodies without fully understanding the differences between mechanisms such as youth councils, youth parliaments or advisory boards. By clarifying the characteristics, governance implications and resource requirements of each mechanism, the platform enables institutions to make more informed and realistic choices.

Second, the platform encourages a more strategic approach to youth participation. Through the self-assessment process, institutions reflect on questions such as the level of decision-making power they are willing to share with young people, the institutional support available, and the long-term sustainability of participation mechanisms. This reflection often leads municipalities to rethink existing practices and to redesign participation structures in a way that better aligns with their policy goals and administrative capacity.

Another important effect is the capacity-building dimension. The platform does not only provide recommendations but also offers accessible explanations about the eight youth engagement mechanisms (youth councils, youth parliaments, youth advisory boards or panels, youth co-management bodies, youth delegates and ambassadors, youth grantings, youth ad-hoc meetings and consultative mechanisms). This knowledge component allows local authorities and youth workers to better understand the diversity of participation models used across Europe and to adapt these practices to their own local realities.

Good practice chapter of the European Charter on Local Youth Work

Organisation and practice