



EUROPEAN EGL EVENT 2026

2-5 June, Tromsø

The European EGL 2026 Event:

How can youth work support youth participation in remote territories of Europe?

The 8th conference of the
Europe Goes Local network
2 – 5 June 2026,
Tromsø (Norway)



EUROPEAN UNION



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Title: The European EGL 2026 Event

Published in July 2026

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.21342045

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Table of Contents

The European EGL 2026 Event.....	4
Youth work and youth participation in remote territories of Europe.....	7
Parallel Study Visits	14
Tvibit Youth Centre.....	14
FRITID Youth Centre and accessible activities.....	16
Alfheim Activity House for disabled young people	17
Tromsø Red Cross Fellesverket.....	18
Tromsø International Film Festival Youth Program.....	20
Tromsø Public Library and Archives Youth Section	22
Tromsø Sami House	24
Outreach team (Utekontakten).....	25
Good Practices Workshops and Gallery	26
Democratic Participation & Civic Space (GR).....	26
Passo dopo Passo (step-by-step) (IT).....	29
DKN – think, move, don't be afraid (LV).....	31
Youth Democracy Lab: Co-creating Civic Participation in Maia (PT)	33
Youth Work Development Kit (EGL Steering Group).....	35
From Beneficiaries to Volunteers and Community Leaders (RO).....	36
Pałacyk Creativity Center as a Multidimensional Support Tool for Youth: Starachowice Case Study (PL)	39
The Anatomy of Distance: Mobile Civic Laboratories & The Pedagogy of the Journey (IT) ..	40
Youth Protection Concept (SE & DE).....	43
Supporting access to Irish Language Youth Clubs in Gaeltacht Areas.....	45
The Key to the Future – From Marginalisation to Participation: An Integrated Community-Based Model for Roma Youth in Budila Commune.....	46
VR EDUCATION	49
Making local youth environment safe and inclusive	51
The Ladies' Dowry.....	53
Step out, Tune in!.....	55
Annexes.....	57
Annex 1: European EGL 2026 Event Programme	57
Annex 2: EGL European Messages on the post-2027 EU Youth Strategy	61



The European EGL 2026 Event

This Event was the 8th European network conference of the strategic cooperation network Europe Goes Local (EGL). This year marked a special edition, as it was the first time the conference was co-organized with and co-hosted by a European Youth Capital: Tromsø (Norway), inspiring the conference theme through the goals of its European Youth Capital programme, True North 2026.

The year 2026 is also a crucial moment for European youth work and youth policy development. Negotiations on the future Erasmus+ funding scheme are ongoing within the European Union's decision-making institutions, triggering advocacy and lobbying efforts in the community of practice to secure continued European funding for youth work development and youth mobility.

- Another key political framework, the European Youth Strategy, is also set to be re-discussed and renewed for the post-2027 period, providing the backbone and reference framework for youth policy in Europe.

The European Youth Work Agenda remains the core policy framework for European youth work, and its connected Roadmap is yet to be launched as the main outcome of the sector's landmark event, the 4th European Youth Work Convention, which took place in 2025 in Malta.

At the municipal level, youth work received important support in 2025 and 2026 from the Council of Europe (CoE). The European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life, adopted in October 2025 by the CoE Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and supported by the CoE Committee of Ministers in March 2026, highlights the vital role of youth work in local communities as one of the key support structures enabling young people to achieve meaningful participation.

With this in mind, the European EGL 2026 Event had the following objectives:

- Discuss what meaningful local youth participation entails in remote, less privileged or rural areas by exploring (legal) frameworks, (alternative) formats, platforms, tools, and channels, as well as the supporting role of youth work.
- Exchange views and present existing models for overcoming obstacles to engaging young people in shaping local communities and ensuring their voices are heard.
- Showcase how Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps can support meaningful youth participation in local communities, and the role youth work plays in this ecosystem.
- Gather input for the European consultation on the European Youth Strategy 2028–2034.
- Last but not least, as the Europe Goes Local project marks its 10th anniversary in 2026, celebrate the community of practice that has developed steadily throughout this decade-long journey.



The Event took place from 2nd June to 5th June 2026 in Tromsø, Norway, and gathered 116 participants from 34 countries in Europe and beyond (including European overseas territories), each country bringing a delegation of 2-4 persons. The participants represented various organisations: from municipalities, through National Agencies for the EU Youth Programmes and international bodies such as SALTO, to youth (umbrella) organisations (see below). Participants take up various roles at these organisations, from officials such as directors and officers, through elected representatives, youth workers, municipality workers, and experts, to researchers (see below).

Table 1: Organisation types represented by the participants		%
Municipality		36.9%
NGOs		31.5%
National Agency or SALTO Centre		29.7%
National governments		1.8%

Table 2: Professional categories of the participants		%
Professional working in municipal level youth work (municipal staff)		30%
NA/SALTO staff		27%
Representative of a national network, umbrella organization dealing with municipal level youth work		13%
Professional with a diverse range of expertise engaged in municipal youth work (experts working in NGOs, institutes – non-municipal staff)		12%
Representative of a European-level organisation/institution		5%
Representative of a youth council		5%
Elected municipal decision-makers		4%
Researcher involved in studies on municipal level youth work		3%
Government representatives		2%

The European EGL 2026 Event included a mix of engaging presentations, panel discussions, practical workshops, study visits, and interactive peer-to-peer support sessions. The Event was structured into diverse formats to ensure dynamic engagement and knowledge transfer. The detailed Event programme can be found in the annexes to this report. The main programme building blocks included:



EUROPEAN EGL EVENT 2026

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- An online onboarding session: Before the conference, an optional online 90-minute onboarding session was organised for participants to start to get to know each other, get familiar with the programme, and with Workvivo, the online communication platform which was used before and throughout the conference. The onboarding session took place on 26th May 2025.
- Plenary addresses: Placed throughout the Event, those were collective moments keeping participants focused and in tune with the practical and strategic intentions of the Event.
- Practice presentations: Participants held workshops and used posters in a “practice gallery” to present initiatives that focused on the developments in local democracy, and youth work policy and practice in (rural) local realities across Europe.
- Study visits: Various local initiatives welcomed participants of the Event to their venues, such as youth clubs or libraries.
- In-depth discussions: Participants engaged in various formats of group debates, such as round tables, where they explored what they learned and reflected in multinational groups.
- Deliberations on the future EU youth policies: Participants heard inputs from various policy stakeholders and subsequently held deliberations on the future of the post-2027 EU Youth Strategy, a vital development for local youth work.
- Networking time: Participants shared experiences and built networks more informally.

This report summarises the thematic discussions and presented practices and underlines the collective insights of the participants to support knowledge-building and actionable steps.





Youth work and youth participation in remote territories of Europe

This chapter provides a summary of the overall deliberations on youth work in rural and remote areas which took place at the EGL 2026 Event, and it is based on inputs of the following experts:

- **Ms. Camilla Ringdal Dukefos**, Head of the Norwegian National Agency for Erasmus+
- **Ms. Inge Stuer**, Programme Director of Erasmus+ Youth & European Solidarity Corps at JINT, the Belgian-Flemish National Agency
- **Mr. Jonas Agdur**, member of the EGL Steering Group and Advisory Board, and senior advisor at the KEKS Network
- **Ms. Parahini Parabaran**, youth activist
- **Ms. Klara Fromm**, member of the Tromsø Youth Council
- **Ms. Sigrid Bjørnhaug Hammer**, Deputy Mayor of Tromsø
- **Mr. Martinus Amundsen**, member of the True North 2026 team
- **Ms. Lene Vågslid**, Minister of Children and Families in Norway
- **Ms. Biliana Sirakova**, Deputy Head of Unit Youth and Volunteer Solidarity of the European Commission
- **Mr. Tobias Flessenkemper**, Head of the Youth Department, Council of Europe
- **Ms. Sif Vik**, Development and Project Manager at Tvibit and part of the Tromsø European Youth Capital 2026 team (Norway)
- **Mr. Mathieu Roumegous**, Director of Agence du Service Civique (the French Erasmus+ Youth and Sports National Agency)
- **Mr. Pedro Tavares**, Head of Youth, Sport and Tourism Office at the Municipality of Lagoa – Azores (Portugal)
- **Mr. Jan Lai**, Senior Youth Expert and Project Manager at Intercultural Association NUR, Sardinia (Italy)
- **Mr. Babis Papaioannou**, Policy Officer – Youth policy and Programmes, European Commission
- **Ms. Sina Riz à Porta**, Board member of the European Youth Forum
- **Ms. Lara Liebertz**, Board member of ERYICA
- **Ms. Carolina Loureiro**, Deputy Director of DYPALL
- **Ms. Jenny Haglund**, Secretary General of KEKS
- **Mr. Claudius Siebel**, Chairperson of the EGL Advisory Board
- **Ms. Martine Lødding**, Coordinator of Tromsø European Youth Capital 2026
- **Mr. Ondřej Bárta**, Freelance youth researcher and Senior Associate at People, Dialogue and Change



When talking about remote areas, it needs to first be clarified what that means. How remote are areas which are sometimes described as “socially excluded localities”, but which can often be found inside large cities? How remote are small settlements which are an hour’s drive from a large city, and yet, any services, culture, or leisure time activities are only accessible in that city at the end of an hour’s drive? **While the concept of remoteness is often understood as a geographical term, in which it means physical distance from various services, it is useful to also acknowledge the lack of connection that it brings.**

Should this lack of connection mean lack of influence for young people living in remote areas? Lack of influence would then mean that these young people are not heard, and that they do not have opportunities to participate as much as their peers from other places, that they are not part of our democracy. **For the sake of the young people, and the future of our democracy, it is vital that young people living in rural and remote areas are not left behind, but that they are invited to shape their communities through participatory methods supported by local youth work.**

The Council of Europe’s “Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on youth work” literally states that: “*Youth work is quintessentially a social practice, working with young people and the societies in which they live, facilitating young people’s active participation and inclusion in their communities and in decision making.*” The EGL Charter on Local Youth Work furthermore stresses the need for youth work “*to be based on and respond to the needs, interests, ideas and experiences of young people as perceived by themselves, thus bringing added value and/or joy in life; and to be created, organised, planned, prepared, carried out and evaluated together with or by young people.*” Taking these two important documents into account, it is apparent that youth work has a significant role to play in supporting youth participation in remote territories. **Youth work is a practice which is localised, that means takes place where young people are, and it is relational, meaning that it is built on and around relationships with young people, providing them with the influence on their surroundings.**

This also means that youth work needs to support various forms of youth participation. Not all young people are ready and willing to take part in a municipal meeting. Not everyone is keen to or has means to become a member of a national youth council. Some may want to stay on the activist side of democracy, some may wish to be consulted on matters that connect to their



lives, through participatory budgeting for example. It is important that young people are provided with various options, and that these structures or initiatives are being inclusive of all young people, no matter how remotely they live. Youth work should give young people the seat at the table when the agenda is being shaped. As Mr. Agdur said: “Participation requires having influence not in, but over any given concept. Not influence within the youth centre, but over it. Not influence in school, but over school. And not influence in society, but over society. *The role of youth work is to widen horizons, show possibilities, open doors and*



stimulate and support young people to participate in the way they want for the ideas and causes they believe, whoever they are and wherever they live.” Influence is a key aspect of participation. Without influence, participation becomes simulation. Simulation can be a learning experience, or a meaningless hurtful experience if it is presented as true participation. Youth work has the potential to support young people in co-creating such participatory mechanisms which work for both young people and adults.

Engaging young people can be a challenge, especially in remote areas, as Mr. Tavares also mentioned in case of the Azores islands. **That is where youth work comes in, creating bridges.** Bridges between young people and their communities, the decision-makers, and various opportunities. But also, bridges between different groups of people and young people, wherever they live. Such bridges are then the bases for participatory culture, and that is an undertaking which may span several young generations, building it brick by brick. Ms. Vik underlined this long-term dimension, and showcased it on the example of Tromsø, where the youth participation movement has been going on for many decades.

Much of the deliberations revolved around the post-2027 EU Youth Strategy, recognising how much difference a clear youth work focus could make across Europe. In order for youth work to be the bridge and support young people in remote areas, youth work itself cannot be remote from policy and funding opportunities. As Ms. Vågslid highlighted, youth work should not be demoted and dismembered in times of crises, it should be strengthened and boosted as one of the key services that help us to overcome these crises, especially in rural and remote areas. **The post-2027 EU Youth Strategy has a potential to support youth work in general and youth work in remote areas as well, especially in connection with the post-2027 EU youth programmes.** One of the outcomes of the EGL 2026 Event was an open letter submitted to the European Commission as part of the public consultation (see Annex 2). This document is based on the debates at the 2026 Event, but also on previous EGL Events and key EGL achievements, such as the EGL Charter on Local Youth Work. It outlines several key recommendations on how to emphasise and support local youth work in the post-2027 EU Youth Strategy. Namely, the European Commission, the Council of the EU, and the European Parliament are invited to consider the following:

- Youth work should be a cornerstone of the post-2027 EU Youth Strategy.
- A basic youth work offer should be available to all young people in the EU, especially at the local level as this is the closest to the daily lives of young people.
- The post-2027 EU Youth Strategy should support local actors by embracing the European Youth Work Agenda (EYWA).
- The development of local youth policies and of local youth work policies should be encouraged and supported.
- Youth work development should be strongly linked to the new Erasmus+ programme.
- Youth workers should be supported.
- Youth work infrastructure should be supported.
- The development of local youth work policies and practices should be supported by establishing a European platform for the youth work community of practice.



The strongest implementation mechanism of any EU Youth Strategy are the EU youth programmes. The EU youth programmes such as the Erasmus+ Youth, the European Solidarity Corps, or the EU Youth Dialogue, therefore play a key role in enhancing the opportunities of young people. It is key that even remote areas, like the French overseas territories for example, can access these programmes, and engage their young people in various projects. Mr. Roumegous pointed out that some systemic barriers still apply, stemming for example from different designations of some of the overseas territories (some being part of the EU, some not), or from the fact that financial rules do not take into account travelling specificities of remote areas. The French National Agency for the EU youth programmes is supporting the remote regions by collaborating within a network of National Agencies from other countries that also have territories outside of Europe, such as Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, or Denmark, and also by working locally with the (youth work) organisations in the overseas territories. Mr. Papaioannou suggested that easy access to the EU youth programmes for youth people from rural and remote areas is one of the priorities for the next EU youth programmes iteration. Among other key topics that were debated was the predictability of resources and their long-term focus, investments in quality youth service systems including through organisational and operational grants, easier and youth-friendly grant administration. Some participants also stressed the need for diversified youth work funding, and options for creating EU-wide holistic funds for small communities which would support development of various services and include youth work as an inherent component.

Successful connections between local youth work and the EU youth programmes can be clearly seen in Norway, as Ms. Dukefos highlighted. The Norwegian Red Cross has managed to establish 20 municipal youth clubs, and these have become regular beneficiaries of the Erasmus+ projects. The projects focus on youth exchanges, on youth participation activities, and on the DiscoverEU Inclusion Action. It is not only the young people who enjoy travelling and mobility stays abroad who can benefit from these programmes. The local communities in the remote areas benefit when young people come back and bring these experiences with them. Moreover, volunteering in remote communities can vastly benefit these areas, both practically, and by providing the sense of connection to the rest of the world, as Mr. Roumegous pointed out. This also contributes to young people in remote communities to be more independent, inquisitive and keen to try out new things, all very important attributes, as underlined by Ms. Vik. Such initiatives can also help explore and sustain local identities, cultures, and traditions, by providing young people with safe spaces in which they can reflect on their heritage and make conscious choices on the identity and culture they want to build in their own remote areas.

Europe Goes Local itself is a magnificent example of supporting local youth work across various contexts and across the whole of Europe. Celebrating its 10th anniversary, there is a clear track record of achievements. From key documents such as the EGL Charter on Local Youth Work, and the EGL Youth Work Development Toolkit, through actively contributing to the European Youth Work Agenda and the Bonn Process, and supporting the development of the “Resolution of the Council of the EU on youth work policy in an empowering Europe”, to creating bridges across local youth work realities. All of this has been achieved through a cooperation of National Agencies for the EU youth programmes, led democratically by a Steering Group consisting of various stakeholders, and across 35 member countries. Partnerships that EGL has built along the way are just as important. Building bridges with the European Youth Forum,



KEKS, DYPALL, ERYICA, or the [Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe](#) are all important developments not only for EGL, but for the European youth work community of practice. Ms. Stuer underlined that this shows the positive impact that the EU Youth Strategy and the EU youth programmes may bring to young people by supporting local youth work. Mr. Papaioannou also stressed that joining EGL initiatives is one of highly recommended steps for local and remote youth workers and organisations, as EGL has been supporting local youth work for many years with substantial success.

Another example of a highly successful youth initiative is the European Youth Capital, awarded by the European Youth Forum. **In 2026, Tromsø holds the title, with its programme “True North 2026”, therefore hosting the first European Youth Capital in the Nordics and the first in the Arctic.** In the words of Mr. Amundsen, the True North 2026 should make sure that Tromsø *“is a better place for young people to live, work and create.”* As a young person himself, he believes that trust is essential: *“Adults often say that young people should be heard. Real participation goes a little further than that. It means influence, responsibility and trust. It means being involved before decisions are made, not after.”*



Ms. Hammer also stressed that the True North 2026 aims to benefit all young people in Tromsø and surrounding regions, underlining the Sami heritage of the area, its specific language, culture, and history. Apart from collaborating on the EGL 2026 Event, the True North 2026 still has many ambitious plans, with some examples listed by Ms. Lødding: bringing together youth workers from all over Norway, getting youth voices to local municipalities, employing 100 people “Not in Education, Employment, or Training” (NEETs) at the Tromsø municipality to gain work experience, organising youth exchanges with 600 young people coming to Tromsø this year, run a participation festival, an art exhibition for young Sami people, an Arctic Youth Dialogue, and an Arctic Youth Conference in Nuuk.

It has been stressed numerous times during the EGL 2026 Event that **while places can be remote, opportunities never should be.** This is stressed also in the new [EU Right to Stay Strategy](#). Young people should have a real option to stay in their local communities, grow and build their futures there, not be pushed out of these communities by lack of opportunities. This was also stressed by Mr. Flessenkemper, when he pointed out that remoteness in itself should not be seen negatively. Remote areas bring many positives to lives of young people, such as the unique environments in which these areas are located, or the welcoming local communities, as highlighted by Ms. Parabaran. And just as Ms. Parabaran decided to stay in the High North, all young people should have that choice. Young people should not have to leave the places they love in order to achieve what they aspire in life. Youth work and youth participation opportunities are vital for young people to find their own sense of belonging and happiness at a place where they live, as underlined by Ms. Fromm and Ms. Vågslid.

There are also examples of various participatory mechanisms at the EU level which may prove useful for local level youth workers and municipalities. The [EU Youth Check](#) is a tool which ensures that a policy at any level takes into account the needs of young people. [The President's](#)



Youth Advisory Board was established by the European Commission President Ms. Ursula von der Leyen, providing her with views of young people on various topics. The EU Youth Stakeholders Group is another structure giving young people a voice in EU policymaking, aiming to “engage European youth organisations, national youth councils, youth researchers, representatives of Member States and other EU institutions in the implementation of the legacy of the European Year of Youth 2022 and the 2019-2027 EU Youth Strategy, and to facilitate exchanges and youth consultations on forthcoming EU policy initiatives.” The EU Citizens’ Engagement Platform is providing all EU citizens, including young people from remote areas, with an online space through which they can share their views on various upcoming policy topics. The European Citizens’ Panels (e.g., on intergenerational fairness, or on learning mobility) are a regular exercise where a specific topic is debated repeatedly by a randomly selected group of EU citizens, with one third of all member seats dedicated to young people between 16 and 29 years of age.

Youth information is key for all local youth work and youth participation in remote areas. It has been stressed by Ms. Sirakova, that without reliable and accessible information, no local youth work can properly support young people, and no connection between the local and the EU realities can be established. In this context, youth information services such as ERYICA and Eurodesk can be mentioned. Both networks focus on providing young people with reliable information on various opportunities relating to youth work, participation, volunteering, the EU youth programmes, and many other areas.

Youth research also has a role to play in supporting youth work in rural and remote areas. The Youth Barometer is a worthwhile exercise that is happening annually in Finland via the Finnish Youth Research Society, and every few years at the EU level via Eurostat. These surveys are examples of how youth research can help young people be heard, by monitoring needs and opinions of young people on representative samples.

There are also additional considerations which have been debated at the EGL 2026 Event, such as the impact of tourism on remote areas, its young people, and participation structures. This is a complex domain, but one which should be taken into account, as it impacts the availability of living spaces in some areas (through abundance of short-term tourist rentals), or the sustainability of the areas themselves (through tourist activities). **Tourism is affecting local youth, and local youth should be able to affect and shape tourism.** The EU Strategy on Intergenerational Fairness is outlining the EU approach to various contemporary and emerging crises, and its section on “megatrends” can be an inspiring read also for youth workers and young people in remote areas.

Participants of the EGL 2026 Event also elaborated on desirable future youth work developments. Local decision-makers should be offered capacity-building opportunities on how to include young people in local policymaking, and youth workers might play a role in such an initiative as well. Youth spaces should also be supported, including sharing spaces that are already available, such as schools or municipality houses in the evenings, and also digital spaces that young people and youth workers could use. In rural and remote areas this domain widens out to also include transport, including creative solutions such as youth-accessible car sharing. Formal education for youth workers has also been debated, including the need to combine formal and non-formal learning in order to provide the best possible youth workers’ preparation,



ideally through a modular format which also serves youth workers who already left the education system to go back and learn about new and emerging topics. Quality standards for youth workers might facilitate setting up the education programmes, and these should be created at the EU level. National events for youth workers are valuable moments for peer learning, and they should be held in all Member States. Psychological support should be available for youth workers, and youth workers should also receive mental health aid (e.g., toolkits) and training (e.g., crisis management). To help them with the psychological burden, youth workers should work in multi-disciplinary teams in order not to face vulnerable situations alone.

Furthermore, interesting initiatives supporting local youth participation and local youth work have been shared by some participants of the EGL 2026 Event, such as the [European Network of Local Youth Councils](#), [ENGAGE YOUTH](#) (a platform that empowers practitioners, youth workers, local authorities, and young people to create meaningful youth engagement processes by choosing the most suitable mechanism), [Creating Spaces of Democracy](#) (Erasmus+ project on advancing professional open youth work across Europe), [VanGO! Mobile Youth Center](#) (youth centre on wheels in Romania), [Associazione Il Vergante Italy](#) (a dedicated stakeholder within the Europe Goes Local network, working to bridge the gap between European policies and rural youth work), and the [Youth Council of the Municipality of Thermi in Greece](#) (addresses the challenge of engaging young people from diverse and geographically dispersed communities through a decentralized sociocratic model).





Parallel Study Visits

The participants of the EGL 2026 Event had an opportunity to visit various youth field organisations in Tromsø. Divided into small groups, they had a chance to see the various spaces for young people, from youth centres to libraries, talk to the youth workers and experts on site, and even experience some of the activities prepared for young people. The following subchapters provide insights into these study visits.

Tvibit Youth Centre

Tvibit Youth Centre is a creative hub for young people and young professionals in the whole of Northern Norway. Tvibit's main aim is empowerment of young people through cultural activities and autonomous projects, and to give young people the skills and motivation to change society through positive autonomous activities.

Tvibit is a cultural and creative hub, production centre, competence centre, meeting place and café, all under one roof. Tvibit helps young people develop their creative talents and ideas. They focus on youth culture, participation, health, music, film and technology, and creative business. Tvibit is located in a renovated old fire station in the city center, a building of 3000 m² with 4 floors of creative space for public use. The activities consist of music (rehearsal space, recording studio, concert venue etc), film and creative media, art and design, dance, festivals, a café and meeting place, and new young culture (among other things).

Tvibit has approx. 2.500 young people visiting the centre every week and also has activities in the whole of Northern Norway (Nordland, Troms, Finnmark and Svalbard).

Through experimentation, participation and empowerment, Tvibit helps young people develop their own ideas, skills, confidence and a sense of belonging. Tvibit offers young people access to spaces, equipment, mentoring, networks and opportunities to test out ideas in practice. Young people can take part in cultural activities, creative projects, international youth work, volunteering, events, democratic processes and social meeting places. A key principle is that young people should not only be invited to participate in already defined activities, but should be supported to shape, lead and develop initiatives themselves. Tvibit's work is based on a strong belief that all young people have resources and the potential to contribute positively to their own lives and to the society around them. The centre therefore focuses on lowering thresholds, building trust and creating opportunities where young people can experience mastery, responsibility and ownership. Youth workers act as facilitators and mentors, supporting young people from idea to action, rather than simply delivering ready-made programmes.

Another important aim has been to connect local youth work in Tromsø with wider European and international opportunities. Through Erasmus+, volunteering, youth exchanges and cooperation with partners across Europe, Tvibit has helped young people in Tromsø see themselves as part of a larger world. This has strengthened young people's confidence, broadened their perspectives and contributed to Tromsø's international profile as a city that invests in youth participation.



The long-term effects of Tvibit's work can be seen both in the lives of young people and in the development of Tromsø as a youth-friendly city. Thousands of young people have participated in activities, projects, events, exchanges and creative initiatives where they have gained confidence, skills, networks and experience with participation and leadership. Many young people who first entered Tvibit as participants have later become volunteers, project leaders, youth workers, artists, entrepreneurs or active contributors in civil society and local democracy.

Tvibit covers the following topical areas:

Competence development of youth workers	European/international cooperation/projects	Capacity building of youth work organisations
Participation of young people in decision-making	Peace-building and conflict transformation	Mental health and well-being of young people
Follow up/evaluation practices of youth work	Research and evidence-based youth-work development	Policymaking processes, methods and tools
Recognition/validation of learning	Youth work in rural areas	Environment/climate
Human rights	Digital youth work	Sustainable development
Community work	Inclusion	Employability
Discrimination	Diversity	Entrepreneurship
Arts and culture	Gender	Volunteering/voluntarism
Safe/secure youth work environment	LGBTIQ	Lobbying/advocacy for youth work
Youth information and counselling	Disability	Recognition of youth work
Digital and information literacy	Active citizenship/activism	Young refugees
Cross-sector cooperation	Racism	Administration of youth work
Organisation of youth work	Planning youth work	Documentation of youth work
Non-formal education/-learning	Youth work in urban areas	Intercultural understanding
Participation of young people in implementing youth activities (planning, preparing, carrying out, etc.)		

EGL Event participants noted that the investment in youth work infrastructure has had many significant impacts and appreciated that Tvibit is youth-led. One of the participants said: "Putting trust in young people works, and it generates amazing things."



FRITID Youth Centre and accessible activities

Their goal is to ensure that youth from impoverished or disenfranchised homes also have access to leisure activities and a meaningful everyday life. Everyone is welcome in their youth and junior clubs; they also see that a lot of their user base consists of lower social class families and youths that can't afford other organized activities like football or music classes and such. They aim to provide as many young people as they can with the means to be able to participate in society in a meaningful manner, and to provide them with the social skills they need. Helping youths to grow up to be the best version of themselves. They provide them with safe adults that they can look up to, so they are able to show their best traits, and decide for themselves who they want to become in a safe and rich environment. They also hire as many youths as they can as workers both in the youth clubs and in other activities run by the municipality, so they learn responsibility and the value of hard work at an early age, but also with the security of youth workers that tailor their workday to the young person's needs. They have a mentorship-programme in the Tromsø Municipality that targets youth engaged in crime, drugs or violence to help them turn their lives around. The mentors are youth workers in the youth clubs, so the kids already know and like them. This has had a real effect on the crime rates among young people in Tromsø.

FRITID Youth Centre covers the following topical areas:

Participation of young people in decision-making	Mental health and well-being of young people	Safe/secure youth work environment
Non-formal education/learning	Recognition/validation of learning	Gender
LGBTIQ	Inclusion	Racism
Radicalisation	Segregation/integration	Young refugees
Employability	Entrepreneurship	Arts and culture
Diversity	Youth work in urban areas	Disability
Participation of young people in implementing youth activities (planning, preparing, carrying out, etc.)		

EGL Event participants noted that the investment of the local municipality definitely pays off.



Alfheim Activity House for disabled young people

The activity house offers cultural activities for people of all ages with cognitive disabilities, such as music and theatre groups, regular leisure-club, summer activities, a café, concerts, a yearly dance gala, travel and courses. Cultural and leisure activities, social community and identity building environments are of equal importance for all people, regardless of their disabilities.

EGL Event participants shared that one of the most striking aspects of the centre's approach is its complete independence from European funding programmes. Staff members were largely unaware of programs such as Erasmus+ or the European Solidarity Corps – not out of lack of capacity, but simply because they have never needed them. The centre is fully funded through the municipal budget and supplemented by its own fundraising activities.

Equally noteworthy was the deliberate choice to frame the centre's work as a cultural matter rather than a health or welfare issue. By addressing funding requests to municipal culture programmes instead of health and welfare departments, the centre not only secures better-resourced funding, but also makes a strong philosophical statement: the people attending are not patients or care recipients, but citizens with a right to cultural participation.

The most prominent idea was the principle of autonomy and self-determination among participants. In the musical workshops, the musicians themselves decide what music to play, how to organize rehearsals, and how to structure their concerts. This reflects a broader philosophy where people with cognitive disabilities are treated as active agents in their own cultural life, not passive recipients of a service.

Equally central was the idea of social inclusion through culture. For many participants who live alone or in institutions, the centre is one of their main opportunities for community life and belonging. Programming is also person-centred: summer activities, for instance, are only designed after participants have enrolled and expressed their needs.



Tromsø Red Cross Fellesverket

Fellesverket is a free and inclusive youth centre for young people aged 13–25, designed to provide a safe and meaningful place to spend time, build relationships, and develop skills. Their aim is simple but powerful: to ensure that all young people—regardless of background or family resources—have access to a supportive environment where they can experience belonging, mastery, and personal growth. The centre is open three days a week, offering regular and predictable meeting points where young people can gather and engage in both informal and structured activities. A free warm meal is served every day the centre is open, creating an important social arena where young people can come together and feel included. Across communities, access to free and safe leisure activities varies greatly. Many young people lack spaces where they can simply “be,” connect with others, and be supported by trusted adults. Fellesverket offers a low-threshold meeting place where young people are welcomed as they are, without expectations of performance or prior experience. At the heart of their work is the belief that social participation is essential—not only for young people’s quality of life here and now, but for their future. Through everyday interactions and structured activities, young people at Fellesverket strengthen their social, emotional, and relational skills. These are key building blocks for resilience, mental well-being, and active participation in society.

The activities at Fellesverket are shaped by youth participation throughout the year. Young people are actively involved in developing the programme, ensuring that activities reflect their interests, needs, and ideas. Activities vary widely—from creative workshops and crafts to themed events such as “Vennentines” (Friendtines/Valentine’s celebrations) and Easter egg hunts, as well as tournaments in table tennis and billiards. They also organize trips outside the centre, such as laser tag, arcade visits, bowling, and outdoor activities like barbecuing and bouldering. At the same time, they take responsibility for organizing activities during holidays and festive periods, when some young people may experience increased loneliness or fewer opportunities to participate. Through this combination of accessibility, youth participation, meaningful activities, and strong relationships, Fellesverket creates a supportive environment where young people can build confidence, develop skills, and form positive connections that matter in their everyday lives and for their future. As Fellesverket is in the city centre, close to the main bus station, it is easily accessible and naturally reaches young people between school and home. Many describe Fellesverket as a place where they can be themselves and feel “good enough” as they are. Young people return regularly, and many stay connected over time. Through work training and homework support, they gain skills, confidence, and opportunities for education and employment. Overall, Fellesverket strengthens belonging, personal growth, and equal opportunities.

Tromsø Red Cross Fellesverket covers the following topical areas:



EUROPEAN EGL EVENT 2026

2-5 June, Tromsø

Participation of young people in decision-making	Peace-building and conflict transformation	Mental health and well-being of young people
Intergenerational solidarity and co-operation	Mental health and well-being of youth workers and staff	Radicalisation
Recognition/validation of learning	Segregation/integration	Environment/climate
Human rights	Community work	Sustainable development
Racism	Inclusion	Employability
Discrimination	Diversity	Administration of youth work
Arts and culture	Active citizenship/activism	Volunteering/voluntarism
Non-formal education/-learning	Youth work in urban areas	Intercultural understanding
Participation of young people in implementing youth activities (planning, preparing, carrying out, etc.)		

EGL Event participants noted that the open youth work centre registers each young person that comes in digitally, for the safety and statistical purposes. They also appreciated the very leisurely atmosphere of the centre, appreciated volunteers that support young people with their homework, as well as kitchen where young people can cook together and where they are also served free meals on a regular basis.



Tromsø International Film Festival Youth Program

The Tromsø International Film Festival Foundation has, since 1991, presented challenging quality films from around the world to a broad audience. The foundation organizes three annual festivals: TIFF, TIFF Junior, and the Silent Film Days. An important part of their core activities is Verdensteatret – the Cinematheque in Tromsø, which they operate yearround. Their activities reach all age groups from 2–3 years and up, regionally, nationally, and internationally.

TIFF employs the equivalent of 15 fulltime positions, has a turnover of nearly 30 million Norwegian kroner, around 350 volunteers, and a total annual audience/number of tickets sold of 100,000. The main festival, the Tromsø International Film Festival, is Norway's largest film festival with approximately 60,000 tickets sold.

At TIFF in January, they welcome around 3,500 children from kindergartens and primary schools to their free outdoor cinema. In addition, they host a family day that attracts around 1,000 attendees. TIFF in January also includes screenings for lower secondary schools in collaboration with the Cultural Schoolbag in Tromsø municipality, TIFF UNG – a program by and for young people aged 15 to 19 – as well as screenings for upper secondary schools. They conduct two to four annual touring programmes offering films for groups from 1st to 13th grade in collaboration with the Cultural Schoolbag in Tromsø and Finnmark. In recent years, with support for the Cultural Schoolbag development, they have also implemented new initiatives involving young people in developing, testing, and qualityassuring their Cultural Schoolbag productions.

In 2013, the foundation established TIFF Junior (originally “Verdens beste – Tromsø Children's Film Festival”) in collaboration with Aurora kino IKS. One goal was to strengthen and better tailor the film offerings for children aged 3 to 15. From the beginning, the children's film festival emphasized participation from children and young people. A children's jury evaluates, selects, and presents the winners of the festival's film awards, and workshops are organized for children and youth on various aspects of film production. Importantly, they have always had a festival class that participates in all stages of the festival: planning, implementation, and reporting.

In 2024–2025, they developed a pilot for Filmbad (participatory film dialogue) for young people, carried out for lower secondary students at TIFF in January and for primary school students at TIFF Junior. The pilot project is national, supported by Kulturtanken, and conducted in collaboration with the Cultural Schoolbag in Tromsø. It resulted in a national guide enabling organizations across Norway to run the same concept. Since 2022, they have built up TIFF UNG, a participatory project and side program for young people aged 15–20.

Including children and young people in their work is of great value to the festivals as a product, to the general audience, to the staff who meet these audience groups, and not least to the children and young people who take part in the various projects and initiatives. Participation leads to higher quality, increased competence regarding their target groups, strengthened media literacy for children and youth, and is essential to the foundation's audience development work in general – especially in their efforts to increase diversity within their audience.

Tromsø International Film Festival Youth Program covers the following topical areas:



EUROPEAN EGL EVENT 2026

2-5 June, Tromsø

Participation of young people in decision-making	Peace-building and conflict transformation	Follow up/evaluation practices of youth work
Human rights	Non-formal education/learning	Discrimination
Inclusion	Volunteering/voluntarism	Planning youth work
Documentation of youth work	Recognition/validation of learning	Youth work in rural areas
Diversity	Gender	LGBTIQ
Disability	Young refugees	Active citizenship/activism
Intercultural understanding	Environment/climate	Sustainable development
Mental health and well-being of young people	European/international cooperation/projects	Digital and information literacy
Arts and culture	Cross-sectoral cooperation	Youth work in urban areas
Participation of young people in implementing youth activities (planning, preparing, carrying out, etc.)		

EGL Event participants thought that it was innovative to see how the Erasmus+ Youth Exchange programme can be used as a tool to involve young people directly in the core activities of a film festival, such as programming, by giving them real responsibility and a voice in shaping the festival.

EGL Event participants also appreciated the deep community roots shown through collaborations with other organizations, such as Tvibit. The European programmes are used to enhance participation in the film festival, as well as to increase the skills in organising a movie festival.





Tromsø Public Library and Archives Youth Section

The Tromsø public library consists of the main library in the town centre, and two branches on the mainland. In addition, they have a library bus that serves the schools and kindergartens in the district/periphery of Tromsø and some of the neighbouring municipalities. They have a staff member dedicated to collaborating with schools. The children and young adult department at the main library consists of a team of about 10 staff members. They have activities and promote literature for all ages, from babies and toddlers to kindergarteners, primary and secondary school pupils. This includes a meeting space for parents and babies, storytelling, attend parent-teacher meetings and hold lectures/talks for parents of teenagers, book talks and literature promotion and library visits with school classes. They have had creative activities and Toast & Gaming as after school activities for 10–13-year-olds, and Shared Reading groups for young adults and minor/under-aged asylum seekers. Every Saturday they accommodate creative activities and every Sunday they show a children's movie. Every activity at the library is free to attend. A library card is free and children under the age of 18 pay no penalty fee for returning overdue books.

In collaboration with the schools: Book talks and library visits for years 2, 5, 8 and 11/12 and Meet the author – class visits with an author of books for young adults (or adults).

In collaboration with the literature festival, Ordkalotten: Meet the author-events

In collaboration with Tvibit / Health care for teenagers: lectures/talks about relevant topics for parents of teenagers.

Workshops: learning how to write and create a graphic novel (not a regularly recurring event)

Yearlong reading project aimed at all ages: *"A literary journey around the world"*. Every month they select and promote literature from different areas of the world (and fictional worlds), to promote books and authors that one wouldn't normally choose to read and to encourage people to explore books and writers from different countries. Readers can check off their journey on a map, and the tour ends in August 2026.

Toast & Gaming: after school activity every Wednesday. Gaming (PlayStation and Switch) and freshly made toast. Very popular but had to be cancelled due to lack of staff resources.

The library services in Tromsø have been successful in regards of increased lending figures. To make literature, and the kind of books and graphic novels etc. that children want to read, available is important for the reading literacy in the young population. Giving children and young adults a meeting place that is free and open to everyone, is also important. Participation of young people in implementing youth activities (planning, preparing, carrying out, etc.).

Tromsø Public Library and Archives Youth Section covers the following topical areas:



EUROPEAN EGL EVENT 2026

2-5 June, Tromsø

Non-formal education/learning	Recognition/validation of learning	Inclusion
Mental health and well-being of young people	Young refugees	Arts and culture
Digital and information literacy	Youth work in urban areas	

EGL Event participants appreciated the high quality of the library itself (and beauty of the building!) and its inclusive and free youth space. Participants noted that the space is making young people feel welcome and allowing them to spend their free time in a meaningful way, learning about society and democracy through literature and reading.





Tromsø Sami House

Sami House Tromsø offers opportunities to learn about Sami culture and traditions. Sami House Tromsø is an NGO funded by the local government and the Sami government, employing 2 staff members. The NGO used to have a “Sami house” which was open for young people to drop in and spend their time, take part in creative workshops, and enjoy each other’s company. Unfortunately, currently the NGO does not have a house because they lost the previous property and they cannot afford another one. This led the EGL Event participants to brainstorming ways in which the NGO could get further support, such as through the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes.

EGL Event participants engaged in an informal conversation about the life of the Sami people in Norway and specifically in Tromsø, while creating Sami handcrafts (duodji). EGL Event participants learned about the status of Sami people in Norway, a historical overview of their rights and struggles for better recognition. The debates also covered the process of “Norwegianization”, i.e., assimilation of Sami people into the Norwegian society. This assimilation resulted in many Sami people losing their language and struggling to keep their culture. The situation is much improved now, with options to study Sami language in schools, the establishment of a Sami governmental body, and so on.



Outreach team (Utekontakten)

Utekontakten is an outreach team that works directly with young people in various life situations. They work to facilitate early intervention, identify young people facing various challenges, and provide targeted support measures tailored to individual needs. Utekontakten also offer education and information about outreach work and topics relevant to young people, such as substance use and related challenges.

The team works according to the principle that young people have the right to be heard, informed, and involved in decisions that are important to their lives. They follow current legislation regarding the duty to provide information and the duty to prevent harm. Young people can talk to Utekontakten about loneliness, friends and family, school, substance use, violence, bullying, mental health, body image and sexuality, crushes and relationships, and anything else that may be on their mind.

Utekontakten can also help young people apply for school, work, and housing. If they need long-term follow-up, the young person will be assigned their own contact person. Utekontakten can assist you in contacting NAV (the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration), child welfare services, the Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Outpatient Clinic (BUP), the Adult Psychiatric Outpatient Clinic (VPP), doctors, and the Norwegian Correctional Service Region North. They also offer conversations, advice, and guidance for parents and other relatives, and can be contacted if you are concerned about children or other young people. In addition, they offer an open meeting place and climbing activities.

EGL Event participants appreciated the approach of the outreach team: go and be where young people are, such as shopping centres, city centre, schools, etc. While this is delicate engagement and needs to be implemented carefully while respecting the boundaries of young people, it was recognised by the participants as a very effective way to get to young people and support them. Participants also appreciated the outreach happening both during the day and during the night hours, recognising that young people attend various events and engage in different activities during the day and during the night.



Good Practices Workshops and Gallery

The participants of the EGL 2026 Event brought with them numerous good practices which they shared through workshops and posters shown in an open space gallery. All of the presented good practices are described below.

Democratic Participation & Civic Space (GR)

Name of the organisation: ΣΥΜΒΟΥΛΙΟ ΝΕΩΝ ΔΗΜΟY ΘΕΡΜΗΣ

Website of the organisation: <https://youthermi.gr/>

Location of the organisation: VICTOROS HUGO 4, 57001 Thermi, Thessalonikis, Greece

E-mail address of the organisation: youthofthermi@gmail.com

Good practice aim & purpose

The Municipality of Thermi, Greece, has become a prominent leader in youth engagement, recently being designated as the National Youth Capital for 2026. This recognition is largely due to the work of the Youth Council of the Municipality of Thermi (YouThermi), which operates using a unique, decentralized model designed to reach its various settlements. The municipality's strategy for fostering democratic participation is built on the axis of Active Citizenship. The goal is to educate and familiarize young people (ages 15–29) with the internal administration and operations of local government. This approach aims to cultivate strong bonds between the new generation and local society, leading to a long-term local strategy for youth.

Good practice description

Decentralized Structure: To ensure “meaningful youth participation in rural settings,” the Youth Council uses as its organizing tool, the **sociocratic model**. It is therefore organized into “local circles.” Each village within the municipality has its own circle, which then sends a representative to the General Circle. This ensures that young people in more remote or rural parts of the municipality (like Trilofos, Vasilika, Ag. Paraskevi) have a direct voice and an active participatory role.

Information Provision: The municipality uses the “**You Thermi**” digital platform and social media to provide information specifically tailored to young people across these dispersed areas. Web Link: <https://youthermi.gr/>

SAYouth Project: Thermi participated in the “Reaffirming the civic participation of young people for a sustainable democracy” (SAYouth) project. A key objective was to develop inclusive communication channels to reach **migrant youth** and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.



Addressing Inequality: Research involving the council has highlighted a specific focus on addressing social inequalities related to **poverty, racism, and disability**. The council acts as a space where youth from vulnerable backgrounds (often supported by local welfare organizations) can participate in focus groups to influence local policy. Their youth council and the Municipality of Thermi, under this concept, actively participated in two European programmes, Cities4her and Juniorxpress.

The invisible role of women: a project action that began in March 2024 and ended in September 2025 at MIET (National Bank of Greece Cultural Foundation), with visual narratives of women of the municipality of Thermi. It was a project that aimed to empower women in the communities and recognise the important role they play in the passage of time. In their overall expression, these activities and events promote information, education and the exchange of opinions and experiences, offering a forum for discussing issues related to the position of women and gender equality, aimed at intergenerational connection.

International Training: The Youth Council is highly active in European networks. For example, they participate in international training seminars (such as those by the **DYPALL Network**) to bring “European best practices” back to their local, less-privileged communities.

EU Rights Advocacy: Through projects like “Youth Action for Democracy” (funded by the Active Citizens Fund), their Youth Council received and conducted experiential training for young people on EU rights and policy design, specifically targeting the Northern Greece region.

The Youth Council of the Municipality of Thermi was established on the initiative of the Municipality in June 2020 and constitutes a modern institution for youth participation in the life of the local community. It was created to give young people a voice and to offer them an organized space for expression, dialogue, and action. The aim of the Council is to strengthen the active participation of young people in public life, to highlight the issues that concern them, and to contribute to the formulation of a local youth strategy in cooperation with the Municipality.

Beyond Representative Democracy: The Youth council goes beyond simple voting; it uses **sociocracy** (consent-based decision-making) to empower youth to co-create local strategy.

Thermi’s Youth Forum: An annual event that serves as a massive civic space for young people to discuss local and global issues (like climate change and social justice) with local politicians and academic stakeholders.

Local Politics: The council serves as an official advisory body to the Municipal Council, ensuring that youth-led policy proposals on everyday life (leisure, safety, environment) are actually heard by decision-makers.

Digital Engagement: The municipality has prioritized digital tools like the **e-thermi** platform (web: <https://eforms.thermi.gov.gr>) and the **SAYouth digital tool**) to support young people who face geographical or physical barriers to attending meetings in person.

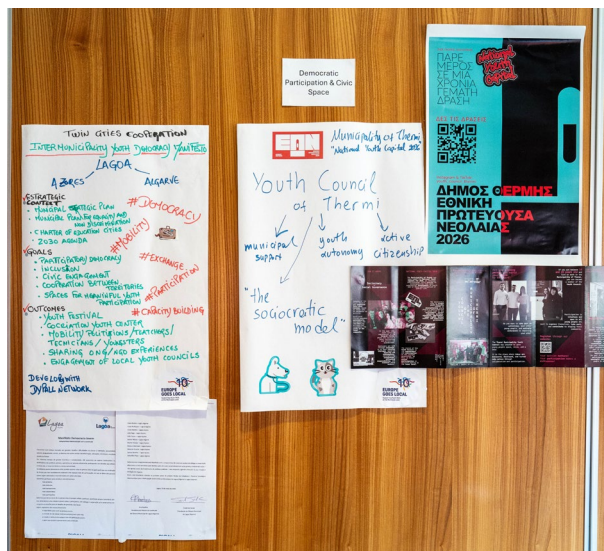
Detached/Street Work: While most Greek municipalities lean toward institutional youth centers, Thermi’s initiative to reach out to youth “where they are”—specifically to prevent van-



dalism and promote “healthy political expression”—aligns with the principles of detached youth work, though it is often integrated into the Youth Council’s “local circle” outreach.

During the group discussions, participants were highly interested in the idea of sociocracy as a method of working with young people and perceived it as innovative. The group also appreciated the National Youth Capital initiative which takes place in Greece.

The group debates also explored the development of youth participation structures in Themi into municipal youth council. The youth council is an advisory board and a co-created structure with the municipality. The success of this structure was based on three pillars: political will, administrative support, and the desire of the municipality to achieve successful youth participation.





Passo dopo Passo (step-by-step) (IT)

Name of the organisation: Associazione Interculturale NUR

Website of the organisation: www.assonur.org

Location of the organisation: via dei Colombi 1, 09126 Cagliari, Italy

E-mail address of the organisation: assonur@gmail.com

Good practice aim & purpose

PASSOdopoPasso was a one year local youth project to foster rural youth intrapreneurship (entrepreneurial mindset and initiative-taking): the ability of young people to know, understand and act, combining resilience, a sense of possibility and responsibility, beyond mere business creation. Sparked by the 'Guilcier Union of Towns' and the 'PLUS Ghilarza-Bosa', the initiative was run by public bodies and youth work organisations (Replay Network aps and Associazione Interculturale NUR), and used non-formal and experiential learning to empower both individuals and communities. It aimed at giving youth the tools to turn dreams into real projects and to implement them. Their main goal was to prove to rural youth coming from very economically challenging areas of the isolated reality of Sardinia that they have more potential than what they are brought up to believe by the context and by the rigid formal educational system that doesn't conceive failure as a constructive outcome. They also wanted to show the importance of youth work in a rural context where formal education is disappearing or failing and where the local administrations have other priorities than those relevant to youth.

Good practice description

The project wanted to provide basic project writing and management competencies to young people with absolutely zero previous experience; as well as specific skills to prove to them that things are possible and that the normal attitude of believing that nothing is possible when you live in an isolated rural environment plagued by unemployment, emigration, depopulation and a demographic structure where youngsters are a minority is wrong. They built an active and participatory learning path based on a first 4-day preparatory meeting, a second 4-day residential course to shape each participant's project writing skills, and two more 1-day thematic meetings with local, regional and national stakeholders. The learning path was completed by study visits to NGOs in Portugal, Bulgaria and Northern Italy. Participants' final personal projects were financially supported with a small grant of 2000 € each, that the youngsters had to learn how to manage under the youth workers' coaching and guidance. Each project included a local component or a final "restitution" in the community, which strengthened dialogue between young people, institutions and the territory. A final seminar involved youth, NGOs, local administrators and other key actors on non-formal education, youth work and European programmes (the EU-CoE youth partnership, The European Academy on Youth Work and Europe Goes Local).

The whole process saw a very close cooperation between the local union of towns and the 2 NGOs managing the administrative part (Replay Network) and the pedagogical and logistic con-



tent (Associazione Interculturale NUR).

Being an experimental project they benefited from a great willingness from the funding administrations to accept failure as a learning opportunity, to not limit the participants' ideas to specific "priority-defined" topics, but instead to allow for any dream or idea of the participants to be pursued. This made it possible to better motivate the youngsters.



During the group discussions, participants were highly interested in the importance of focusing on the learning process and personal development of young people while creating a project, rather than focusing solely on project structure and application quality. Being flexible, giving young people full agency, and providing mentorship are important, as they can encourage young people to dare to ask for more. It is a way of learning how the system works and be part of a society they might not feel that they are part of.

The group debates also explored how giving full agency to young people in developing their own community projects creates a learning process for both young people, and the local administrators. While young people gain personal skills and experience, local administrations learn to become more open to youth participation and non-formal education, allowing room for growth, experimentation, and mistakes rather than having strict control.



DKN – think, move, don't be afraid (LV)

Name of the organisation: Nīcas jauniešu centrs

Website of the organisation: <https://jauniesi.nica.lv/>

Location of the organisation: Skolas iela 14A, LV-1010 Nīca, Latvia

E-mail address of the organisation: nicas.jc@izglitiba.dkn.lv

Good practice aim & purpose

The aim of this good practice was to create meaningful opportunities for young people in rural areas (South Kurzeme region) where there are fewer youth activities, only 2 youth centres, and fewer opportunities for personal development. The practice was created to bring activities closer to young people's homes so they could participate without financial or transport barriers. The main goal was to support young people's personal development, mental wellbeing, creativity, and involvement in the local community. Through this practice, they wanted young people to become more confident, more open, and more motivated about their future. They also wanted to help them discover new interests, talents, and skills such as creativity, teamwork, communication, and self-expression. Another important purpose was to create a safe environment where young people could meet, talk, share ideas, and feel that they belong to their community. The practice also aimed to strengthen cooperation between the NGO, local school and the municipality, showing that youth work can be developed through cooperation between different local stakeholders. In the long term, the goal was to create regular youth activities in rural areas and encourage young people to become more active in community life, projects, and local initiatives.

Good practice description

This good practice is a youth activity programme implemented in the Dienvidkurzeme municipality, mainly in rural areas (Nīca) where young people have fewer opportunities to participate in youth activities. The practice was created after noticing that many young people in rural areas do not have regular access to workshops, youth events, creative activities, or personal development opportunities. Because of transport problems, financial barriers, and distance from cities, many young people spend their free time passively and do not participate in activities that could help their development. Therefore, the idea of this practice was to bring activities directly to young people in their local environment.

The practice is being implemented as an 11-month project where activities take place regularly. Each month there are 1–2 activities, depending on the project plan and the needs of young people. Each activity lasts around two hours. The activities are not only educational but also interactive, creative, and practical so that young people can learn through experience, not only through listening.

So far, several activities have already taken place. One of the first activities was an improvisa-



tion theatre, where young people learned to express themselves, react quickly, work in teams, and feel more confident speaking in front of others. Another activity was designing recycled clothes, where young people redesigned old clothes and learned about sustainability, creativity, and the reuse of materials. They also organised two lectures and discussions with a coach about personal values, motivation, future choices, and personal development. These activities helped young people think about their future, understand themselves better, and discuss important life topics.

Participants were involved through cooperation with the local school, youth centre, and social media. Participation was voluntary and open to all young people from the local area. So far around 30 young people have been involved in the activities, and the number is growing as the project continues.

The project is implemented in cooperation with the NGO “Keep the Change” and the local school, which help with the organisation, communication, and involving young people. Trainers, a coach, and youth workers are also involved in leading activities. This cooperation shows that youth work can be successful when different local stakeholders work together.

The practice is also connected to the municipality because it supports youth development, youth participation, mental wellbeing, and community involvement. It helps the municipality provide more opportunities for young people, especially in rural areas where youth services are limited.

Overall, this good practice shows that regular small activities in rural areas can have a big impact. By creating a safe environment, offering creative and educational activities, and listening to young people’s needs, it is possible to increase youth participation, confidence, skills, and community involvement. This practice can inspire other municipalities and organisations to create similar youth activities in rural areas.

During the group discussions, participants were highly interested in the main challenges that young people from remote areas face, such as anxiety, stress, lack of motivation, isolation (only two youth centres in the largest municipality in Latvia), or lack of opportunities (available mostly in cities). The secret ingredient for having a successful project was identified as designing and writing the project by five young women from rural areas. That way, the project is based on needs of young people, but also built on previous European Solidarity Corps projects, participant feedback, surveys and observations, and conversations which took place in schools.

The group debates also explored further challenges in such as process, such as reaching the “hardest to reach” young people (those that benefit the most are those that are least likely to participate), or measuring long-term impact (it is difficult to measure increased self-confidence, reduced anxiety, stronger sense of belonging, personal growth, which appear months or years later).





Youth Democracy Lab: Co-creating Civic Participation in Maia (PT)

Name of the organisation: Município da Maia

Website of the organisation: <https://www.cm-maia.pt/>

Location of the organisation: Praça Dr. José Vieira de Carvalho, 4474-006 Maia, Portugal

E-mail address of the organisation: juventude@cm-maia.pt

Good practice aim & purpose

The Youth Democracy Lab: Cocreating Civic Participation in Maia was developed to strengthen young people's civic and political engagement by providing real-life experiences in democratic environments and participatory processes. The practice resulted from the Municipality of Maia's commitment as a member of the Portuguese Territorial Network of Educating Cities and the International Association of Educating Cities. Under the 2024 theme – The Educating City as a Laboratory for Learning, Citizenship and Social Transformation – the project sought to transform the city into a living learning space where young people could explore democratic participation, cocreate proposals, and experience active citizenship. The initiative aimed to address key challenges observed in Portugal, including the low participation of young people in traditional civic processes and the growing need to acknowledge their emerging and innovative forms of engagement, especially through digital means and new civic practices. By taking young people into real decisionmaking spaces – from the national Parliament to the local Municipality – and combining non-formal education with participatory methodologies, the project aimed to promote empowerment, critical thinking, coresponsibility, and political literacy. Ultimately, the objective was to create meaningful spaces for listening, dialogue, and action, enabling young people to take an active role in shaping their community.

Good practice description

The Youth Democracy Lab: Cocreating Civic Participation in Maia was an innovative participatory process designed to reinforce youth engagement in democratic life by transforming the city into a dynamic educational ecosystem. Grounded in Maia's commitment as an Educating City, the practice was structured around several interconnected sessions that combined experiential learning, non-formal education, and direct engagement with political decision-makers.

The project began with a remarkable field experience: instead of a traditional parliamentary visit, the group met with a Member of Parliament and a parliamentary staff member outside the Portuguese Parliament. At the same time, the young participants observed a large firefighters' demonstration from a safe distance, which led to a meaningful discussion about democratic rights, freedom of expression, and civic engagement. This spontaneous moment created a powerful learning opportunity about democratic life and forms of participation.

The first formal session introduced the concept of an Educating City and included dynamic



activities on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The young people analysed different SDGs and, through debate and consensus, selected SDG 4 (Quality Education) as the most relevant for guiding the project. After the session, an online questionnaire was provided to deepen reflection and collect insights for the next steps.

Based on the questionnaire results, the second session explored SDG 4 in depth by analysing local examples such as sensory integration rooms and mental health initiatives. The participants identified local challenges and collaboratively developed concrete proposals. To ensure more active engagement, the group was divided into two subgroups. At this stage, the commitment was made that the proposals would later be formally presented to the Municipality's political decision-makers.

A following session focused on preparing and refining these proposals. The process culminated in a roundtable meeting at the Municipality of Maia, where the young participants were welcomed by elected officials. The environment was intentionally designed to be inclusive and supportive, allowing the young people to present their ideas confidently. The group itself democratically elected the representatives who would speak in the final presentation.

Across the five in-person sessions — involving 32 young people aged 15 to 22 from various local parishes — the practice relied on non-formal education methods, democratic voting, guided discussion, and participatory decision-making. Two major proposals emerged: a “Green Area” proposal, which became integrated into several ongoing municipal actions; and a “Blue Area” proposal, which was later formally approved for implementation.

The Youth Democracy Lab demonstrated that municipalities can effectively function as laboratories of democracy, offering young people meaningful opportunities to understand political processes, cocreate solutions, and influence local decision-making.

During the group discussions, participants were highly interested in the long journey to establish or shape a local youth policy with successful youth participation elements. The group noted that successful youth participation formats need to be part of a holistic local youth policy. The group debates also explored the staff, resources, and relationships needed to compose a good and representative youth council.



Youth Work Development Kit (EGL Steering Group)

Youth work development toolkit: <https://toolkit.europegoeslocal.eu/en/>

Based on the [European Charter on Local youth work](#), our toolkit provides a step-by-step guide to knowledge-based youth work development!

Its primary function is to support organisations providing youth work, but it can also be used by, for example, young people or politicians to assess the youth work provided or to get material for discussions or advocacy.



From Beneficiaries to Volunteers and Community Leaders (RO)

Name of the organisation: Asociația Cătunul Verde

Website of the organisation: <https://www.facebook.com/catunulverde>

Location of the organisation: Lucretia Suciu nr 4, 410105 Oradea, Romania

E-mail address of the organisation: catunulverde@gmail.com

Good practice aim & purpose

The aim of this good practice was to foster a culture of youth participation in rural and disadvantaged communities by creating real opportunities for young people with fewer opportunities to get involved, learn, and take active roles in their communities.

They wanted to support young people in moving beyond the role of beneficiaries of educational activities and become active volunteers, contributors, and eventually community leaders. Through non-formal education methods and hands-on volunteering experiences, the initiative aimed to build their confidence, sense of responsibility, and key life competences.

Another important objective was to create a sustainable pathway of development, where young people could gradually progress from participants to volunteers, and further into mentors or professionals in the social field. By doing so, we aimed to break cycles of passivity and limited opportunities often present in rural environments.

At the same time, the practice aimed to strengthen local communities by involving young people in planning and implementing activities for children and peers, encouraging ownership, initiative, and long-term engagement.

Ultimately, the purpose was not only to empower individuals, but to create a self-sustaining model of youth involvement with long-term impact.

Good practice description

Cătunul Verde Association developed this good practice as a long-term model of youth engagement in rural and disadvantaged communities in Bihor County, Romania. The practice is based on the organisation's experience of working with vulnerable children and young people in communities with limited access to volunteering opportunities, non-formal education, and structured youth work activities.

Many of the young people involved came from families with low incomes, single-parent households, or were raised by grandparents. Some belonged to Hungarian or Roma minority communities. A number of them had previously participated, as children, in educational and socio-emotional activities organised by the team. Building on this connection, they created a pathway for their continued development during the next years of their lives.



Young people are involved through a gradual and participatory process. They are encouraged to express their interests and ideas and are supported to design and implement their own initiatives, especially for children and young people in vulnerable situations. They take part in workshops on volunteering and non-formal education methods such as Photo Voice, Forum Theatre, and Human Library, and later apply these in real contexts, including camps and local activities.

Participants are actively involved in planning, decision-making, and implementation. In some communities, such as Popești, young people have taken initiative beyond the project, engaging in local processes like applying for the European Youth Village title.

The implementation is based on collaboration with local stakeholders. Schools support participation and outreach, while social workers and child protection services help include young people with fewer opportunities. They also collaborate with local NGOs, such as Centrul Prietenia in Popești, and with public institutions such as the County Directorate for Sports and Youth (DJST Bihor) and local municipalities, including Salonta. Universities also play a role, as some participants continue their studies in socio-human fields and return through internships.

The initial project involved approximately 40 young people from rural and peripheral communities. Since then, the model has been integrated into the organisation's ongoing work and expanded across the county. Currently, around 40 young people are actively involved, with more engaged over time through different activities. In communities such as Săcuieni, stable groups of 15–20 young people organise regular activities for peers and children.



This practice is continuously evolving. Each stage included concrete activities that strengthened the group. The next step focuses on supporting young people to engage more actively with local authorities and community issues, taking into account the reality of rural communities, where youth groups change over time due to migration.

During the group discussions, participants were highly interested in the model of initiative groups: young people who started as beneficiaries and are now independently organising activities for other young people. This peer-driven model is particularly striking in a rural context where young people often lack access to structured support. One of these initiative groups has even started competing for a European Youth Village, demonstrating a remarkable leap from passive participation to European-level engagement.

The group debates also explored how CăTunul Verde sustains its work financially: primarily



EUROPEAN EGL EVENT 2026

2-5 June, Tromsø

through donations and fundraising from companies, without relying on project funding alone. Participants also highlighted the journey from beneficiary to volunteer and community leader as the core logic of the practice: children as young as 10 join camps, return as volunteers, and eventually take on leadership roles. Traditional crafts such as wood painting were mentioned as a tool for informal connection and community building. A key takeaway was that this is not a project: it is a long-term vision described as a “red thread” running through everything the organisation does.



Pałacyk Creativity Center as a Multidimensional Support Tool for Youth: Starachowice Case Study (PL)

Name of the organisation: Miasto Starachowice

Website of the organisation: www.starachowice.eu

Location of the organisation: Radomska 45 Street, 27-200 Starachowice, Poland

E-mail address of the organisation: vice@starachowice.eu

Good practice aim & purpose

As part of the topic “The role of civic space in fostering local engagement among young people,” a multidimensional urban space called the Pałacyk Creativity Center was presented as a tool for strengthening young people’s involvement in city life, not only those working within the Youth City Council.

In Starachowice, they acknowledged the lack of space not only for young people but also for NGOs and young entrepreneurs. The city has an industrial character and a low level of social entrepreneurship. The goal of the space was not only to create a youth space for the Youth City Council but also a multidimensional space, aimed at social groups: young people, NGOs, and young entrepreneurs. The goal was to build cooperation and bridges to activate young people and entrepreneurs, strengthening their engagement and entrepreneurship. Young people became co-hosts of this space, the seat of the Youth City Council, but also a venue for social, business, and international events. The center celebrated its two-year anniversary in April 2026.

Good practice description

The Pałacyk Creativity Center was created as a tool to stimulate the social development of youth, NGOs, and young entrepreneurs. The space includes a youth council headquarters, a creative space, a coworking space, a conference room, and a podcast studio. Youth are co-hosting and co-organizing this space. The Center’s goals are: 1) Creating a single, shared space for collaboration between youth, NGOs, and entrepreneurs; 2) Exchanging views and opinions, and involving youth in projects of other NGOs; 3) Implementing joint initiatives for youth: entrepreneurship days (direct participation of entrepreneurs operating at the Creativity Center); 4) Collaborating with NGOs operating at the Creativity Center on mental health issues – as part of this collaboration, the organization offers free psychotherapeutic counseling for youth; 5) Direct participation of youth in events organized not only for youth – the goal is to build relationships between youth and other social groups in the city; 6) Organizing workshops for youth from the city (hip-hop workshops, language workshops, FIFA e-sports competitions, creative workshops).



The Anatomy of Distance: Mobile Civic Laboratories & The Pedagogy of the Journey (IT)

Name of the organisation: IL VERGANTE

Website of the organisation: <https://ilvergante.com/category/associazioni/ilvergante/>

Location of the organisation: Via IV Novembre n. 4, 13853 Lessona, Italy

E-mail address of the organisation: ilaria.zocco@gmail.com

Good practice aim & purpose

The Core Vision: Overcoming the “Geography of Distance”

The primary aim of this practice is to dismantle the barriers to democratic participation faced by young people living in rural and peripheral areas. Traditionally, youth work is “static” (linked to physical centres), which inherently excludes those in remote valleys or mountains who lack easy access to urban hubs. The goal was to flip this script: instead of asking youth to travel to reach a “centre,” they transform the act of traveling itself into the “centre.”

Strategic Objectives:

- Neutralizing Geographical Isolation: To provide high-quality non-formal education (NFE) in areas where no physical youth infrastructure exists.
- Reclaiming the “Temporal Void”: To transform the dead time spent by students on public transport (buses and trains) into productive, civic-led laboratories.
- Empowering Rural Identity: To shift the perception of rural youth from “passive commuters” to “active citizens” who feel ownership over their territory.
- Innovation in Youth Work: To demonstrate a low-cost, high-impact model that utilizes existing public infrastructure (transport networks) as a venue for social change, aligning with the European Charter on Local Youth Work.

Good practice description

The “Kinetic Hub” Methodology

The practice, “Mobile Civic Laboratories,” operates through a disruptive pedagogical framework known as the “Pedagogy of the Journey.” It is structured into two main operational pillars:

A. The Physical Kinetic Space: In collaboration with an NGO, they delivered their Lego Workshop on a bus converted into a mobile and civic centre. This Bus travels to remote village squares, creating an immediate, visible “heterotopia”—a space that breaks the routine of the village and provides a horizontal platform where youth and educators can meet without the traditional hierarchies of school or institutional offices.



B. The Geography of Transit (Trans-European Rail Lab): This involves utilizing actual transit routes as “living textbooks.” For example, during journeys from Switzerland to Sicily – cooperating with another local NGO, they use the train carriage as a laboratory. Through the “Community Building: Brick by Brick” gamification methodology, they facilitate workshops on European identity, active citizenship and how to ‘build’ future cities/Youth Centres and social challenges while the landscape moves outside the window. This allows for:

- Place-Based Education (PBE): Using the local landscape and transit routes to spark dialogue about territory and belonging.
- The Sociology of Mobility: Encouraging youth to “occupy” public spaces effectively, asserting their right to be heard even while in motion.

This model is inherently scalable and adaptable to any region—like the Norwegian fjords or Italian mountains—where distance is the primary obstacle to engagement.

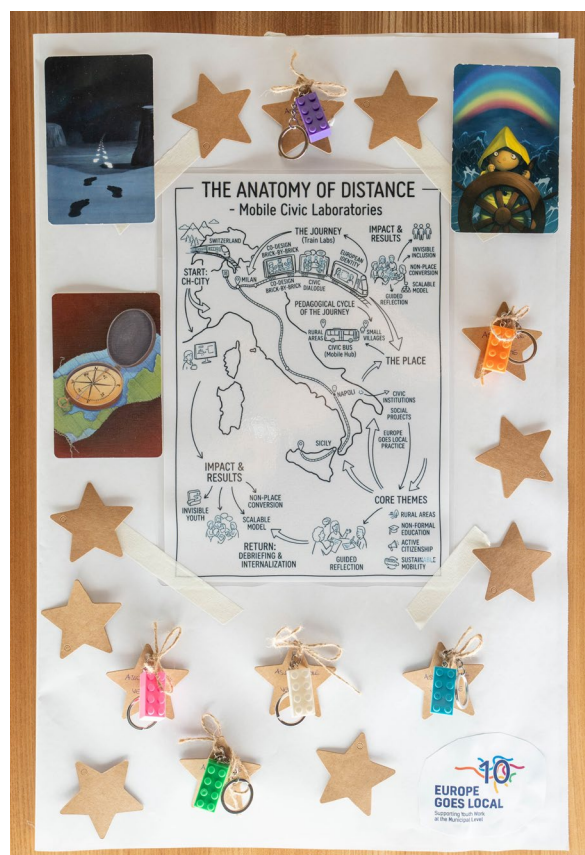
The core innovation of their practice lies in the **Pedagogy of the Journey**: they explicitly target the ‘dead time’ of commuting—typically a social and cultural vacuum—and convert it into a high-impact laboratory for non-formal education .

During a specific trip to a specific place, they utilize the transit time between locations not merely as a commute, but as a citizenship amplifier. The “Kinetic Hub” operates through a structured pedagogical cycle that maximizes the journey:

Phase 1: The Outbound Journey (Preparation & Priming): During the journey toward the destination (e.g., a place of social or historical interest), the train or bus becomes a laboratory. They use this time to set the stage, using gamification and the “Brick by Brick” methodology to introduce themes of active citizenship. The movement acts as a catalyst for creative thinking, preparing the young people for the site visit.

Phase 2: The Site Experience (Active Engagement): Once at the destination, the group engages with the territory—visiting social projects, rural startups, or civic institutions. Because they were “primed” during the journey, their observation is sharper and more intentional.

Phase 3: The Return Journey (Debriefing & Internalization): The journey back is the most critical phase for Non-Formal Education. They use this time for a structured debriefing. While the landscape moves in reverse, the young people





EUROPEAN EGL EVENT 2026

2-5 June, Tromsø

reflect on what they witnessed. This transforms a simple field trip into a deep learning experience, ensuring that the “Non-Place” of the transport vehicle is filled with collective meaning and shared insights.

During the group discussions, participants were highly interested in transforming passive travel time into an active project component and productive civic laboratories. Travelling together can already serve as a creative hub, and these “kinetic hubs” could be seen as innovative forms of mobile youth work on wheels (trains, buses, bikes) or even on foot (e.g., a European solidarity walk and talk).



Youth Protection Concept (SE & DE)

Name of the organisation: Göteborg stad, socialförvaltning Sydväst/ Fritid and Stadt Koeln

Website of the organisation: <https://www.stadt-koeln.de/> and <https://goteborg.se/>

Location of the organisation: Box 16, 421 21 Göteborg Gothenburg and Cologne, Sweden

E-mail address of the organisation: marie.e.falk@socialsydvast.goteborg.se

Good practice aim & purpose

The aim of this practice is to develop a practical, rights-based safeguarding framework for international youth work that moves beyond adult-led rules. Their goal was to create a 'Youth Protection Concept' (YPC) where youth participation is the core principle of safety itself, rather than an afterthought. They wanted to achieve meaningful involvement, ensuring young people are involved throughout the entire project cycle so that the framework reflects their real experiences, needs, and language. By grounding the concept in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Erasmus+ values, we have created a model for rights-based protection applicable to everyday international youth work while remaining accessible for all. This specifically helps youth workers establish safe and inclusive environments without needing complex external infrastructures. A key pillar is shared responsibility, where a Code of Conduct is co-owned by both professionals and young people. While the concept is designed to be helpful for all youth work, this approach serves as a successful example for including marginalized groups or youth from remote areas, as it creates a transparent and predictable safety net tailored to their specific needs.

Good practice description

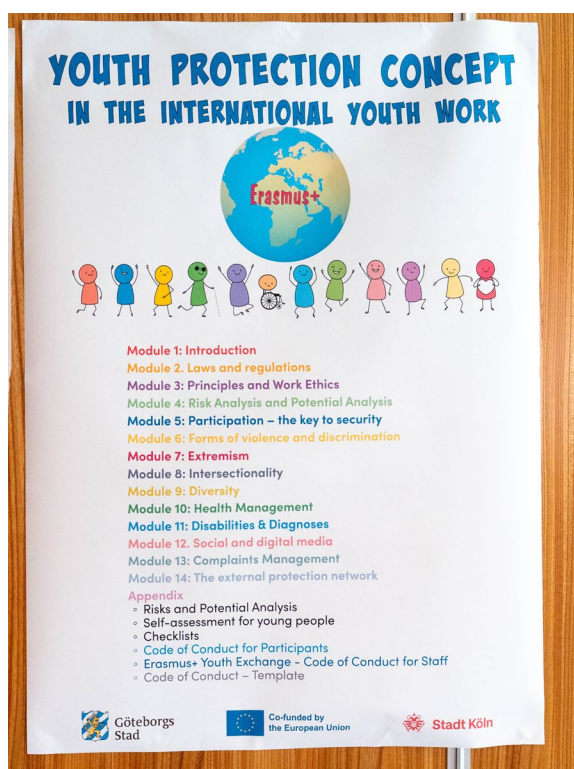
This Good Practice is a comprehensive pedagogical manual developed through a 1.5-year collaborative process. To achieve their goals, they conducted four days of intensive workshops in Cologne where experts, youth workers, and young people established a shared understanding of safeguarding. These days, led by an external facilitator, focused on aligning different professional perspectives with youth-led insights. A central part of this process was the active participation of young people through a co-creative approach. We integrated German expertise on mandatory safety concepts with Swedish expertise in specialized fields such as gender-based violence, honor-related oppression, and digital vulnerability. Following this, the work was divided between partners to develop 14 specific modules locally. The teams then gathered for a full week in Gothenburg for a review process to agree on the content and tone, ensuring a balanced integration of local and national legal requirements, EU values, and youth perspectives. The resulting manual consists of 14 thematic modules designed to create a common baseline:

- Legal & Ethics: National jurisdiction, UNCRC rights, GDPR, and professional work ethics including an 'open error culture'.
- Safety & Risk Management: Internal reporting procedures for legal conflicts and the professional duty of supervision.



- Social Dynamics & Inclusion: Meaningful participation, intersectionality, and diversity with a focus on LGBTQIA+ safety.
- Violence & Conflict: Prevention of bullying, toxic masculinity, honor-related violence, sexualized violence, and gang-related risks.
- Health & Crisis: Management of psychosocial crises, neurodevelopmental disorders (ADHD/Autism), diabetes, or physical disabilities.
- Digital Environment: Risks and ethics regarding social media, AI, cyberbullying, and digital grooming.

A core component of the practice is the Risk and Potential Analysis. This tool allows organizations to systematically identify vulnerabilities (risks) while simultaneously highlighting existing strengths (potentials) within their structures. By using this analysis before the exchange, staff can determine which specific measures and modules to activate. This provides a robust, self-sufficient structure that is especially useful for youth workers in remote or less-privileged territories where external support may be limited. Furthermore, the concept is designed to be used to create a discussion about fundamental values (core principles) before entering a project with a potential partner. This ensures that the safety net is inclusive and predictable for all, especially for marginalized youth who may face higher barriers to participation. A unique feature is the internal reporting procedure developed to handle legal conflicts between partner countries, ensuring the 'best interests of the child' always take precedence. This is supported by checklists divided into three phases: Before, During, and After the exchange, alongside a youth-oriented self-assessment tool to ensure the framework remains a living, reactive process. The final manifestation is a manual that will be accessible via a webpage. They have also applied for a KA2 project to digitize the concept, allowing organizations to customize their own YPC by selecting the modules and checklist items applicable to their specific exchange.



During the group discussions, participants were highly interested in the booklet that was written together with youngsters. The participants thought that it presented a very useful framework for (inter)national exchanges and projects. One of interesting ideas came from young people themselves who insisted on having an error-friendly environment. That way you can make mistakes without getting immediately punished. Moreover, the co-creation and shared ownership between youngsters and adults lead to youth becoming more active. The group appreciated the fact that the project partners found each other at the EGL Event 4 years ago.



Supporting access to Irish Language Youth Clubs in Gaeltacht Areas

Name of the organisation: Muintearas

Website of the organisation: <https://muintearas.com/#>

Location of the organisation: Tír an Fhia, Leitir Móir, H91 YE86 Tír an Fhia, Leitir Móir, Ireland

E-mail address of the organisation: john.curran@muintearas.com

Good practice aim & purpose

The practice introduces and provides context for the youth work undertaken by Muintearas to support the provision of Irish Language-only youth clubs and youth supports across the Gaeltacht regions of Ireland.

Good practice description

The Gaeltacht regions are predominantly small, rural, isolated, economically and socially deprived areas scattered along the State's western seaboard. The State's Gaeltacht areas represent small parts of 7 counties and, cumulatively, have a population of approximately 106,000, of whom some 20,000 identify as daily speakers of the Irish language outside the educational system.

The many challenges facing the Gaeltacht, with regard to economic development, loss of linguistic and cultural identity, housing issues, youth out-migration, and social concerns, were outlined to provide context for the place, the work, and the issues to be addressed as Muintearas supports their communities and young people.



The Key to the Future – From Marginalisation to Participation: An Integrated Community-Based Model for Roma Youth in Budila Commune

Name of the organisation: Asociația Sprijin și Dezvoltare

Website of the organisation: <https://sprijinsidezvoltare.wordpress.com/>

Project website: <https://www.cheia-viitorului-budila.ro/index.php>

Location of the organisation: 5 Egretei Street, Apartment 27, 500461 Brasov, Romania

E-mail address of the organisation: sprijinsidezvoltare@yahoo.com

Good practice aim & purpose

The “Key of the Future – Social Inclusion in Budila Commune” project aimed to increase social inclusion and participation of Roma youth and their families in a marginalised rural community in Romania, moving from marginalisation to participation through an integrated community-based model. The project responded to major challenges faced by Roma communities and other vulnerable people living in similar conditions: limited access to early education, high risk of early school leaving, reduced access to health services and low civic participation among young people.

Its main objective was to create an integrated community-based model supporting participation of Roma youth and their families, improving access to education and essential services, and contributing to social inclusion. A central objective was to empower Roma young people by placing them at the core of the intervention, supporting them to develop self-confidence, social and communication skills and engage in their community, while recognising the role of families.

Through non-formal education, counselling, sports and empowerment activities, participants reflected on discrimination, human rights and their role in society. In the long term, the project enables Roma youth to become advocates for their communities, promoting social change and inclusion, while strengthening cooperation between NGO, municipality and school to ensure sustainable impact.

Good practice description

“The Key to the Future – Social Inclusion in Budila Commune” is an integrated community development project implemented within the Roma community and other vulnerable groups in Budila Commune, Romania.

The intervention was based on an integrated approach, combining education, health, personal development and community participation, tailored to the specific needs of a rural marginalised context.



Roma youth were placed at the centre of the intervention. Activities were designed to create a safe and inclusive environment in which young people could develop self-confidence, social competencies and the ability to actively participate in community life, while being encouraged to express their views and represent their needs and perspectives.

The youth work activities included educational support to prevent early school leaving, school and vocational counselling, sports and personal development activities for young people, empowerment programmes for Roma women and young women, parental education, as well as employment support services for parents, including counselling and meetings with local employers.

To support access to essential services and early childhood education, the project included the construction and operation of a kindergarten for Roma children and other vulnerable families in the community. In addition, a medical office and a dental office were established, providing preventive services for children and young people. The project also promoted intercultural dialogue and cooperation between the Roma community and the majority population through awareness-raising and community engagement activities.

Currently, activities continue in the sustainability phase through educational and participation programmes for Roma children and youth, organised in collaboration between the NGO Sprijin și Dezvoltare (project partner), the Municipality of Budila (project promoter) and Budila Secondary School.

These include workshops on bullying prevention, human rights and children's rights, healthy communication, mutual support and democratic participation. Young people are encouraged to reflect on these topics, identify situations of discrimination or bullying and contribute to creating a safe and inclusive environment. Simple digital youth work tools are also used to support expression and documentation of their experiences. Sports and cultural activities continue through sports clubs and intercultural dance activities, promoting cooperation and dialogue between Roma and non-Roma youth.

An important element of the practice is the empowerment of Roma youth through initiative groups and regular meetings, where they are encouraged to express their ideas and actively engage in local youth participation and community development, strengthening their role as active, representative actors and voices within the community. Roma women and young women are supported to strengthen their role within the family and community. In this process, Roma youth have also been involved in developing European initiatives, including the preparation of an Erasmus+ youth exchange project. As part of the sustainability process, the process of establishing a Roma youth organisation is being supported as a youth-led initiative.

The practice was implemented between January 2022 and April 2024 and continues in a sustainability phase, reaching over 1,300 beneficiaries, including approximately 800 children and young people (at least 770 Roma children and youth) and around 470 Roma parents, as well as other vulnerable community members.

During the group discussions, participants were highly interested in the challenges of interacting with the Roma community as a non-Roma person, useful strategies, and help of key (local)



Roma stakeholders. It is important to be present in the community, to make project results tangible, and to involve community members in the co-creation of projects, instead of forcing a project on them.

The group debates also explored the development of community-centred projects which carry out work that municipalities should be providing but cannot. These projects have an important role in building bridges between minority communities and local authorities and in addressing basic community needs. While the focus on youth participation is always present, it may not always be the highest priority for minority groups when they need to take care of concerns and challenges related to their basic needs.





VR EDUCATION

Name of the organisation: Administration of Klaipėda city municipality

Website of the organisation: www.klaipeda.lt

Location of the organisation: Liepų str 11, LT-92136 Klaipėda city, Lithuania

E-mail address of the organisation: agne.kovalenkaite@klaipeda.lt

Good practice aim & purpose

The idea originated from the Klaipėda–European Youth Capital 2021 programme. After facing implementation challenges, the concept evolved from the initial “tolerance incubator” idea, and a hackathon was organised, where young participants proposed interactive VR films with choice-based storytelling. The aim of the VR education is to create engaging learning experiences to help young people understand complex social situations and reflect on their decisions. Through immersive storytelling, the VR films allow participants to experience realistic scenarios related to friendship, personal choices, and the risks of harmful behaviours such as addictions. By placing viewers inside the story, the VR format encourages empathy and critical thinking, helping young people see how different decisions may influence their future and relationships with others. Now they have 4 educational movies about the ERASMUS+ experience, bullying, disabilities and of friendship, choices, and the risks of addiction. Also, they have a methodological guidebook for youth workers on how to facilitate the education. These films are designed to place young people directly inside realistic scenarios, allowing them to observe situations from a first-person perspective and emotionally engage with the story.

Good practice description

They actively involved local NGOs, youth organisations, and young people themselves in the co-creation of the VR films. Their input was essential in shaping the themes, scenarios, and decision-making elements within the videos, ensuring that the content is relevant, relatable, and meaningful for the target audience. The key strength of this practice is the use of 360-degree VR technology to create immersive learning environments. Instead of passively receiving information, participants become active observers of the situations presented in the films. This approach helps young people better understand complex social dynamics, recognize the consequences of different choices, and develop empathy toward others. Topics such as bullying or living with disabilities become more tangible because the viewer can experience situations as if they were part of them. The educational sessions usually follow a **three-stage structure**: introduction, VR experience, and reflection. During the introduction, the facilitator prepares participants by discussing the topic and establishing a safe space for open dialogue. After watching the VR film, young people take part in guided discussions, group activities, or problem-solving exercises that help them interpret what they experienced and consider alternative actions or perspectives. Overall, the combination of immersive VR storytelling and structured facilitation demonstrates how technology can enrich youth work and create powerful learning experiences. This approach can inspire educators and youth workers in other contexts to experiment with immersive tools and interactive methods to address complex social topics and encourage



meaningful reflection among young people. The target group of this initiative is young people, specifically those aged approximately 14 to 29, including both students in formal education and participants in youth centres and youth organisation activities. It can also be used for educators, teachers and youth workers for learning purposes. The tool is designed to be flexible and adaptable to different sub-groups within this age range. These sessions typically take place in schools, youth centres, or within youth group activities. A standard session lasts around 45 minutes and includes several stages: introduction to the topic, viewing of the VR film in groups up to 30 people, and a facilitated reflection and discussion.

During the group discussions, participants were highly interested in the use of immersive VR and 360° films to help young people experience complex social situations from a first-person perspective. This playful method supports reflection on topics such as bullying, addiction, self-esteem and Erasmus+ experiences. The method has great potential for engaging young people across local municipalities.

The group debates also explored the development of choice-based storytelling for prevention and learning. The films allow young people to observe or make decisions within realistic scenarios and then discuss the consequences. This makes sensitive topics easier to address, because participants can talk about the fictional character rather than directly about themselves.



Making local youth environment safe and inclusive

Name of the organisation: ՀՀ Արմավիրի մարզի Վաղարշապատի համայնքապետարան

Website of the organisation: <https://ejmiatsin.am>

Location of the organisation: 0 Mashtots St., Vagharshapat (Ejmiatsin), Armavir Marz, Armenia, 1101 Ejmiatsin, Armenia

E-mail address of the organisation: info@ejmiatsin.am

Good practice aim & purpose

The Vagharshapat Municipality actively promotes youth development by providing inclusive and accessible environments for young people. Within the community, two youth-oriented environments operate to support young people: the “Ejmiatsin Youth House” open youth centre and the “Khoy” open youth space. These environments serve as platforms for youth engagement, personal development and civic participation. The goal of having youth infrastructures in the community is to enhance the civic activism and well-being of young people through the implementation of professional youth work and the provision of accessible youth services. The “Ejmiatsin Youth House” open youth centre was established in 2022 by the Vagharshapat municipality with the support of Youth Initiative Centre NGO and UNICEF Armenia. The centre operates based on the methodology and principles of open youth work, providing a safe and supportive environment where young people can develop skills, express their ideas, get professional orientation and actively participate in community life. “Khoy” youth space was established in 2025 and serves as a safe space for about 200 young people for self-realization, development, practicing leadership competences and life skills. The content of the work depends entirely on the needs and interests of youngsters.

Good practice description

The “Ejmiatsin Youth House” open youth centre offers young people a wide range of services, including competence building for life and for competitiveness in the job market, individual or group counselling, and non-formal and informal education, which will help young people to enhance their self-esteem, achieve more control over their lives, and improve their chances for gaining employment in the future.

The Centre also serves as a platform for thematic discussions, seminars, trainings and collaboration among civil society organizations, schools, childcare centres, social services, police, municipality and other institutions, providing a wide range of accessible services.

One of the key directions of the centre is also intercultural communication and promotion of volunteering culture. In the frame of “European Clubs”, which are informative cultural activities, youth workers and international volunteers organize sessions about Europe, European culture and history, EU institutions, values; run workshops about Erasmus+, the European Solidarity Corps and other mobility programmes; organise European cultural evenings, European film



screenings followed by discussions, photo exhibitions and thematic weeks; and collaborate with schools, NGOs and European networks. It contributes greatly to mutual cultural understanding, tolerance, solidarity, peace building, spreading democratic values and active citizenship.

Another important aspect of the youth environments' activities is promoting environmental awareness and healthy lifestyles, in the framework of which young people organize hikes, excursions, environmental clean-ups, recycling and zero-waste workshops. They also created ecology awareness days with the support of the Municipality of Vagharshapat which contribute to youth participation, community involvement and environmental sustainability as well as ensure that activities are relevant, positive and beneficial for everyone involved.

The Gyumri Youth Initiative Centre NGO (YIC) as a responsible organization for youth environments' content, engages in youth policy development and participation in Armenia through capacity-building initiatives, training programmes, advocacy support, and structured collaboration with both youth and public authorities. YIC brings together youth representatives and local self-government officials to co-learn and co-develop strategies for community-level youth policy. These trainings help participants understand how to draft and implement youth-related policy frameworks within municipalities, fostering collaborative youth-government engagement.



The Ladies' Dowry

Name of the organisation: Biblioteca Publică Locală Pietrari

Website of the organisation: <https://bibliotecapietrari-crina.blogspot.com/>

Location of the organisation: Principala, 192, 247510 Pietrari, Romania

E-mail address of the organisation: bibliotecapietrari@yahoo.com

Good practice aim & purpose

The project “The Ladies’ Dowry” addressed two major challenges specific to rural communities: the declining interest of young people in local traditions and cultural heritage, and the lack of opportunities for their active engagement and participation in community life. The project’s main goals were to involve rural youth in cultural and volunteer activities, strengthen their sense of belonging to their community, develop their digital skills, and preserve and promote local cultural heritage through modern means. By combining traditional heritage with digital storytelling, creative workshops, and community events, the project encouraged young people to rediscover the value of their roots while using contemporary tools and platforms to share them. Through this approach, we aimed to transform the way rural youth interact with their cultural identity—from passive observers to active ambassadors of tradition and innovation. The project demonstrated that youth work can be a powerful catalyst for community participation and sustainable rural development. Ultimately, “The Ladies’ Dowry” exemplifies how initiatives rooted in local culture can foster inclusion, creativity, and active citizenship among young people from rural or less-developed areas, aligning closely with the core theme of the Europe Goes Local 2026 Conference.

Good practice description

“The Ladies’ Dowry” (Zestrea domnițelor) is a cultural and educational initiative that brings together tradition, creativity, and youth engagement in the rural community of Pietrari, Vâlcea County. Implemented by the Pietrari Local Public Library, the project seeks to empower rural youth by providing meaningful opportunities to rediscover and reinterpret local cultural heritage while developing both social and digital skills.

The project emerged from a real need — in Pietrari and many other rural settlements, young people often face limited cultural opportunities, low involvement in community life, and a gradual loss of connection with their traditional roots. Through “Zestrea domnițelor”, the library became an active community hub, engaging youth in cultural volunteering, non-formal learning, and digital innovation.

Its central activity focused on documenting and digitizing 70 traditional embroidery motifs and folk costume patterns originating from Pietrari, Brașov, and the Bucharest regions. Young participants attended 15 embroidery workshops and 4 traditional gatherings (șezători) where they learned directly from local craftswomen about textile patterns, symbolism, and techniques. The



motifs were carefully digitized and included in a physical and online open-access collection, connecting cultural preservation with technology and accessibility for future generations.

Beyond research and crafts, the project had a strong educational and social dimension. Through field visits to Râmnicu Vâlcea, Braşov, and Bucharest, youth participants interacted with museums, cultural centers, and urban volunteers, understanding how tradition can gain new life through creative industries and digital storytelling. The Facebook page documents this process through rich photo albums, short videos, and stories highlighting the transformation of participants—from curious learners to proud promoters of their heritage.

The project's visibility and recognition extend beyond the local community. In 2023, "The Ladies Dowry" was a finalist in the "Projects with Impact" category at the Rural Youth Gala. It was showcased in international professional settings, such as the IFLA World Library and Information Congress (WLIC) in Rotterdam and the "Let's Go GREEN!" International Green Libraries Conference in Zagreb, Croatia. These appearances emphasized how libraries can integrate sustainability, digitization, and heritage promotion into youth work. In 2025, the project expanded its cultural outreach through collaborations with other institutions, including the Christian Tell County Library in Gorj, where a special event titled "Zestrea Domnițelor – An Original Cultural Performance" celebrated Romanian traditional costumes and rituals and a festival was also organized between the libraries.



Through innovative use of social media, local partnerships, and community-based research, "The Ladies' Dowry" proves that even small rural libraries can generate impactful youth initiatives. The project combines traditional craftsmanship, digital culture, and community pride—transforming embroidery patterns into symbols of intergenerational connection and modern identity.

Ultimately, this good practice illustrates how youth work rooted in cultural heritage can foster participation, creativity, and sustainability in rural areas. By aligning local action with European values of inclusion, active citizenship, and digital transformation, "Zestrea domnițelor" offers an inspiring model for cultural preservation through community engagement and modern storytelling.



Step out, Tune in!

Name of the organisation: KAPTÁRKŐ TERMÉSZETVÉDELMI ÉS KULTURÁLIS EGYESÜLET

Website of the organisation: <https://www.kaptarko.hu/>

Location of the organisation: Kallómalom utca 32. III/9., 3300 Eger, Hungary

E-mail address of the organisation: info@kaptarko.hu

Good practice aim & purpose

This practice aims to empower students (14–19) from rural Hungarian towns to become active contributors and leaders in sustainability-related decision-making processes. It addresses the gap between high student interest in environmental protection and the strikingly low awareness of global sustainability initiatives among local youth. The practice follows a structured, non-formal path, beginning with experiential learning field trips to protected and non-protected areas, where students observe local environmental threats as well as good practices firsthand. These findings are processed in workshops using non-formal tools to develop concrete solution proposals. To strengthen advocacy, students receive training in argumentation, structured dialogue, and critical thinking. The process culminates in roundtable discussions, where students present their “youth perspective” proposals directly to decision-makers active in their chosen topic. This transforms participants into active stakeholders capable of influencing local environmental strategies. In parallel, students co-create a practical guide documenting the methodology and outcomes of the programme, making the practice easily adaptable. The project specifically addresses the problem of classroom confinement by proving that nature is best understood through direct experience. Ultimately, they aim to develop GreenComp competencies, fostering a lasting sense of responsibility to contribute to global climate action.

Good practice description

This project is a structured, non-formal educational programme that empowers high school students from rural Hungarian towns (Eger and Veszprém) to become active contributors in sustainability-related decision-making processes. It addresses the gap between strong environmental interest and limited awareness of global (EU and UN) sustainability initiatives among youth. The participants were involved through a combination of open calls and direct outreach in cooperation with local secondary schools. Although the programme was entirely organised and implemented outside the formal school system, formal cooperation agreements were established with partner schools. Schools were also attendees of the final event.

The methodology follows a clearly defined, step-by-step learning pathway based on experiential learning and problem-based learning. Following the information events, preparatory workshops provided foundational knowledge on environmental values and sustainability concepts, while also equipping students with practical skills for fieldwork.

The core phase consisted of field visits to protected natural areas (to Bükk and Bakony regions) in cooperation with National Parks, where 20 students participated in expert-led, hands-on learn-



ing experiences. During these visits, students observed real environmental challenges while also identifying good practices. This place-based approach strengthens ecological awareness and connects theoretical knowledge with real-life contexts. Following the field experiences, participants engaged in a series of monthly follow-up workshops. Based on the field visits, the students were divided into five smaller working groups according to their individual interests. Each group focused on a specific sustainability challenge identified during the fieldwork, including:

- illegal waste dumping in protected natural areas,
- recycling and reuse practices,
- responsible behaviour in nature,
- the relationship and tensions between forestry and nature conservation,
- and the role of environmental education within the Hungarian public education system.

These sessions focus on processing observations, developing critical thinking, and transforming insights into concrete solution proposals. Using non-formal methods, groups collaboratively formulate their questions and create a “proposal package” addressing local environmental challenges. Within their thematic groups, they deepen their understanding, critically analyse the issues, and develop targeted solutions. A key component of the practice is the co-creation of a practical guide by the students. This guide documents the full methodology, learning process, and outcomes, making the programme easily adaptable and transferable. The document is also shared with local municipalities of the visited areas, as it reflects on local challenges. In addition, it is disseminated among relevant national park directorates and forestry stakeholders, supporting the integration of youth-generated insights into local environmental management and decision-making processes.

The process concluded with a roundtable discussion involving 70 participants, including students, environmental experts from universities, educators, and local decision-makers. The student groups presented their topics, outlined the problems, and proposed solutions, while also raising their key questions. Presentations were followed by moderated discussions, where decision-makers (from Hungarian Association of Environmental Enterprises, Napraforgó Waldor School, National Society of Conservationists and Hungarian Hiking Federation) provided feedback and assessed the feasibility.

The practice combines experiential and problem-based learning with youth participation. It builds skills such as critical thinking, teamwork, problem-solving, and active citizenship, while promoting long-term commitment to sustainability.





Annexes

Annex 1: European EGL 2026 Event Programme

2 June

17.00	Registration desk opens
18.00 – 19.00	Opening of the event (plenary) <i>Welcome</i> by Camilla Ringdal Dukefos , Head of the Norwegian National Agency for Erasmus+ <i>'Setting the scene for the conference'</i> by Inge Stuer , Programme Director of JINT <i>'How can youth work boost youth participation in local communities and how does Europe support to that?'</i> by Jonas Agdur , Senior Adviser of the KEKS network Getting to know each other
19.00	Dinner

3 June

9.00 – 11.00	From Europe to Tromsø (plenary) <i>'Welcome to Tromsø, the European Youth Capital of 2026'</i> by Parahini Parabaran, youth activist and Klara Fromm, member of the Tromsø Youth Council, followed by Sigrid Bjørnhaug Hammer, Deputy Mayor, and Martinus Amundsen, member of the True North 2026 team <i>'Official addresses'</i> by Lene Vågslid , Minister of Children and Families in Norway; Biliana Sirakova , Deputy Head of Unit Youth and Volunteer Solidarity, European Commission (online); Tobias Flessenkemper , Head of the Youth Department, Council of Europe <i>'Ask the institutions'</i> : discussion with Biliana Sirakova , Deputy Head of Unit Youth and Volunteer Solidarity, European Commission (online); Tobias Flessenkemper , Head of the Youth Department, Council of Europe Solidarity Introduction to the team, the agenda and digital tools for the event Getting to know each other, sharing expectations
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EUROPEAN EGL EVENT 2026

2-5 June, Tromsø

11.00 – 11.30	Coffee break
11.30 – 14.00	Parallel study visits to youth (work) organisations in Tromsø. Study Visit 01 Tvibit (3 groups) Study Visit 02 Cultural school for youth (and children) Study Visit 03 Alfheim Activity Center for disabled young people Study Visit 04 Fellesverket at Red Cross Study Visit 05 Tromsø International Film Festival with their youth programme Study Visit 06 Tromsø Library with their youth section Study Visit 07 Tromsø Sami House Study Visit 08 Outreach team (Utekontakten)
14.00 – 15.00	Welcome back! (plenary) <i>Sharing impressions about the study visits</i> <i>'Panel discussion: How do young people participate in remote communities? What is common and different amongst the Arctic region, French overseas territories, European islands and remote, rural areas? Exchange about dilemmas, challenges & inspiring initiatives'</i> with the participation of Sif Vik , Development and Project Manager Tvibit / Tromsø European Youth Capital 2026 (Norway); Mathieu Roumegous , Director of Agence du Service Civique / French Erasmus+ Youth and Sport National Agency (France); Pedro Tavares , Head of Youth, Sport and Tourism Office at the Municipality of Lagoa – Azores (Portugal); Jan Lai , Senior Youth Expert and Project Manager at Intercultural Association NUR, Sardinia (Italy)
15.00 – 15.30	Coffee break
15.30 – 17.30	Two rounds of parallel workshops, presenting inspiring practices ROUND 1: 1. Stefania Kampouri: Democratic Participation & Civic Space (GR) 2. Jan Lai: Passo dopo Passo (step-by-step) (IT) 3. Andželika Ivaščenko: DKN – think, move, don't be afraid (LV) 4. Mafalda Roriz: Youth Democracy Lab (PT) 5. Jonas Agdur: Youth Work Development Kit (EGL Steering Group) 6. Georgeta Szabo: From Beneficiaries to Volunteers (RO) 7. Marcin Gołębiowski: Pałacyk Creativity Center (PL)



EUROPEAN EGL EVENT 2026

2-5 June, Tromsø

ROUND 2:

1. Ilaria Zocco: The Anatomy of Distance (IT)
2. Marie Falk: Youth Protection Concept (SE)
3. John Curran: Supporting access to Irish Language Youth Clubs in Gaeltacht Areas (IE)
4. Sorina Carmen Văcariu: The Key to the Future (RO)
5. Agnė Kovalenkaitė: VR education (LT)
6. Jonas Agdur: Youth Work Development Kit (EGL Steering Group)

17.30 – 18.00	Closing of the day (plenary)
19.00	Big band concert: True North: Tromsø Ungdomsstorband med solister // Bryggeriet scene Facebook
20.00	Dinner at the hotel

4 June

09.00 – 09.20	<i>God morgen!</i> (plenary)
09.20 – 10.00	Practice gallery
10.00 – 10.20	'Youth Work in the New EU Youth Strategy: Work in Progress' by Babis Papaioannou , Policy Officer – Youth policy and Programmes, European Commission, online
10.20 – 13.00	Open Agenda (including the coffee break)
13.00 – 14.30	Lunch
14.30 – 16.00	'World Café: Messages to Europe'
16.30 – 18.00	Conclusions of the event
	Wrap up by the rapporteur, Ondřej "Ondras" Bárta , youth researcher
	Reflections of the participants and the members of the EGL Steering Group: SinaRiz à Porta , Board member of the European Youth Forum; Lara Liebertz , Board member of ERYICA; Carolina Loureiro , Deputy Director of DYPALL; Jenny Haglund , Secretary General of KEKS; Claudius Siebel , Chairperson of the EGL Advisory Board

Closing words: future outlook by **Judit Balogh**, EGL coordinator and **Martine Lødding**, Coordinator of Tromsø European Youth Capital 2026



EUROPEAN EGL EVENT 2026

2-5 June, Tromsø

19.00

Dinner and celebration of the 10 years of Europe Goes Local

5 June

Check-out from the hotel and departure



Annex 2: EGL European Messages on the post-2027 EU Youth Strategy

Position Paper on the post-2027 EU Youth Strategy

By Europe Goes Local

Celebrating its 10 years anniversary, **Europe Goes Local (EGL)** is a European cooperation supporting development of local youth work policy and practice. The consortium's core mission is to empower and strengthen the local youth work community of practice in alignment with the European Youth Work Agenda, by building bridges between local and European policy and practice. EGL is collaboratively governed by a Steering Group and an Advisory Board, consisting of Youth National Agencies and several European NGOs linked with local youth work, fostering dialogue among partners when designing learning, networking, and project development opportunities. EGL has built a wide and active community of practice featuring municipalities and numerous local actors involved in the development of youth work and youth work policies. Over the years, EGL has implemented huge number of activities aimed at creating dialogue and cooperation among youth work stakeholders from various local realities, offering valuable learning and networking opportunities. Among its key achievements thus far is the creation of foundational tools that guide the quality development of local youth work, most notably the European Charter on Local Youth Work¹, the Changemakers Kit², and the EGL Youth Work Development Toolkit³. EGL is financed through the contributions of participating National Agencies within the frameworks of the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes.

EGL has successfully taken a lot of initiatives during the last 10 years to strengthen local youth work. The feedback from the community of practice has also shown that it is necessary not only to continue doing this, but also to reinforce the support from the European level for the development of local youth work policies. It is from the position of expertise on bridging the European and local levels in supporting youth work policy and practice development over the past many years that the EGL Steering Group presents you with this Position Paper to offer our views on some key aspects of the post-2027 EU Youth Strategy (EUYS) on behalf of the wider EGL community of practice.

The EGL community of practice therefore invites the European Commission, the Council of the EU and the European Parliament to consider the following:

Youth work should be a cornerstone of the post-2027 EUYS. Youth work is a value-based, inclusive, participatory practice that strives to support young people's autonomy, self-determination, access to quality information, and access to rights. Youth work places an emphasis on critical thinking, creativity, as well as on human rights, democratic values and active citizenship.

1 <https://europegoeslocal.eu/the-european-charter-on-local-youth-work/>

2 <https://www.europegoeslocal.eu/changemakerskit/introduction/>

3 <https://toolkit.europegoeslocal.eu/en/>



A basic youth work offer should be available to all young people in the EU, especially at local level as it is the closest to the daily lives of young people, including those with fewer opportunities and those from rural and remote areas. Local and regional authorities and youth organisations play a crucial role in developing quality youth work. Intersectional collaborations of youth work with other sectors should be supported whenever possible, as they strengthen delivering better support to all young people.

The post-2027 EUYS should support the local actors by embracing the European Youth Work Agenda (EYWA). EYWA provides a strategic framework for youth work policy and practice at all levels and supports innovation and recognition in youth work. It aims to integrate youth work into existing and future youth policy strategies.

Development of local youth policies and of local youth work policies should be encouraged and supported. It is the local reality and the local expertise that should be built upon, bringing together the local community of practice: young people, youth workers, youth information services, municipalities, and relevant youth organisations. Such local youth policies and youth work policies should be provided with appropriate, predictable, and long-term available resources and have clear aims and indicators to ensure that progress can be tracked.

Youth work development should be strongly linked to the new Erasmus+ programme. The programme should offer opportunities for municipalities and local actors, specifically for capacity building for youth workers, creating and maintaining partnerships and long-term cooperations. Funding for intermediate structures supporting youth work development is also key. National Agencies should have the means and opportunities to strategically support local youth work policy and practice development, and to facilitate access of municipalities and other local actors to the new Erasmus+ programme. A successful example of such strategic support from National Agencies is the current Europe Goes Local initiative.

Youth workers should be supported. Opportunities for development of youth work competencies through formal and non-formal learning and continuous critical reflection should be provided, and youth workers need to be recognised for the value they bring to the local communities. A clear ethical framework based on human rights and democratic values should be the cornerstone of any youth workers' development, learning, or education. Youth workers should also have access to mental health support, since youth work can include psychologically and emotionally demanding components.

Youth work infrastructure should be supported. Youth work should have access to appropriate real-world and digital spaces, co-designed with young people. Youth workers should be supported in their everyday work by having access to support in domains such as (project) administration or accountancy, for example via the provision of organisational or operational grants to youth work organisations. Youth workers should be part of cross-sectoral networks and bodies, and engage in round tables and conversations with teachers, social workers, mental health professionals, police, and representatives of many other relevant sectors. The post-2027 EU Youth Strategy should also recognise youth information workers and youth information as a distinct field of practice and expertise, complementing youth work by enabling young people to access reliable information, make informed decisions, and exercise their rights.



Establishing a functioning connection between the European and the local level requires active mediation. **The development of local youth work policies and practices should be supported by establishing a European platform for the youth work community of practice.** As it is in EGL, such a platform should bring together municipalities and local actors and foster capacity building, learning experiences, information and knowledge sharing. It should also help building transnational collaborations, consortia and partnerships that give youth workers opportunities to transfer practices and strategies across countries, to make use of European references and tools (e.g., the European Charter on local youth work), and to learn from European research or research supported activities. All this can be achieved through establishing intermediate organisations at European level, such as Youth Work Centres of Excellence which would build on successful initiatives such as Europe Goes Local.

All of the abovementioned recommendations are based on the expertise of the EGL community of practice as expressed at various EGL European events and in the EGL European Charter on Local Youth Work. Nevertheless, they are also in line with the European policy debates in recent years. In 2020, the Council of the EU invited the Member States and the European Commission to develop and implement the European Youth Work Agenda⁴ as a strategic framework to strengthen quality, innovation and recognition of youth work, and to incorporate EYWA in the new EUYS. Since then, youth work and youth work policy are recognised as distinct fields of social practice and of political interest. During the last seven years and across several Council of the EU documents, the Member States have been emphasizing the importance of youth work in the life of young people, especially at local level and in remote and rural areas. The Member States have acknowledged that youth work⁵ needs appropriate framework conditions, the presence of sustainable structures and the availability of adequate financial resources, and they have been asking for specific attention to the development of youth work policy⁶ at the local level by providing municipalities and other local or regional actors with resources, channels and platforms for exchange.

This position paper is sent by the Steering Group on behalf of the Europe Goes Local network

08 July 2026, Brussels

4 Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the Framework for establishing a European Youth Work Agenda (2020/C 415/01).

5 Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on education and training of youth workers (2019/C 412/03).

6 Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on youth work policy in an empowering Europe (C/2024/3526).