

Europe goes local –
Conference

03.06.2026

Youth Protection Concept in the International Youth Work

Erasmus+ Projekt “Small
Scale Partnership”



Stadt Köln



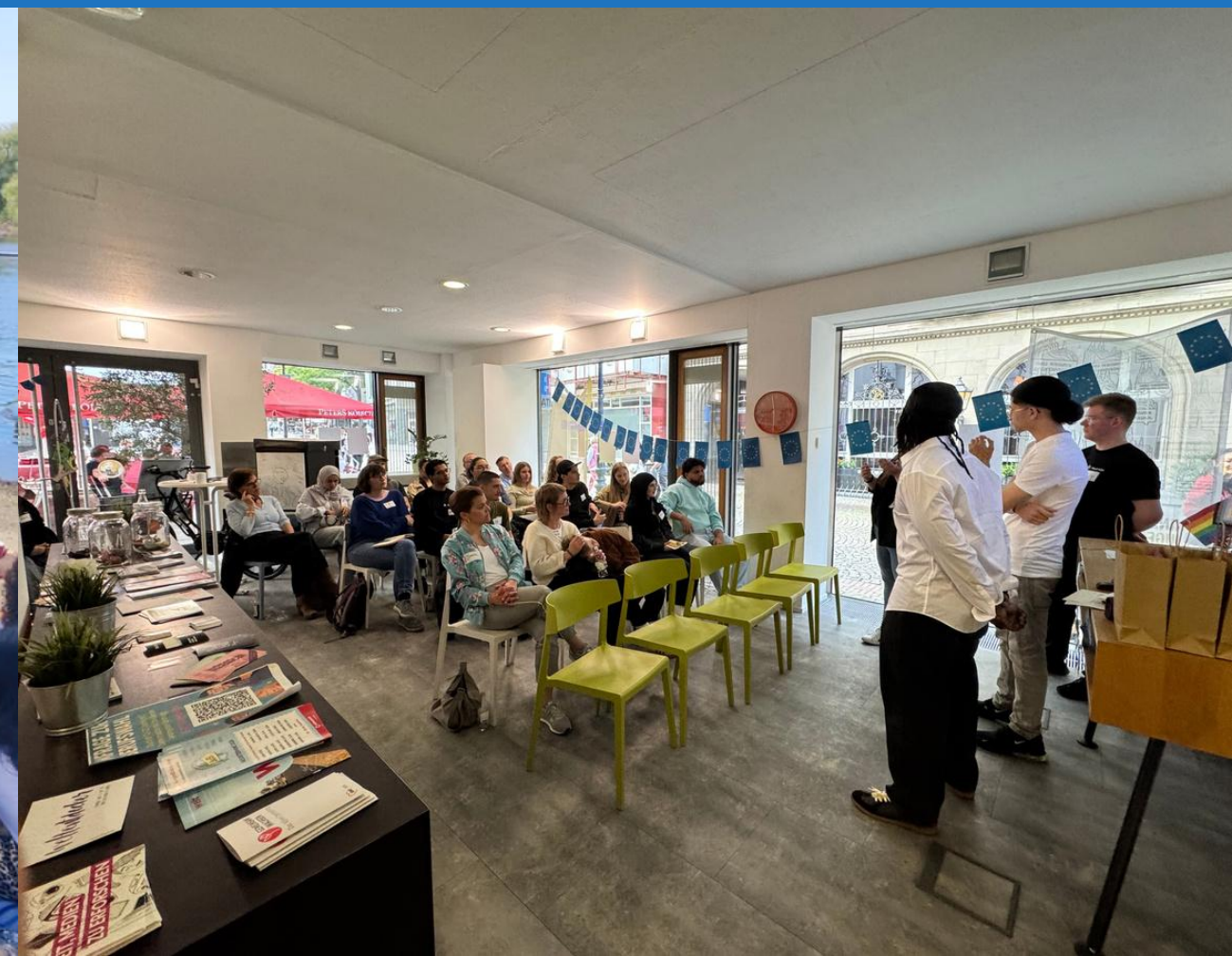
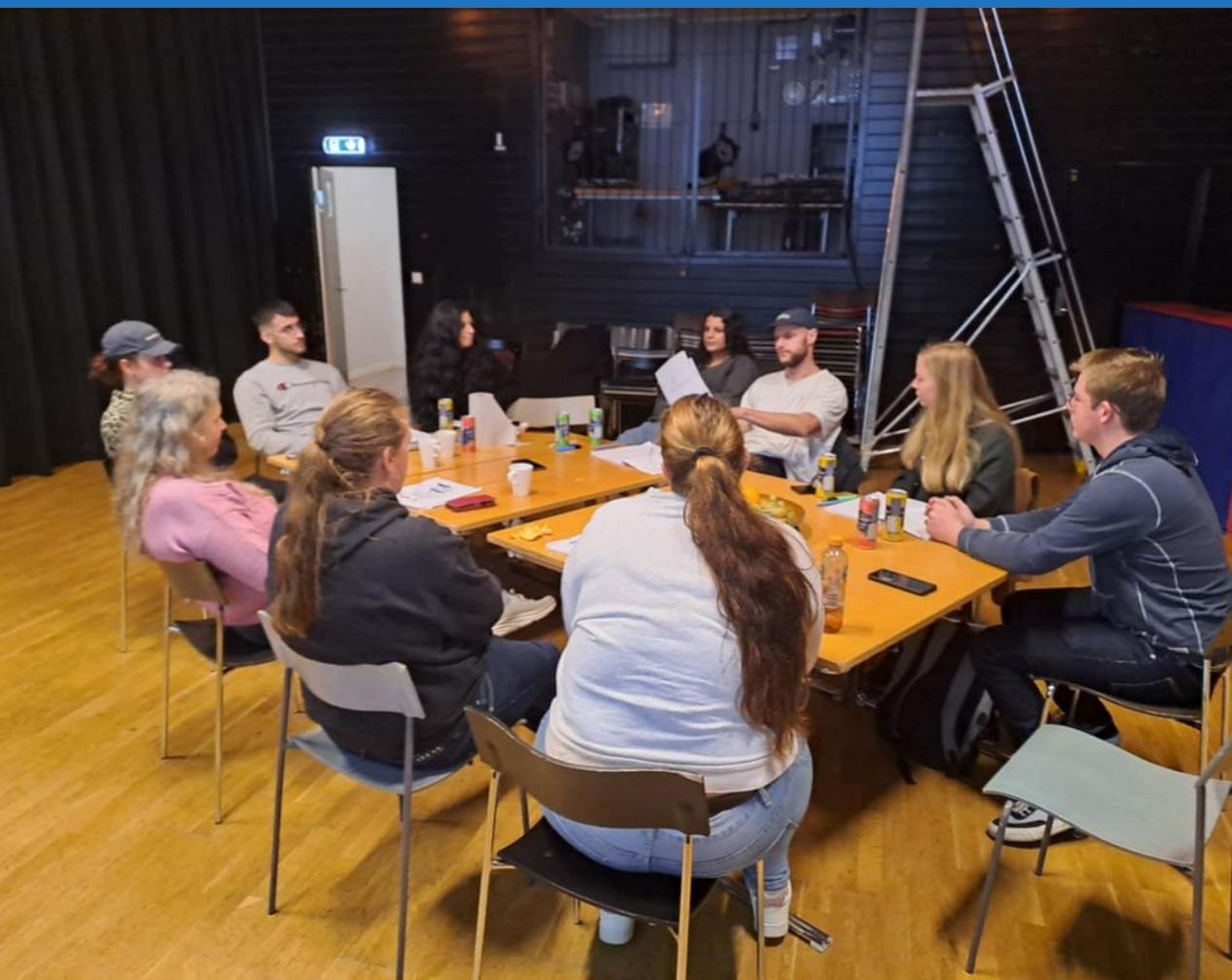
Co-funded by
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Göteborgs
Stad

Project idea

- Joint protection concept of 2 international partners
- Focus on safe and respectful exchanges
- Participation of young people
- developed and financed within an Erasmus+ project
- 1 ½ year project
- 2 expert exchanges & 2 Launchevents



Purpose and Foundation

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as legal foundation as the basis (Art. 2, 3, 6, 12, 31).

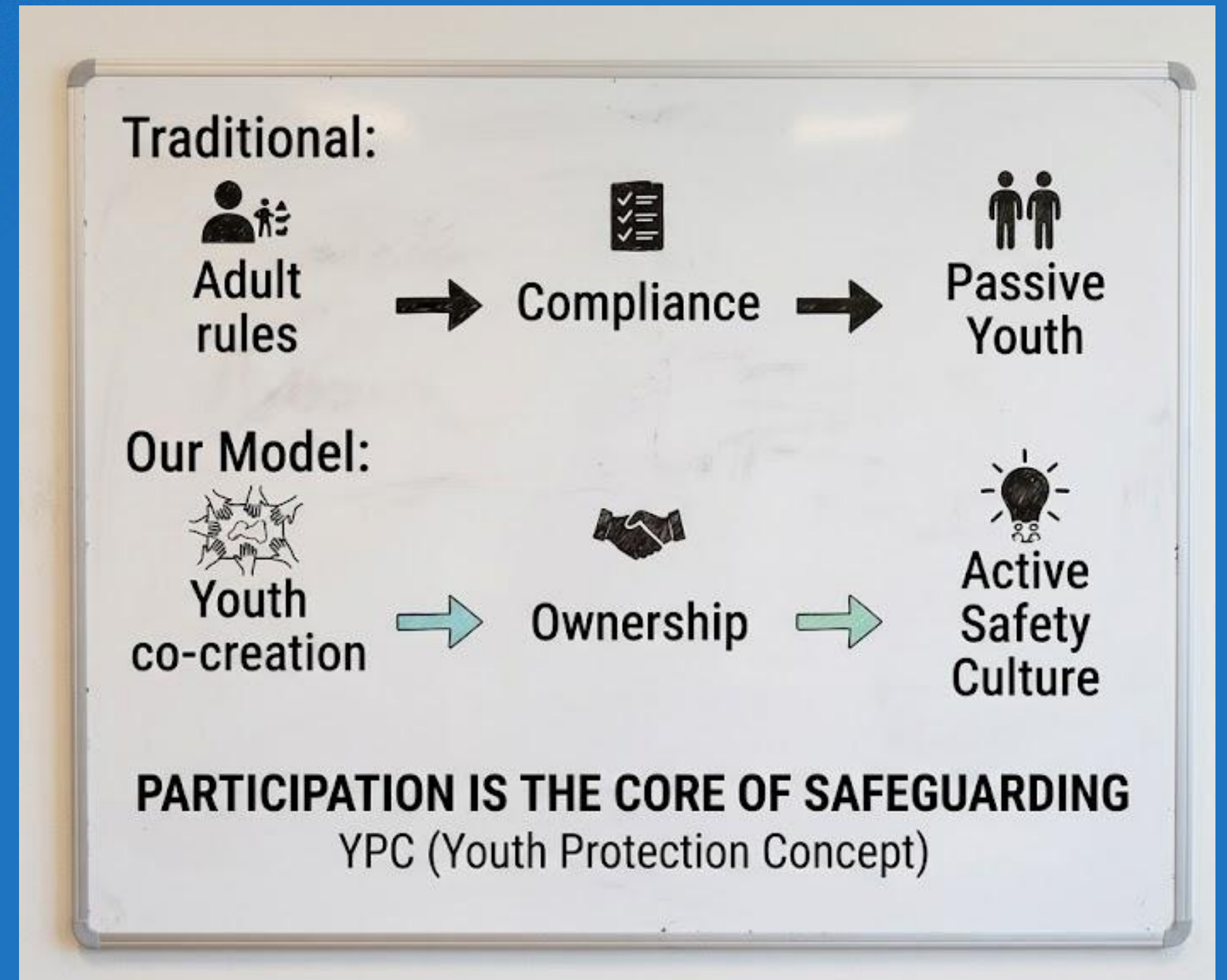
Erasmus+ values: Inclusion & Diversity, Democracy & Participation, Respect & Tolerance.

Unified protection standards across borders. Built bridges between differences in culture and laws.



Rethinking Youth protection: Participation as Protection

Traditional Approach	Our Model (YPC)
Adult-led rules	Youth-led co-creation
Forced compliance	Shared ownership
Passive youth	Active safety culture



Participation of young people

Contribution through active participation in the working meetings in Cologne and Gothenburg.

Review of the chapters written by young people in terms of readability, clarity and any outstanding questions.

Young people have created a layout for the first page of the safety plan and took an active part at the Launch-Events.





Core Principles

Best Interest of the Child (Art. 3 UN-Childrenconvention)

The best interest of the child as the guiding principle for all decisions.

Transparency, documentation and reflection in all processes - open communication and end-to-end traceability

Zero tolerance towards violence, discrimination, abuse and extremism - taking firm action in the event of breaches.

Regular training and review of protection measures. Staff appraisals every two years and ongoing professional development.

Key topics

Three key protection areas for inclusive and safe international youth work.



**Diversity &
LGBTQIA+**



Intersectionality



Inclusion

14 Modules



Modules 1–5:

- Introduction & Objectives
- Laws & Regulations
- Principles & Work Ethics
- Risk & Potential Analysis
- Participation

Modules 11–14:

- Disabilities & Inclusion
- Social & Digital Media
- Complaints Management
- External Support Network

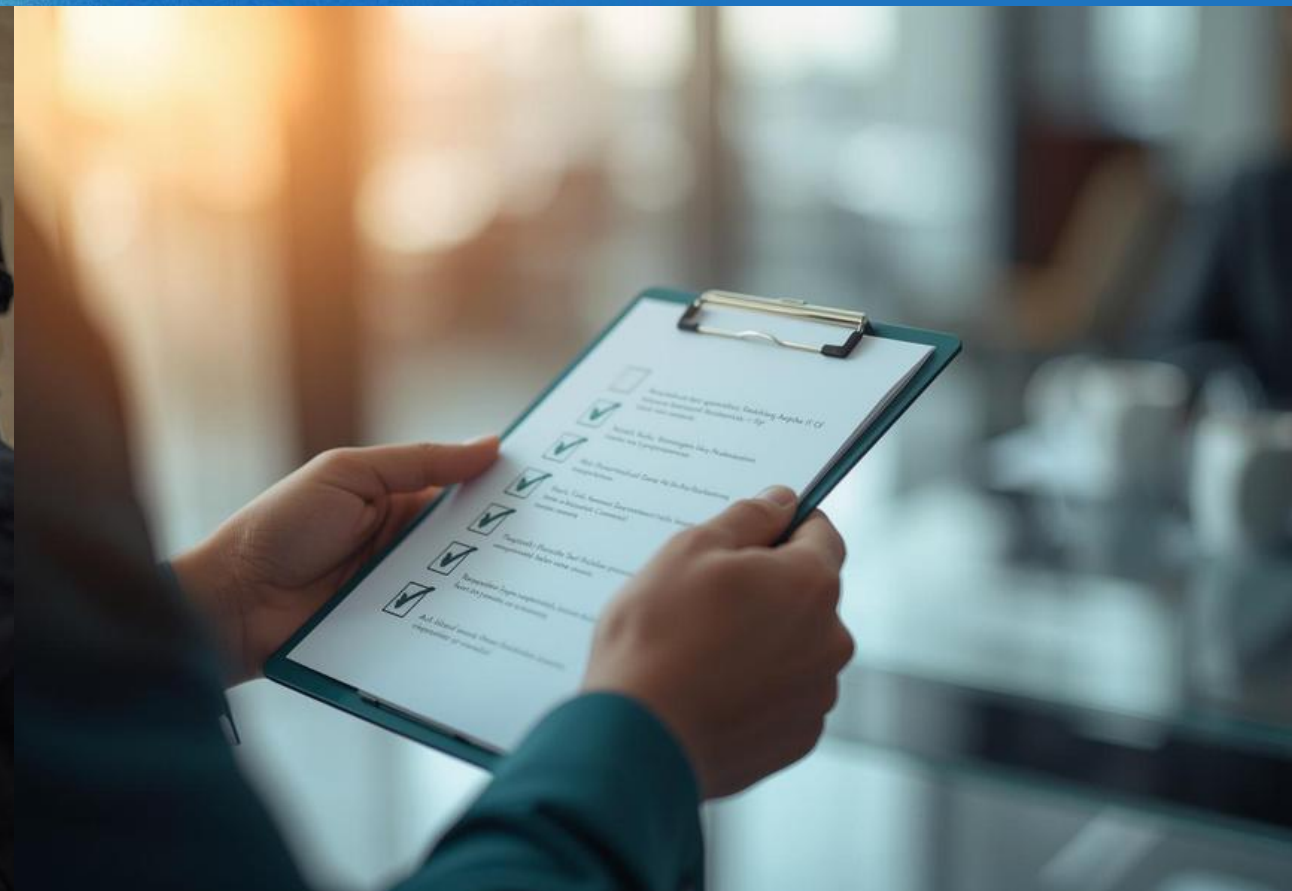
Modules 6–10:

- Violence & Discrimination
- Extremism
- Intersectionality
- Diversity & LGBTQIA+
- Health Management

All modules are based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Erasmus+ values: inclusion, democracy and respect.



Practical Tools



Risk & Potential Analysis, Checklists for all project phases, Code of Conduct for participants and staff with signature, self-assessment questionnaire for young people

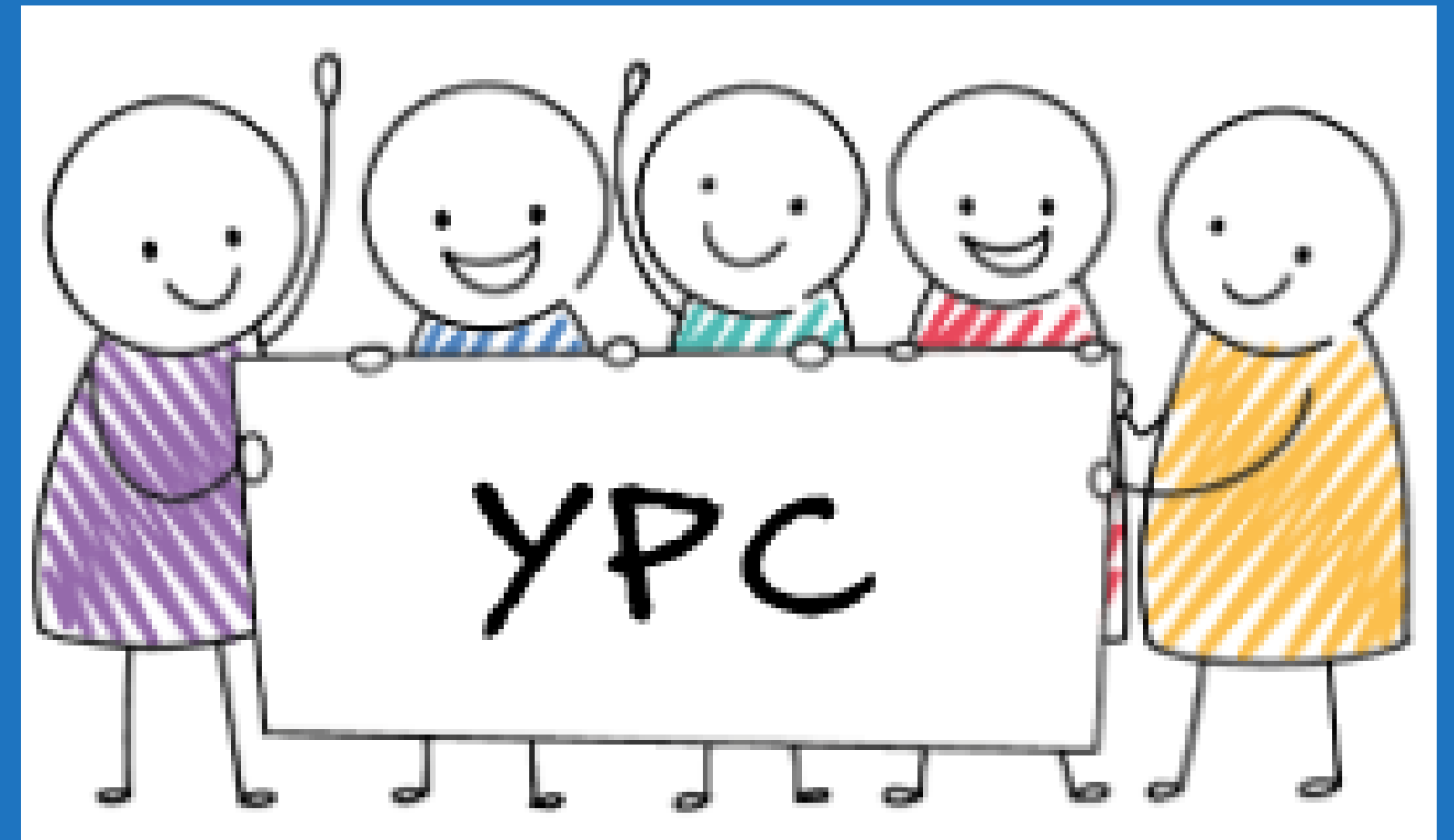
YPC as a Partner–Alignment Tool

- **Proactive Values Mapping:** Use the checklists as framework to align core principles with potential partners before starting the project.
- **Preventing Misalignment:** Discussing "what is safe" and "how we handle errors" in the planning phase avoids conflicts later.
- **Inclusive Access:** Create a predictable and transparent safety net that lowers barriers for marginalized youth and those from remote areas, making international participation feel safe and accessible.
- **Building Shared Responsibility:** Moving beyond top-down rules by involving youth in co-creating the Code of Conduct and safeguarding measures, ensuring these are lived values rather than just policies.
- **Operationalizing Safety:** Using the YPC checklists throughout all project phases (Before, During, After) to turn theoretical safeguarding into a reactive, youth-driven process.



Learned lessons and what we would do differently

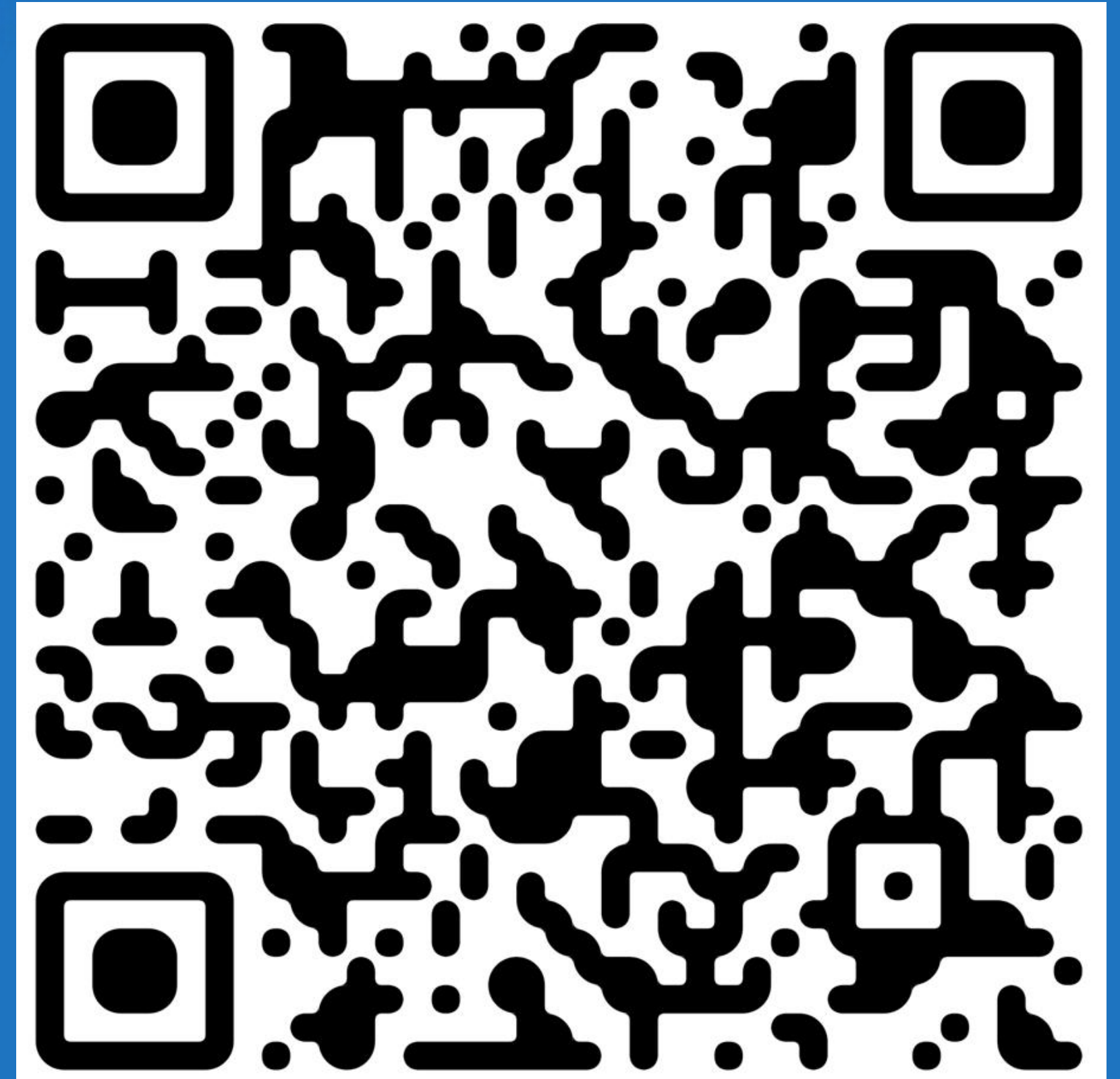
- Clear communication and accessible information are essential to ensure that everyone understands their roles, responsibilities, and reporting options.
- Practical training and regular discussions are more effective than providing written policies
- You can't have a protection concept on 15 pages
- Include more time to a project to let people breath
- Allocate more time for partner consultation and joint development of common youth protection.
- Plan additional opportunities for peer learning and exchange of experiences between partner organizations.



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Buzz groups/questions

- What did you find most inspiring in this practice? What could you take, adapt, or apply in your own context?
- What resonated most? If there was one thing that made you think 'Oh, wow!', what was it?



Thank You!

Together for safe
international youth work