# Participation and citizenship education and learning
# in European Youth Programmes

## Transnational Research Report

**Helmut Fennes**
**Susanne Gadinger**

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*'Erasmus+ Youth in Action'* and the *European Solidarity Corps* are the two European youth programmes of the European Union supporting international projects in the youth field. The *Research-based Analysis of European youth programmes* (RAY) is a research programme conducted by the RAY Network, which includes the National Agencies of the European youth programmes and their research partners in currently 33 countries*.

This RAY study on *Participation and Citizenship Education and Learning in European youth programmes (RAY PART)* presents a final transnational analysis of the results from case studies of projects funded by the European youth programmes conducted between 2019 and 2021. The study was designed and implemented by the *Generation and Educational Science Institute* in Austria in cooperation with the RAY Network partners in Austria**, Croatia, Finland**, Germany**, Italy**, Malta, Portugal and Sweden. It was co-funded within the Transnational Cooperation Activities (TCA) of E+/YiA and of the European Solidarity Corps. IZ – Vielfalt, Dialog, Bildung in Austria acted as RAY Network Coordination during the implementation of this project in 2019 and 2020. The Finnish National Agency for Education – EDUFI acted as RAY Network Coordination during the implementation of this project in 2021.

This report reflects the views only of its authors, and the European Commission cannot be held responsible for any use, which may be made of the information contained therein.

Where available, national research reports can be requested from the respective National Agencies and their research partners (see http://www.researchyouth.net/network/). Further RAY publications can be retrieved from http://www.researchyouth.net/reports/.

* 33 countries in 2019/2020: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom.

** Members of the RAY-PART research project working group

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# Abbreviations and explanations

RAY          Researched-based Analysis of European youth programmes. The RAY Network consists of the National Agencies of Erasmus+ Youth in Action and European Solidarity Corps and their research partners involved in the RAY project.

RAY-LTE     Research project on long-term effects of Erasmus+ Youth in Action on participation and citizenship. Ten project partners: Austria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Sweden, Slovenia (2015-2018).

RAY-PART    Research project on participation and citizenship education and learning in European youth programmes. Eight project partners: Austria, Croatia, Finland, Germany, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Sweden (2019-2021).

RAY-MON    Research-based analysis and monitoring of Erasmus+ Youth in Action. Joint activity of all RAY network partners (ongoing).

E+            European Union Programme Erasmus+ (2014-2020)

E+/YiA      Erasmus+ Youth in Action (2014-2020)

SOC          European Solidarity Corps (2018-2020)

European youth programmes    European Union programmes funding youth projects, in particular Erasmus+ Youth in Action and the European Solidarity Corps

European youth projects    In the context of this study: projects funded by European youth programmes

## Activity types

YE      Youth Exchange (E+/YiA Key Action 1)

YD      Youth Dialogue (E+/YiA Key Action 3)

SP      Solidarity Project (SOC Action)

pp      Appendix to activity types for 'past projects' (researched projects which already had taken place before this research project – see section 1.4).

## Country abbreviations

AT      Austria

DE      Germany

FI      Finland

HR      Croatia

IT      Italy

MT      Malta

PT      Portugal

SE      Sweden

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# 1    Introduction

For more than 20 years, a main objective of European youth programmes[1] has been the promotion of active citizenship and participation in civil society and democratic life in line with the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty (European Union, 2007).[2] This objective is also reflected in the European Union Youth Strategy (2019-2027)[3], and in the programme decisions of European youth programmes for the period 2014 to 2020. In this spirit, projects funded through European youth programmes should contribute to the development of competences relevant for participation and active citizenship as well as to the engagement of young people as active citizens in society.[4] In line with this, a new activity type 'Youth participation activities' was introduced in Erasmus+ Youth (2021-2027), supporting "activities outside formal education and training that encourage, foster and facilitate young people's participation in Europe's democratic life at local, regional, national and European level".[5]

In view of these policies and programme objectives, the RAY Network[6] has explored since 2009 the effects of projects funded through Youth in Action (2007-2013) and Erasmus+ Youth in Action (E+/YiA, 2014-2020) on young people, youth workers and youth leaders involved in these projects. This was done every second year in the RAY Monitoring (RAY-MON) surveys, asking respondents after their project participation about the effects of their project participation.[7] The analysis of these surveys indicates that participants as well as project team members develop participation and citizenship competence and practice as a result of their involvement in such a project, and that the percentages of positive responses for most items related to the development of participation/citizenship knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and actions are higher than 50%, sometimes up to 95%. Nevertheless, it needs to be noted that these responses reflect subjective perceptions of the respondents if they developed these competences or not, but they do not actually measure how much these competences were developed.

In order to verify these findings and to explore long-term effects of E+/YiA projects, the RAY research project 'Long-term-effects of Erasmus+ Youth in Action on participation and citizenship' (RAY-LTE) was developed and implemented between 2015 and 2018. In this longitudinal/panel study, participants of E+/YiA projects were surveyed four times and interviewed three times over a period of three years, starting shortly before the beginning of their project (project team members only took part in the surveys). Through this research design, participation and citizenship competence and practice development could actually be measured more objectively than through the RAY Monitoring surveys. In particular, the

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[1] Presently, Erasmus+ Youth in Action (E+/YiA) and the European Solidarity Corps.
[2] Furthermore, a number of other specific objectives of E+/YiA can also be linked to active citizenship and participation in civil society and democratic life, e.g., fostering solidarity, respect for cultural diversity, inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities or special needs as well as working against discrimination, intolerance, racism and xenophobia. Indirectly, such links can also be found for objectives related to capacity building, quality development and European cooperation in the youth field as well as for objectives related to education and work.
[3] (European Commission, 2018)
[4] (European Commission, 2019)
[5] (European Commission, 2021, p. 149)
[6] Research-based Analysis of European youth programmes (RAY). The RAY Network consists of the National Agencies of Erasmus+ Youth in Action and the European Solidarity Corps and their research partners in 32 countries (as of 2021).
[7] See (Böhler et al., 2021) and (Böhler et al., 2022)

RAY-LTE research findings show that specific competence areas and specific types of practices related to participation and citizenship were developed through E+/YiA projects – some of them only by certain sub-groups of participants – and that these effects are still existent two to three years after the project.[8]

Since there now was sufficient evidence that E+/YiA projects actually contribute to the development of participation and citizenship competence and practice, an obvious subsequent question was: *How* do E+/YiA projects contribute to the development of these competences and practices? This question was explored in the RAY research project 'Participation and citizenship education and learning in European youth programmes' (RAY-PART, 2019-2021), the findings of which are presented in this document.

In both the RAY-LTE and the RAY-PART studies, participation and citizenship practice refers to participation of young people in a broad scope of contexts, actions and behaviours, from general participation in (civil) society at large (such as discussing political issues with friends, volunteering or engaging in a NGO) to non-conventional participation (e.g., signing petitions or participating in a rally), conventional participation (e.g. voting) and to participating in political life (e.g., in decision making processes at all levels. Participation and citizenship competence is understood as a combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary for active citizenship and participation in society and democratic life.[9]

## 1.1 Main findings of the RAY-LTE research project

In short, there is strong evidence that knowledge and skills relevant for participation and citizenship are developed. There is also evidence that for certain sub-groups of participants values inherent to democracy, such as solidarity and tolerance, are strengthened. Furthermore, certain sub-groups of participants became more active in civil society and in democratic life. This learning took place primarily in E+/YiA projects focussing specifically on participation and citizenship.

It was also found, that different groups of participants profited in different ways. E.g., for participants with prior experience with similar activities or projects a so-called cumulative advantage was observed – they further develop competences and practices, building on their prior learning. These participants also often chose projects on topics they were already engaged in and deepened their existing knowledge through participating in an E+/YiA project. On rather young and less educated participants, the projects had the effect of becoming more active in social life and society in general. The latter often came to participate in E+/YiA projects not because of primarily being interested in the topic of the project, but rather aiming to get away from home, to go to another country and to meet new people from abroad. Nevertheless, some of these participants acquire knowledge related to participation and citizenship, develop related skills and become more active in civil society. Last but not least, for some young people with fewer opportunities the projects had been 'stepping stones' to a more active participation in civil life. For others, the projects were a first step to participation and citizenship, which could be followed up by support to take further steps towards participation in society.

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[8] See Bárta et al., 2021
[9] For a more detailed conceptual framework of citizenship see Bárta et al., 2021.

The findings of the RAY-LTE research project included a number of recommendations referring to the development of promoting participation and active citizenship in E+/YiA.[10]

## 1.2 Aims and objectives of the RAY-PART research project

The RAY-PART research project is focussing on how competences and practices related to participation and democratic citizenship are developed in European youth programmes in order to inform key actors involved in the implementation and further development of these programmes. The main research question is:

Which approaches to participation and citizenship education and learning applied in projects funded by European youth programmes are effective in developing participation and citizenship competences and practices of participants and, in particular, fostering the engagement of young people in civil society and democratic life and empowering them to do so?

Specific research questions are:

- What are the key elements and methodologies of these approaches to make them effective?
- Which competences are needed by project leaders/team members in order to implement these approaches?
- How can these competences of project leaders/team members be developed?

In consequence of the Corona-pandemic, the following specific research questions were added:

- Which approaches to participation and citizenship education and learning developed in these projects when dealing with the effects of the Coronavirus Pandemic on the projects are effective in developing participation and citizenship competences and practices of participants and, in particular, fostering the engagement of young people in civil society and democratic life and empowering them to do so?
- Which digital means and methods (e.g., online meetings/discussions) are applied in the projects and how do they contribute to participation and citizenship education and learning?

## 1.3 Research design and methodology

The research design of RAY-PART is based on the findings of the RAY-LTE and RAY-MON studies. It applied a qualitative educational research approach with case studies of projects funded through E+/YiA and the European Solidarity Corps using a mix of research methods. The focus was on the observation of project core activities, a group discussion with participants during the project core activity and interviews with at least one project leader/team member of the hosting country during the project core activity as well as two months after the project core activity; a second interview with a project leader/team member of a partner country was optional. Furthermore, the project organisers were asked to include additional questions in the project evaluation in order to support the research process. Documents used for the project promotion, preparation, implementation, evaluation and follow-up were considered in a document analysis. Each case study should cover all project

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[10] See Bárta et al., 2021; see also chapter 5 Recommendations of this report.

activities from the preparation of the project after grant approval until the end of follow-up activities of the project.

Guidelines for the observation, group discussion and interview as well as a structure for the analysis of the collected data were developed through the transnational RAY research team and the national researchers of the eight project partners.[11]

As during the LTE project, project leaders and participants of the researched projects were planned to be invited to a research conference in the European Youth Centre of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France, after the completion of all case studies in order to discuss the preliminary transnational research findings and to integrate the conclusions from the conference in the final analysis and research report, thus giving this research project a participatory research dimension.

## 1.4    Implementation of the case studies – changes due to the Corona pandemic

Unfortunately, the data collection for the case studies, which was originally planned to be implemented from winter 2019 until summer 2020, was strongly affected by the Corona pandemic. Only two projects took place before March 2020 (when the pandemic started and respective contact restrictions came into force) and were researched in the planned way. 18 projects which had been selected to be researched and which should have been taking place between March and August 2020 were interrupted, postponed or cancelled – or postponed several times and finally cancelled. Single project activities were cancelled or transferred into online formats or implemented in presence in an adapted way, e.g., with less participants, in bigger rooms or only nationally without participants from other countries. As a result, some RAY partners could only carry out one or even no case study at all in 2020. And of course, also the data collection had to be adapted to the protective measures and contact restrictions and could not be implemented in all case studies in the intended way. For example, observation was not possible in some projects because the researcher was not allowed to travel or the allowed maximum number of persons in the activity was already reached. Most group discussions with participants and interviews with project leaders and team members took place online. Activities transferred into online formats could be observed by the researcher only by taking part in online meetings, which severely limited the quality of observation.

In February 2021, it was still uncertain and unpredictable whether projects would take place in the first months of the year. Therefore, it was decided that also past projects with a focus on participation and citizenship could be researched applying an ex post facto research design. While an observation of project activities was not possible in past projects, the design foresees at least one interview with a former participant (or if possible, a group discussion with around three former participants) and interviews with one project leader or team member of the hosting organisation and with one project leader of a partner organisation. Projects which had been implemented in 2019 were given priority compared to earlier projects in order to do the data collection after a comparable period of time after the implementation of the projects. During the implementation of the research, it turned out that from some projects only one or no former participant could be found for an interview, but partly also up to three participants took part in the group discussions. Finding the project leaders for the interviews was easily possible.

Obviously, the data collection was done under different conditions: on the one hand during the project with participants and project team members being in the middle of the project

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[11] RAY partners in Austria, Croatia, Finland, Germany, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Sweden.

experience with all emotions involved but, at the same time, with the possibility of external observation by the researcher; on the other hand, a year or longer after the project with a more distant and possibly reflected view of participants and project team members of their experiences, but without external observation by the researchers.

Nevertheless, similar responses by participants and project team members were given during the interviews for both types of projects. Therefore, it seemed to be justifiable to integrate the analysis of the case studies of both 'current projects' (data collection during the project implementation) and 'past projects' (data collection around a year after the project).

In total, 17 case studies were implemented, including eleven case studies on current projects and six case studies on past projects. Table 1 in the appendix shows that the case studies covered three activity types: 'Youth Exchanges' and 'Youth Dialogue projects' funded through E+/YiA, and 'Solidarity projects' funded under the European Solidarity Corps. As intended in the design of the research project and despite of the postponements and cancellations due to the pandemic, the case study sample reflects a variety of project topics (Table 2) and project designs (Table 3 to Table 19) across all countries involved in RAY-PART. Table 3 to Table 19 also inform about the number of participants of the projects, projects with a focus on inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities, the number of project partners and the effects of the Corona pandemic on the project implementation.

Also, the planned research conference in Strasbourg was affected by the pandemic: it had to be postponed and was finally implemented online in October 2021. The postponement and the online format of the conference can be assumed to be the main reasons that only very few project participants registered – this assumption is supported by the finding of the RAY-PART research that young people had a strong desire for 'real contacts', meaning meeting other young people in person. Nevertheless, around 40 project leaders/team members of the researched projects, representatives of the National Agencies of the RAY-PART project partners, their national research partners, the transnational research team as well as stakeholders of the European youth sector discussed the findings, developed recommendations and communicated them to policy makers in the youth field at European and national level. This exchange, first between research and practice and in a second step between research, practice and policy, turned out to be very fruitful. The outcomes of these discussions are reflected in this report.

# 2    Main conclusions

The research findings show that the following project designs, methodologies, methods and settings are effective for fostering the development of participation and citizenship competence and practice:

## 2.1    The project as participation and citizenship practice

Obviously, this can be achieved through a project design and project setting which provide for actually practicing participation in civil society or democratic life, e.g., by directly supporting people with fewer opportunities, by implementing actions against climate change, by a political campaign for human rights etc., thus by practical participation and citizenship being inherent to the project and its activities.

This also can be achieved through a simulation of a participation and citizenship activity during a project – e.g., through simulating a political process such as a session of a local council, a regional or national parliament, a committee of an international organisation or of any political representative body. Such a participation practice can also take place in role-plays organised as part of a project, e.g., a role-play on a registration procedure of an asylum seeker or on a controversy between a protester and a policy maker.

In any case, it is essential to link the project theme and activities to current social and political events and developments at local, regional, national, European and global levels: this is likely to catch the interest of the participants for the project activities and to foster their genuine motivation to work on the respective topics related to participation and citizenship.

## 2.2    Ensuring sustainability of projects

Participation and citizenship practice of the project participants can well be fostered, if they – as part of the project – develop a follow-up activity or another project for active participation in civil society and democratic life to be implemented after the initial project, thus creating a multiplier effect for the initial project.

This multiplying effect and sustainability of projects could be increased by providing adequate funding for follow-up activities/projects resulting from participation and citizenship projects. Ideally, this funding for follow-up activities would already be allocated as part of the grant for the initial project, to be confirmed if the follow-up project is meeting the funding criteria of the respective European youth programme.

## 2.3    The project as a means for understanding participation and citizenship

The concepts of participation and citizenship are often described in an abstract way and can be difficult to grasp for young people. Therefore, it can be helpful to use the project experiences for developing an understanding of participation and citizenship – at least an implicit understanding of the participants, but possibly also an (at least rough) conceptual understanding. In case of the latter, it is essential to communicate explicitly the concepts of 'active citizenship' and 'participation in civil society and democratic life' in a language, phrasing and terminology that is comprehensible and close to the reality of participants and team members.

## 2.4 The project as non-formal and informal learning space

Since European youth projects are, in principle, applying non-formal education approaches and methodologies, it is obvious that they should comply with certain principles, key elements and approaches of (non-formal) education and learning. Beyond that, the research findings show that certain methodologies and methods are successful specifically for fostering participation and citizenship competence and practice:

- participatory learning, i.e., actively involving the participants in developing the project and establishing the project objectives, content, themes, design, methodologies and methods, and in implementing the project itself, including evaluation and planning follow-up activities;
- experiential learning, i.e., practicing participation and citizenship in the project (see section 2.1) or through field exercises, excursions etc.;
- inputs and discussions, but as well creative and artistic methods such as photographs, films, paintings, theatre etc.;
- adequate time, space and guidance for reflection, individually and in groups, of experiences and learning related to participation and active citizenship;
- adequate time and space for informal learning; this became evident, in particular, due to the lack of informal time in projects which were implemented completely online, where the participants hardly had opportunities for informal talks and joint or individual activities in a physical project environment;
- online project activities complementing face-to-face activities; in fact, the necessity for some projects to partly move activities planned to take place face-to-face into the online space showed advantages of blended learning which are likely to be continued also after the Corona pandemic.

Furthermore, using a variety and combination of adequate non-formal education and learning methods showed to be successful for fostering learning for participation and citizenship.

## 2.5 Learning effects

While this study is not primarily aimed at exploring learning outcomes but on educational approaches, methodologies and methods fostering learning for participation and citizenship, it obviously also revealed learning effects since the 'what' and the 'how' are interlinked. These findings are confirming and/or complementing the findings of the RAY-LTE study (see Bárta et al., 2021).

## 2.6 Effectiveness and quality of projects

It is necessary to providing adequate training for youth workers and youth leaders on developing and implementing participation and citizenship projects for young people in line with the findings of this research project: the specific competences required to develop and implement these projects are going beyond those of regular (European) youth projects.

Furthermore, it would be useful to establish policies and structures fostering citizenship education and learning for young people and respective training for youth workers/youth leaders in a sustainable way.

# 3     Research Findings

This study will focus on educational approaches, designs, methodologies and methods which were used in the 17 researched projects, exploring which were effective for fostering participation and citizenship competence and practice. This will be elaborated in section 3.1 to 3.4. Of course, there can well be other approaches, designs, methodologies and methods which are effective in this respect, but could not be identified as such in the case studies of this research project.

A main finding of the case studies is that the success of projects in fostering participation and citizenship competence and practice does not only depend on specific methodologies and methods: the case studies show, that it is also essential that certain principles, key elements and approaches of (non-formal) education and learning are applied in European youth projects to provide for effective participation and citizenship education and learning. This will be elaborated in section 3.5.

Furthermore, this chapter also outlines learning effects related to participation and citizenship being reported by participants and project leaders of the researched projects (section 3.6), the effects of the Corona pandemic on the researched projects as well as on the case studies (section 3.7), and conclusions from the case studies concerning youth work competences which are required or at least useful for developing and implementing European youth projects fostering participation and citizenship (section 3.7).

## 3.1     Project designs and methodologies

In the projects researched, different project designs and methodologies were applied (see also Table 3 to Table 19) which are considered to be effective for the development of participation and citizenship competences and practices of the participants. Of course, many other different aspects with respect to specific educational approaches and methods used when implementing these projects play a crucial role for the actual learning outcomes.

### 3.1.1     Linking the project themes to current social and political events and developments

All topics the projects were focusing on are strongly linked to social and political events and developments at the time they were developed and implemented. Therefore, they had a high potential to catch the interest of young people and their motivation to participate such a project. Partly, the participants are affected by the project topics themselves, for example they experienced racism, or they participate in a project because they are interested in or want to engage for a certain social or political aim which is addressed in the project, for example for the protection of the environment, for the observance of human rights or against social inequality. In the projects, the participants are provided with knowledge about these topics, do research on these topics on their own, exchange about these topics with young people with different views on the topics, because they have different backgrounds or come from different countries which are somehow concerned with these topics. And of course, the participants also bring in their own experiences with this topic. This means, that all activities have a specific reference to current topics and real life.

The topics most frequently addressed in the projects are discrimination because of different reasons, for example because of social status, sexual orientation, religion or skin colour, as well as environmental protection and sustainability, and in this context, especially the climate change. Human rights and children`s rights are thematised, furthermore extremism, racism,

nationalism, EU-scepticism, treatment of refugees, gender equality, fake news, preservation of cultural heritage, youth participation, job search, living on an island, Corona etc.

Without doubt, environmental protection and sustainable development are very prominent current political themes. While this was the main topic of only one project, it was brought up by the participants in at least ten other projects and it is likely that it also emerged in the other projects without being noted by the researchers: obviously, this is an important issue for young people and it probably should be addressed explicitly as a project theme more often and thus result in an increased engagement of participants in their projects.

More specifically, participants in the ten projects mentioned above discussed topics like ecological distribution of funds after Corona or ecological travelling as inhabitants of an island, they got to know about specific nature protection programmes, biodiversity and plastic waste prevention, they cleaned school yards, parcs and forests etc.

In the project focusing on environmental protection, the participants developed a school curriculum with three different modules aiming to foster the awareness of school students for environmental protection and to encourage them to organise respective events at school. The curriculum was approved and recognised through the respective national ministry and put into practice through the participants in four schools. The variety of non-formal methods applied within the introductory lecture, e.g., inputs or research, practical workshops (such as on constructing a school composter) and different activities such as quizzes, games or field work, as well as the link to the school students' interest in environmental protection and the implementation in the living environment of the pupils contributed to the big success of the project with respect to participation and citizenship.

### 3.1.2  Practicing participation and citizenship

Practicing participation and citizenship was the core of the design of six projects.

The participants of three projects carried out participation and citizenship activities in real life. In one project, they interviewed elderly inhabitants of a rural region about their traditions in planting, cooking and eating, and finally created a recipe book in order to strengthen the awareness on this cultural heritage, protect it and contribute to a sustainable way of living. The project also aimed at fostering the intergenerational dialogue. In another project, the explicit aim was building of a LGBTIQ+ community and the creation of a LGBTIQ+ centre as a safe place for and from the community. These aims were reached through different public and internal activities. In the third project, five young people spending their voluntary service at different organisations but in the same city carried out different activities together such as informing about European youth programmes in school classes and in the youth centre, cleaning the parc, developing and implementing an online survey on Corona and creating an online tutorial for trainers in the youth field.

In three other projects, the participants practiced political participation in simulations: they took the roles of political representatives (in one project of a regional parliament and in two projects of the European Parliament) and carried out the whole spectrum of respective tasks, starting with identifying topics they want to engage in, doing research on these topics, discussing solutions for problems related to these topics in thematic working groups, discussing also with policy makers, formulating motions, presenting the motions in plenary, discussing them and voting on them.

### 3.1.3 Empowerment of specific target groups to participate in civil society

The design of five projects aimed at empowering young people belonging to specific target groups to actively participate in civil society. The core of this approach is the common special need or goal of a specific target group and the adequate response to this need or goal. In all researched projects, the participants were involved in the identification of their special need respectively of what they intend to improve specifically for themselves, be it by being asked before the project orally, by a survey or in a preparatory meeting. They were partly also involved in the way how this aim should be achieved in the course of the project. In all projects a basic frame was offered, for example the focus on inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities through sports, the focus on young people living on an island or the focus on young people with a migration background. Within this framework, the participants planned the activities, prepared the material needed, co-designed the final event, decided on the topics to be discussed, e.g., related to the question how islanders could perceive themselves as members of the European Union. In a project involving refugees as participants, they were involved in preparing the programme schedule and communicated what they specifically wanted to get to know about the society of the country they now live in and which institutions they would like to visit in order to become able to arrange their affairs on their own, for example to go through formalities at the registration office. One project aimed to work with young people from deprived areas against exclusion, discrimination and marginalisation. At a start-up meeting, the participants expressed their strong wish that the project should be about job opportunities and should enable them to find a summer job or an apprenticeship. In consequence, the project leaders adapted the project programme accordingly, taking into account that, if young people become members of the labour market instead of having nothing to do and hanging around in the streets, it helps to avoid that the young people get involved in illegal activities. In a Youth Dialogue project, representatives of school councils and educational staff as well as school principals took part in a project fostering their ability to involve school students in decision-making processes at school.

### 3.1.4 Working on topics related to participation and active citizenship

Working on and the discussion of topics related to participation and citizenship was central in four projects. The participants worked on different aspects of one main topic such as human rights, environment, mental health, racism and gender equality. The discussion included a variety of non-formal learning activities such as discussion, input, role-play, art work, excursion, board game, reflection, etc. This design was implemented within Youth Exchanges and within a Youth Dialogue; the activities of the Youth Dialogue project were implemented in monthly 24-hours-camps focusing on one specific topic during each camp.

### 3.1.5 Development (and implementation) of a project for active participation in civil society and political life

In two projects, the participants developed (and implemented) project concepts for fostering active participation and citizenship in civil society and political life. In one of these projects, a rather elaborated concept was developed, aimed at fostering the awareness of school and university students for environmental protection and providing them with practical skills and knowledge on the subject. This project, which was also implemented through the participants with pupils, was included as an exemplary project in a promotional video of the European Commission and was recognised as a valuable mechanism for raising awareness about environmental protection by the national Ministry of science and education. In the other

project, concepts for local youth work were developed by young people and local administrators.

## 3.2 Methods

### 3.2.1 Discussions

Almost all interviewed project leaders consider discussions on topics related to participation and citizenship to be an effective method in European youth projects to foster participation and citizenship competence and practice of the participants involved in them. This was supported by the participants, who stated in broad agreement that they appreciated the discussions on the topics in their projects.

According to the participants, the discussions provided them with many different aspects about a topic, they learned to express their own opinion and got to know other views and perspectives. Some participants considered clashing ideas appearing in the discussions as an efficient way to develop new social agency. Furthermore, they gained knowledge, became more skilled rhetorically, their ability to compromise was fostered, and they realised, that discussions are the way to a solution. Last but not least, the participants got the feeling to be taken seriously and became more self-confident.

In one project, a panel discussion presenting specific examples of active youth councils by young people themselves was the part the participants remembered best. The participants reported, that they could easily identify with the 'role models', because they were also young people and the participants could imagine themselves in their place.

The project leaders outlined some criteria for making discussions successful: First of all, the topic to be discussed needs to be of interest for the participants, it needs to be important to them. For that reason, participants themselves should develop and decide on the topic or on the aspects of a topic which should be discussed. The project leaders could also try to make the participants curious with an input including interesting or surprising facts. Furthermore, the project leaders consider it to be decisive to make also rather shy participants talk from the very beginning of a discussion, which could be reached through forming small groups with two to three young people each; this intimate and easily manageable setting helps shy participants to dare to speak. When the participants got used to express their opinion also other discussion formats such as discussions in bigger groups or in plenary, fishbowl or world café discussions should follow in the course of the project. Both for shy and more courageous participants, a transparent, trustful and appreciative atmosphere is indispensable for carrying out discussions from which the participants can profit. According to the project leaders this atmosphere can be created through communicating to the participants that it is not compulsory to take part in the discussion, to ask them to listen to expressed opinions and to respect them, and to convince others not by attacking them but by presenting one's own arguments. Depending on how experienced the participants are in such a way of discussing, the project leaders see their own role in being present for being asked questions by the participants and to facilitate the course of the discussion, only interfering when it is inevitable.

Preparing discussions with brainstorming, doing research and/or inputs and closing discussions with a reflection are considered to be effective combinations of methods.

*"I appreciate to get to know the perspectives of the others and to share my opinion." (YE/PP)*

*"I very much appreciated the exchange … especially with people, who live in very different contexts." (YD/PP)*

### 3.2.2   Role-plays

Role-plays were applied in three projects on the following topics: human rights, local youth participation and empowerment of young people with a migration background; the participants of two of these projects assessed the role-plays as the most impressing project experience and said that they loved it.

Role-plays appear to be a method resulting in strong and sustainable learning effects with respect to participation and citizenship. The participants used their creativity to empathise with roles which were different to their own life. Playing a given role on a topic such as human rights was partly connected with strong emotions, which made the learning much more powerful than just providing the learners with information on this topic. This is very well illustrated by the example of a participant in a project on human rights. In a role-play he acted as a refugee standing in front of a border. In his home country, the refugee is persecuted, and crossing the border would save him from persecution. He tries to convince the border guard to allow him to do the saving step, but he does not get the permission. The participant said about this scene in the group discussion: "I really felt very discriminated and alone. … It took more than one hour to overcome this emotion." (YE/PP) This experience provided the participant with knowledge about and raised his awareness for the situation of many refugees and the violation of their rights. Other participants reported of a broadened horizon, the plan to think more about the topics addressed in the role-plays and the intention to change their behaviour when they are back home: for example, they want to help school students who are bullied at their school, or they would like to initiate a local youth project.

In another project the participants were asked to take the role of local administrators who should design local youth initiatives having € 500,000 at their disposal. The participants liked the competitive character of the role-play and aimed to be awarded for the most innovative project.

According to some project leaders, a role-play is a method suited very well for young people at the age between 13 and 18 years. The role the participants should play should not be too complicated and should be well explained.

Role-plays should be followed by a reflection allowing the young people to understand what they did and felt, to handle their emotions and to consolidate what they learned.

### 3.2.3   Inputs

Contrary wide-spread beliefs in youth work, that information and knowledge input is not useful, the case studies show that providing the participants with knowledge on the project topic helped them to actively take part in the project as well as in society and political life. For example, basic terms related to the project topic were clarified in order to create a common basis for all participants, also for the less experienced ones. In the projects, the inputs were given through experts or eye witnesses, such as a refugee who gave an insight into the process of applying for asylum. Also, participants themselves inquired, worked out and presented important information on different topics which were worked on in the projects. Inputs presented well and, in an age-appropriate manner turned out to be well received by the participants, for example short and compact presentations with varying elements such as quotations, visual effects, pictures, cartoons etc. Especially the participants in the projects aiming at empowering certain target groups of young people (see section 3.1 Project designs and methodologies) really asked for being provided with information, for example about how

to write an application for finding a job or about certain administrative procedures in order to be able to tackle them on their own in the country the young people migrated to.

### 3.2.4 Brainstorming

Brainstorming was applied in all research projects, proved to be useful to involve the participants actively and made them think about topics related to participation and citizenship in order to discover their own access to a topic and to become aware of their understanding of and opinion on it. Through brainstorming, the young people made the experience that they were able to contribute to the topic and to help shape the activities. For example, in some projects the participants worked on topics related to participation and citizenship with artistic methods. The decision on what they wanted to create, which message should be transported and how this should be put in practice was developed through brainstorming and discussion. In another project, the participants did a brainstorming on the concepts of citizenship and citizen through the analysis of key competences. As already outlined in the context of the method of discussion, a trustful atmosphere in the project seems to be decisive for the success of brainstorming, i.e., participants daring to contribute to it.

### 3.2.5 Investigation/enquiries

A strong activation potential can also be stated for the method of investigation and enquiries. The participants were eager to search for information for the topics they worked on in the internet as well as offline/in 'real life'. For example, they did research on topics for being able to work out motions to be discussed in simulations of political representation settings; they collected material for creating an online 'Trainer's library'; they went through newspapers searching for job advertisements; they analysed the student council's action plan in order to develop it further and put it into practice; they roamed the city for finding safe public spaces and sports activities; and they did interviews with local inhabitants to find out about their traditional planting, cooking and eating habits.

In one project, groups of two participants each were told to do research on the educational system of their home country and had to answer around ten questions prepared by the project team, mostly on numbers and statistics. The project leader asked all groups to present their answers. Most of the participants found this research boring, because it was not about the peculiarities of the systems and more or less a repetition of dry facts. If the activity would have started with a brainstorming, for example under the motto "What do/did you like/not like at school/university/vocational training?" the participants could have been drawing on their own experiences and come into an exchange. This way, they could have been identifying crucial aspects which are of interest to them and do research on these aspects. As outlined for the method of discussions, the participants need to be interested in the topic they should do research on in order to achieve sustainable learning effects. If they are interested, they like doing investigations and are proud to present what they found out.

### 3.2.6 Artistic methods

There are several examples in the case studies how participation and citizenship was fostered through artistic methods. In one project, the participants challenged the traditional view, that young people are not able to participate or make a difference, through a photo story including pictures of young people engaging in civil society and political life. Photo collages on the topic climate change and Corona were created in two projects, in one of them the participants also created a sketch to provide an introduction to the topic. Members of the LGBTIQ+ community created videos on their activities and on LGBTIQ+ rights, aiming at building a vivid community,

filling the LGBTIQ+ centre with life and representing themselves as active part of the city. In a Youth Exchange project, the participants could work on the topic of human rights in the form of a film, a theatre play, songs and music as well as painting. The example of the film group shows how their work fostered the participants' knowledge on and their awareness of human rights. They started with a brainstorming collecting ideas, which message should be transported by the film and which specific rights the film should be about, and they discussed how these rights could be exemplified in short scenes. The brainstorming and the discussion developed a great dynamic with many serious as well as funny proposals, the fun supported the creativity and the project gathered momentum. From time to time, the project leader gave hints what could realistically be put into practice. During the filming the 'artists' empathise the feeling of being treated unfairly for example in the scene, where the freedom of speech is not respected or men have more income than women for the same work. But all scenes on the violation of different specific rights included a second part illustrating the actual human rights according to agreed supra-national conventions and declarations. Almost all participants reported that before the project they had not been aware, that human rights play such a strong role in everyday life and that also young people are again and again confronted with situations in which human rights are violated. They now feel much better informed and prepared to stand up for these rights, when necessary, both in respect of other people and themselves.

Some participants experienced less with artistic methods realised that the way of artistic expression they had chosen was not ideal for them and they could change into another workshop. The project leaders said that also choosing the 'wrong' workshop in the first time is an important step on the way to one's suitable method of expression.

### 3.2.7   Production of concepts, objects, publications

The previous section was on the creation of different art products such as films, theatre plays, songs, paintings or collages. In some projects, also other products were developed, for example an online trainers' library, a survey, motions to be discussed in the context of a simulation of a body of political representatives, applications to find a summer job, a recipe book, concepts for, e.g., how to stop bullying at schools etc. On the one hand, the participants are proud of the products they created together with the others, on the other hand, they have something concrete as result of the project, representing in some way their experience and learning, which they can show at home to their families and friends.

### 3.2.8   Simulation

Simulation was already described above as a project design providing for practicing participation and citizenship. But a simulation can also be considered to be a method – which is described in more detail in this section.

The simulation of bodies of political representatives in three researched projects (a simulation of a regional parliament and two simulations of Committees and of a plenary session of the European Parliament) resulted in strong learning effects with respect to participation and citizenship, including the central effect of participants overcoming the hesitance or fear to become involved in conventional politics. Furthermore, negative stereotypes about politicians being distant from 'common' people were challenged by the encounter and discussions with actual policy makers, as they occurred as part of the simulations. The participants were impressed by meeting policy makers, because this does not happen in their everyday life. The participants perceived themselves to be taken seriously, because the policy makers were

really interested in their topics and opinions, partly took notes in order to forward and follow-up on certain aspects and to come back to the participants in these issues with further information – including the exchange of contact data. As observed, the policy makers also acted in an open and constructive way, and they exemplified their point of view when they were confronted with critical remarks about their politics.

*"Discussions with politicians are important. You learn something about the day-to-day business of politics, you can discuss eye-to-eye, you can share your opinion with politicians, with whom we normally have no contact." (YD/PP)*

*"The committees meet in the official rooms of the state governments; the plenary session takes part in the Federal Council. This setting in authentic rooms gives the feeling that we are taken seriously." (YD/PP)*

*"I didn't feel at any time that my opinion was unwanted." (YD/PP)*

Further learning effects refer to the awareness-raising of the importance of specific topics which were brought into the discussion by other participants, the development and deepening of skills related to research, communication, rhetoric, presentations and compromising as well as a considerable increase in knowledge about the topics discussed. Several participants also expressed the intention to further engage in politics, possibly in their local environment or in the European Youth Dialogue.

*"I very much appreciated the exchange and the discussion of the topics and questions in small topic groups, especially with people, who live in very different contexts." (YD/PP)*

The participants also felt to be taken seriously by empathising with the role of a professional policy maker, and through this their learning was fostered. They selected by themselves the topics they wanted to discuss with policy makers, partly topics related to a given subject area such as the European Youth Goals[12] or completely free; they did a brainstorming and research on the topics, they discussed them and worked out motions, they presented and defended the motions in plenary, and finally voted on them.

According to the participants, several elements contributed to a smooth flow of the process, took away their nervousness and fostered their learning: the offer of an optional preparation meeting for clarifying topic-related terms; the excellent preparation of the core activities in respect of content, methods and technique; informative and understandable inputs, with quotations, visual effects or other inspiring elements; a good communication culture; an amicable, appreciative and supportive atmosphere during the meetings; the impartiality of the project leaders; and the supportive ad low-key role of the project leaders. Participants also liked to volunteer in press or media groups.

As already mentioned, the participants felt to be taken seriously. On the other hand, it could be observed that also the participants themselves took the activities seriously, e.g., they were always in time for meetings and partly worked through the breaks. Furthermore, the participants wore elegant clothes for the simulation of formal assemblies of the respective political bodies.

After the simulations, the participants took advantage of different follow-up offers of the beneficiaries. Some participants became ambassadors or leaders of thematic groups in the next youth parliament. They also were offered to take part in seminars on the EU Youth

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[12] https://europa.eu/youth/strategy/european-youth-goals_en

Dialogue and on the Youth Goals. Furthermore, the exchange of contact data between participants and policy makers as well as the fact that the policy makers responded to written messages of the participants and answered their questions or informed them, what they had achieved in an initiative proposed by the participants, supported the intention of some participants to continue being politically active.

*"The moderator encouraged us to speak out. It's a popular excuse not to be heard, but that excuse no longer applies in the context of a youth state parliament." (YD/PP)*

*"It is such a motivating project. Because you see people growing and growing, you see yourself growing and you just want to participate and do more, it's almost addictive." (YDpp/PP)*

### 3.2.9 Excursion

Excursions were carried out in the projects in order to visualise the topic and get specific and more detailed information on the topic. The participants very much appreciated the encounter with the reality and this effected sustainable learning. In a project on environmental protection, educational field trips to the wastewater treatment plant or to an 'intercultural garden' were implemented, where experts gave lectures on specific topics related to these locations, e.g., on modern food production processes and its impact on nature.

According to the case study on a Youth Dialogue project, the excursions to different administrative departments in the town hall, to the state parliament and to a police station were of great importance to the participants. The participants, all of whom had a migration background, explicitly expressed the wish to do these excursions in order to learn about the organisation and processes of the administration in order to become able to take care of their administrative matters on their own and to actively and independently take part in the life of the country they now live in.

In a case study on a Youth Exchange, the participants from the hosting country invited the participants from the partner country to their families for one day. This can also be seen as a kind of excursion for the participants of the partner country. They got an impression of the way of living in the country they visited. For all participants the setting helped to reflect on their own lives, on what is special and what is similar. This could also be an inspiration for the idea to change something in one's life and therefore for participation and citizenship.

### 3.2.10 Field exercise

Two project designs described in section 3.1.2 can be considered as big field exercises.

In one of them (a Solidarity Project), participants were practicing participation in civil society and political life by interviewing elderly inhabitants of a rural region about their traditions in planting, cooking and eating.

*"This project was an asset for fostering active participation in the community, both of actual project participants and of 'indirect' participants from the community; the project also fostered obtaining a broader view on important social issues that exist in our social context. I believe that it was crucial to develop the skills and attitude for active citizenship, not only to know rights and responsibilities, but also to implement a spirit of solidarity with others in the community." (SP/PP)*

In the other of these two projects, the participants developed a concept for building a LGBTIQ+ community and implemented this concept by themselves.

In another Solidarity Project, participants implemented different activities such as informing school classes about European youth programmes and cleaning a parc. Around 1,000 people were reached by public races and a walk for cleaning the green area of the city organised by the participants of a Youth Exchange. Participants of other projects organised flash mobs.

A field exercise in yet another Solidarity Project could also be considered a small project: the participants developed a concept for fostering the awareness of pupils and students for environmental protection, which was then implemented by the participants with pupils. Additionally, the participants, who had developed the concept, did several public activities, for example public screenings on the topic environmental protection followed by discussions with the visitors, public workshops on do-it-yourself cosmetics as well as an online lecture on sustainable living and climate change for law students.

### 3.2.11 Teambuilding

Especially in Youth Exchanges and Youth Dialogue projects, teambuilding and group dynamic activities played an important role as basis for the work on the topic of the project. Youth exchanges can bring together a considerable number of participants belonging to several country groups. Therefore, methods supporting participants in getting to know each other and developing trustful, respectful and cooperative relationships are fundamental to be carried out very early in the project. This is important, for example, for to encourage participants to dare to express their opinion and to discuss openly with other participants. According to the statements of the participants in the group discussions and according to the observation, teambuilding activities helped the participants to feel comfortable and secure in the youth project environment, and to gain a certain self-confidence enabling them to actively take part in the activities. Some exercises combined the teambuilding with a playful approach to the project topic. For example, in one project the topic 'politics' was approached through an exercise in which all participants should put one personal object on the table and should then discuss if it had a political dimension – be it a key, mobile, comb or chewing gum. It was easy for the participants to start the conversation as they were only supposed to report on a banal object like a key. This provoked a general amusement – which relaxed the atmosphere and provided for getting to know the reporting person and also for an introduction to the topic 'politics'.

### 3.3 Communicating concepts of participation and citizenship

The statements of the project leaders show reflected points of view on participation and citizenship and the importance they attribute to it. In the interviews, they underline different aspects of participation and citizenship which are especially important to them. For example, they highlight the need of the analysis of the current social and political situation and the conclusions drawn from it. Furthermore, the awareness-raising of one's role in society and related to this the development of one's identity was mentioned. Besides this, for the project leaders participation means knowing about one's rights and obligations, voicing one's opinion, debating and listening to debates, acting concretely both in projects and everyday life and achieving positive social change. Key words are empowerment, agency, self-activity, perception of oneself and one's actions as meaningful and powerful, and commitment.

*"Agency means to experience oneself as powerful, as somebody with an opinion, who can express this opinion and fight for it, to take matters into one's hand." (YD/PL)*

Young people are considered to be the most important factor for achieving social change; therefore, the project leaders see the need to listen to them, open doors for them through providing an international experience, to introduce new perspectives to them and to push them to implement the project on their own.

Project leaders also refer to the European dimension of participation and citizenship through addressing topics the European Union promotes, such as the European Youth Goals.

Project leaders were also asked if they used the terms participation and citizenship in the communication with the participants. It becomes apparent that mainly the project leaders of the simulations of conventional politics and of two other projects explicitly focusing on participation and citizenship presented the terms to the participants explicitly, explained them and translated them into the language of the participants, e.g., "being interested in the design of living environments" or "to participate actively in something". In introductory sessions, they also clarified terms like politics, democracy and agency providing a common terminological basis for all participants.

*"We have talked about what we refer to by using those concepts. They are not common to young people. This is especially the case for those young people that are raised in societies without participation in civil society – where voluntary engagement is very rare. We do our best to explain and try to make them understand." (SP/PL)*

In a Youth Dialogue project, the project leader started with an age-appropriate game which raised the awareness of the participants that there is no non-political sphere and that politics and participation are no phenomena somewhere far away in the lives of other people, but can be shaped by everyone. In another Youth Dialogue project, a concept for youth participation on local level was developed by young people together with local administrators; the term participation was discussed intensively using Hart's 'Ladder of participation'[13] and was re-defined accordingly. The young people and the local administrators agreed on the need to translate the term for participants with fewer opportunities. Yet another Youth Dialogue project aimed to foster participation of school students in the student councils through implementing the EU Youth Dialogue. Two of the three project leaders were recognised experts on citizenship education and Youth Dialogue, and explicitly used the terms participation and citizenship.

The project leaders of some other projects hold the opinion, that the terms participation and citizenship are too complicated and only use other terms in the projects, e.g., contributing to society. In again other projects, the concepts are rarely or not at all talked about, because it is expected that the participants will be sensitised to these terms by participating in the project or doing their voluntary service. In a Solidarity Project, participants were strongly engaged in building a LGBTIQ+ community in a city – and they were successful. Only in the group discussion with the researcher they realised, that their engagement was about participation and active citizenship.

*"For most of the volunteers the project background is something abstract and not that relevant because they do the voluntary service in the hosting organisation and it has these and those tasks." (SP/PL)*

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[13] See Hart, 1997

Participants hardly use the terms participation and citizenship in the projects, they use their own wording, for example:

*"When you articulate your opinion and interest you can cause movement and change." (YD/PP)*

*"Active citizenship I would say is being proactive in your community and surroundings so that you can make a positive impact on it and also voting and taking all the steps you can in order to leave your impression on the community around you – hopefully for the better." (SP/PP)*

*"Participation and active citizenship – if there is a meeting about, for example, building a new park … if I go there, then I am active and participatory. It is important to participate. It includes to help out to reach change." (SP/PP)*

When describing their understanding of participation, participants repeatedly mention the following characteristics: perceiving oneself of being connected with other people/of belonging to a community; feeling responsible for the community; contributing to this community or to society; helping others; being informed and listening to the needs of others; respecting human rights and living accordingly; being heard and taken seriously; provoking an interest; challenging oneself; promoting a change.

### 3.4    Digital instruments – online learning

As described in section 1.4, activities and projects selected to be researched were postponed, cancelled or adapted to the security measures due to the Corona pandemic. For example, meetings were held twice or three times with a clearly lower number of participants, bigger rooms were organised or the activities were moved outdoors. Besides this, activities planned to take place in presence were changed to hybrid or online activities and new online activities were invented. This was the case for nine out of eleven projects which were implemented in 2020.

*"So, in March [2020], I had thought that it would get much worse and we would have to send all the volunteers home and nothing would work at all. And now I'm actually quite happy that many things still worked and somehow, we found ways to do them anyway. Either the volunteers worked online or they took on completely different tasks, like in our team. I feel like we saved that quite well." (SP/PP)*

In order to stay in contact despite of postponements, project leaders and participants created Facebook- or WhatsApp-groups. These communication channels were also used for mutual support in case of loneliness or difficulties, which appeared to be a severe problem during the lockdowns. In a few projects, the participants made use of the free time they gained because planned activities could not take place by updating websites, developing webinars, podcasts and surveys and implementing the surveys. The participants liked working on these online products and considered the work to be meaningful.

The project leaders of five projects report, that implementing discussions online "was ok and interesting", "worked well", "went very well" or "almost worked as good as in meetings in presence". The latter is a quote from a project leader who was also surprised by several further observations he made during the online implementation of the parliamentarian simulation he was responsible for. For example, he would not have expected that all participants who had applied for the face-to-face meeting also attended the online meeting, that they were in time for the start of sessions, and that they showed such a great working spirit. The online version of the activity included shorter units because working online is much more exhausting than

working face-to-face. But many participants wanted to work longer on the topics and even worked through the breaks. Originally, the activity should take place in the building of the parliament as it had been the case in the previous years. Being invited to the Parliament and meeting policy makers always effected a high seriousness among the participants and they wore elegant clothes. The project leader was astonished to see that the participants wore blouses and ties also in front of their screens and interpreted that the functioning of the plenary hall as learning space could be conveyed. According to the observation of the activity through the researcher and the answers of the participants in the group discussion with the researcher, the participants appreciated to engage in the debate and to develop motions. The participants even saw advantages in the online format such as saving time through avoiding a long travel and the easy exchange of contact data with the policy makers in the chat of the video conference tool in order to follow-up on certain questions related to the project topics. Partly more meetings than planned were implemented because online discussions clearly required less time and effort.

Besides discussions, also brainstorming, searching for information independently, inputs by experts, working out motions, presenting and voting on them, group work, minor assignments and reflection went well online according to the statements of several project leaders and participants as well as to the observation of project activities; very good experiences were made as well with tools for collaborative working, writing and feedback.

For example, one Solidarity Project was completely transferred into an online format. Originally, several 24-hours-physical camps on different topics had been planned to take place bi-weekly. This setting was changed to two-day online activities on these topics. First, the project leaders saw major obstacles to succeed with the online format, for example, they were afraid that the distance in an online setting would negatively influence the ability of the participants to concentrate and to communicate. But finally, they concluded that the online activities went well and described the results which were achieved as great. Online activities made the camps very time-efficient so even more activities could be included in the schedule.

The positive feedback to the working with digital instruments, for example of the radio show, also applies to the building of a LBGTIQ+ community in a Solidarity Project. The participants even observed a much better response from the community to the activities that were moved online, although they saw offline activities as the better way to reach the wider community. This might have to do something with the fact, that sexual orientation continues to be a source of prejudice and discrimination and that people who are interested in the activities of the LGBTIQ+ community sometimes do not dare to attend. If this was the case, online offers would have had the function of helping people overcome embarrassment or fear of contact. In another Solidarity Project, introductory lectures on uncontrolled consumerism or the harmfulness of plastic for the environment, workshops like 'The Climate Collage' and quizzes using the game-based learning platform 'Kahoot' were implemented online with "significant success". An introductory input included an introductory evaluation, an introduction into the topic of the lecture, a 20-minutes PowerPoint presentation, a discussion identifying problems, solutions and concluding remarks as well as a final evaluation. The workshop 'The Climate Collage' is based on a 42-cards-game, where each card represents an element, a cause or a consequence of climate change. The participants are asked to find the cause-effect relationship between the different components of climate change; the cards were shown on the shared screen.

*"I never imagined the digital project to be so structured and well-organised, nor did I expect it to be so much fun." (YD/PP)*

All project leaders who had to change to online formats are aware that the transformation of a face-to-face activity into an online activity requires the adaption of approaches methods and settings. It is considered to be crucial to use various methods and activities as well as a wide range of different interactive online tools to activate and involve the participants, to motivate them to actively take part and to help them to be focused. Providing participants with information through inputs worked well sharing the screen for power point presentations, videos or internet sites. Online quizzes and games were considered to be suitable to warm up and get to know each other, to approach a topic or just to have fun. In some projects participants could go to escape rooms and they made use of this offer frequently, because they enjoyed to meet also informally. Participants also stress the importance of free time for individual activities and enough time for working on the given tasks together with others. Another criterion for the success of online activities seen by a project leader is the sound technical functioning of the tools. All project leaders are also aware, that not all activities are suitable to be transferred into an online format.

*"The transition from physical interaction to on-line has worked out well. We used a lot of digital tools to make sure that participants are participatory and stay focused. We have seen in other projects that it is a challenge to make young people stay engaged in activities over a longer period of time. We therefore decided to have intensified and focused activities 24h over the weekend." (SP/PL)*

Participants of projects using digital instruments and implementing online activities report that their learning concerning participation and citizenship was successful in the sense that they became aware of important societal topics, that they came in touch with the conventional political sphere, that they started to actually participate in civil society after the project or that they were enabled to do so.

Besides the positive feedback on specific methods applied online, project leaders as well as participants underline, that the absence of the direct human contact in online settings was sadly missed by all those involved. They also described the absence of informal settings and physical interaction as a great loss. For example, meeting informally in breakout rooms was seen to be ok by the participants, but they also said that it would not be the same like having a chat when standing around a bar table or hanging around on the sofa. The project leaders of two projects also assess the level of discussion, the atmosphere and group dynamic as much better in face-to-face activities. Furthermore, offline settings offer a greater variety of methods and activities. In the case studies, there is great consensus to consider face-to-face meetings to be indispensable.

Two project leaders experienced, that online activities are not suitable to support rather shy young people or young people with fewer opportunities. To make those rather shy people talk on the screen is much more time intensive and demanding than in offline settings, very small groups and the creation of a trustful atmosphere are needed. Translation would have been offered for young people with migration background with language problems in face-to-face meetings, but this was not possible in online meetings. As a result, those young people with language problems did not attend and were lost for the project.

Although many participants think that the online activities went well, they do not want digital elements to play an important role in projects in a future without pandemic.

## 3.5 (Non-formal) education and learning principles, approaches, elements and environment

Since European youth projects – such as the researched projects – are, in principle, applying non-formal education approaches and methodologies, it is obvious that they should comply with certain principles, key elements and approaches of (non-formal) education and learning[14] beyond applying specific methodologies and methods which are successful specifically for fostering participation and citizenship competence and practice. The case studies show that many of these principles, approaches and methodologies were applied in the researched projects and were helpful for the respective learning processes. This is elaborated in more detail in the sub-sections below.

### 3.5.1 Educational principles

#### 3.5.1.1 Learner-orientation/centeredness

Learner-orientation implies that the topic, the methods, the methodology and the educational approach are tailored for the participants and – ideally – developed in a participatory way involving the participants with the support of the project team.

In one of the projects (YEpp), most of the activities and workshops were planned by the young people themselves; in another project (YEpp), the project themes ('youth', 'creativity' and 'culture') were selected by the participants following a brainstorming session.

It is also possible that participants can decide on specific aspects and questions they are interested in within a given topic as it was the case in one of the projects (YEpp).

*"We … were making sure that each and every person would have the opportunity to speak their minds, to have this space, where their ideas can be heard, and as youth workers, we make sure that such space is available." (YDpp/PL)*

At a more general level, learner-orientation is also reflected in the following quote: *"The most important thing is to give young people room to seek and find. You cannot give participation – it needs to be taken and you need to grow into it. These [youth] exchanges provide excellent opportunities to learn about participation and finding it. In the end, the important thing is to find your own voice." (YEpp/PL)*

#### 3.5.1.2 Trustful relationships

Project leaders agreed unanimously that a trustful relationship between the project leaders and the participants is fundamental for supporting the participation of young people in the learning process of a project. In order for the participants to feel safe in the project, the relationship between the project team and the participants should be shaped in a non-hierarchically way, and the project leaders should act attentively, empathically and appreciative towards the participants. This includes to respect the opinions of the participants – even if they are difficult to comprehend or to agree with – and to argue with them and confronting them with other possible views on the respective topic. Furthermore, transparency, the use of the participants' language and understanding for the participants contribute to an atmosphere in which participants feel comfortable to express their ideas and feelings and to talk even about difficult and/or private experiences.

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[14] See Fennes & Otten, 2008, and Council of Europe, 2012.

*"It is important to address them correctly and communicate to them directly. It is important to ask them questions and to speak their language. You need to communicate in a simple way and make the conversation relevant to them. To see and address their situation. To make them feel important."* (SP/PL)

The participants of a Youth Exchange confirmed in their evaluation that they perceived the project as a safe space in which everyone felt confident to express themselves. This is supported by a participant suffering from depressions, who could be convinced to take part at least in the second part of the project and was happy about this decision, because, even if he sometimes felt detached, he very much enjoyed having been involved.

*"She always supports me. She allows me to say what I want to say and she makes sure that I come back every week. I want to be there because they are all nice to me. It is my second home."* (SP/PP)

*"The project leaders and we were on the same level."* (YD/PP)

A trustful relationship is also essential for participants being able to learn from the encounter with the project leaders. Participants describe project leaders as inspiring personalities, in particular if they are dedicated to social work. Vice-versa, project leaders are aware that they can be a role model for the participants, because the participants recognise the project leaders' energy and way of thinking, if the project leader is interested in the participant and if she or he is an active citizen herself/himself.

*"The other fact is too that they are … all social work lovers (laughs) …. I had the opportunity yesterday … to help them and I could see the way they talk about social work. … it's crazy for me – someone not in this community – and … [I am] overwhelmed on how much they can talk about it (laughing) and the impression they give about it. And to [do] youth work and try to help people to grow. Basically, it's that. They are really passionate about what they do. And you can see that, yeah."* (SP/PP)

*"[In our project leader] we have discovered … a wonderful person, … who is able to take an interest in our problems … and, above all, to learn together with us."* (YE/PP)

### 3.5.2 Learning approaches

#### 3.5.2.1 Participatory learning

The findings from the case studies show that a participatory approach in a youth project and its activities is very effective in fostering participation and citizenship competences and practice. This concerns various aspects of a project, in particular: project objectives, content and themes; project development; project design, methodologies and methods; project implementation.

*"The … [name of the project] is a project from pupils for pupils, it functions only through pupils. Most things are forwarded and decided by us. Nothing is decided top-down, we are involved."* (YD/PP)

In more than half of the projects the participants were involved in the decisions on the project content and format; in four projects participants decided on the specific topics. The participants of one project could select the aspects they were interested in out of a number of suggested topics, and in another project two participants took part in the preparatory meeting of the project, thus being part of the project development. All in all, a strong

participation of participants in various phases of the project can be observed, including the collection of ideas for topics for the project, the collection of material to work on the topics, the elaboration of the project goals which should be achieved, the brainstorming on methods to be used, the design of the project format and schedule as well as the organisational planning. As a consequence, the participants perceived themselves as being able to carry out a complex planning for a youth project and to profit with respect to knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. They developed self-confidence and the motivation to undertake further participation efforts.

*"The young people were involved from the very beginning. The idea for the theme of racism came from them. They also planned and organised many of the activities. For example, one of the main activities, the racism workshop. Taking responsibility is a key part of an exchange. The young are not only passive participants, but active makers of the exchange experience. This is an integral part of growing [in]to participation and active citizenship." (YEpp/PL)*

Among the projects involving participants in the planning and implementation of topics and methods, all activity types of projects explored in this study are represented. In particular, the participative character is inherent in the Solidarity Projects and, accordingly, the participants were the core team that created and implemented the entire project with participants being divided into thematic groups based on their skills and interests to take over different tasks. Likewise, in Youth Dialogue projects and Youth Exchanges, the concept of maximal involvement of participants was applied successfully. There were also projects in which participants were not actively involved in the development and implementation of the project, but were asked about their interest and the topics they wanted to be covered by the project. Also in these projects, the participants realised, that their voices are taken seriously. Notably in one project, the interests expressed by the participants made the project leaders change the already planned content of the project.

As the projects show, the role of the project leaders within these participatory formats was not to lead the project or to push their own ideas, but to accompany the process the participants went through. In particular, the project leaders were present in case the participants asked for advice or support. In some projects, the participants developed the topics and methods in cooperation with the project leaders and the project leaders helped to fit the ideas and wishes of the participants into the Erasmus+ framework and to include content that contribute to the Erasmus+ objectives. This gave the participants a sense of empowerment as well as a taste of how it feels when one is an active citizen and takes initiative.

*"We could select the theme and plan the programme. Adults helped but did not push their own ideas. Planning and organising the activities gave us a lot of experience and confidence." (YEpp/PP)*

*"The basic idea was that the participants themselves should determine the project." (YD/PL)*

In a few projects, participants of former projects were involved and slipped into the role of group leaders or committee chairpersons. As a result, the participants could take advantage of this setting and exchange with the more experienced peers. This was also the case in a few projects, in which participants were part of the project team. Already the fact that the other participants saw their peers being involved in the project management created an environment where the typical distribution of roles was changed.

*"The other aspect was the idea of having a core group of young people leading the organisation of the event with us. That gave them a strong sense of leadership. This sense of leadership now they are using it in their career." (YDpp/PL)*

### 3.5.2.2 Experiential learning

The case studies include numerous examples participants being involved in actions which can provide for participation and citizenship practice, thus being able to learn from these experiences and the reflection on them. Participants' experiences in the case studies include: inquiries or research, interviewing other people, analysing situations and actions, discussions on social and political issues, group work, developing ideas and concepts, planning and implementing activities, taking decisions, making compromises, working out texts or applications, producing artwork or a theatre play, doing role-plays, rehearsing a flash mob, field exercises, presentations in meetings or in public, meeting policy makers etc. Through all these activities, the participants engaged intellectually, emotionally and socially, and they learned through the consequences of their action, through the success and the mistakes. For example: if the participants conducted a good interview, they got valuable information for their planned activities and actions; if they invited participants from other countries to their homes, they became aware of their own culture and learned about the culture of their guests; etc.

*"But you know, as I developed myself, I felt the freedom that I have also increased … my responsibility. This was also directly … in line with the non-formal education methods and that it was a lot of self-learning which was facilitated by the people around me. Rather than just giving me information and telling me this is how you can do this and that, I was allowed to try out something …. And I was learning from my failures or from my successes."* (SP/PP)

*"I really felt to be at the police man's mercy, all depends on the decision of the police man. This touched me a lot, because I have never felt this or thought about this. Human rights are disregarded."[15] (YE/PP)*

### 3.5.2.3 Peer learning/Learning from and with others

A main element of (extra-curricular) European youth projects is the encounter and the joint learning of young people, both in national and multinational contexts. This learning approach can be applied in most methods described in section 3.2 and in most of the activities described in the section on experiential learning (3.5.2.2), which actually was done in all projects explored for his study using different group formats and sizes, including pairs, and which provided for learning from and with others.

As outlined in the case studies, participants who were less engaged before the project met already engaged peers and were impressed by their (mostly great) interest and involvement. For these 'less engaged participants' it was important to see others who were already dedicated to be involved in society and to make a change. As a result, they became motivated to become more engaged in society as well. Furthermore, learning from and with others also took place in meetings with policy makers in Youth Dialogue projects and in simulations of parliamentarian work which had strong effects on the participants and encouraged them to become more involved in social and political issues.

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[15] Participant of a Youth Exchange reflecting on a role-play.

Furthermore, the learning through encounters between people with different (cultural) backgrounds and experiences, in particular by addressing controversial topics in such settings, worked well to stimulate young people to become active. Of course, also contradictory views emerged in such discussions and led to intensive exchanges: the step outside one's 'bubble' helped participants to find reasons to become active. In a project on racism, the learning about different experiences was seen as the most efficient way to motivate new social agency. Nevertheless, in the same project it was also observed that it is easier to deal with difficult issues like racism if the participants share some common ground. In the case of the aforementioned project, young people with a migration background met young people from a remote area; both groups shared the experience of feeling inferior.

Participants also mentioned that they appreciated the encounter with like-minded people, because they could follow-up together on common topics and reinforce already existing attitudes and values or even develop common projects.

The case studies also provide evidence that young people with special needs were supported by their peers in order to be fully included in all project activities. E.g., participants in a Youth Exchange assisted a partially blind girl during a hiking tour.

### 3.5.2.4 Challenging the participants

The findings from the case studies show that participation and citizenship learning was fostered if the participants were faced with challenges resulting from situations, tasks, activities or experiences which were knew to them, e.g., meeting policy makers and discussing with them, conducting interviews for exploring a specific topic or issue, expressing their views on a specific topic through art work such as painting, producing a film or a theatre play.

*"We had to get involved in groups and workshops that got us out of our comfort zone."*
*(YE/PP)*

Participants were also challenged by implementing activities on their own or together with peers, for example chairing a meeting or moderating public event, working on a specific topic and drafting a petition or a motion to be voted on in a simulation of a representative body, practising a flash mob, looking for vacancies and writing respective applications, or developing a project concept and implementing it. These challenges fostered the curiosity of the participants and their motivation to become more active in society. Through coping with these challenges, the participants perceive themselves as active agents who can make a difference in their communities. Even frustrations with such challenges can result in learning: for example, finding out that one dislikes playing theatre can be important for finding another way of expression one feels more comfortable with. At the same time, challenges should not overwhelm participants or have a negative effect on the relationship between the participants, e.g., a competitive atmosphere preventing cooperation. The latter was overcome in a national Youth Dialogue project, in which only those participants drafting the best motions for a youth parliament to be presented to policy makers were selected to take part in an international activity.

*"We try to eliminate the competitive feel[ing] … and then it happens that although there is a competitive feel[ing] to it, you can see that these young people actually become friends, even those who are not actually selected to be part of the national team." (YDpp/PL)*

### 3.5.2.5 The fun factor

Non-formal learning can also be fostered in an atmosphere of pleasure and with playful methods (of course, in an age-appropriate manner) aimed at involving the participants actively in learning processes and stimulating the participants' curiosity and creativity. Almost all project leaders stress the importance of such a 'fun factor'.

With respect to young people age 13 and 17 years, a project leader in a Youth Exchange recommends *"less information, less researching and less formal things" (YE/PL)*, but playful methods. Therefore, the key competences for lifelong learning are not presented by the project leader in a formal way giving the participants a lecture, but through the game 'Bingo on key competences'. Participants are asked to complete a task related to a specific key competence, for example, they should find someone who can teach them a traditional dance for the development of cultural awareness and expression.

*"I appreciated the unconventional situations the participants were brought in the theatre workshop. Fun is helpful for learning." (YE/PP)*

*"To make them wanting to learn it. The more entertaining the less pressure is on the participant's shoulder." (YE/PL)*

### 3.5.3 Key education and learning elements

### 3.5.3.1 Preparation

Preparation is essential for any non-formal learning activity such as a youth project. For an activity aimed at participation and citizenship education and learning, it is essential that such a preparation is taking participatory approach. In the researched projects, a variety of preparatory activities taking a participatory approach could be observed: preparatory meetings to plan the topics and/or formats together with the participants, preparatory meetings of the participants themselves to plan the project on their own, (voluntary) preparatory workshops for clarifying basic topic-related terms and concepts, the preparation of former participants to take part as committee chairpersons as well as preparatory groups working on their topics as a preparation for a simulation of a political representative body. Furthermore, online communication groups were set up for connecting the participants before the main activities. In a Youth Dialogue project, the planned programme was tested by a school class before it was implemented in the project.

The case studies indicate that a participatory approach in the project preparation contributed to developing participation competence and practice.

### 3.5.3.2 Guidance

Another important key element making non-formal learning successful is the provision of guidance to the participants through the project leaders. The appropriate extent of guidance depends on the age and the experience of the participants, on their tasks and the design of the project. But basically, the project leaders agree to see guidance not in the sense of teaching the participants, but in the sense of facilitating learning processes. This means to provide a minimum of structure, to moderate and accompany the participants' activities and the processes they are going through, to be available when participants ask for support, and to interfere only when it is necessary.

The project leaders of a Youth Dialogue project saw themselves as facilitators of the experience 'I can change something!'. Therefore, they guided the participants through acting

appreciatively and transparently towards them, through encouraging them and through providing knowledge in order to enable them to act independently in the project. This included also dealing with ambiguity and tensions coming up during discussions with other participants or policy makers, with project leaders supporting them when coming to the conclusion that *"exchange is not possible without any friction."*

In a Solidarity Project, the participants developed a curriculum for fostering the awareness of school students for environmental protection. All eleven participants were higher education students or recent graduates, were already engaged in different fields of environmental protection, knew each other, and developed together the idea for the project. They decided that one of them should act as coordinator and they organised themselves in different groups, e.g., a curriculum group, an evaluation group, a PR and event group etc. Despite of their thematical expertise and experience in active engagement, they reported that the project leader's guidance was of immense importance to them. *"Our project leader proved to be a solid and quality mentor in our individual learning processes." (SPpp/PP)*

Another example illustrates the importance of adequate guidance in a situation where a participant would have liked "a bit more guidance". Five volunteers who were engaged in the same city were asked to implement networking activities between their hosting organisations on top of their regular tasks as volunteers in a Solidarity Project. In the beginning of their voluntary service, the young people were occupied with their new tasks within their projects and some of them did not really put much effort into the networking activities. Therefore, the others were a bit left alone with their responsibility to implement meetings and developing other networking activities. One participants comments: *"But then I think … as a group we could have been guided better because I realised that it is our responsibility to come together and make these activities and I think at the beginning we needed a bit more guidance and a bit more help with teambuilding." (SP/PP)* The project leaders of this project followed the methodology of process orientation and saw their task in supporting the development of the participatory competencies of the participants, but only in a methodological-didactic way.

*"Our focus is on agency. We want the participants to take things into their hands." (YD/PL)*

*"I think you have to guide or somehow provide an idea for them, like 'hey let's meet today and play a game and meanwhile we think about where we are right now in our voluntary service and where do we want to end up'? Less content issue workshops, where we discuss topics like climate change, but more structured reflection." (SP/PL)*

*"The project leaders were always available to help with any difficulties, and coordinated the activities in cooperation with us in order to streamline some processes." (SP/PP)*

### 3.5.3.3   Reflection

Reflections of participants on the experiences they made through their project participation were an integral part of most projects, taking place at different stages of the projects – after specific activities, at the end of the day or at the end of project phases. A large majority of participants was positively inspired by these reflections. The case studies underline the importance of reflection as a separate method as well as being integrated into other methods. Through different reflection formats – such as reflection sessions in groups about the day every evening, individual reflection as element of a project diary, a reflection on the project while hiking through the hills surrounding the project site etc. – the participants became aware of the meaning and the importance of participation and citizenship, of how the activities they were involved in affected them, and – very importantly – their learning with

respect to participation and citizenship. The young people developed a deeper understanding of thoughts, values, emotions, different views and attitudes. For example, after a role-play on the rights of children and on their different opportunities in life the participants were emotionally excited. One participant who had played the role of a child who is always bullied by peers, because her parents cannot afford to buy new clothes for her, experienced strong and mixed emotions. In this shaken condition, she was happy to be invited to sit down together with all others in a chair circle rather than having to deal with it by herself or wishing to leave the activity. In this silent and concentrated situation, she was able to start thinking about the role she had played and which emotions she felt. Through talking about her experiences, listening to the experiences of the others and through exchanging with them she became aware of what she had learned through the role-play, for example to not always focus on other young people with more opportunities than she has, but to be content with what she has and can do and to rather focus on those with less opportunities and to help them.

The case studies also reveal another meaningful effect of reflection, more specifically of group reflection: the reflection created a feeling of connectedness among the participants and of strong and transparent relationships. This effect was particularly evident in a project that focused on inclusion. Reflecting and sharing experiences of having fewer opportunities in life than other peers resulted in this bond. The strongly activating character of the project, in which the young people organised the activities themselves as far as possible, gave them the experience of being empowered – in particular as young people with fewer opportunities.

### 3.5.3.4  Evaluation

The case studies indicate that evaluation is a widely recognised method for assessing the learning of the participants as well as the project activities and the project as a whole as a basis for further developing the project designs, methodologies and concepts. Evaluation was applied in various forms in all researched projects, for example verbally, in writing, using a questionnaire or the individual learning part of Youthpass etc. – individually, in groups or in plenary. Besides others, the methods 'story-telling', 'drawing a flower', 'pizza-evaluation' or meta-evaluation were implemented. For example, 'drawing a flower' is a process-oriented, participatory method: participants describe precisely their tasks, key competences and learning processes and outcomes by drawing a flower, where the leaves stand for the different competences; the project leaders support the participants by organising the flower for the Youthpass. The evaluation also took place in different rhythms and at different occasions, e.g., at the end of a session, at the end of the day, at the end of a project activity, or at the end of the project.

The projects showed that presenting the aims of the project to the participants at the very beginning and also asking them to set their personal goals for the project (which is suggested to be done during the individual learning part of Youthpass) fostered the awareness of the participants for their learning through the project when doing the evaluation at the end of the project. If evaluation activities took place also during the course of the project, the project leaders were able to react during the implementation of the project and, if necessary, to adapt content, methods and schedule of the project.

While evaluation as a method was applied in all projects, the evaluation did not in all projects explicitly refer to the question, if the project participation fostered participation and citizenship. This was caused by the fact, that in some of these projects the project aims – fostering participation and citizenship education and learning – were not communicated explicitly throughout the course of the project. In one project, the participants only became

aware in a group discussion, which was implemented as part of the research on the project, that participation and citizenship were integrated in all the activities they had carried out during the course of the project, but that the participants had not been aware of this project aim. Since all researched projects referred to participation and citizenship education and learning, the learning of the participants was of course also on participation and citizenship. For example, the discussion of topics like environment, mental health or racism fostered the awareness of the participants for these topics as well as their knowledge on them. What was lacking partly was the connection of these topics and learning effects to the concepts of 'participation' and 'citizenship'. In other projects, the participants were well aware of their learning related to participation and citizenship as the following quotation shows:

*"I realised it is possible to initiate change and that there is no need to say that something is unchangeable and it must remain as such. I learned to better argue my views. I learned something about the EU Youth Dialogue and how it operates." (YD/PP)*

### 3.5.3.5  Follow-up – what now/what next? Dissemination and further project participation

After the projects, project leaders and participants published reports in traditional and social media about their project experiences. The participants of a Youth Exchange met other young people and told them how it was to take part in such projects. As a result, the other younger people wanted to realise their own project. In some projects, follow-up opportunities were offered to the participants. For example, they could become 'ambassadors of democracy' or get again in contact with the policy makers, they had discussed with, via social media. Some participants started internships at the offices of politicians. Groups of participants planned to continue their common work on volunteering and participation, to implement specific project activities (e.g., 'living libraries'[16]) in their home country or to work in their local environment on topics which were discussed in the project. In several projects, ideas for follow-up projects were developed and put into practice. The field work carried out in a Solidarity Project was planned to be extended to other regions.

*"I would like to run a simulation at my school." (YD/PP)*

*"I will be more involved in politics." (YD/PP)*

### 3.5.3.6  Learning spaces – education and learning conditions

The case studies show that activities taking place in spaces where participation and citizenship could actually be experienced and/or practiced were successful for fostering participation and citizenship competences and practice. This was mostly the case for activities outside the regular project meeting site and in different locations related to the project content. The participants appreciated such locations and report that they were supportive for their learning with respect to participation and citizenship.

Specific examples are youth parliaments in two projects which took place in the official parliamentary buildings: *"The framework is very important. The plenary hall is a kind of learning space, which affects a great seriousness. The participants are one hundred percent focused. This also affects a very respectful interaction between them." (YD/PL)* These settings also reduce fears of becoming involved in conventional political participation: some of the young people, sitting in the seat of a real member of parliament, ask themselves whether they would like to help shape politics as a member of parliament someday.

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[16] A 'living library' is kind of an event in which persons 'represent' books they have read (showing the title of the book on a badge) – one book per person. They tell the story of their book to visitors of the 'living library' interested in it.

At the level of meeting rooms and facilities, adequate learning environments and conditions are essential for any learning activity. In this respect, the researched projects provide examples for both conducive and obstructive framework conditions for the implementation of non-formal learning activities. For example, a role-play and the following reflection on it was strongly supported by taking place in a meeting room well protected from outside noise (in a rather busy location), which allowed the participants to really concentrate on what they were doing. Besides this, the room was big and the furniture could easily be moved around so that different settings could be arranged, for example a free area for the role-play or a chair circle for the group reflection. In general, there should be space enough to host different activities and enough rooms equipped with the necessary equipment for group work. Furthermore, big rooms and places to work outside gained new importance during the Corona pandemic.

The preparation of the technical equipment and requisites also turned out to be important, because the participants were very quickly distracted and started to watch their mobiles when the activity did not immediately start. This was observed in Youth Exchanges with rather young participants. In a workshop of a Youth Exchange (YE1), the project leader had uploaded a wrong film and only realised it when he started it during the workshop. He searched the correct film, did not find it and finally another project leader came into the room and needed to search something on the computer. In consequence, the participants were no longer focused and were chatting with each other.

### 3.6 Learning effects

Although this study is not primarily aimed at exploring learning outcomes but on educational approaches, methodologies and methods fostering learning for participation and citizenship, it obviously also revealed learning effects since the 'what' and the 'how' are interlinked. In view of this, this section will look at main findings on learning effects resulting from the projects. These findings are confirming and/or complementing the findings of the RAY-LTE study (see Bárta et al., 2018)

The research activities done in the context of the case-studies (group discussions of participants, interviews with project leaders and, if possible, observation) indicate various learning effects resulting from the projects as outlined below.

Overall, an increased awareness of social issues can be observed, e.g., related to the situation of refugees who feel the rejection of the natives of the country to which they have fled, to people with fewer opportunities, to social issues of people living on an island etc.; but as well a greater awareness of one's personal approach to participation and how one could become more active, on one's agency, on the importance of taking an interest in politics, on the importance of being active in the community.

*"I felt what they feel when they come to a foreign country, because I felt judged. I felt that my life was in the hands of other people, so I felt powerless. … That's very important, because I felt sympathy for these people." (YE/PP)[17]*

*"We always think, that we have a lot of problems, why I can't I have this or that and we usually don't look on those, who have fewer opportunities. My awareness was raised, that we should*

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[17] Quote of a participant in a role-play about his feelings when playing a refugee being confronted by natives played by other participants – and about his/her reflection about it afterwards.

*look on others who have less chances and suffer a lot than on those having better chances. This is the most important thing I learned. This impressed me a lot." (YE/PP)*

*"This project was an asset for fostering active participation in the community, among direct and 'indirect' participants, and also for obtaining a broader view on important social issues that exist in our social context. I believe that it was crucial to develop the skills and attitudes of active citizenship, not only to know rights and responsibilities, but also to implement a spirit of solidarity with others in the community." (SP/PP)*

*"I became even more aware of the importance of taking an interest in politics and I will continue to try to pass on this commitment and inspire others to take an interest in politics." (YD/PP)*

The project participation also resulted in fostered or newly acquired skills related to participation and citizenship competence, e.g., to work on a social or political topic and do research on it; to communicate and discuss with others; to voice one's opinion; to convince others; to cooperate; to compromise; to solve problems; to express thoughts and feelings by means of arts; to apply for a job; digital skills; leadership skills; project management skills; mother tongue skills; foreign language skills; social skills; personal skills; etc.

*"As a total, we leaders feel that the group gained a very deep understanding of the issues and the complexity of them, but most importantly they learned to discuss, disagree and respect the opinions of others and accept the different values and lifestyles of others. They also gained courage and self-esteem to share their own opinions and speak for themselves, not for someone else." (YEpp/PL)*

*"I have learned to approach each other more and to show a willingness to compromise, even to filter out sensible starting points in dissenting opinions." (YD/PP)*

*"The project has laid the basis for how to research knowledge, to find positions and to present viewpoints in debates." (YD/PP)*

*"Of course, it matters on an individual level … meeting like 200 individuals, it also helps even more with learning how to deal with the different individuals, so that was the biggest thing for me." (YDpp/PP)*

Furthermore, the case studies also indicate that the participants acquired knowledge on various themes related to participation and citizenship, such as human rights, racism, political processes, functioning of non-governmental organisations, administrative systems, labour market, needs of local community, European Union etc.

Throughout all projects a strong empowerment of participants can be observed, and their self-efficacy and agency were clearly fostered. Participants realised, that small actions can have an impact on society, which motivated them to get engaged after the project experience and keep being active and involved. The young people and the local administrators, who developed concepts for local youth participation in a Youth Dialogue project, were empowered through getting to know about the European youth programmes and through an exchange with a representative of a European institution. Young people with fewer opportunities involved in a Solidarity Project were empowered because they were supported in the project to become able to apply for job on their own and, subsequently, to earn their own money. The success of achieving the project aims empowered the participants in many

of the projects: the building of a LGBTIQ+ community, the empowerment of pupils to engage in student councils and to have a say in school development, the development and implementation of a concept to foster environmental protection and sustainable development, the implementation of a public (sports) event etc.

*"There was a great impact concerning political participation. The dialogues with politicians surprised the young people. They were thrilled to be able to get directly in contact with them, at eye level. It was their first experience to be heard and taken seriously by politicians. They got new impressions and were motivated to engage themselves in organisations and participation structures like Fridays for Future. It was for them a feeling of being welcome, the possibility to participate and to be able to realise their ideas." (YD/PL)*

*"The pupils made the experience that it is worthwhile to work and engage for something." (YD/PL)*

*"It was an opportunity to exchange for with a representative at European level, which was inspiring for us, in order not to feel alone." (YD/PP)*

*"The young people involved demonstrate a more active social voice and are more aware of their power to change. I believe that with this project, the other participants and I, our symbolic and real participation has increased in the community where we operate." (SP/PP)*

*"You feel empowered to participate, the week after the project you keep asking yourself why you aren't participating more, that you want to participate more." (YEpp/PP)*

Furthermore, many effects of the project participation could be observed with respect to the practice of the participants. In a Youth Dialogue project, a workshop on equal rights empowered especially young Muslim girls who became more engaged during and after the project than before; in particular, two of them moderated the final event of their project. Participants from a project on human rights intend to change their behaviour and will help school students who are bullied. Participants of a simulation of a political representative body can now imagine to become politically active in their village or city.

*"This project has made me more active – how to be part of society and change society". (SP/PP)*

*"Trying to take part as much as possible in events as a volunteer and help the society that I am part of." (YEpp/PP)*

*"When you start participating in youth exchanges you continue participating, you do not stop, you want to work for your environment, your community." (YEpp/PP)*

*"I will engage myself in a political party." (YD/PP)*

Also group building effects could be observed: in all projects, a feeling of being a group, of a joint responsibility in the group and of being able to make a change as a group was developed. Participants learned how to communicate, discuss and cooperate efficiently in a group, and they learned that mutual support within group has a strong motivating effect. A supportive group atmosphere also encouraged the participants to talk about their ambitions, opportunities, obstacles and problems.

According to the outcomes of the project evaluations, strong learning effects were achieved through the participation in the project. Participants report a high increase of knowledge

related to the project topic(s), a fostered awareness of challenges related to the project topic(s) as well as the acquisition and/or deepening of intercultural, social, communication, language and entrepreneurial skills. Furthermore, many participants have the intention to follow up in their everyday-life on what they learned through the project, both through a changed behaviour or through trying to implement a similar activity at home. Last but not least, the overall satisfaction with the project in general was high and the participants indicated that they enjoyed the participation in the projects and that most activities were designed and implemented well. Many participants were enthusiastic about their experiences and the positive effects they could achieve, and they called their participation in the project a 'priceless learning experience'.

## 3.7 The Corona pandemic

The Corona pandemic had strong effects on the sample for this research project (see subchapter 1.4) and on the methods and settings used in the researched projects (see sections 3.2 and 3.4). Furthermore, effects on the content were observed in the sense that 'Corona' became (explicitly or implicitly) an additional project topic, *"because it dominates our lives"* (YD/PL). For example, in one project a thematic group on Corona was added following-up on questions like "What are long-term effects of the Corona pandemic on democracy and fundamental rights in Europe and in the region? How can our basic democratic foundation be protected during this crisis? How can digitalisation and analogous democratic processes be linked? How can democracy be empowered in a digital way in order to maintain one's agency?" The participants themselves raised many different aspects on Corona which affected them, e.g., the psychological condition of school students as well as technical equipment for home schooling, information about protective measures, effects of Corona on the economy or an ecological system for the distribution of Corona funds. In other projects the discussions were about the effects of Corona on voluntary services or on the EU Youth Dialogue. In one project, Corona was discussed in an artistic way through creating a photo collage on the topic. Overall, the discussions on Corona contributed to participation and citizenship learning of the participants because the pandemic had effects on all areas of politics, society and every-day-life.

Negative psychological consequences for participants due to Corona were reported especially from the project in which five participants implemented their voluntary service in the same city. According to the original plan, they should establish a network between their hosting organisations. But as a result of Corona, their patience was challenged when waiting for Corona test results in order to continue their work and to meet people again. Furthermore, they were concerned about the situation of their families in their home countries and about not knowing if their voluntary service could be continued. Being a group of volunteers and being able to talk about their concerns was helpful for them in this difficult situation. It was also reported that this situation strengthened the volunteers' personal growth.

*"Before Corona they were simply a household, you met in the kitchen. But because of Corona and the limitations [the volunteers] got to know each other better. There are simply too many different personalities, age groups and interests, which probably wouldn't have merged that much. Corona kind of forced them to merge and it went out really well, I think."* (SP/PL)

This Youth Dialogue project took place in the epicentre of Corona in this country. One effect of the pandemic on youth policy in this country was contradictory to the aim of the project,

which was the development of concepts for the implementation of participatory structures and practices in the youth sector at local level:

*"After the pandemic the noun "young" completely disappeared from any political agenda."* *(YD/PL)*

### 3.8 Youth work competences

### 3.8.1 Youth work competences for participation and citizenship education

Most project leaders in the researched projects were (highly) qualified for their role and tasks in the project, and they had prior experience with similar activities and projects. Many of them also had a comprehensive life experience covering various dimensions of life – social, political, professional and private. There were as well less experienced project leaders who had the necessary competences for their tasks in the project but were at the same time learners further developing their competences which will make them better equipped for their future involvement in similar activities.

The analysis of the case studies indicates that specific attitudes of project leaders are essential for successful projects on participation and citizenship learning, such as a commitment to participation in civil society and democratic life, to values inherent to democracy, to human rights, justice etc. In this respect, project leaders are seen by the participants as role models, and if participants are to become active in society, the project leaders have to be active in society themselves – they need to have personal experience with being active in civil society and they need to have an intrinsic motivation to be working with young people in a participation and citizenship project. This will allow them to be authentic as facilitators, coaches, trainers and mentors of the participants in a youth project fostering participation and citizenship, acting also as „provider of learning opportunities" for the participants.

*"A good competence is being an activist; you cannot preach if you are not active in the community yourself. … You need to be democratic and instil that sense in the project."* *(YEpp/PL)*

Of course, being a project leader in (international) youth projects fostering participation and citizenship requires adequate knowledge on a broad scope of areas and topics, in particular an understanding of

- participation in society at large and more specifically in civil society and democratic life;
- citizenship;
- competences for participation and citizenship;
- participation and citizenship practices;
- principles of non-formal education and learning;
- methodologies and methods for participation and citizenship education and learning.

Furthermore, acting as a project leader in (international) youth projects fostering participation and citizenship requires skills which are going beyond regular skills for (international) youth work[18], in particular skills necessary for developing and implementing adequate designs, methodologies and methods for such projects. This includes specific skills for applying a participatory approach in the project development and implementation, skills

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[18] See also https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/training-and-cooperation/tc-rc-nanetworktcs/youthworkers-competence-model/

for empowering and inspiring young people for participation in civil society and democratic life, and skills for communication, cooperation and networking in civil society and with political organisations.

The following quotes reflect general youth work skills combined with specific skills related to participation and citizenship education and learning.

*"To use the right words is important – to listen and learn about their interests. Where are they in life and what needs do they have? To adapt to their … needs and interest. This will engage them to learn more and participate." (SP/PL)*

*"Yeah, I feel they're very good at motivating. … I see that everyone in the team is quite emotionally intelligent and quite good at observing people and kind of understanding what might motivate different people. Yeah so, this high level of understanding is a competence which they possess and I observed. And also, they are very good in thinking forward and seeing a vision. I suppose that's not so linked with us, but maybe it is because in general they work very well with these visions and set things up, how, what they need to do in order to make these visions to reality. Yeah, and I think there are a few tweaks and using this idea and this vision and that not and applying what they do to other projects, to our volunteering project, then like this project will get better and better and more and more effective. Yeah, reflection, that's a good one. They reflect a lot, very often. Yeah." (SP/PP)*

*"Once we did a project ... that was also a key action 3 [Youth Dialogue] … and our idea was to get a group of young people that were not actually interested in the normal debating kind of thing, and what we did. We actually engaged a rap artist. They [the participants] have built their own kind of resolutions that we presented to parliamentarians, so it was a different approach, but the whole idea was that we were still trying to understand where these young people were at the moment, so I think that's that." (YDpp/PL)*

*"To create a safe space [for young people] in order to do, to make mistakes, to try again. Something not separated from society." (YEpp/PL)*

*"As a youth leader I am supportive, I am calm. I try a lot to empower young people. I try and include the silent ones. I am also a good leader but I enjoy their company and I let them work and that is very important for a youth leader, to let them roam and experience things." (YEpp/PL)*

*"It is sometimes difficult to balance between giving young people space to find their own voice and path and steering them in the right measure. It is not always fun to step out of one's comfort zone, this might need a lot of encouragement." (YEpp/PL)*

*"The young play the leading role and the [youth] exchange should follow their lead. The project leader is responsible for the general direction and objectives of the exchange. So, there is also a need for being analytical." (YEpp/PL)*

*"A good competence is being an activist; you cannot preach if you are not active in the community yourself. I am a student activist; I try to raise awareness about social injustices and problems. It is one of the reasons why I am on the student council. You need to be democratic and instil that sense in the project." (YEpp/PL)*

*"You have to be clear yourself why participation and active citizenship of young people is important." (YEpp/PL)*

*"And … the other fact is that they are completely all of them social work lovers (laughs) for that saying, I had opportunity yesterday to a film then, to an interview to help them and I could see the way they talk about social work. Yeah, I think them, all of them it's crazy for me someone not in this community and like overwhelmed on how much they can talk about it (laughing) and the impression they give about it. And to youth work and try to help people to grow. Basically, it's that. They are really passionate about what they do. And you can see that, yeah." (SP/PP)*

### 3.8.2 Development of youth work competences for fostering participation and citizenship

As for developing the competences described above, it can be concluded that they were largely developed through experiential learning – as persons involved in civil society and political engagement, as young people being involved in participatory activities and participation projects, and as youth workers becoming involved in (international) youth projects related to participation and citizenship.

*"I went through the same awareness-raising process as participant I want to initiate in participants today in projects: I want to put them out of their world through role-plays – they are generally interested in many other things in this age and maybe come from a small village – and try to broaden their horizon." (YE/PL)*

*"I see the change in me and that's the best factor, because I see the change in me, so I can easily say, yeah, it works." (YE/PL) [the change, when he was a participant in YiA projects]*

For some project leaders, it is ongoing learning process for themselves, still developing these competences in every new project, developing and testing new designs and methods. They are

*"You can teach, transmit competence but you can learn only by experience. You have to combine knowledge and experience." (YD/PL)*

Nevertheless, there is also a need for specific youth worker training for developing and implementing participation and citizenship projects, including opportunities for an exchange on youth work experiences, the development of specific resources for these projects etc., addressed towards youth workers both experienced as well as unexperienced in the field of participation and citizenship education and learning.

# 4    Conclusions from the RAY-PART Conference

The design of the RAY research project on participation and citizenship education and learning in European youth programmes included a conference for the presentation and discussion of preliminary research findings of this research project, involving selected participants and project leaders of surveyed projects, the RAY-PART researchers, RAY Network Partners and policy makers.

The conference was also intended to contribute to the findings of this research project with a participatory approach involving participants and project leaders/team members in the research process during the conference. Furthermore, it should give recognition to the willingness of the beneficiaries of the researched projects to be part of the study as well as to the efforts of the participants and project leaders in contributing to this research project through their participation in group discussions and interviews as part of the case studies.[19]

Originally, the conference was planned to take place at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg in April 2021. Due to the delays of the case studies caused by the Corona pandemic (see section 1.4), the conference needed to be postponed to October 2021 and was moved to an online space due to the ongoing Corona pandemic and related restrictions.

In general, the preliminary research findings were confirmed by the views and experiences reported by the participants and project leaders/team members taking part in the conference, but they were also complemented by suggestions for successful approaches, methodologies, methods and settings for developing participation and citizenship competences and practice, e.g., methods aimed at developing analytical skills – e.g., analysing power structures/relations in a learning setting/environment or assessing the reliability/quality of information.

The discussion of the preliminary research findings resulted also in a number of recommendations which are included in chapter 5.

The conference also included a dialogue between young people, youth work practitioners, researchers and policy makers. The policy makers included two members of the European Parliament, the EU Youth Coordinator of the European Commission and representatives of the Ministries in charge of youth affairs in Austria and Malta, the latter also being the chairperson of the Council of Europe's Steering Committee for Youth. This dialogue was very lively and was appreciated very much by the conference participants, also due to discussions taking place on eye level between the participants in this dialogue. The dialogue resulted in further recommendations related to participation and citizenship education and learning which are included in chapter 5. Further recommendations of the dialogue went beyond the specific topic of this research project, such as:

- establishing youth work as a distinct profession in the European Union and to develop professional educational pathways for youth workers contributing to the professionalisation of youth work; this should include the validation of youth work competences developed through informal and non-formal education and learning;
- promoting the recognition of Youthpass, including outside the youth and non-formal education field, in order to demonstrate the learning processes and outcomes of young people and youth workers participating in European youth projects;

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[19] Such a conference was also organised as part of the RAY-LTE project in 2018 and turned out to be very successful in meeting the objectives described above.

- translating the RAY-PART findings into specific recommendations for youth work at large.

In principle, the policy makers involved in the dialogue agreed to promote the recommendations developed during this conference and specifically during their dialogue with young people, youth work actors and researchers.

# 5    Recommendations

The research findings largely confirm the recommendations of the RAY research project 'Long-term effects of Erasmus+ Youth in Action on participation and citizenship' (see Bárta et al., 2021). Furthermore, the research findings of this study result in the following additional recommendations:

**Recommendations for the project level**

The main conclusions in sections 2.1 to 2.4 implicitly comprise numerous recommendations for the development and implementation of participation and citizenship projects and are not rephrased here. Additional recommendations for the project level are the following:

**Recommendation 1:** *Explicitly adressing topics related to participation and citizenship and clarifying the links between these topics and participation and citizenship.*

**Recommendation 2:** *Using a combination of a variety of (non-formal) learning methods, providing for affective, interactive, experiential as well as cognitive learning, including periods of reflection as integral element of the methodology of European youth projects.*

**Recommendations for the programme implementation level**

**Recommendation 3:** *Giving special emphasis to promoting projects fostering participation and active citizenship of young people with fewer opportunities.* This could be achieved by specifically addressing youth work actors working with young people with fewer opportunities and providing additional funding for respective activities.

**Recommendation 4:** *Providing adequate training opportunities for youth workers and youth leaders, including exchange of good practice, on developing and implementing projects fostering participation and citizenship competence and practice of young people in line with the findings of this research project; in this respect, it is necessary to further elaborate youth work competences, which are important for fostering participation and citizenship education and learning.* This is necessary since the specific competences required to develop and implement these projects are going beyond those necessary for regular (European) youth projects, thus require specific training.

**Recommendation 5:** *Exploring how digital youth work formats can complement face-to-face interaction and actually create synergies between them, to develop respective methods and project designs, and to provide respective training opportunities for youth workers.* While there is general agreement that online activities cannot replace face-to-face interactions in (European) youth projects, they can be very useful and effective as complementary settings for blended learning. In order to make best use of potential synergies further developments in this respect are necessary.

**Recommendations for the programme level**

**Recommendation 6:** *Reviewing the evaluation criteria for project applications in the light of the RAY-LTE and RAY-PART research findings; in particular, establishing criteria for participation and citizenship projects funded through European youth programmes which provide for follow-up participation and citizenship projects developed and implemented by participants of funded projects, thus contributing to the sustainability and a multiplying effect of the original projects and of the learning outcomes of participants.* [20]

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[20] Partly, recommendations 6 and 7 have been implemented in Erasmus + Youth (2021-2027), but should be taken into consideration fully in both European youth programmes.

*Recommendation 7: Providing adequate funding for follow-up activities/projects resulting from participation and citizenship projects in order to achieve sustainability and multiplication of project outcomes.* Ideally, this funding for follow-up activities would already be allocated as part of the grant for the initial project, to be confirmed if the follow-up project is well planned and meeting the funding criteria of the respective European youth programme. This would encourage the participants and project organisers that the project outcomes could actually be used for a future project.

**Recommendations for participation and citizenship education and learning in general**

*Recommendation 8: Establishing a European Agency for Citizenship education[21] and drawing on the findings of the RAY-LTE and RAY-PART research projects in order to inform the development of this Agency, in particular with respect to educational approaches, designs and methodologies to be promoted by this Agency.*

*Recommendation 9: Promoting participation and citizenship education and learning as an integral element of youth work.*

**Recommendations for research**

*Recommendation 10: Extending research on participation and citizenship education and learning to contexts outside European youth programmes and to feed the respective findings into the European youth programmes; in particular, such research should address the participation of young people with fewer opportunities in society and political life.*

**Recommendations for the policy level**

*Recommendation 11: Promoting participation of young people in the development of European youth policies and programmes so that they reflect the needs and interests of young people. In this respect, there should be an effective dialogue between the youth field and policy makers in the European Union, in particular involving the European Parliament more intensively.*

*Recommendation 12: Developing an ongoing and 'real' dialogue between policy makers and young people and youth workers at all levels (additionally to big events taking place once a year); in this respect, it is suggested to further develop the European Youth Week and link it with local participation initiatives and grass-root participation all over Europe; as for the latter, it is recommended to offer specific training to youth workers and local policy makers in order to promote this dialogue at local level.*

*Recommendation 13: Reviewing European youth policies and programmes in the light of the RAY-LTE and RAY-PART research findings; furthermore, these research findings could also contribute to the development of participation and citizenship education and learning in other chapters of Erasmus+.*

*Recommendation 14: Establishing policies and structures providing citizenship education and learning for young people and respective training for youth workers/youth leaders in a sustainable way.* Citizenship education and learning for young people and youth workers needs stable structures in order to be available continuously and accessible across Europe and beyond (see also recommendation 8). This requires respective policies and structures.

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[21] For the exising respective initiative see https://valuesunite.eu/supporters/

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# 7 Appendix

*Table 1: Activity types and projects status (current or past) of the case studies*

| Activity types and projects status (current or past) of the case studies | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Activity type | Programme | Current projects | Past projects | Total |
| Youth dialogue projects (YD) | E+/YiA* | 5 | 1 | 6 |
| Solidarity projects (SP) | SOC** | 5 | 1 | 6 |
| Youth Exchanges (YE) | E+/YiA | 1 | 4 | 5 |
| Total | | 11 | 6 | 17 |

*\* Erasmus+ Youth in Action*
*\*\* European Solidarity Corps*

*Table 2: Topics of the case studies*

| Topics of the case studies | |
|---|---|
| Different topics within different groups of participants in the projects, e.g., equal rights, Corona, information and communication or public transport | 5 |
| Empowering young people for daily life in society/the labour market | 2 |
| Local youth work | 1 |
| Student council | 1 |
| Human rights/Rights of children and young people | 2 |
| Sports | 1 |
| Racism | 1 |
| Being an islander | 1 |
| Intergenerational exchange; local food and cooking traditions | 1 |
| LGBTIQ+ | 1 |
| Environmental protection | 1 |

*Table 3: Case study YD1*

| Case study YD1 (AT) | |
|---|---|
| Topic | Different topics, e.g., equal rights, Corona, etc. |
| Design | Simulation of parliamentary work on regional level |
| Number of participants | 35 |
| Inclusion of YPFO | Random sampling according to gender, age, residence and type of school<br>Friendship ticket: Invited young people can register one more person<br>Specific encouragement of YPFO through youth centres |
| Number of project countries | 1 |
| Affected by Corona | Yes. Activities partly postponed, partly transferred into online format. |

*Table 4: Case study YD2*

| Case study YD2 (DE) | |
|---|---|
| Topic | Different topics, e.g., sustainable urban development, social inequality, etc. |
| Design | Simulation of parliamentary work on European level |
| Number of participants | 80 |
| Inclusion of YPFO | Yes |
| Number of project countries | 1 |
| Affected by Corona | Yes. Activities partly postponed, partly transferred into online format. |

*Table 5: Case study YD3*

| Case study YD3 (DE) | |
|---|---|
| Topic | Empowerment of young people with African migration background to actively take part in civil society |
| Design | Inputs, e.g., on asylum process; excursions to public administration institutions; group work; workshops e.g. on rhetoric; exchange with policy makers etc. |
| Number of participants | 413 |
| Inclusion of YPFO | Yes |
| Number of project countries | 1 |
| Affected by Corona | Yes. Project prolonged, activities partly transferred into online format, partly implemented twice with reduced number of participants. |

*Table 6: Case study YD4*

| Case study YD4 (IT) | |
|---|---|
| Topic | Local youth work |
| Design | Development of a project concept fostering youth participation and citizenship including local administrators and young people |
| Number of participants | 34 |
| Inclusion of YPFO | 13 participants with fewer opportunities |
| Number of project countries | 1 |
| Affected by Corona | Yes. Project stopped; instead of three one-day-trainings per province implementation of physical or online short events. |

*Table 7: Case study YD5*

| Case study YD5 (HR) | |
|---|---|
| Topic | Strengthening of High School Councils by using the Youth Dialogue of the European Union |
| Design | Group work; simulation of focus groups and decision making in High School councils; reflection; evaluation |
| Number of participants | 13 |
| Inclusion of YPFO | Yes |
| Number of project countries | 1 |
| Affected by Corona | Yes. Activities partly changed into online format, partly implemented with less participants. |

*Table 8: Case study YD6pp*

| Case study YD6pp[22] (MT) | |
|---|---|
| Topic | Different topics, e.g., mental health, environmental protection, etc. |
| Design | Simulation of parliamentary work on European level |
| Number of participants | 97 |
| Inclusion of YPFO | 19 participants with fewer opportunities |
| Number of project countries | 17 |

*Table 9: Case study SP1*

| Case study SP1 (PT) | |
|---|---|
| Topic | Strengthening of intergenerational relations, protection and dissemination of local knowledge and traditions related to food and cooking, enhancement of rural areas |
| Design | Practice of participation in civil society: Interviewing locals; doing research on planting, cooking and eating on local level; creating a recipe book |
| Number of participants | 5 |
| Inclusion of YPFO | Yes |
| Number of project countries | 1 |
| Affected by Corona | No, the project took place shortly before Corona. |

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[22] 'pp' stands for 'past project', meaning a project which was completed before the RAY-PART research project started.

*Table 10: Case study SP2*

| Case study SP2 (HR) | |
| --- | --- |
| Topic | LGBTIQ+, Community building on local level |
| Design | Practice of participation in civil society: workshops; design and implementation of public events like a flea market, a living library; creation of a trans support group etc. |
| Number of participants | 9 |
| Inclusion of YPFO | Yes. Young people facing fewer opportunities due to their sexual orientation. |
| Number of project countries | 1 |
| Affected by Corona | Yes. Activities partly postponed and implemented physically and online later. |

*Table 11: Case study SP3pp*

| Case study SP3pp (HR) | |
| --- | --- |
| Topic | Environmental protection |
| Design | Development and implementation of a project concept fostering participation and citizenship including students and recent graduates |
| Number of participants | 11 |
| Inclusion of YPFO | No |
| Number of project countries | 1 |
| Affected by Corona | Project was selected to be researched during its implementation, but this was not possible due to Corona. The project was included in the research after its terminatin. Some activities were transferred into online or hybrid format. |

*Table 12: Case study SP4*

| Case study SP4 (SE) | |
| --- | --- |
| Topic | Social inclusion of young people living in marginalised municipalities |
| Design | Workshops; discussions; inputs through experts etc. |
| Number of participants | 5 |
| Inclusion of YPFO | Yes |
| Number of project countries | 1 |
| Affected by Corona | Yes. Implementation of activities with less participants, in bigger rooms and/or outdoor. |

Table 13: Case study SP5

| Case study SP5 (SE) | |
|---|---|
| Topic | Social topics challenging young people, e.g., LGBTIQ+, equality etc. |
| Design | Work on/exploration of a topic related to participation and citizenship through inputs; discussions; reflection etc. |
| Number of participants | 5 |
| Inclusion of YPFO | Yes. Some participants with migration background. |
| Number of project countries | 1 |
| Affected by Corona | Yes. All activities were postponed and implemented online. |

*Table 14: Case study SP6*

| Case study SP6 (DE) (Common activity of five volunteers) | |
|---|---|
| Topic | Different topics, e.g. gardening, Corona, etc. |
| Design | Practise of participation in civil society, e.g., through volunteering; creation of an online library for trainers etc. |
| Number of participants | 5 |
| Inclusion of YPFO | Not planned, but in the course of the project it became evident, that some of the young people had fewer opportunities |
| Number of project countries | 4 |
| Affected by Corona | Yes. Due to Corona the original topic lost its meaning. Implementation of completely different (online) activities. |

*Table 15: Case study YE1*

| Case study YE1 (AT) | |
|---|---|
| Topic | Human rights and children`s rights |
| Design | Work on/exploration of a topic related to participation and citizenship through role-plays, reflections, discussions, inputs etc. |
| Number of participants | 48 |
| Inclusion of YPFO | Yes, approximately one third of the participants. |
| Number of project countries | 7 |
| Affected by Corona | No, the project took place shortly before Corona. |

*Table 16: Case study YE2pp*

| Case study YE2pp (IT) | |
|---|---|
| Topic | Inclusion through sports |
| Design | Developing and implementing public sport events; discussions etc. |
| Number of participants | 31 |
| Inclusion of YPFO | Yes |
| Number of project countries | 5 |

*Table 17: Case study YE3pp*

| Case study YE3pp (MT) | |
|---|---|
| Topic | Intercultural learning of islanders |
| Design | Workshops; discussions; exchange with policy makers etc. |
| Number of participants | 40 |
| Inclusion of YPFO | Yes, 20 participants |
| Number of project countries | 4 |

*Table 18: Case study YE4pp*

| Case study YE4pp (FI) | |
|---|---|
| Topic | Racism, extremism, diversity |
| Design | Work on/exploration of a topic related to participation and citizenship through a video workshop; discussions; board games etc. |
| Number of participants | 29 |
| Inclusion of YPFO | Yes. Most participants had a migration background or came from remote regions. |
| Number of project countries | 2 |

*Table 19: Case study YE5pp*

| Case study YE5pp (FI) | |
|---|---|
| Topic | Youth, rights of young people, creativity, culture |
| Design | Work on/exploration of a topic related to participation and citizenship through panel discussion; creation of photo stories; visits to local families etc. |
| Number of participants | 29 |
| Inclusion of YPFO | Yes. Many young people from remote regions. |
| Number of project countries | 2 |