



THE GLOBAL GOALS



YOUTH DEMOCRACY HANDBOOK

The Youth Democracy Handbook has been authored by young participants of the Erasmus+ projects Democracy Camp 2023 and 2024. It discusses various forms of youth participation. These include local youth councils, national youth parliaments, advisory committees, advocacy groups, petitions and campaigns, model EU or UN programmes, as well as direct democratic instruments such as the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) as the first transnational direct democratic tool worldwide.

The improvements required for youth to realise their full democratic potential in the areas of sustainability and inclusive societies include but are not limited to:



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- Lowering the voting age and the age for signing citizens' initiatives, such as the ECI in all EU member states, but also at national and local level, as citizens increasingly use citizens' initiatives to promote sustainable and inclusive societies. Citizen-led initiatives also empower marginalised communities to put their solutions on the political agenda.



- Improved access to educational projects such as Model United Nations or Model European Union and work experience beyond urban capitals.



- Workshops on "life skills", such as public speaking, included in school curricula as these are also relevant in a political context.



- Strengthened networking between CSOs, private actors, and governments through government and EU impetus.



- Promoting digital tools for democratic processes, such as digital voting in elections or referendums.



- Legislative changes that empower young people and expand opportunities for participation in democratic processes. For example, binding elements and decisions by youth councils are key to keeping young people enthusiastic about democracy in the long term and using their expertise to benefit society as a whole.



- A more binding follow-up to the ECI: In order for the ECI to remain a best practice, the organisers need appropriate follow-up by the European Commission after the successful collection of signatures. The lack of political follow-up gives the process only symbolic value.



- Europe-wide referendums triggered by certain bottom-up citizens' initiatives would involve all EU citizens in deciding on Europe's future.



- To turn young people into active participants, one needs to perform two inseparable actions: inform and engage. Simply informing, without providing the needed tools to participate, will not bear any results - or satisfaction among citizens. On the other hand, simply creating opportunities, without informing the youth of their importance, functioning, or even their existence, will also carry little fruit.



- Stronger dissemination of best practices such as the ECI, Youth Councils, the EU Youth Dialogue, European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV), or the European Solidarity Corps. Any communication should use inclusive, gender-sensitive language and representations and rely on diverse communication channels among which influencers.

A project by



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