

Youth Partnership

Partnership between the European Commission
and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth



Youth Knowledge Book Youth and democracy in the climate crisis

Call for abstracts

Deadline for abstracts: 15 July 2023

Background and context

The [latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report](#) reminds us that there is ‘a rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all’. This reality is very clearly understood by young people, who are ‘at the vanguard of action on climate change’ ([Sloam et al, 2022: 684](#)).

European institutions have in recent years placed the topic of climate change and sustainability higher on the policy agenda. The EU adopted the [European Green Deal](#), whose centerpiece is the European Climate Law, which makes the goal of reaching net zero emissions in 2050 legally binding. The specific focus on youth is reinforced by including environment and climate change among the key priorities of Erasmus+, the EU’s flagship programme to support education, youth and sport, encouraging organisations to “incorporate green practices in all projects through an environmental[ly] friendly approach [...] and to come up with alternative greener ways of implementing their activities” (European Commission 2021¹).

¹ European Commission (2021) Priorities of the Erasmus+ Programme: Erasmus+ Programme Guide, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/programme-guide/part-a/priorities-erasmus-programme_en, accessed 22 July 2021

The [Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe \(PACE\)](#) has adopted several texts that are demanding a paradigm shift in policies, to ensure that a healthy environment is recognised as a basic human right. The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) contains [numerous safeguards](#) that help the European court and campaign groups to strengthen environmental protections. The Council of Europe's Youth Department, with the intention to support efforts to include climate change and its impact on young people on the international political agenda, has undertaken several steps to support initiatives aiming to "green" the youth sector. These include the [Consultative meeting "The climate crisis, young people and democracy"](#), the establishment of a [task force on greening the youth sector](#) by the Joint Council on Youth (CMJ), the inclusion of environment within [Compass: Manual on Human Rights Education with Young People](#) (p. 444) and most recently, the drafting of the Committee of Ministers recommendations on climate change and young people.

Current work of the EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership on youth participation, climate change and sustainability builds on previous publications on the topic such as the [T-KIT on Sustainability and Youth Work](#) (EU-CoE youth partnership 2018), the analytical paper on the [youth climate strike movement](#) (Gorman 2021), [Sustainability checklist](#) (Tumenaite 2021) and the research conducted within the context of the [European Platform on Learning Mobility](#) (EPLM), including an [exploratory study on Sustainability in learning mobility](#), 4th EPLM conference - Sustain Mobility: learning how to be more sustainable in mobility projects (February 2023) and upcoming Compendium of practices on sustainability and learning mobility.

As a follow-up, and building on the wealth of knowledge and resources listed above, the EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership continues its work on this topic in 2023 through the Youth Knowledge Book on Youth and democracy in the climate crisis, which is the focus of this call.

Book Concept

A key concern for this Youth Knowledge Book (YKB) is to consider the experiences of young people in the age of climate and biodiversity crises as well as their political participation in movements for climate justice and sustainability. Furthermore, the YKB seeks to explore how the youth sector across Europe is responding to young people's environmental activism - and inform future responses which support young people's agency and autonomy in responding to the eco-crisis.

(a) Young people in the climate and biodiversity crises: identities, values and motivations

One factor that may be driving young people's political action for climate justice is the distinct

intergenerational character of the crisis: young people living now will face the consequences of adult (in)actions in their life spans. Yet it must be acknowledged that young people are heterogeneous and will experience differentiated risks and impacts according to their identities and geographies. Developing a greater understanding of the diversity of young people's experiences of the climate crisis as well as the relationship between social identity, climate risk and participation in climate activism is therefore an important concern for the publication.

The YKB therefore invites further reflections on how identities, values and motivations relate to young people's articulations of (or silences around) climate justice. Who are the young people that are mobilising? Are they the "elite youth"? How does climate justice relate to other concerns, such as rurality, economic precarity and racial discrimination? What are the experiences, values and motivations of young people engaged in the movement? Articles that discuss environmental emotions, such as sadness, anxiety or stress, are very welcome.

(b) Youth climate activism: How are young people doing environmental politics?

This Youth Knowledge Book seeks to explore the world building practices and 'Do-It-Ourselves' politics ([Pickard \(2022\)](#)) of young environmental activists and illuminate how young people are *doing politics* through environmental activism. The aim is to offer greater perspective on the different ways young people are influencing climate governance (and politics more generally) across Europe. Topics which may be relevant here include:

- Explorations of the spaces and ways in which young people are establishing their autonomy and agency through political participation in the environmental movement.
- Analysis of how youth climate activists are engaging across both conventional and unconventional participation structures.
- Empirical examples of innovative participation practices such as youth citizens assemblies.
- Case studies and (auto)ethnographies created with and by young people that provide empirical richness to our understanding of youth climate activists' world-building practices.
- Discussions of how young people are making an impact on political decisions and outcomes, including in the youth field's response to the climate crisis.
- Mapping and analysis of how such local practices and projects relate together within and between countries, extending through friendships, networks, partnerships and solidarities to form the European youth environmental movement.

(c) The role of youth sector in response to the climate and biodiversity crises

The third area the YKB explores is the role and response of the European youth sector to the climate and biodiversity crises. We welcome contributions which tackle the question of both working with the youth (how has the climate crisis and young people's climate activism been received in youth policy and/or youth work) and engaging with environmental issues in general (youth sector's responses, locally, nationally and internationally, to the climate crisis and associated issues, such as the just transition). In particular we encourage contributions which shed light on three areas:

- *Young people and climate governance*
Little is known about young people's experiences of engaging with environmental policy, or their ability to shape policy outcomes in accordance with their structural critique. Contributions which shed light on these issues and inform meaningful, empowered inclusion of youth through governance innovations are welcome.
- *Exploring the intersections of inequality and climate injustice*
How has youth work engaged with the youth climate movement? How is youth work (and other youth services) working with the young people on environmental issues on local, regional, national and international level? What about those young people who continue to struggle to meet their material needs in the face of inequality and discrimination? Put simply, [can everyone afford to be green?](#)
- *Expanding youth work ethics and relationality from planetary perspective*
How might youth work respond relationally, politically, and with ethical accountability to the climate and biodiversity crises? Relationships lie at the heart of youth work, and the eco-crisis calls on youth work to consider its relationship with what some scholars and philosophers call the 'more than human' world² of the ecosystems we are a part of. Theorising an expanded ethics for youth work in response to the eco-crisis is an urgent and important task.

What types of submissions are we looking for?

Submissions should address one or more of the thematic areas set out above and contribute to the youth sector's knowledge of and response to the eco-crisis and young people's environmental activism. As this YKB examines an emerging field of knowledge, we are looking for both empirical research on the topic as well as case studies, reports and practitioner reflections which shed light on how (green) youth work and practice have been able to respond to the issues of climate justice across Europe and beyond.

² A greater environment and nature that develops and survives around people and humanity.

The geographic scope of this volume is the signatory states to the [European Cultural Convention](#), but can focus on a local, regional, national, or supranational level, or a combination thereof. We welcome submissions from academics and researchers, practitioners (including activists) and policymakers. We especially encourage submissions either authored or co-authored by young people, as well as submissions that give voice directly to young people (especially those from marginalised groups), for instance, through the methodological approach chosen. Descriptions of projects, project reports and evaluations which do not demonstrate critical engagement with the themes of the YKB will not be considered for publication.

Process & Timeline

Deadline for abstracts: 15 July 2023

Please send your submissions by email to youthknowledgebook@gmail.com by the 15th of July 2023, at 23h59 CET. Only original works—not previously published or under consideration elsewhere—will be considered.

Your submission should include:

- Proposed title summarising the main idea(s) of your chapter;
- Abstract outlining the proposed contribution (300 words max.);
- Full names and biographies of author/s (150 words per author max.);
- Institutional affiliations of author/s, if any.

The Editorial Board will take a final decision about the selection of contributions by the **end of July 2023**. Selected authors will be then notified by the Editors and requested to submit full chapters, taking into consideration the feedback from the editorial team. All submissions will be subject to peer review.

If you are interested in submitting a contribution, or have any queries regarding the Youth Knowledge Book, process and timeline, please contact Lana Pasic at lane.pasic@partnership-eu.coe.int. Questions and clarifications requested close to the deadline may not be answered due to lack of time. Please, consider these time constraints when submitting your queries.

Editorial team

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