

Youth Partnership

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



“Shaping youth policy in practice” a capacity-building project for strengthening youth policy, 2019-2020

FINAL REPORT AND DOCUMENTATION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Definitions and realities of youth policy vary across countries, within countries, and also over time. Youth policy is a strategy implemented by public authorities with a goal of providing young people with opportunities and experiences that support their successful integration into society and enabling them to be active and responsible members of their societies, as well as agents of change. Youth policy addresses various and interlinked dimensions in young people's lives: well-being, learning, democratic participation and inclusion. It can offer opportunities for young people to develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes to find their place in society, to be autonomous, and to play a role in civil society and the labour market.

Youth policy is an important topic for both the Council of Europe and the European Commission. Both the [Council of Europe 2030 Youth Sector Strategy](#) and the [EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027: Engage, Connect, Empower](#) promote youth policies based on principles of human rights, democracy, opportunities and youth participation in policy and decision making. While the two strategies serve as an important standard at the European level, youth policy development in practice is sometimes fragmented, there is limited co-operation between different actors, and the role of young people is not sufficiently recognised, resulting in the need for more co-operation and attention to specific policy areas. This need for co-operation and involvement of various actors in defining the priorities and developing policy plans was the motivating factor for the development of the Shaping youth policies in practice project.

Aim and objectives

The aim of the project was to build the capacities of those involved in youth policy in different countries and from different angles (governmental, non-governmental and research) with a vision to strengthen their youth policy work on the basis of the know-how and principles promoted by the EU-CoE youth partnership and its two partner institutions.

The key to the project was bringing together national delegations with a special composition of actors from the different sides of the youth sector triangle. According to the youth policy principles promoted by the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership, youth policy should be based on evidence, should listen to the voices of young people and should be based on the co-operation between different actors involved in the youth field in order to respond to young people's needs and aspirations. The project offered a variety of activities, in the form of online learning, a residential training seminar in France, an online webinar, implementing a delegation plan, advice and expertise support, networking and a study visit in Ireland. A final evaluation seminar was supposed to take place in Italy in the spring of 2020, but it was postponed and moved online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The objectives of this edition of the projects were to:

- build capacities of youth policy actors to strengthen youth policy on the basis of the know-how and principles promoted by the EU-CoE youth partnership and its partner institutions;
- contribute to a culture of co-operation among different actors for supporting youth policies within each participating country;
- create a space for peer exchange on youth policy;
- accompany and build the capacity of national delegations to develop and implement a delegation plan within each country's national context.

National delegations and participants

The project involved participants from five countries – France, Italy, Ireland, Russian Federation (region of Novosibirsk) and North Macedonia – which formed national delegations on the basis of interest and relevance for their current youth policy roles. The delegations involved five or six actors from different areas of youth policy, which included public bodies or institutions working on and responsible for the youth policy, Erasmus+ National Agencies, research institution/educational institution or a youth researcher, youth organisation or a youth work practitioner, national youth councils, and another public policy sphere (representative of a body, adjacent to local public administration bodies). The project created a space for diverse members of the delegations to work together on policy improvements and engage jointly in capacity building.

Project phases

Phase 1 – Online and offline (March to May 2019) – Two-month online phase, bringing participants to a common level of understanding of youth policy concepts, principles, approaches and meetings of the delegations to prepare their ideas and plan.

Phase 2 – Residential four-day training seminar (20-24 May 2019, Strasbourg, France) – A training seminar aimed at strengthening competences on youth policy, enhancing co-operation in the national delegations and the preparation of their delegation plan, supporting networking and peer learning among delegations.

Phase 3 – Co-operation phase (May 2019 to November 2020) – Implementation of delegation plans and provision of support to the delegations in this process.

Phase 4 – Study visit (Ireland, 21-23 October 2019) – A two-day study visit to one of the participating countries, focusing on learning from practice and critical analysis of the work done in phase 3.

Phase 5 – Consolidation and evaluation seminar (November 2020) – A three-day online seminar, consolidating the learning from the project previous phases and bringing new knowledge on youth policy.

Methodological approach

The methodological approach to building capacities and supporting youth policy actors in France, Ireland, Italy, North Macedonia and the Russian Federation (Novosibirsk region) to strengthen their youth policy work was multifaceted. The methodology was designed to both ground youth policy development in the know-how and principles promoted by the EU-CoE youth partnership and its two partner institutions and to flexibly respond and adapt to the specific youth policy areas and needs of each delegation. Furthermore, each phase of this long-term project required specific methodology blending online and offline, individual and group learning, mentorship support, developing knowledge and exchanging own practices.

Outcomes

The project was an opportunity to bring the topic of youth policy, its principles, standards, practices, European frameworks, tools and approaches to national youth policy contexts in the participating countries. It provided a space for various actors to come together into one shared process, where they could consolidate their efforts and try experimenting and bringing the change in youth policy-making.

The outcomes of this process could be divided into several clusters:

- improved or built capacities of those involved in youth policy in different countries
- development of practice of intersectoral and consolidated work between various actors

- collecting, sharing and exchange of practices between countries, sectors and professionals in the youth field
- implementation of new projects at youth policy level
- networking and further work with colleagues involved in the project
- personal and professional networking.

The project brought a fresh perspective to policy development processes, created a platform for professionals to meet and get to know each other, and it also created a sense of ownership over the policy-development process. It is a safe space for networking, building relationships and developing and improving plans. It also serves as an example of how the strengths and competences of field actors can be brought together for the benefit of young people.

THE CONCEPT OF THE PROJECT

Definitions and realities of youth policy vary across countries, within countries, and also over time. Youth policy is a strategy implemented by public authorities with a view to providing young people with opportunities and experiences that support their successful integration into society and enabling them to be active and responsible members of their societies, as well as agents of change. In general, youth policy addresses various and interlinked dimensions in young people's lives: well-being, learning, democratic participation and inclusion. Youth policy can offer opportunities for young people to develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes to find their place in society, to be autonomous, and to play a role in civil society and the labour market.

Youth policy is an important topic for both the Council of Europe and the European Commission. Both the [Council of Europe 2030 Youth Sector Strategy](#) and the [EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027: Engage, Connect, Empower](#) promote youth policies based on principles of human rights, democracy, opportunities and youth participation in policy and decision making. While the two strategies serve as an important standard at the European level, youth policy development in practice is sometimes fragmented, there is limited co-operation between different actors, and the role of young people is not sufficiently recognised, resulting in the need for more co-operation and attention to specific policy areas. This need for co-operation and involvement of various actors in defining the priorities and developing policy plans was the motivating factor for the development of the Shaping youth policies in practice project by the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership and in collaboration with delegations from five countries: France, Italy, Ireland, North Macedonia and the Russian Federation (Novosibirsk region), including National Agencies of Erasmus + of France, Italy, Ireland and North Macedonia, and the Department of Youth Policy and Higher Education, Ministry of Education of the Novosibirsk region, Russian Federation.

Among the principles of youth policy, these principles were particularly guiding the project:

- Young people are seen as a resource in both the work of the Council of Europe and of the European Commission and this is the approach promoted also in their respective member states.
- Co-operation between different actors, governmental, non-governmental and research, is fundamental for developing meaningful and effective youth policies.
- Inclusion and youth participation are significant elements that youth policy needs in order to be close to young people and involve them in all policy phases.
- Cross-sectoral co-operation is needed to make sure policies reaching young people are coherent and that different professionals link with each other.

In reality, while some of these principles are present in youth policies, quite often youth policy practices are fragmented, co-operation between actors does not happen on a structural basis, and the role of young people is not sufficiently recognised. In other cases, different youth policy areas need more attention and co-operation.

Aim of the 2019-2020 edition

In this context, the aim of the project was to build capacities of those involved in youth policy in different countries and from different angles (governmental, non-governmental and research) with a vision to strengthen their youth policy work on the basis of the know-how and principles promoted by the EU-CoE youth partnership and its two partner institutions.

The key to the project was bringing together a limited number of national delegations with a special composition of actors from the different sides of the youth sector triangle. According to the youth policy principles promoted by the EU-CoE youth partnership, youth policy should be based on evidence, should listen to the voices of young people and should be based on the co-operation between different actors involved in the youth field in order to respond to young people's needs and aspirations.

The project offered a variety of activities, in the form of online learning, a residential training seminar in France, an online webinar, implementing a delegation plan, advice and expertise support, networking, a study visit in Ireland and a final evaluation and consolidation seminar.

The objectives of this edition of the projects were to:

- build capacities of youth policy actors to strengthen youth policy on the basis of the know-how and principles promoted by the EU-CoE youth partnership and its partner institutions;
- contribute to a culture of co-operation among different actors for supporting youth policies within each participating country;
- create a space for peer exchange and learning on youth policy;
- accompany and build the capacity of national delegations to develop and implement a delegation plan within each country's national context.

Participants

The project involved participants from five countries (France, Italy, Ireland, Russian Federation (region of Novosibirsk) and North Macedonia) recruited as national delegations on the basis of interest and relevance for their current roles.

Each national delegation consisted of five or six participants, who represented different stakeholders of youth policy. The final composition of the delegations included the following actors (with various compositions in the country groups):

- a representative of public bodies or institutions working on and responsible for the youth policy
- a representative of the National Agency
- a representative of a research institution/educational institution or a youth researcher
- a representative of a youth organisation or a youth work practitioner
- a representative of the national youth council
- a representative of another public policy sphere (representative of a body adjacent to local public administration bodies).

The project created a space and opportunities for these diverse actors to work together on policy development and engage in capacity building.

Project phases

Phase 1 – online and offline (March to May 2019)

This was a two-month online phase, bringing participants to a common level of understanding of youth policy concepts, principles and approaches.

Two meetings of the delegations were held to prepare their delegation ideas and plan.

Phase 2 – residential four-day training seminar (20-24 May 2019, Strasbourg, France)

A training seminar aiming to strengthen competences on youth policy, enhancing co-operation in the national delegations and the preparation of their delegation plan, supporting networking and peer learning among delegations.

Phase 3 – co-operation phase (May 2019 to November 2020)

Implementation of delegation plans and support measures for the delegations in this process

Phase 4 – a study visit (Ireland, 21-23 October 2019)

A two-day study visit to one of the participating countries, focusing on learning from practice and critical analysis of the work done in phase 3.

Phase 5 – a consolidation and evaluation seminar (November 2020)

A three-day seminar, consolidating the learning from the project previous phases and bringing new knowledge on youth policy.

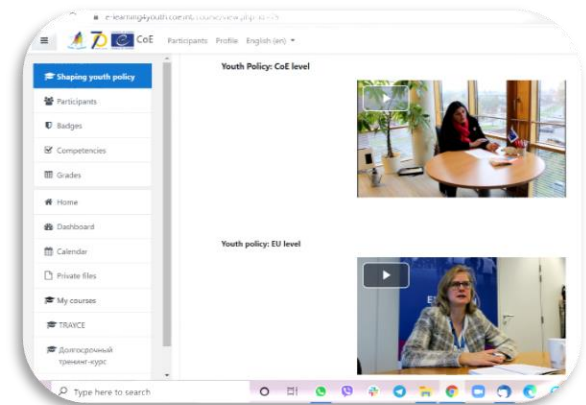
LIFESPAN OF THE PROJECT

Online phases 15 March to 20 May 2019

This phase offered a possibility to develop knowledge of European context, framework, tools and key principles for youth policy, and understand the historical, cultural and political context of youth policy development and the position of young people in Europe and participating countries. It offered a space and opportunity to all actors to get acquainted with the people and structures involved in the project.

The objectives were to:

- develop knowledge of European context, framework, tools and key principles for youth policy;
- understand the historical, cultural and political context of youth policy development and the position of young people in Europe and participating countries;
- offer possibility and space to get acquainted with the people and structures involved in the project.



The online element of the project, which supported the work during the whole project cycle, was based on the Moodle platform of the Council of Europe Youth Department, and not only consolidated all the materials of the project but also had a resource library on the priority themes in the youth field and the themes to be addressed by the participating delegations.

Preparation in the country groups 1 March to 20 May 2019

The work in the national groups before meeting at the capacity-building activity in France had to focus mainly on developing an understanding of each member's role in country delegation and identifying delegations' development needs and visions for change. Preparations had to include assessing own policies and identifying fields of action which needed strengthening.

Seminar: The capacity-building activity 20-23 May 2019, Strasbourg, France

The activity became an important space where participants developed an understanding of public policy development and the role of different stakeholders, and increased their knowledge of youth policy in specific areas that are relevant for each delegation's vision for change. The activity enabled the participants to take part in constructive peer exchange on youth policy between countries.

This seminar built the capacity of each delegation to co-operate more effectively within the country and to execute a delegation plan to take steps to implement the vision for change.



The objectives were to:

- develop an understanding of public policy development and the role of different stakeholders;
- develop knowledge of youth policy in specific areas that are relevant for each delegation's vision for change;
- enable participants to take part in constructive peer exchange on youth policy between countries;
- build the capacity of each delegation to co-operate more effectively within the country;
- develop delegation plans to take steps to implement the vision for change.

Work in the country groups May 2019 to November 2020

This period was the time when the country teams could take their plans to the next level and start with implementation. This phase also gave an opportunity to delegations to receive tailor-made, targeted and specific needs-based support, guidance and advice from youth policy experts.

Study visit 21-23 October 2019, Ireland

The three-day study visit to Ireland was an important educational part of the project to advance the exchange of practices and policy approaches. The participants were invited to take a closer look into the Irish youth policy field and its recent tools and developments. During the visit days, the participants could also share at which stage of plan development they are, what challenges they face and how they are finding solutions.

The objectives were to:

- exchange practices and policy approaches;
- learn about the new national LGBTQ+ youth strategy and its history;
- closely look at the implementation of the strategy;
- get to know people and processes related to youth policy at this stage.



Consolidation and evaluation meeting November 2020 (online, hosted by Italian NA)

The consolidation meeting brought together all partners and participants for a three-day collaborative reflection on the achievements and work done. This was the moment to look analytically and retrospectively at the process, to examine the paths the delegations have gone through, share project outcomes, and discuss how the work could be taken forward. This was also an opportunity to evaluate the project and identify recommendations for the future.



The objectives were to:

- have a collaborative reflection on the project and its elements;
- take a look at the delegations' achievements;
- share outcomes, insights and lessons learned during the past year;
- explore the role of the project in supporting youth policies on a national level;
- develop recommendations for the continuation of the project.

METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

The methodological approach to building capacities and supporting youth policy actors in France, Ireland, Italy, North Macedonia and the Russian Federation (Novosibirsk region) to strengthen their youth policy work was multifaceted. The methodology was designed to both ground youth policy development in the know-how and principles promoted by the EU-CoE youth partnership and its two partner institutions and to flexibly respond and adapt to the specific youth policy areas and needs of each delegation. Furthermore, each phase of this long-term project required a specific methodology.

METHODOLOGY FOR PREPARATION PHASE

The preparation phase had two integral elements:

1. **Individual online learning** about youth policy with the following objectives:
 - developing knowledge of European context, framework, tools and key principles for youth policy;
 - understanding of historical, cultural and political context of youth policy development and the position of young people in Europe or a participating country;
 - providing space for getting to know delegations and institutions participating in the project.

Weekly online modules were developed and delivered via the Moodle platform. The modules were focused on thematic information and knowledge sharing from publications Essentials of youth policy, European Institutions and History of Youth policy in Europe. A depository of key resources for learning about youth policy – including legal bases, research and academic resources, good practices, and educational tools in relation to Youth Policy – was created and shared. Finally, the online learning platform was also used for getting to know other delegates.

2. **The process of setting up the delegations** with the objectives of:
 - developing understanding of each member's role in a country delegation
 - identifying delegations' development needs and vision for change.

Guidelines (annex 1) were prepared and offered to heads of delegations to support them in the process of forming delegations. Once the delegations were formed, their initial meeting was planned. A template (annex 2) for the initial meeting(s) was developed and shared with heads of delegations to support them with the process of creating the team and “sketching the situation” about the delegation's priorities and needs. Particular focus was put on building a shared understanding about the project, establishing commitment to work together and sharing knowledge of youth policy. The capacity-building phase was then further shaped based on the feedback received from delegations' meetings.

METHODOLOGY FOR CAPACITY-BUILDING PHASE

Objectives for the capacity-building seminar were:

1. Develop understanding of public policy development and role of different stakeholders.
2. Develop knowledge of youth policy in specific areas that are relevant for each delegation's vision for change.
3. Enable participants to take part in constructive peer exchange on youth policy between countries.

4. Build capacity of each delegation to co-operate more effectively within country.
5. Develop delegation plans to take steps to implement the vision for change.

A specific capacity-building programme (annex 3) was developed for delegations, evolving around two key processes:

1. **learning about public policy development and principles of effective youth policy**, as well as thematic issues relevant for participating delegations;
2. **working as a team on development of a joint delegation plan** with a clear idea of intended change, ways to go about that change and clear indicators of success, as well as ways in which delegations would work as an effective team.

The underlying principle was that delegations should also learn from each other's good and relevant practices. Therefore, besides working on their own, participants also had a chance to work and exchange with others on specifically identified topics.

The participants were offered a delegation book as a tool to accompany their learning process and to capture the progress they made in planning their interventions. This tool allowed each member of the delegation to note and reflect individually on each element introduced through the programme while building a joint delegation plan. The master delegation book was filled by the head of delegation and final decisions, agreements and products of joint work were recorded there. It served as a record and foundation for building the final delegation plan. A template for the delegation plan (annex 4) was developed and shared with delegations as a tool for capturing their vision and agreed means to pursue it.

Furthermore, the team of facilitators had designed a **tailored approach to supporting each delegation**. Namely, each facilitator was in principle the main support person for different delegations and as such also a main communication channel between a national/regional delegation and the team. This approach allowed for greater insights and more effective communication and support to the delegations.

METHODOLOGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

Objectives for the implementation phase were:

- implementation of the delegation plans
- support measures for the delegations in this process.

During this phase the delegations were **self-organising to implement the delegation plans** in accordance with their agreement on how they would work together as an effective team. The delegations communicated regularly using channels they had set up for this purpose and organising delegation meetings as needed. The implementation of their plans was monitored internally.

The **facilitators were in communication** with the delegations to understand their progress and offer further support as needed. Delegations were also asked by facilitators to identify needs for support which could be addressed by facilitators' teams and/or externally.

METHODOLOGY FOR STUDY VISIT

Objectives for the study visit were:

- learning from practice of one of the participating countries
- critical analysis of the work done on implementation of delegation plans until that point.

The programme was designed to meet those objectives. It started with a review of implementation of delegation plans and ended with a review of plans based on new learning and insights acquired during the study visit. The delegations learned about the process of LGBTI+ Youth Strategy development and had a chance to visit services and organisations directly implementing the strategy.

The study visit was accompanied by one member of the facilitators' team to ensure continuity and support the reflection and assessment process for delegations. The facilitator was also supporting delegations to contextualise the learning about Ireland's LGBTI+ Youth Strategy and relate it to their delegation plans.

METHODOLOGY FOR CONSOLIDATION AND EVALUATION SEMINAR

Objectives for the consolidation seminar were:

- consolidating the learning from the project
- bringing new knowledge on youth policy
- evaluating the Shaping youth policies project.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the consolidation seminar planned for the spring of 2020 was postponed to November and held online. The concrete methods were thus also adapted for online work, while keeping the Moodle course on Shaping youth policies as the key depository of the work done.

The pre-task (annex 6) was developed to help delegations to reflect and share the work done. Delegations first met to map their achievements, assess the impact of their work and prepare for the joint consolidation meeting and sharing with other delegations.

The design of the programme (annex 7) included mapping of the achievements, as well as identifying challenges, success factors and potentials for the future. Again, the principle of sharing between the delegations was important and incorporated in the design. Finally, the programme included specific focus on evaluating the overall experience with this long-term project.

OUTCOMES, RECOMMENDATIONS AND INSIGHTS

Outcomes

The project brought the topic of youth policy, its principles, standards, practices, European frameworks, tools and approaches to the member states' national youth policy contexts. It provided a space for various actors to come together into one joint shared process, where they could consolidate their efforts and try experimenting and bringing the change to youth policy-making .

The outcomes could be divided into several clusters:

- improved or built capacities of those involved in youth policy in different countries
- development of practice of intersectoral and consolidated work between various actors
- collecting, sharing and exchange of practices between countries and representatives of various sectors
- implementation of new projects on youth policy level
- networking and further work with colleagues from the project
- personal and professional networking.

Even if the COVID-19 situation impacted on some of the activities that were planned and the project was prolonged, the groups stayed very integrated and the delegations managed to keep their composition. The final meeting was then a chance to bring together all delegations' experiences, reflect on their processes and learning, and develop a set of recommendations which could support similar projects and programmes.

The project brought a fresh perspective to policy development processes, created a platform for professionals to meet and get to know each other, and it also created a sense of ownership over the policy-development process. It is a safe space for networking, building relationships and developing and improving plans. It also serves as an example of how the strengths and competences of field actors can be brought together for the benefit of young people.

Recommendations and insights for Shaping youth policies projects

The recommendations below are based on the learning experience of participants taking part in a project "Shaping youth policy in practice" – a capacity-building project for strengthening youth policy in 2019/20 – and the final evaluation that was done at the end of the project. This set of recommendations and insights can serve different actors who wish to engage in shaping youth policies in their communities, while bearing in mind the specifics of different realities and the need to adapt approaches to concrete situations.

In this report they are structured in two parts – recommendations for implementation of similar projects by various national and international actors in the future and recommendations on more specifically structuring the National Plan development. The recommendations are made taking into account and including activities, methods and approaches already used in the 2019/20 edition.

Recommendations referring to the overall process and the way of working

1. Combining different learning approaches, such as face-to-face events, capacity-building seminars, study visits and work in national delegations is recognised as extremely valuable for participants. Blended learning approaches (online and offline) should be part of future editions as well, as they were highly appreciated by the participants, ensured learning by doing and provided practical experience.
2. There is a need to pay attention to the total duration of the project and time management. Long-term involvement in a project might be difficult for some stakeholders, but on the other hand, shaping youth policies is not a quick process. The total duration should be set up based on the activities planned and should offer a sufficient time for the work in national delegations. A more compacted and shorter timeline might be better, as sometimes a long period of time between international events can cause a gap in following the whole project. A duration of 12 to 18 months is recommended.
3. When identifying the aims and objectives, be specific on the challenges and topics this project should address, taking into the account the needs of young people. Having a defined scope could facilitate greater co-ordination across different delegations and would ensure more concrete and applicable peer-learning opportunities.
4. Organise reports, presentations or online sessions between the international events (seminar, capacity buildings, study visits) in order to ensure the follow-up of the face-to-face events, as well as support the delegations in their work. This also helps with maintaining the contact between the events and a regular communication. Online activities have been recognised as an asset to the whole project.
5. Throughout the project, build the relations among participants through sharing of practices, strategies, goals achieved and useful guidelines. This should be encouraged within national delegations, as well as among different delegations, as it supports mutual learning as well as individual growth.
6. Input from different experts is highly desirable. Experts can come from different fields, such as researchers, institutions or practitioners. Through their presentations, participants can have access to expertise they normally would not have. Providing meetings for participants with different stakeholders, institutions, organisations and young people is recommended.
7. Providing presentations about different institutional frameworks (for example, on the work of the EU-CoE youth partnership or EC), international processes on youth policies, ongoing strategies and other relevant information was useful and important. This helped participants to better understand the context, role of different international institutions and the (advocacy) tools they can refer to or use in their national contexts.

Specific recommendations referring to the set-up and operation of the delegations

1. Encourage diversity of the stakeholders involved in delegations. They should represent different actors, fields and positions (governmental, non-governmental, research, youth NGOs, etc.) with a mix of expertise and experiences. Stress this strongly in a call when setting up delegation teams.
2. Ensure that external facilitators/mentors/coaches assist delegations in planning their work, supporting them and monitoring their progress. This support should be available throughout the process in a structured way (such as regular meeting, dedicated person for each delegation, planned check-ins, etc.)
3. Throughout the process ensure that there is a regular check-in with delegations from the trainers/facilitators and for the organisers of a whole project. This should be done frequently, especially in between the seminars. This will also contribute to the commitment and motivation of delegation members to follow the work.
4. In the planning of a whole process, ensure that there is enough time planned for the work in delegations. This should be specifically ensured before participants attend the international activities (such as seminars or study visits), so they can prepare sufficiently, as well as in the phases where they are encouraged to implement their national plans. As shaping youth policies can take time, this need should already be reflected in the planning process.
5. Ensure regular communication from the organisers/lead partners to the delegations and among all of them, throughout the project. Delegations should understand where in the process they are and what is ahead of them, so they can plan their work accordingly.
6. Anticipate time and place for consolidation meetings inside the delegation and outside the delegation. In long-lasting processes, things might change in between, and adaptations are needed. The delegations should be able to adapt to new realities and, if needed, adjust initial plans.
7. Ensure more regular contacts with the other delegations, whether in person or online. Exchange and sharing among different delegations contribute to peer learning, gathering and developing new ideas and overcoming challenges.
8. Participants in the previous edition of “Shaping youth policy in theory and practice” could be involved as mentors or coaches. They went through a similar process and could offer valuable advice for new participants.

Recommendations for the development of the national plans and their implementation

Shaping youth policies is a process that should be based on co-operation of different stakeholders, working within a team or a delegation, where each of them can contribute with their experience, knowledge and capacities. The recommendations below provide some guidance on developing **National action plans** within a specific policy process:

- 1. Ensure diversity of the stakeholders' profile** – Make sure your group of co-workers and partners have a diverse background, so your team is composed of people from different organisations and institutions who are active in shaping youth policies. Diversity within a team can both help and hinder the process. Make sure that all members will be present and active during each stage of the project. Even once the team is set up, be open to attract people from different youth communities and gain new resources.
- 2. Develop a common view of the project's goal and ideology** – Ensure that there is a clear understanding among everyone in a group about what this group is trying to achieve (why, who, concrete milestones) and how this will be done (steps, way of working together).
- 3. Define specific goals and results that you want to achieve** – Be specific about what you want to achieve and how. Setting up the whole orientation should follow the principles of project management with SMART goals.
- 4. Apply project management principles** – Develop action plan guidelines for short-term, medium-term and long-term outcomes. Set up a plan for regular communication with your team, regular meetings and clear task divisions. You can organise online meetings and use digital tools that can help you keep track and organise yourselves better, such as Slack or Teams. Ensure that there is ongoing co-ordination of the team and regular monitoring.
- 5. Don't be too ambitious** – Shaping youth policies takes time. Start with small, concrete steps that are feasible and can pave the way to bigger things.
- 6. Be flexible: adjust to changing realities** – In long processes, a lot of things can change. People in your group might change, and political priorities might change. Adjust to the new realities by reshaping the goals, if needed.
- 7. Pay attention to time management** – Make sure you structure the timeline in terms of output sharing. A more compacted and shorter timeline would be better to see the next steps, while keeping broader picture and end results in mind.
- 8. Share problems and solutions adopted** – Be honest and transparent, build trust and close relationships, not only with your team members, but also with the stakeholders you are addressing.

9. Build a team spirit and motivate each other – Invest in good relationships, have regular communications, take time for sharing and learning from each other.

10. Establish strong connections with policy makers – Present them with the goals you are trying to achieve, involve them in the process from an early stage, make alliances and make sure you actively lobby political institutions.

11. Disseminate the outcomes after the project – Make sure the outcomes are not only visible to your team members, but also more broadly, in a community, youth sector, other organisations and institutions. Celebrate the results of your work.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1 – FORMING DELEGATIONS


Shaping youth policies



Guide for the composition of national/regional delegations

Each delegation will be composed of five or six people, who will need to commit themselves to a one-year process with:

- regular co-operation within the delegation throughout the programme (online or offline) (March 2019 to March 2020)
- a five-week (one hour per week) online learning course (March-May 2019)
- a four-day residential capacity building activity, France (May 2019)
- a two-day study visit, Ireland (October 2019)
- a three-day consolidation meeting, Italy (February-March 2020)

Steps for composing the delegation

	<p>Step 1. Vision for change</p> <p>Identify the youth policy area which you think is relevant to tackle and work with in your country/region. Reflect on the problem that the change is tackling, what makes you want to work on it. Once the delegation is formed, another round of reflection on the policy area will follow, helping to look into what needs to change and how.</p>
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	<p>Step 2. Analysis</p> <p>Conduct a quick mapping of stakeholders/actors to identify who are the most relevant people and structures to be on board with you in this process, who has a big influence, a decision- and difference-making power, who is heavily affected by it, which are the structures and people you think should be allies in this process. Depending on the youth policy specificities and the area you want to tackle in the project, the relevant actors will differ.</p>
	<p>Step 3. Balance in the delegation</p> <p>Put together a balanced delegation and invite people to join the project.</p> <p>A balanced delegation means a group of consciously committed people, representing actors from different angles of youth policy. The balanced delegation will include decision makers, civil society actors, research community, practitioners, etc. This approach to the delegation composition gives a possibility to pull together people with different remits, strengths and expertise, to work together.</p>

Who can be invited to the delegation:

- representatives of public authorities from local, regional or national level, actors in charge of youth or of issues touching upon the situation of young people;
- representatives of the research field/community;
- members of youth organisations, clubs, youth representative bodies/councils;
- representatives of the National Agencies of the Erasmus +;
- representatives of relevant interest groups and activist groups;
- individuals who can heavily influence envisaged policy changes.

ANNEX 2 – INITIAL DELEGATION MEETING(S)

This document was developed to support those facilitating the process of forming and preparing national delegations to get involved in the project “Shaping youth policy in practice”.

Template for delegations meeting

Preparation phase

Please have in mind that the objective of the first meeting is to “sketch the situation” and start collecting the information about the delegation’s priorities and needs. When meeting with your delegation, please make sure you tackle the following elements:

1. Shared understanding: Once the delegation is formed, discuss with the delegation members their engagement in the project, and go through all the phases with the concrete objectives and work done for each phase. This is an important step to have a shared understanding within the delegation of the whole project and the role of each member.

2. Commitment to work together: Make sure it is clear for delegates that this is a collaborative project – it requires them to take part not only as individuals but also as members of a delegation.

3. Knowledge-based participation: Discuss with delegation members how they could bring to the table the latest knowledge and trends from their specific role/position in relation to youth policy.

When meeting with delegations please document the following elements by completing the form below.

1. Please describe your delegation briefly.

<i>What is the composition of people and their connection to youth policy in your country/region?</i>	
<i>Name of delegate</i>	<i>Role (e.g. youth worker, civil servant, researcher, policy maker, NA staff)</i>

2. Allow each individual to share their thoughts and agree on a key priority or priorities for them as a delegation. You may wish to use the drawing below as a support for reflection.

What is it in the youth policy field and/or youth policy process in your country/region that really needs to change and that you want to work on during the programme?



3. Allow each individual to share their needs – thinking of them individually and as a delegation. Collect all ideas. If needed, consult the document outlining the “Shaping Youth Policy” project.

- When it comes to youth policy, what would you like to learn during this project?
- What would be some of the common needs of your delegation for developing and implementing the plan to address such change in the framework of the “Shaping youth policy” project? (support in knowledge/skills/expertise, support with process, etc.)

Please send back this form by 31 March 2019.

ANNEX 3 – PROGRAMME OF THE FIRST RESIDENTIAL SEMINAR, STRASBOURG, 20-23 MAY

	Monday 20 May	Tuesday 21 May	Wednesday 22 May	Thursday 23 May
Before 9.30	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
9.30-11.00	Official opening Introduction to the project and programme of the seminar Who is there and what expectations do we have?	Principles of effective youth policy – interactive input by expert	<i>What else do we need to know?</i> Parallel specific thematic workshops	<i>What are we going to do?</i> Delegation (inter)action plan
11.00-11.30	Break	Break	Break	Break
11.30-13.00	Public policy forming process – interactive input by expert	<i>How are principles related to changes we envisage?</i> Translating principles into practice	<i>What else do we need to know?</i> Parallel specific thematic workshops	<i>What are we going to do?</i> Delegation (inter)action plan
13.00-14.30	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
14.30-16.00	<i>How do we want things to change?</i> Vision for change in youth policy field	<i>Who else needs to be engaged?</i> Mapping actors	<i>How can the learning be used?</i> Applying learning	Sharing the plans Evaluation Closing
16.00-16.30	Break	Break	Break	Break
16.30-18.30	<i>How do we need to change our practice?</i> Assessment exercise	<i>What capacities and commitments are needed for change?</i> Self-assessment	<i>What are the challenges we (might) face?</i> Peer exchange	Departure
19.00	Dinner	Dinner out	Dinner	
20.00	Optional evening – Sharing good practice examples	Dinner out	Self-organised evening	

ANNEX 4 – DELEGATION PLAN TEMPLATE

VISION

What is our vision for change? (You can copy this from the section above, making any changes you need to)

VALUES AND WAYS OF WORKING TOGETHER

What are our commitments to how we want to work together? (You can copy this from the section above, making any changes you need to)

(INTER)-ACTION PLAN

What is the (inter)-action	When will this be done?	Who is the lead actor?	Who are the other actors?

IMPACT, REVIEWS AND REFLECTION

How will we know if we are being successful?	
What will we do to review and keep track of our progress?	
When will we do this?	
Who will take responsibility for leading this?	

SUSTAINING INTERACTION

What things could happen which might prevent us interacting and achieving our vision?	What can we put in place to deal with this?

SUPPORT

What external support do we need? Who could provide this?

ANNEX 5 – PROGRAMME OF STUDY VISIT TO IRELAND

Programme

LGBTI+ Youth Strategy Study Visit

Dublin

21-23 October 2019

Times	Sessions
Day 1	
9:30 - 11:00	Welcome Introductions/reintroductions Updating, sharing where delegation plans are
11.00 - 11.30	Coffee break
11.30 - 12.30	Context – Youth work in Ireland and LGBT youth work in Ireland
12.30 - 14.00	Lunch
14:00 - 17:00	Linda O’Sullivan, Youth Advisory Committee – The rationale for the strategy, strategy goals and the strategy development process Moninne Griffith, CEO of Youth Advisory Committee and Jayson Pope, “Belong To” member and member of the Youth Advisory Committee for the Strategy – NGO and young person’s perspective on the development of the strategy
17:00 - 19:00	LGBT History Tour of Dublin (optional) – The history of LGBTI+ advocacy in Dublin, through stories from the walking tour
Day 2	
9.30 - 11.00	Check-in Travel to Dundalk

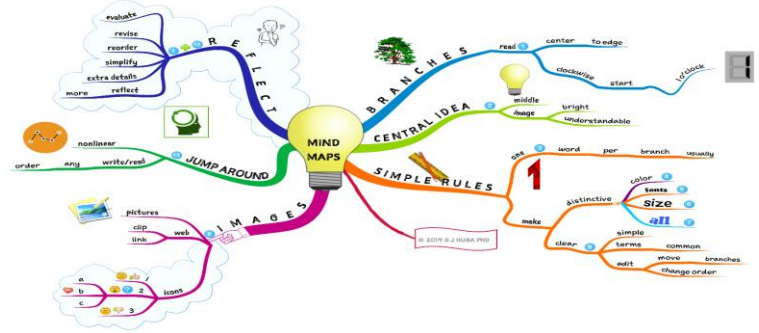
11.30 - 13.00	<p>Bernie Quinn, Outcomers – Creating a safe supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people in rural areas</p> <p><i>Outcomers is a social and befriending support group for LGBT people in the North East and border counties of Ireland</i></p>
13:00 - 13:45	Travel to Drogheda
13:45 - 15:00	Lunch in Drogheda
15:00 - 16:00	Visit to Boomerang Youth Cafe, Drogheda, a one-stop youth service and cafe in Drogheda Town. They have a weekly LGBT group that meets in the centre.
16:00	Travel to Finglas
17:00	<p>Finglas Youth Resource Centre – LGBT youth group creating a safe supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people in urban areas</p> <p>FRYC LGBT group – the support they provide and their perspective on the LGBT strategy</p>
Day 3	
9.30 - 13:00	<p>Discussing and consolidating the learning outcomes from the visits</p> <p>Working in delegations on further developing national/regional plans</p> <p>Evaluation of the visit and sharing ideas and needs for the next stage of the project</p>
13.00 - 14.30	Lunch and departure

ANNEX 6 – MAPPING ACHIEVEMENTS TASK

Evaluation phase

This document is developed to support delegations to reflect upon the process of working together and map all results achieved in the framework of their work plans as regards Shaping youth policy!

We would kindly ask you to organise a little get-together as delegations before the Evaluation meeting that is scheduled for 18-20 November. Coming together might be in person, or online, or even organised in an asynchronous way, but please make sure that each delegation member contributes to the task!



Content

You could start by looking at your delegation plan and reflecting on what was planned and what has been implemented and achieved. Those questions might help you reflect:

- *Have we managed to contribute to our vision of change? To what extent and in which aspects?*
- *What progress has been made? Do we have evidence of it?*
- *Were there some additional and unexpected results? Which ones?*

And also feel free to add anything else that you discover when you reflect on achievements reached.

Format: The map of your achievements would ideally be concise and understandable to others who were not involved in your process and your delegation. It could be in the form of a video, a mind map, a bullet point list, or any other means you find useful.

Please use different tools and ways to present your achievements in a visually appealing and understandable manner.

Timeline

For the needs of our meeting, please upload the results of mapping the achievements in the [Moodle](#) platform by 11 November.

Also please have the results of your reflections with you when joining the November online meeting.

ANNEX 7 – PROGRAMME OF CONSOLIDATION AND EVALUATION MEETING (ONLINE)

Programme

Wednesday 18 November 2020**10.00-13.00**

- Check-in and reconnecting with the group: What has happened since we last met?
- Working in delegation breakout groups: Mapping the achievements
- Working in mixed groups: Sharing and learning from each other about the developments

Thursday 19 November 2020**10.00-13.00**

- Check-in with the whole group
- Working in delegation breakout groups: Challenges, success factors and potentials for the future
- Working in mixed groups: Sharing lessons learned and points useful for others

Friday 20 November 2020**10.00-13.00**

- Check-in with the whole group
- Individual evaluation of whole experience and learning process
- Working in delegation breakout groups: Evaluating the impact on the national level
- Working in mixed groups: Recommendations for the future

Annex 8 – Evaluation of different phases

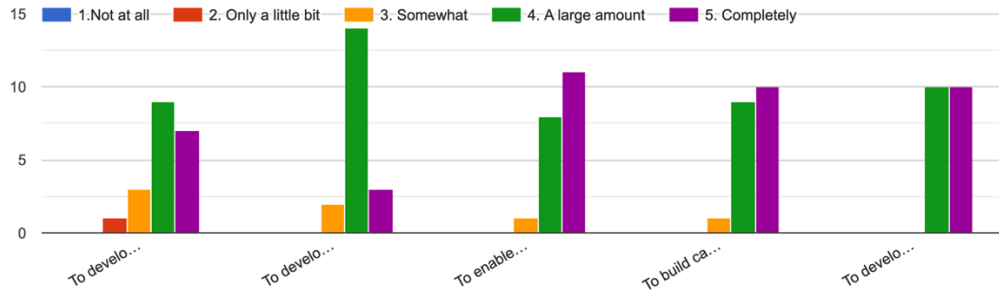
Strasbourg: The capacity-building activity 20-23 May, Strasbourg, France

The aim of the event was to develop participants’ understanding of public policy forming and the role of different stakeholders, and to develop knowledge of youth policy in specific areas that are relevant for each delegation’s vision for change. The activity enabled the participants to take part in constructive peer exchange on youth policy between countries.

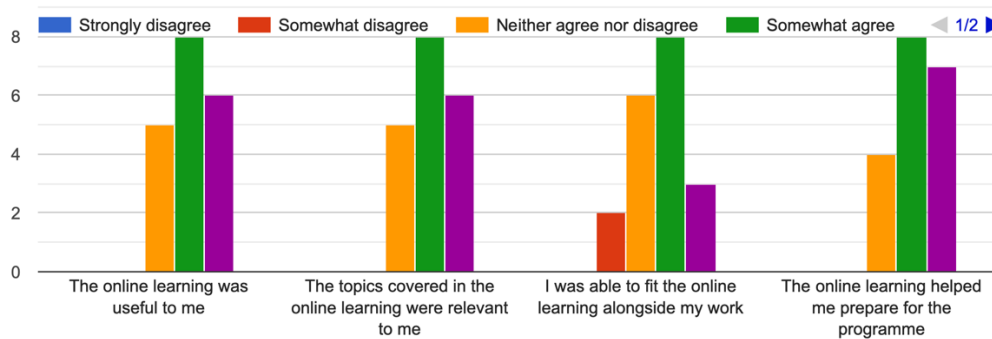
After the event in Strasbourg, evaluation with participants showed that they were very satisfied with the event and that it was beneficial for their learning, sharing and better understanding youth policies and the roles of different actors in it.

The evaluation was done individually though an online form and below are the main reports from this evaluation.

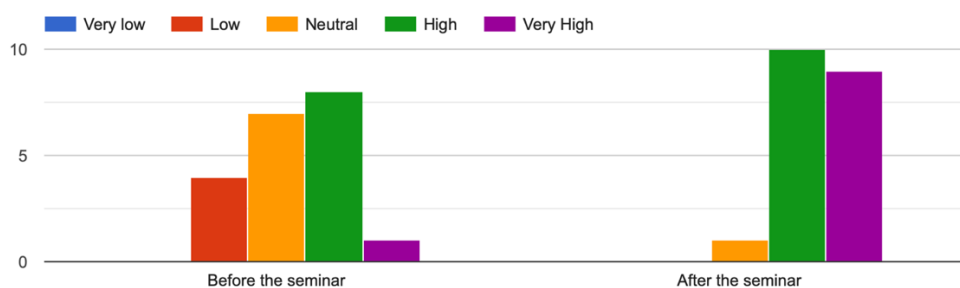
How much did this seminar and online preparatory learning meet their objectives?



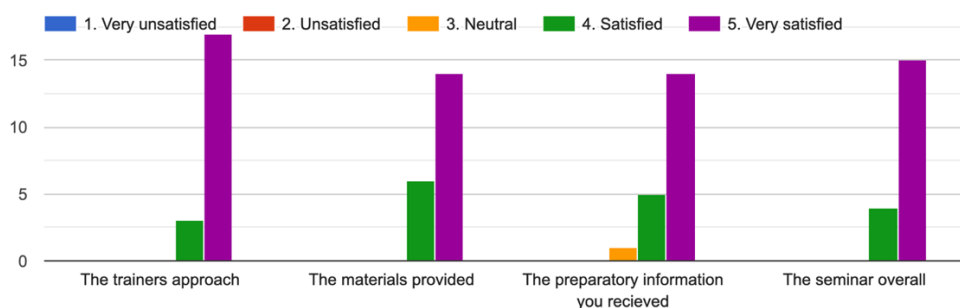
How much do you agree with the following statements?



How confident do you feel to implement positive change within youth policy in your country?



How satisfied were you with...



Participants most valued the following aspects of the seminar:

- collaboration with colleges from their own delegation, exchange and dialogue among themselves, discussions and decisions inside the team, the chance to work closely with national delegations;
- interaction between representatives of different delegations, exchange of international experience, exchanging experiences with other delegations, the exchange of good practice;
- clarification of basic principles of youth policy, the compacted information and useful tools about youth policy, guest speakers as an additional help to understand general and specific shape of policy (youth);
- lecture by a professor from the National University of Ireland;
- receiving advice that is relevant to their work;
- process orientation approach;
- the facilitation and the “funnel” approach (from global policy to action plan);
- learning materials as a working book during the seminar;
- perfect organisation by host NA and Council of Europe and the trainers’ support to participants, informal communication with coaches and representatives of the partnership;
- conviviality, kindness and general good humour, good atmosphere, informal communication in the evenings.

The aspects that could be improved were:

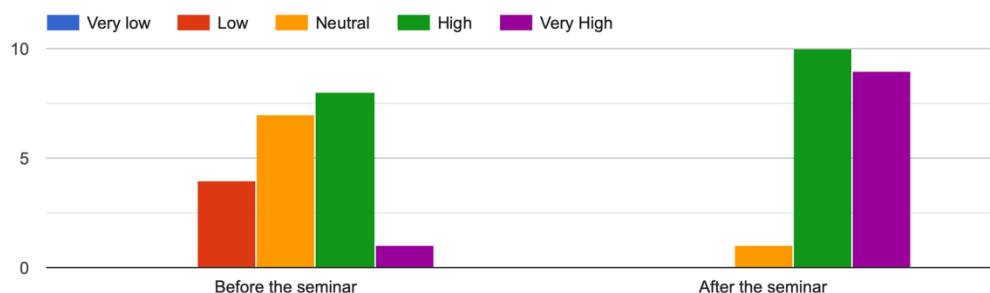
- more opportunities for communication and exchange with members of other delegations;
- more time needed to finalise their action plan;
- more opportunities and time to hear about the plans of other delegations;
- meeting the other delegations and understanding their project earlier in the seminar;
- more time for exchange and sharing deep knowledge, especially with participants from other delegations;
- more interactive sessions and interactions, more practical tasks;
- more informal tasks and conversations between participants.

They also identified what youth policy topics they would like further information about:

- youth workers' training, good practices on youth workers' training;
- inclusion in the youth environment;
- implementation and impact on participants in previous editions of the project;
- direct involvement of young people in shaping local youth policies;
- youth work and NFE recognition;
- co-management system;
- youth information;
- youth councils at local level – their functions, role, challenges and benefits for youngsters;
- integrating mobility into national youth policy;
- directions of youth policy, examples of projects in other countries;
- youth participation of ethnic minorities and successful experience of their social integration;
- practical skills to make or change spaces that are used for youth policy – youth policy centres;
- youth funds in EU regarding sports.

Overall participants were very satisfied with the seminar and it brought them meaningful knowledge and experience. Most of them stated that they are receiving the support they need and that they felt confident to implement a positive change in their country.

How confident do you feel to implement positive change within youth policy in your country?

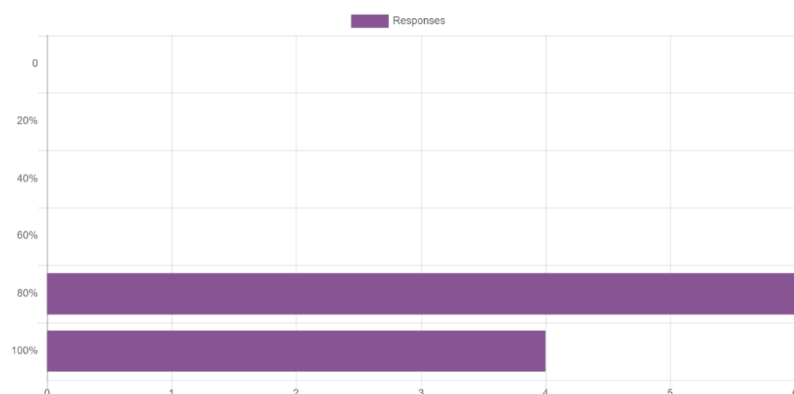


Dublin: Study visit 21-23 October 2019

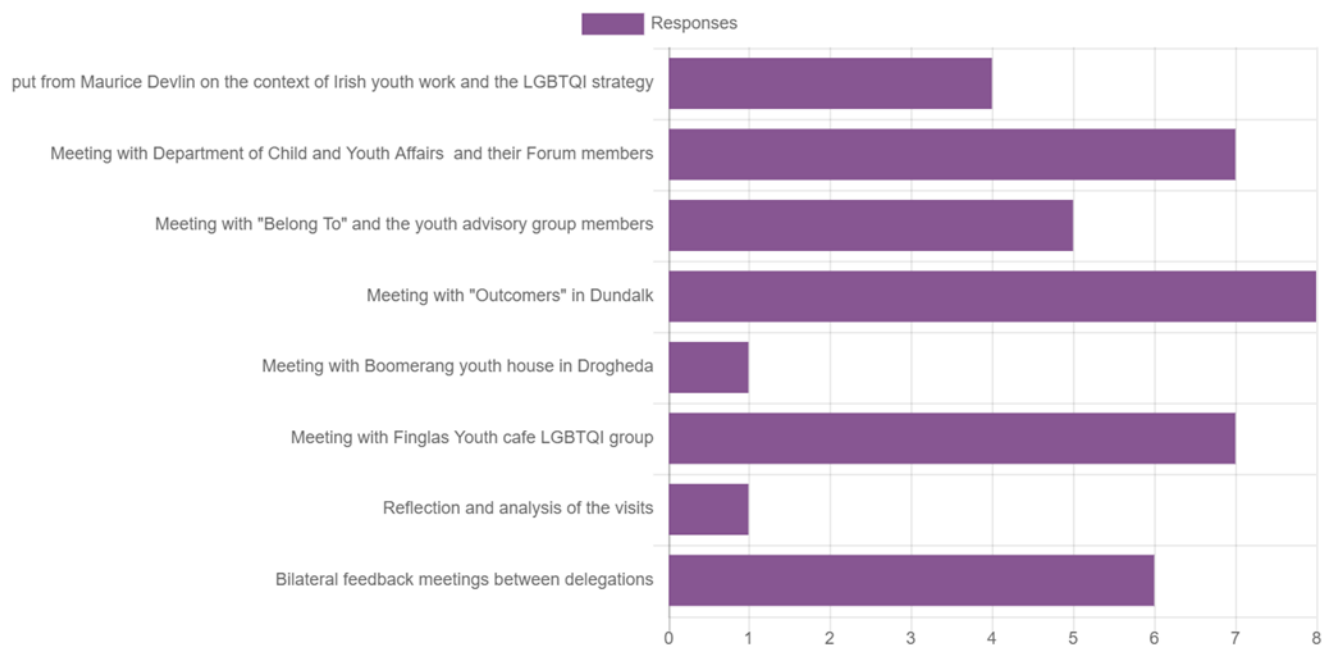
After the study visit to Ireland, the evaluation with participants was done online.

They stated that most of their expectations were fulfilled and these are some of their reflections:

- “It was a good opportunity to reflect not only on the topics, but on the efforts of young people to overcome difficulties. I guess it’s a great example for people who don’t commit themselves in their communities.”
- “It was a great experience and we had a chance to listen to a lot of personal stories which made the situation of LGBTQI+ young people very understanding and on our trip home we actually got into a discussion about doing something to help those people in our country.”
- “It was organised perfectly and it was obvious that Anna and her colleagues worked hard on this study visit! I especially liked the first day because it was a mixture of history of the LGBTQ movement in Ireland and more practical issues such as strategy implementation. I also liked the life-stories from young people which were opened to share their contribution within the process of implementation of the LGBTQ+ strategy in Ireland.”
- “And what I would like to say more is that it’s been very effective to show not only Dublin’s progress in this process of accepting the strategy, but also to show rural areas.”
- “It was very impressive. It was very interesting to visit different youth centres across the country and to know about a huge strategy of youth participation in the youth policy from development to evaluation.”
- “I would describe my impression by two moments: 1. How the state supports groups and topics which are sensitive and are prohibited in some societies. 2. How to organise this work strategically and holistically. Even if volunteers say this work is not perfect, it is a good try.”
- “Perfect event, very helpful and very interesting.”
- “I am glad I took part in the study visit. There are a lot of interesting things I learnt about Ireland and the good practices about the support for the LGBTI+ community.”
- “The study visit was very well organised; the atmosphere was friendly and we were able to understand the context and content of the public policy chosen as an example.”
- “Great study visit! I found this visit very interesting. It allowed me to discover another context. We are already trying to transpose some good practices into our national context (France).”



These are the following programme elements that contributed most to their learning during the visit.



A special added value of the study visit was the opportunity for participants to meet people from or working with the LGBT community, in particular LGBT young people who shared their personal experiences. Some of them said they are hoping to start the process of organising focus groups with LGBTQI + groups in their country, and explore how they can help them with their national youth strategy or in any other way.

The whole study visit was useful for them; in some cases it influenced their delegation plans. Some of the most-important take-aways for the delegations were the following:

- New knowledge about the basis of the civil initiative coming not from above, but from the bottom up (subsidiary model), examples set by young people for others
- Practical issues how art (music, fine art etc.) can build a bridge between different people
- Practical aspects of how to work not only with excluded groups but how to work with the whole community of the city, town, village regarding the questions of common well-being
- Starting the process of organising focus groups with LGBTQI + groups in their country, going to try to improve youth workers' skills about LGBTQI + issues, setting up training. We will set up a training very soon
- We've also engaged in a reflection about youth participation in regional youth policies
- Youth involvement
- The work of a youth centre, young volunteers working in youth centres (former pupils), good example of multi-format space for youth in Finglas, peer work in youth centres, commitment of young people
- Contacts, establishing a collaboration with a youth centre they visited
- Knowledge of how to design a strategy, structure, design process, monitoring, results achieved etc.
- Exchange and getting together with other delegations, the consistency of the whole group, exchange and honest sharing about their realities and improvements, and also listening carefully

- Strengthening commitments to work on their delegation plans
- Being flexible and patient.

Participants also appreciated the bilateral exchange at the end of the seminar, stating that it helped to better understand the ambitions of each delegation. This helped them better understand that each delegation's action plan contributes to a larger whole.

Suggestions for the study visit were:

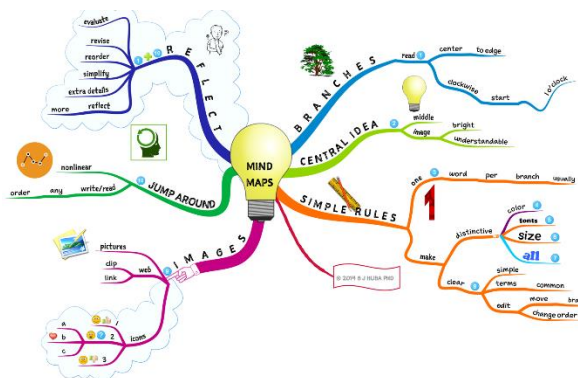
- The programme with three visits on the same day seems a little bit too heavy, as it doesn't leave enough time to improve their knowledge. More time for reflection after a couple of visits would have been appreciated.
- During the visits, what was most interesting was the exchange with the leaders and with the young people. I regretted that we did not have enough time to carry out a workshop or a debate with each structure visited, because we were too passive on this day whereas it was a great opportunity to practise a little to understand how the youth workers who have been trained to welcome young people work every day.

Evaluation of the overall project

At the end of the project, in November 2020, a final online seminar was organised in order to evaluate the whole project.

The objective of the seminar was to look back at what has happened in the meantime, to gather all participants together and to allow them to share successes, the challenges they face and how they overcame them and to share lessons learned.

Before the seminar, national delegations were asked to do a small piece of homework that included preparation of the roadmap. They were asked to organise a little get-together as delegations before the evaluation meeting. They were encouraged to start by looking at their delegation plan and reflecting on what was planned and what has been implemented and achieved. In this reflection they were guided through questions that the final evaluation seminar was built upon as well.



The final evaluation of the whole project was composed of different methods throughout three days and the final outcome is the list of the lessons learned from the project, which were shaped in two sets of recommendations.