EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

(To be filled in and uploaded as deliverable in the Portal Grant Management System, at the due date foreseen in the system.

⚠ *Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum).)*

PROJECT	
Project name and acronym:	Empowering youth Participation for Inclusive and plural Communities — EPIC_IDEA
Participant:	ISTITUTO COOPERAZIONE ECONOMICA INTERNAZIONALE ASSOCIAZIONE (ICEI)
PIC number:	932287177

EVENT DESCRIPTION			
Event number:	D2.1 (WP2)		
Event name:	Bottom-up analysis on young people's perspectives on the future of the EU		
Type:	Event		
In situ/online:	online		
Location:	Italy, Spain, Portugal, Hungary		
Date(s):	December 2024 – April 2025		
Website(s) (if any):	https://icei.it/en/progetti/epic_idea-empowering-youth-participation-for-inclusive-and-plural-communities/		
Participants			
Female:	86		
Male:	36		
Non-binary:	0		
From country 1 [Spain]:	37		
From country 2 [Italy]:	30		
From country 3 [Portugal]:	27		
From country 4 [Hungary]:	28		
Total number of participants:	122	From total number of countries:	4

Description

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

The **objective** of the ***Bottom-up analysis*** was to collect data, both qualitative and quantitative, to identify recurring patterns, themes and needs to set up future strategies and interventions (in the project and beyond) for the

promotion of diversity and inclusion in local communities and at European level.

The activity was structured into three consecutive phases:

1. **Selection of participants,** by partner organisations. They carefully selected youth workers and young participants from diverse backgrounds, ensuring inclusive representation and a wide range of perspectives in the final outcomes.
2. **Implementation of surveys, focus groups and interviews**, involving youth workers and young people
3. **Analysis of the collected data** and preparation of a final assessment report.

The output has been an assessment of needs and potential developments in the role of young people and youth workers in promoting EU values and it is useful for guiding the implementation of all the project activities. The assessment, explained in detail in the **Report of the Analysis (D2.2)**, presents the views and experiences of the target groups and their suggestions on what could work to improve youth participation.

ELABORATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF SURVEYS FOR YOUTH WORKERS & YOUNG PEOPLE

Right after the Transnational Training of Trainers (WP1) in October, the Consortium started working on the development of the analysis and data collection tools through specific co-design meetings with partners. With the support of the experts in social research methodology, from Intra Association, 2 surveys (1 for youth workers and 1 for young people) and guidelines for online focus groups and interviews were elaborated.

This has been a very interesting process, as it allowed us to start from the specific needs of each country to create useful tools for data collection for identifying the main aspects of the process.

The surveys were opened from December 2024 until the end of January 2025 to collect as many responses as possible and ensure the involvement of all beneficiaries.

The next step were the implementation of the **online focus groups and interviews** (February – April 2025) with the aim to identify and deepen trajectories and areas for further intervention on the issues that emerged most frequently in the surveys: the focus groups and interviews modality allows the collection of qualitative input on how and why young people perceive contemporary phenomena in a certain way.

The survey for **YOUNG PEOPLE** consisted of 20 open-ended and closed-ended questions, translated in the partners' national languages, as following:

Demographic and Contextual Information

1. Age and gender
2. What is your main daily occupation?
3. What do you like to do in your spare time?
4. What are your dreams?
5. What are your concerns?

Inclusion and belonging

6. How diverse do you consider the city you live in (in terms of: culture, ethnicity, language, social background, religion)?
7. Do you think that the institutions (municipalities, schools, national government, European institutions) do enough to guarantee equity and respect for diversity?
8. Do you have any relevant relationship with one or more institutions? If yes, can you briefly describe it?)
9. How much do you think young people's voices are heard by institutions in decision-making processes?
10. Who do you feel hears the youngsters' voice the most?

Getting informed and participating

11. What does it mean for you to participate?
12. In what way do you get informed?
13. How do you rate the quality of the information you have access to?
14. In what ways do you participate/activate?
15. If you actively participate in movements, associations, groups, or political parties, which kind and which topic you address/focus on?

TOPICS

16. What topics do you think are the most important to address?

Environment (climate change, resource management, biodiversity…)

Society (inclusion, social well-being, culture…)

Human Rights (justice, peace, international cooperation)

Security (crimes, borders, radicalization)

Economy (equity, labour market, development…)

Technology (AI and automation, social media, digital infrastructures…)

17. Do you think that your actions can contribute to change?
18. How supported do you feel in the activities you do?
19. Who do you get support from?

Tell us more about it!

20. In addition to the topics, you usually focus on, please indicate other subjects or areas of interest in which you would like to be involved

The survey for **YOUTH WORKERS** consisted of 12 open-ended and closed-ended questions, translated in the partners' national languages, as following:

Demographic and Contextual Information

1. Age and gender
2. What is your nationality and/or cultural background?
3. What is your highest level of education?
4. Where are you currently working? What is your professional position and what are your main tasks?

Youth participation

5. When thinking of "youth participation", what words come to your mind? Name max 3, separated by a comma.
6. In your experience, what makes youth participation important?
7. Did you have any training in the past 12 months on the topic of youth participation? If YES, please give us more information about the training(s): length, topic, focus, methodology, provider…

8. If you had to take a training on “youth participation” in the next months, what would you like it to focus upon?

9. Did you implement activities to foster participation in your daily activity with young people? 10b) If YES, please give us more information about the activity: which ones, how do they go, what are the impacts, …

Topics

10. How do you evaluate/self-assess your level of knowledge regarding the following topic?

Anti-Rumours

Future Thinking

Communication and campaigning

Advocacy

Engagement of young people

11. Are young people involved / do they participate in the managing or implementation of activities in your organization? If YES in which activities? How is their engagement fostered and supported? What are the effects on the young people themselves, on their peers, on the educators, on the community?

12. What would young people need in order to participate more?

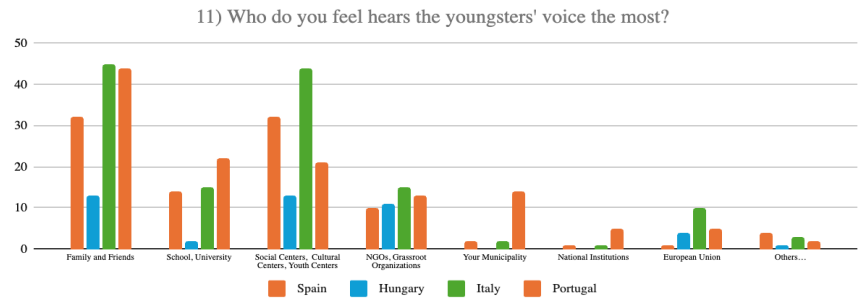
NUMBERS:

We collected a total of **312** surveys (190 from Young People & 122 from Youth Workers), distributed as follows:

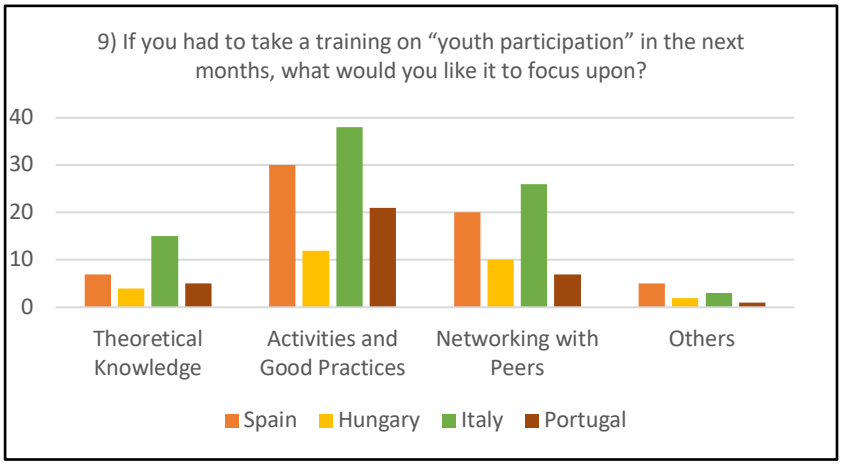
COUNTRY	**YOUTH WORKERS**	**YOUNG PEOPLE**
ITALY	48 (28 F, 19 M, 1 Prefer Not to Say)	68 (32 F, 36 M)
SPAIN	37 (22 F, 15 M)	52 (33 F, 16 M, 3 Non-Binary)
PORTUGAL	24 (14 F, 10 M)	52 (32 F, 20 M)
HUNGARY	13 (8 F, 5 M)	18 (10 F, 7 M, 1 Non-Binary)

Regarding the surveys dedicated to the **young people**, one of the most interesting findings was to see how much the young people find the city in which they live diverse: perceptions of urban diversity differ markedly across the four countries, with Spain reporting the most positive views and Hungary the lowest. Italy and Portugal show more balanced, moderate perceptions shaped by local and neighbourhood-level contexts. These findings highlight how national socio-cultural and political environments influence young people's views on diversity.

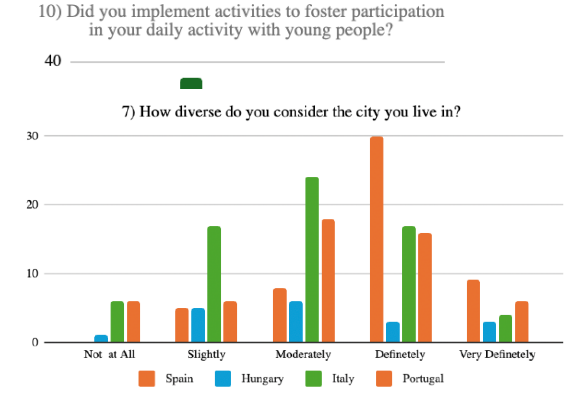
Another key finding highlights the extent to which young people feel heard by institutions, particularly those closest to them—such as families, social centres, and grassroots organisations. In contrast, more distant institutions, especially national and local governments, are perceived as less attentive to their voices. Across the four countries, informal networks and community-based spaces are consistently viewed as more responsive, with Italy and Hungary showing the strongest reliance on these. Notably, the European Union is seen as more attuned to young people's needs than national bodies, underscoring its potential to play a unifying and supportive role in enhancing youth participation.



In the survey for **youth workers**, we noticed how much they want to increase their knowledge on possible activities and good practices, if they had to take a training in “youth participation”.



We also found that a significant majority of youth workers already implement activities aimed at fostering youth participation in their daily practice. This underscores a shared professional commitment to youth engagement across Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Hungary. While participation is widely promoted, the intensity and consistency of these efforts vary by country, shaped by local contexts. Hungary demonstrates the strongest level of engagement, whereas Portugal presents a more mixed picture.



ORGANIZATION AND FACILITATION OF ONLINE FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS

ICEI, as leader of the WP2, shared a set of **Guidelines** with partners to provide detailed information on how to organise and facilitate online focus groups and interviews, and reach the results useful for the competition of the WP2 and, consequently, plan the following Working Packages.

As first step, thanks to the work of the researcher involved in the activity, ICEI provided each partners AI-generate images based on the answers given by young people in survey's questions about dreams and concerns. The aim of these images was to facilitate the start of the focus groups with visual contents, but also to deepen what emerged from the quantitative part of the analysis. The images were customized for each country but clustered in similar macro-groups.

Concerns: future and uncertainties, health and personal wellbeing, relationships and social expectations, society and global issues, work and study.

Dreams: career development and professional growth, lifestyles and specific desires, personal growth and happiness, relationships and family, wealth and economic safety.

NUMBERS:

A total of **122** people, including young people and youth workers, participated in the focus groups and interviews, distributed as follows.

This numbers are part of this WP.

COUNTRY	**PARTICIPANTS (YOUNG PEOPLE AND YOUTH WORKERS)**
ITALY	30 (19 F, 11 M)
SPAIN	37 (28 F, 9 M)
PORTUGAL	27 (19 F, 8 M)
HUNGARY	28 (20 F, 8 M)

ONLINE FOCUS GROUPS:

Each online Focus Group lasted approximately 1h30/2h to allow everyone to express their thoughts while covering a wide range of topics. They covered the same sections of the survey, and a draft flow was suggested as follow:

Section 1 – Desires and Concerns | 10 - 15 min
Each country went over the most recurring desires and concerns that emerged in the surveys. Intra provided AI-generated images by entering these desires/concerns as prompts, and the initial activity, using visual tools, also acted as an icebreaker for the subsequent discussion.

Question: "These images were generated by the AI from the answers we collected in the surveys. What do you think they represent? Do/Can you relate to these desires/concerns?"

Based on the answers given by the participants, a follow-up question was proposed.

Section 2 – Topics | 30 - 45 min
This part of the discussion represented the core of the focus group, and therefore, more time was devoted to it. The aim was to gather insights on how young people perceived the main issues and which ones they considered most important to address.

The discussion included four questions:

- A question on the top-rated topic locally
- A question on the least-rated topic locally
- A question on the top-rated topic globally
- A question on the least-rated topic globally

Country	Top-rated locally	Least rated locally
Italy	Society (inclusion, social well-being, culture…)	Environment (climate change, resource management, biodiversity…)
Spain	Human Rights (justice, peace, international cooperation)	Technology (AI and automation, social media, digital infrastructures…)
Portugal	Human Rights (justice, peace, international cooperation)	Environment (climate change, resource management, biodiversity…)
Hungary	Education (accessibility, civic education, education innovation…) Security (crimes, borders, radicalization)	Environment (climate change, resource management, biodiversity…) Technology (AI and automation, social media, digital infrastructures…)

Top-rated globally	Least rated globally
Education Human Rights	Environment Technology

Sample of questions discussed were the following:

- What are the barriers to fulfilling your dreams?
- Why are you worried about your mental health?
- How does the non-fulfilment of human rights affect your daily life?
- Why do you think that technology seems to be the least important topic among young people?
- If we want to make a plan for youth participation and share it with public institutions, what response would we get back from them?
- What has been your experience with civic or political participation, and what motivated you to join this conversation?
- What do you make of the fact that many young people say they will emigrate after graduation?
- Do you believe education is truly accessible to everyone today?
- Do you feel empowered to tackle climate change as young people?
- What prejudices have you heard about people coming from another country?
- What should be done so that everyone is treated equally?

Section 3 – Inclusion and Belonging | 15 - 30 min

The third part focused on the relationship with institutions, how they were perceived, and what young people expected from them.

Question: “Imagine you wanted to organize [bottom-up activities] in your local context, what kind of support could/would you have received from the institution?”

Section 4 – Getting Informed and Participating | 15 – 30 min

This section focused on young people's perceptions of disinformation and fake news, especially online.

First question: "What were your experiences or thoughts about the way information was shared and communicated online?"

Follow-up question: "Imagine you could have created a new social network specializing in the dissemination of news, how would you have liked it to be organized in terms of information quality?"

EXAMPLES OF ONLINE INTERVIEWS:

- What is your role and what are your main responsibilities/tasks?
- Can you describe the young people you work with on a daily basis (age, background, family history...)?
- What do you think when we talk about youth participation?
- What do you think stimulates and hinders youth participation?
- If you think specifically about the young people you work with, does what you have said still apply?
- What can or should adults do to support young people in participatory processes? What do you think your role/contribution is as a youth worker?
- As a youth worker, what do you think are the biggest fears/dreams you perceive in the young people you work with?

These are some of the main findings of the **Report of the Analysis (D2.2):**

- Disconnect between young people and institutions, with a lack of trust and meaningful engagement opportunities. While some interact with educational institutions, other forms of engagement are limited. The data suggests a need for institutions to strengthen efforts to actively engage young people through visible, inclusive, and meaningful participation opportunities.
- Strong emphasis on education and societal issues, suggesting that young people recognise the importance of knowledge and social dynamics in shaping their future.
- Ears and concerns of young people, revealing a generation grappling with uncertainty, social pressures, and economic difficulties.
- Young people's trust in social media and the internet as information sources, emphasizing the need for improved critical assessment skills.
- Participation is viewed as an active process involving personal commitment and expression, rather than passive support.
- Sense of exclusion from decision-making processes and lack trust in institutions, particularly at the national and local levels.
- Varying degrees of belief in youth agency across Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Hungary. Portugal exhibits high optimism and strong support, suggesting effective youth engagement strategies. Conversely, Hungary shows lower optimism and support, indicating a need for targeted interventions to strengthen youth support systems.
- Participation is valued for fostering understanding, engagement, and critical thinking among young people. It is linked to education, belonging, and responsibility, promoting diversity and upholding rights.
- It is crucial to provide clear opportunities, safe spaces, and institutional support to encourage and sustain youth involvement. Additionally, education, mentorship, and role models play a vital role in guiding and motivating young people to actively participate in their communities.
- Across Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Hungary, youth participation initiatives focus on educational programs, workshops, and collaborative projects.
- During the focus groups, young people discussed racial discrimination, immigration, and societal stereotypes. They proposed inclusive activities like cultural festivals and sports days to foster understanding and combat discrimination.
- Young people need networks and safe spaces to participate. Motivations for participation include the desire for change, belonging, social interaction, and being heard.
- Young people express concerns about mental health, safety, and the future, highlighting the need for greater stability and support. They advocate for accessible mental health resources and supportive relationships to navigate stress.

- Youth workers observe a dual reality in young people's lives, marked by high pressure and anxiety alongside hopeful aspirations. Education is seen as both an opportunity and a burden, while economic insecurity and social inclusion are pressing concerns. Environmental issues, though important, are secondary priorities, overshadowed by immediate life challenges.

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).