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 (ICEI)
PIC number:	932287177

EVENT DESCRIPTION			
Event number:	D21.1 (WP21)		
Event name:	Policy Lab with decision makers in Italy		
Type:	Event		
In situ/online:	In situ		
Location:	Montesilvano, Italy		
Date(s):	25 – 26 May 2026		
Website(s) (if any):	https://icei.it/en/progetti/epic_idea/		
Participants			
Female:	17		
Male:	13		
Non-binary:	0		
From country 1 Italy:	30		
Total number of participants:	30	From total number of countries:	1

Description

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

INTRODUCTION

The Policy Lab represented an important step in the process of strengthening the role of young activists as active contributors to local policy-making processes. Building on the experiences, reflections, and proposals developed during the previous Youth Camp, and in particular during the **"The City of the Future" Future Thinking Lab**, the Policy Lab aimed at bringing young people's voices into an institutional dimension, creating a space for dialogue and collaboration with local authorities.

The objective of the Policy Lab was to build bridges between young citizens, municipalities, and organisations working in the youth field, supporting the transformation of young people's experiences and needs into concrete policy proposals. Rather than positioning young people only as beneficiaries of public policies, the activity

promoted their role as key actors in identifying challenges, proposing solutions, and contributing to the design of more inclusive and participatory cities.

The Policy Lab involved young activists and youth workers, together with representatives from the six municipalities participating in the project. It represented a moment of structured dialogue aimed at addressing the root causes of the needs identified during the previous phases of the project and exploring possible administrative responses.

The methodology adopted was based on co-creation and mutual exchange: young people brought their lived experiences, future visions, and proposals, while municipal representatives contributed with their knowledge of institutional tools, resources, and constraints. The aim was to identify shared and feasible solutions, capable of combining young people's aspirations with the possibilities and responsibilities of local administrations.

CONTENTS

Activity 1: From Youth Visions to Policy Challenges

The first part of the Policy Lab was dedicated to preparing municipal representatives for the dialogue with young participants. The session was based on the outputs produced during the **"The City of the Future" workshop** held in the Youth Camp, where young people had identified urban challenges, imagined desirable futures for 2036, and explored possible pathways for change.

During the Future Thinking Lab, young participants had worked on a variety of topics connected to urban life, including mobility, arts and culture, sport, social gathering, education, political participation, environment, work and opportunities, housing, mental health, accessibility, and intercultural relations. Starting from these reflections, municipal representatives were invited to reinterpret the issues identified by young people as policy questions and explore possible institutional responses.

The session was inspired by the case study of **MurArte in Turin** (https://www.torinotoday.it/video/murarte-Torino-1999-2019.html), presented as an example of how a youth-led practice initially perceived as an urban challenge can evolve into a structured public policy. The case highlighted the role of administrations in recognising the collective needs behind emerging phenomena and transforming them into concrete instruments, rules, spaces, and forms of support.

Through this approach, participants reflected on the transition from a perceived "problem" to a possible policy response, exploring:

- what political question was contained within the issue identified by young people;
- which municipal tools or policies could potentially respond to the challenge;
- which existing resources and experiences could be activated;
- which constraints needed to be acknowledged;
- which actors and organisations should be involved;
- what first realistic steps could be taken.

Working in small groups, municipal representatives analysed the outputs of the young participants and developed initial hypotheses for possible responses. The objective was not to define final solutions, but to create the basis for a constructive exchange with young people.

The main outputs produced during this phase included:

- a reformulated version of the youth-identified challenge as a policy question;
- a first hypothesis of institutional response;
- an overview of available resources and existing constraints;
- possible administrative tools or mechanisms;
- an initial realistic step towards implementation.

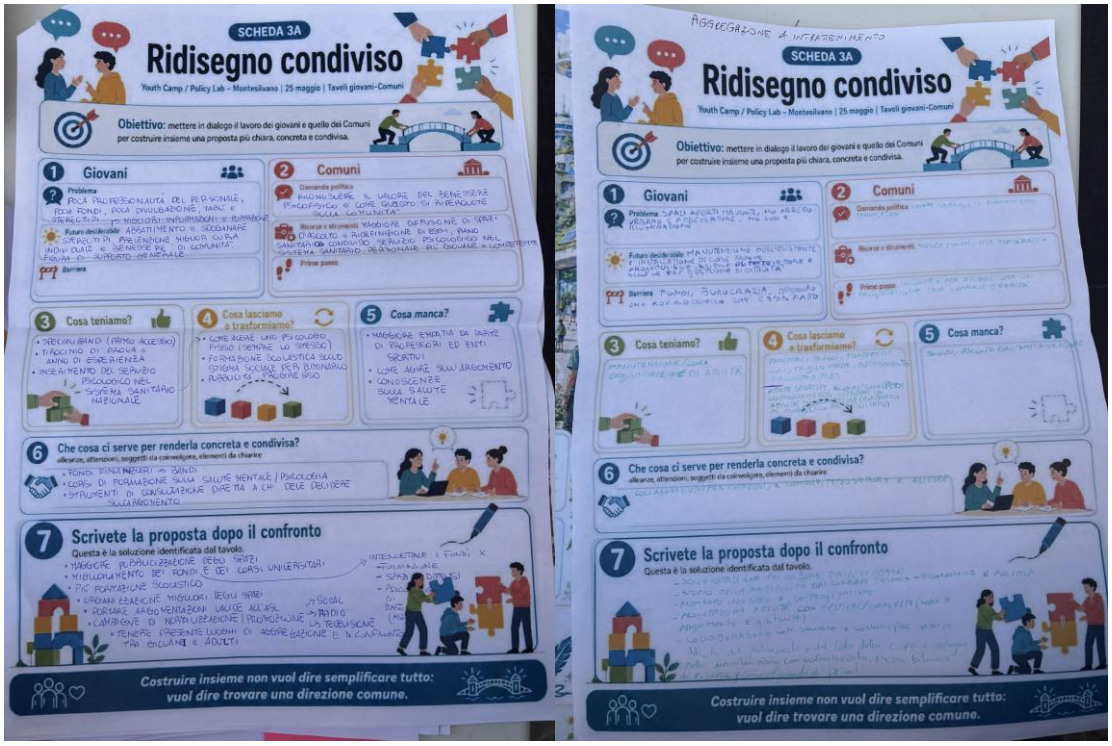


Figure - Examples of materials and group activities

Activity 2: Co-designing Shared Solutions

The second phase of the Policy Lab brought together young participants and municipal representatives in mixed working groups. The methodology was based on the principle that dialogue should not follow a top-down model in which young people simply present requests and institutions evaluate them. Instead, the activity created a space where two different forms of knowledge could meet: young people's experiences and visions, and municipalities' understanding of administrative processes and possibilities.

Each table (Work & Opportunities – Arts & Culture – Social Gathering & Entertainment – Political Participation – Sport – Mental Health & Well-being) worked starting from two complementary perspectives:

- the problems, desired futures, and barriers identified by young people during the Future Thinking process;
- the first possible responses and institutional considerations developed by municipal representatives during the morning session.

The objective was to move from a general aspiration towards a shared and feasible proposal, taking into account both the needs expressed by young people and the practical conditions required for implementation.

Each group followed a structured pathway, reflecting on:

- what problem emerged from the young people's work;
- what desirable future had been imagined for 2036;
- which barriers needed to be overcome;
- what response had been proposed by municipalities;
- what elements needed to be improved, integrated, or made more concrete;
- what shared solution could emerge;
- what first step could realistically be taken.

The outputs produced by each table included:

- a possible local solution;
- the institutional tools or mechanisms required to implement it;
- the role of municipalities;

- the role of young people;
- the role of civil society organisations;
- a first action to be taken within 30 days;
- open questions or issues requiring further discussion.

The proposals emerging from the working groups were then collected and synthesised into the first draft of the **"Manifesto for Young, Inclusive and Participatory Cities"**, a document summarising the shared commitments and priorities identified throughout the process.

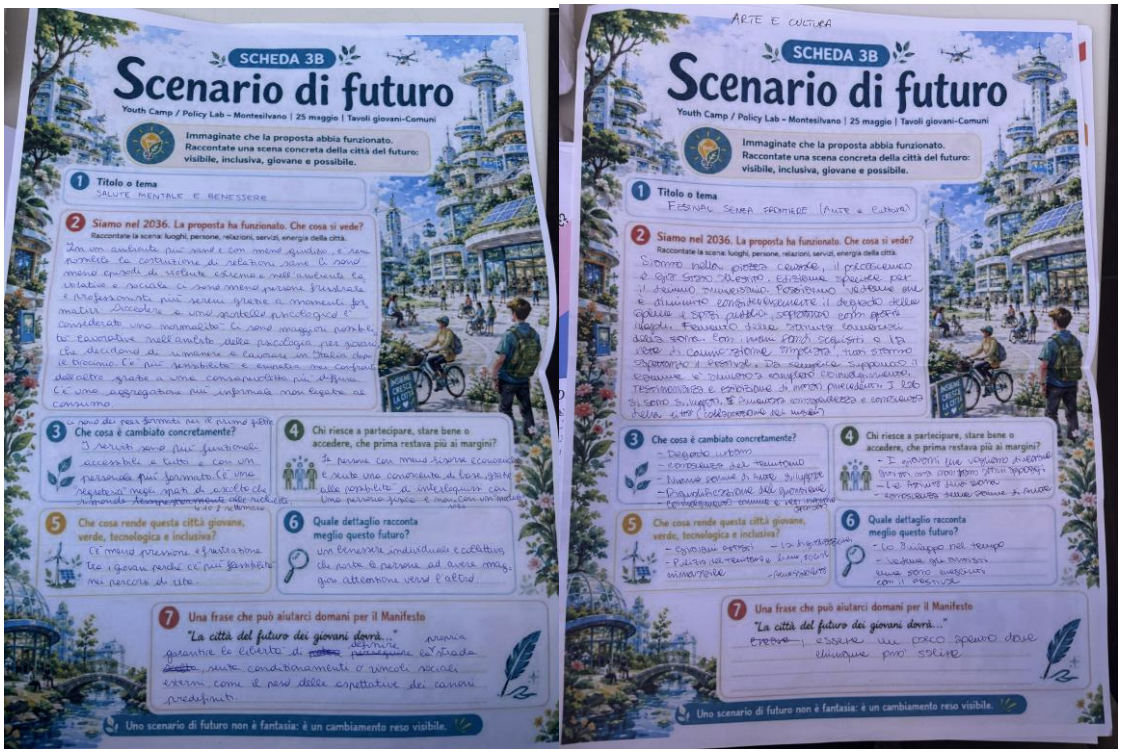


Figure - Examples of materials and group activities

Activity 3: Structured Dialogue in the Municipal Council Hall

The final moment of the Policy Lab took place on 26 May in the Municipal Council Hall of Montesilvano and represented the highest level of institutional dialogue of the Youth Camp.

During this session, the solutions developed in the mixed working groups were presented to the wider group of participants, including young people, municipalities, youth workers, and project partners. The objective was not simply to present the results, but to collectively validate and further refine the proposals.

Each group presented:

- the challenge identified by young people;
- the desirable future envisioned;
- the proposed solution;
- the first step towards implementation.

Following each presentation, participants engaged in a feedback process aimed at assessing whether the proposals effectively responded to the identified needs, whether they were sufficiently concrete, which actors should be involved, and what conditions were necessary to make them achievable.

The final step consisted of transforming the solutions into short and powerful statements forming the basis of the **Manifesto of the City of the Future, Futuria**. Working groups reformulated their proposals into commitments and elaborated a preamble.

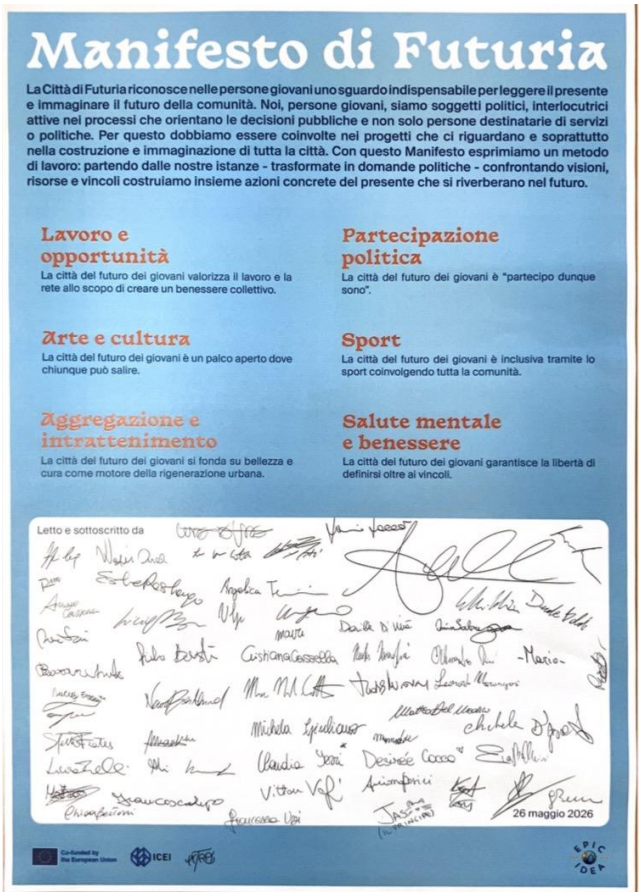
The final outcome of the activity was therefore a first draft of the **Manifesto**, developed collectively by young people and institutions, signed by each participant, and representing a concrete bridge between youth participation and public policy development:

Manifesto of Futuria

The City of Futuria recognises young people's perspectives as an essential lens through which to understand the present and imagine the future of the community. We, as young people, are political actors and active participants in the processes that shape public decisions, not merely recipients of services or policies. For this reason, we must be involved in the projects that affect us and, above all, in the construction and imagination of the city as a whole.

Through this Manifesto, we express a working method: starting from our needs and demands — transformed into policy questions — and by bringing together different visions, resources, and constraints, we collectively build concrete actions for the present that can generate impacts and resonate into the future.

<u>Work and opportunities:</u>
The city of the future for young people values work and networks as tools to create collective well-being.
<u>Arts and culture:</u>
The city of the future for young people is an open stage where everyone can step onto it.
<u>Social gathering and entertainment:</u>
The city of the future for young people is built on beauty and care as drivers of urban regeneration.
<u>Political participation:</u>
The city of the future for young people is "I participate, therefore I am."
<u>Sport:</u>
The city of the future for young people is inclusive through sport, involving the whole community.
<u>Mental health and well-being:</u>
The city of the future for young people guarantees the freedom to define oneself beyond constraints.



EVALUATION

Overall feedback from the Mentimeter shows a good level of satisfaction among participants, highlighting the young participants' strong passion for active civic engagement and meaningful institutional impact. While the overall evaluation for the Policy Lab received moderate scores, the open-ended responses underscored a deeply positive ambition among participants to see their ideas translated into concrete local action. Rather than disinterest, the feedback reflected high expectations for authentic democratic dialogue, with young people expressing a clear desire to move beyond sporadic or symbolic discussions toward genuine, long-term collaboration with decision-makers, including through future meetings to be held in their respective local contexts. Participants offered valuable constructive suggestions to enhance future editions, such as refining the methodology for manifesto co-creation, diversifying group dynamics, and establishing clearer follow-up mechanisms to track the outcomes of their proposals. Overall, these activities successfully demonstrated the youth's enthusiasm for civic leadership and provided key insights on how to build even more effective, empowering, and action-oriented channels of dialogue between young citizens and local institutions.

CLOSING REMARKS

The Policy Lab represented a crucial step in consolidating the role of young people as active actors in democratic processes and local decision-making. By connecting the reflections developed during the Youth Camp with direct dialogue with municipalities, the activity demonstrated how participatory methodologies can support the transition from youth experiences and demands towards concrete policy proposals.

The process allowed young participants to strengthen their advocacy skills, better understand institutional mechanisms, and experience direct interaction with decision-makers. At the same time, municipal representatives had the opportunity to engage with young people's perspectives, challenges, and expectations, gaining insights useful for the development of more inclusive and youth-oriented policies.

The methodology was positively evaluated by participants, youth workers, and institutional representatives, who highlighted the value of creating spaces where different actors can collaborate on equal terms. The Policy Lab therefore represented not only a final moment of exchange, but also a starting point for future cooperation between young citizens, municipalities, and organisations committed to building more inclusive and participatory communities.

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