

Understanding Europe Participation Formats 2022

Reports and instructions for five
different participation formats with
students from Armenia, Austria,
Germany, Romania and Portugal.

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Participation Format Austria

Ihr redet endlich mit und wir drehen eure Stimme lauter...

(eng.: You can finally participate and we increase the volume of your voices...)



Participation Format Austria

IHR REDET ENDLICH MIT UND WIR DREHEN EURE STIMME LAUTER...

(eng.: You can finally participate and we increase the volume of your voices...)

Our Participation Format was targeted at pupils attending vocational schools all over Austria, a target group we found to have limited access to political education as part of their formal education. Based on close examination of corresponding compulsory school curricula, especially when it comes to political and EU-related topics, vocational schools have comparatively less time dedicated to political education to cover topics besides vocational subjects due to their intensified focus on

technical specialisations. Therefore, we set out to specifically address the issue of a potential lack of political education among our target audience.

Setting/Material

conference room equipped with a technical set-up including a projector, speakers, and microphones

tables and chairs for pupils to take a seat

additional room to set up coffee breaks and lunch

Time

5-hour discussion event

Preparations

A **team** consisting of **five Trainers** and a **Coordinator** overseeing the individual tasks.

Preparations were kicked off right after the Kick-Off-Workshop in Brussels (April) and continued throughout the term in regular intervals, on average once a week. Work was resumed after the summer holidays and was intensified during the last two weeks before the event (November).

Group Size

Approximately **30 participants** on site

Budget

min. 1500€, max. 2000€

Learning Goals

- commitment, perseverance
- impact, motivation

Why is the Participation Format necessary? What does it entail?

In our case, the Participation Format initiative gave us a **framework** within which we could reflect on our current impact and **identify areas** in which we can further **intensify our efforts** to engage pupils in active citizenship.

Despite our project ambitions of promoting outreach and inclusion, we have to face the truth that some schools are easier to reach out to than others, be it because of more costly and longer train rides, for example.

However, the Participation Format enabled us to channel our efforts towards a concrete and feasible project which, with its funds and support structures, allowed us to **go the extra mile** to reach out to a new target audience.

The Preparation Phase

The first steps towards preparing the Participation Format involved drafting e-mail invitations and a corresponding flyer to attach. More specifically, we prepared one e-mail draft each for both *on-site* and *digital* participation targeted at school secretaries, heads of school, and teachers, and *another draft* tailored to potential guest speakers. The former included all the organisational details as to when/where/how the format was designed to take place, with the latter emphasising the impact of the event. The *flyer* served as a compact summary of the key facts as a more palpable overview of the project outline. All materials were double-checked and proofread before the first e-mails were sent out to schools.

Alongside the drafting process, some team members were tasked with looking up schools all over Austria which fit our target criteria, noting down contact details and allocating the schools to individual trainers who would then be responsible for contacting the respective schools. In parallel we worked on two separate registration forms, one for *teachers*, and one for *pupils*, which included questions aiming to find out more about the pupils' interests. Throughout the school acquisition, however, we were faced with a lack of interest and willingness to participate, which was mostly due to the fact that we were reaching out to a new target group, a target group with which we had not yet formed very solid school cooperations. As a lesson-learned, our main takeaway was that we identified an apparent lack of visibility within this target group which we would like to specifically address by sharing our project outcome alongside invitations to book regular courses with us. Given that we arranged for an editor to attend our event and take photo and video footage throughout the day, we now have a professional promotion video which we can send to interested partner schools in the future. Special thanks go to *Europe Direct* in Upper Austria which featured us in their *newsletters* to help us promote our project.

Within the team, a buddy system was developed in which every task manager, the trainer/organiser who held the main responsibility for the task, was assisted by a buddy, another trainer who was supposed to keep track of the preparatory steps in case an organiser would have had to drop out due to unforeseen circumstances. To introduce the trainers to the buddy system a hybrid event was held for which the coordinator had prepared a worksheet explaining and describing the respective tasks. In the buddy groups the trainers had then 45 minutes each to start working on their allocated tasks in a rotating fashion. However, despite the smaller teams, a great deal of work and responsibility still rested with the coordinator who remained the main contact person throughout the preparations. An anonymised and translated version of the said task allocation and distribution can be *accessed* digitally.

The Methodology

Methodologically, when referring to the discussion event itself, the discussion followed a very open format despite its tight schedule. Each speaker had a 30-minute-long allocated speaking time and the organising team on site was very strict with time keeping. However, within the 30 minutes we asked the speakers to reserve enough time for student questions which could literally address any topic within the overarching theme. Moderation on parts of the organising team was kept to a minimum apart from a brief introduction and warm welcome by the respective organiser who was each responsible for an allocated guest speaker.

The Event Itself

The event itself already started on the day before when two organisers went to the venue to meet with a teacher. A tech correspondent of the school and the student who would help us on the day of the event were present as well. Additionally, also the student representative was there to help us with any queries or requests. We prepared the venue by arranging tables and chairs as planned, checked if audio and video were working properly, and went through the schedule once more. Special thanks go to the technical experts provided by the school without whom it would have been much more difficult and time-consuming to prepare for the event.

09:00 - 09:15	Registration
09:15 - 09:30	Welcome and Agenda
09:30 - 10:00	Preparation in smaller groups (In preparation for the discussion sessions)
10:00 - 10:30	Topic 1 Participation in the European context - <i>Paul Rübiger (fMEP)</i>
10:30 - 11:00	Topic 2 Energy transition - <i>Energiewende Linz</i>
11:00 - 11:30	Topic 3 Volunteering & Youth engagement - Youth organisation <i>European Youth Parliament Ireland</i>
11:30 - 11:50	Coffee Break
12:00 - 12:45	Topic 4 Inclusion in journalism - <i>Redaktion andererseits</i>
12:45 - 13:15	Topic 5 Youth representation - <i>Bundesjugendvertretung BJV</i>
13:30 - 14:00	Topic 6 Inside Politics - <i>Mag. Czernohorszky</i>
14:00 - ...	Lunch and Socialising (open-end)

As the day of the event had arrived, four organisers gathered in person, checked once again if the technology was still working as planned and then went over the responsibilities and assignments. In the same course we also connected to our coordinator, and another organiser and trainer, who both joined the event online. Everything was ready when the students arrived on time. For the group work, we split the students into groups and every organiser had about 30 minutes to help pupils prepare questions and discuss inputs to a certain expert with their group. This proved to be very helpful later on as it helped to break the silence before the first question to be asked at the beginning of the Q&A slots.

We started with Paul Rübiger, a former Member of the European Parliament, who gave a brief introduction to our topic, *Participation*, why it became more and more important for him in his political career and why it is so important in general. Afterwards the students got to ask interesting questions. While our first guest slot was coming to an end, the organiser who was responsible for the following expert was already preparing all the necessary steps and made sure the arrival was uncomplicated and convenient for our guests. Throughout the day, this went smoothly and without problems and we managed to stick to the timetable quite well, with only a few adaptations needed for the sake of flexibility.

In hindsight, what could be concluded was that the number of experts we had aimed for need not even have been that high for a setting such as our Participation Format, at least not for time frame that was available to us. Since there were always still many questions left, an idea would be to invite a smaller number of experts but allocate longer slot to each Q&A section. Although we had communicated to all our experts that the focus should have been on the Q&A, almost all of our guest speakers started off with a not exactly short presentation or introduction of themselves and their organisations. Although an introduction was helpful, some speakers spent too much time on introductions which cut the remaining time to ask questions a little bit too short at times. All in all, however, the event was a huge success. Discussions continued throughout the coffee break and after the event had officially ended, when social media contacts were exchanged and almost every student was engaged discussions and asking questions.

As mentioned before, it has proven to be absolutely necessary to have someone external being responsible for technical support as well as to have a teacher with whom we could correspond and who supervised the event on behalf of the school, for which we were hugely thankful. As an organising team, in terms of running the event, we worked together really well, which proved vital for all logistics and organisational details. Having a slice of cake and a coffee as well as a tasty meal for lunch also turned out to be a 'mood lightener' among the young participants.



Pupils listening attentively to the guest speaker (Luca Peinsold)



Pupils engaging in the discussions (Luca Peinsold)



Organiser facilitating group work in preparation for the talks (Luca Peinsold)



Organisers at work managing the discussion event (Luca Peinsold)

The Impact

Our project set out to provide young pupils with a **platform** to make their voices heard to encourage active citizenship and youth engagement. For young people to feel empowered and show initiative, adolescents need to feel listened to. With our Participation Format we therefore hoped to show our participants that their **opinions matter**.

Furthermore, with our wide bandwidth of topics on our discussion agenda we aimed to point out how different issues all **link together**. While the topic of participation spanned through all our programme, the discussions all had related subtopics tailored to the overarching motto, *Participation*. Even though the long-term impact is hard to assess for a one-time event we definitely set a **positive example** in which we could not only act as **role models** for young pupils due to the organisers' similarity in age, but also **introduce schools** to the concept of **peer-to-peer education**. Even if a one-time event might not ignite the fire, it might at least **spark an interest** in current socio-political issues.

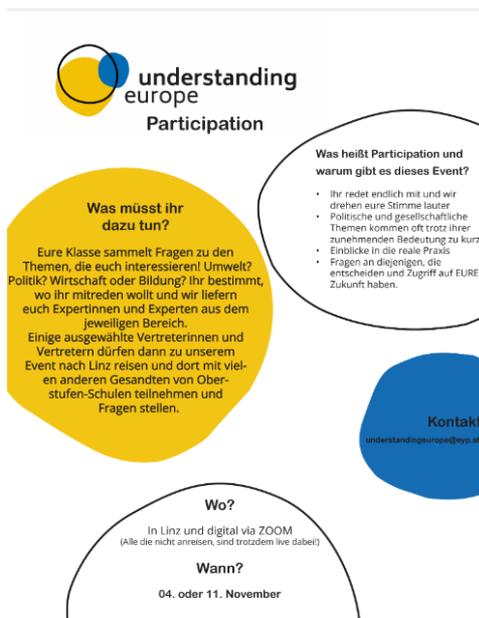
With regards to our **external guests**, the speakers were offered a **platform** to reach out to the younger generation. Most of our speakers advocate for causes themselves, be it through non-governmental efforts towards clean energy transitions or the representation of people with disabilities in journalism. By creating a dialogue with young people, our guest speakers could **raise awareness** about their unique causes among a young and promising audience.

Moreover, through this event we, as an **organisation** and team, could also gain a better understanding of what currently matters to pupils. Getting a more in-depth **insight into pupils' interests** based on the questions that were being raised during the discussions can help us decide which course formats we would like to adopt for our school visits. Hence, such formats can help us develop our organisation to keep up with the changing needs and interests of pupils and to better tailor our offers.

Materials developed

- [E-Mail-Vorlage_vor Ort](#)

- [E-Mail-Vorlage_digital](#)
- [E-Mail-Vorlage_Expert*innen](#)
- [Flyer](#)
- [Newsletter features](#)
- [E-Mail-Vorlage_Registrierung](#)
- [Registrierungsformular_Lehrer*innen](#)
- [Registrierungsformular_Schüler*innen](#)
- [Programm_Endversion_German \(word\)](#)
- [Programm_Endversion_German \(pdf\)](#)
- [Programme_Final Version_English \(word\)](#)
- [Programme_Final Version_English \(pdf\)](#)
- [Group Work Work Sheet_German \(word\)](#)
- [Group Work Instructions_German \(pdf\)](#)
- [Task Division Buddy System_English](#)
- [Photo folder](#) (photos taken by Luca Peinsold)



understanding europe
Participation

Was müsst ihr dazu tun?
Eure Klasse sammelt Fragen zu den Themen, die euch interessieren! Umwelt? Politik? Wirtschaft oder Bildung? Ihr bestimmt, wo ihr mitreden wollt und wir liefern euch Expertinnen und Experten aus dem jeweiligen Bereich. Einige ausgewählte Vertreterinnen und Vertreter dürfen dann zu unserem Event nach Linz reisen und dort mit vielen anderen Gesandten von Oberstufen-Schulen teilnehmen und Fragen stellen.

Was heißt Participation und warum gibt es dieses Event?

- Ihr redet endlich mit und wir drehen eure Stimme lauter
- Politische und gesellschaftliche Themen kommen oft trotz ihrer zunehmenden Bedeutung zu kurz
- Einblicke in die reale Praxis
- Fragen an diejenigen, die entscheiden und Zugriff auf EURE Zukunft haben.

Kontakt
understandingeurope@yyp.at

Wo?
In Linz und digital via ZOOM
(Alle die nicht anreisen, sind trotzdem live dabei)

Wann?
04. oder 11. November

Registrierung Participation Format

Participation - Ihr redet mit, entscheidet und wir drehen eure Stimme lauter.

Beim diesjährigen Diskussionsereignis werdet Ihr die Möglichkeit haben, brennende Fragen an diejenigen zu stellen, die entscheiden und Zugriff auf EURE Zukunft haben. Daher möchten wir Euch mitgestalten lassen, welche Themen die Diskussionsveranstaltung mit den geladenen Expertinnen und Experten bestimmen sollen. An wen möchtet Ihr Eure Fragen richten? Welche Themen interessieren Euch?

Lasst es uns wissen. Wir freuen uns darüber, dass Ihr bei unserem Event mitmachen werdet!

Wie hast Du vom Participation Format erfahren?

Short-answer text

Wie heißt Du?

Short-answer text

Wie lautet Deine E-Mail Adresse?

Short-answer text

Participation Format Germany

BEcome ACTIVE



Participation Format Germany

BECOME ACTIVE

What is the relationship between the environment and racism? A five-day long workshop dealt with this question. The students learned about the central concepts behind these phenomena. This included a workshop with an environmental activist, a visit to a museum and the question of who is involved with the exhibits presented in the exhibitions. The students did not only reflect their own behavior and consumption, but became active themselves by working on projects on how they can have a positive impact in their neighborhood. The workshop was planned by Vanessa Schmidt and Michel Wicke.

Setting/Material

The aim of this workshop was to use as little resources as possible and to use and recycle the materials available. Most of the workshops took place in the classroom of a high school in Berlin and in their green schoolyard.

Time

The workshop went on for five days and ran for about six school hours per day.

Preparations

We were a team consisting of two people. The planning started with a survey where we wanted to involve the students: "What topics are you interested in?" After receiving the results, we began to plan the workshop. This took about three to four hours for each day of the project.

Group Size

The school class was comprised of about 30 students, each supported by two trainers (us).

Budget

We had a budget of 2000€, which was spent mostly on material costs for the project ideas and honorarium salaries for external speakers.

Learning Goals

Encourage young people to participate in social processes and to exert an active influence.

Why is the Participation Format necessary? What does it entail?

In our work as an association, we work with pupils whom we would like to motivate to participate in democracy. We have often noticed that students like to participate in one of our workshops for more than just four hours. That's why we used this project funding to try a new approach. With a project that builds on the basic course of four hours but includes further elements of participation.

The aim of the project "become active" is to encourage young people to participate in social processes and to exert an active influence. In order to increase the self-efficacy of young people, we wanted to make the project particularly free: the young people themselves should decide which issues they want to advocate for, and we as trainers empower these ideas.

The Preparation Phase

Searching a Target Group:

We are an organisation dedicated to working with students, which made it easy to decide on students as the target group and participants for our workshop: our target group was a school class. It was considered to reach about 30 participants.

Since only one school class can be selected for the participation format, care should be taken to ensure that the learning group is appropriately represented. This means that in order to achieve the learning goal, the learning group should not be an elitist group, but should need targeted support in the process of empowerment. Due to limited resources, we chose a school where democratic structures were already in place and on which we could build (motivated teachers and students, democratic structures such as class representatives/councils). Based on this school profile, we asked three schools we already knew from previous EU-Crash-Courses and proposed our project to them.

Searching a Timeframe:

To try out a new participatory format, we wanted to try a workshop that included five days of four hours instead of the usual four hours in one day. The project is implemented as a project week (5 schooldays).

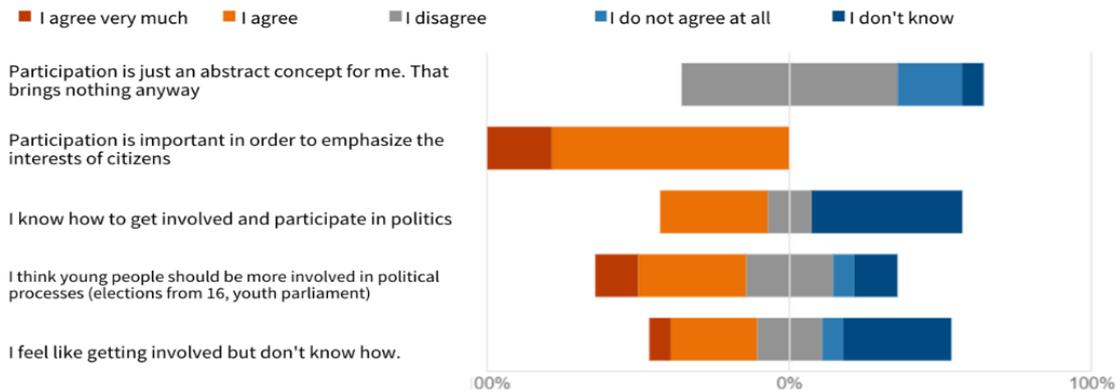
Planning the Project Week (Preparing material/preparing questionnaires):

Since this format is about participation, the students should be involved in the workshop from step one. In other words, we designed a workshop around the needs and wishes of the students. For this, it was necessary to conduct a survey with the participating students already before the format took place, which included the following questions:

1. What, is your name?
2. Interests: What is your favourite subject? What hobbies do you have?
3. Is there anything you have ever wanted to change? What bothers you? (Climate crisis, racism, sexism, discrimination, issues in school/class/your district).
4. Have you ever been (politically) involved or heard about it from acquaintances? If yes, how and for what? (e.g. collecting donations, demonstrating, visiting a member of parliament, being a member of an association/party, class representative, active in working groups)
5. If you were chancellor for a day, what political project would you initiate?
6. If I could introduce a fundamental right, it would be....
 - a. Environment: Every person has the right to live in a healthy and protected environment
 - b. Digital self-determination: Everyone has the right to digital self-determination. The exploration or manipulation of people is prohibited.

- c. Globalization: Everyone has the right to be offered only those goods and services that are produced and provided with respect for universal human rights.
- d. Artificial intelligence: Every human being has the right to have algorithms that burden him or her to be transparent, verifiable and fair. Essential decisions must be made by a human being,

7. Which statements do you agree/disagree with?



Words and topics the students wanted to cover (excerpt)

The Methodology

Design Thinking in Schools

Design thinking in political/civic education is a method to approach political problems in a solution-oriented way. Students should first consider which solutions to a particular problem are generally possible and then reflect on which methods are realistic to achieve.

Other methods can be found in the Power Point used during the workshop. For the most part, these are methods that are used in Understanding Europe in this or a similar form but have been adapted for the purposes of this workshop.

The Event Itself

After the survey was filled out by the students, the process of planning began. The basis was the four-step workshop model used in Understanding Europe, which explains participation. It was now the turn of the participants to design a workshop. Once we had identified the topics of environment and racism as the students' main interests, the phase of reading and informing ourselves about these topics began. We always notice that the issue of racism, but also the environment, is seen as important by the students. However, there were no workshops in the Understanding Europe network that cover these topics in detail at the time. Therefore, it was necessary to plan from scratch.



In a further step, the exchange with a teacher was necessary: where are the students in their learning process, is there anything to consider, are there similar projects that have been carried out that can be built on? Because this is a longer project, it is important to know more about the students, as we will be spending five days with them. Are there any problems with pupils?

On the first day, the basics of participation in democratic processes and climate change were presented and discussed. On the second day of the project, these strands were connected to the topic of colonialism and racism. In this step, we had to learn about the topic as well and find and develop appropriate didactic exercises on the topic. Because we wanted to enable an expert discussion with the students on the topic, the search for a qualified speaker began. With the help of Understanding Europe Germany, we were able to contact various organisations.

It was also decided to have an excursion day to approach the topic in a hands-on learning way with museum exhibits. This can initiate informal learning processes, strengthen personal responsibility, and induce learning from one's own willingness through experience and visualization on exhibits in the museum. For this purpose, contact was made with the Humboldt Museum in Berlin and it was agreed that the students would be given a guided tour of the exhibition "After Nature". It is dealing with the question "How are climate change, species extinction and the crisis of democracy connected?" It was an ideal way to conclude the project with theoretical and practical examples that made the students ready to become active themselves.

Being active in a practical way was the goal of the last two days. By using old and unused materials lying around at home or at school to recycle them to find a new use for them. The idea was that the students would develop and implement projects themselves without the help of the trainer. Only helping when needed. However, this step required organizing computer labs and art rooms, getting materials, etc.

The Impact

Over the two days, the students have excelled and empowered themselves. While at the beginning some did not trust themselves to become active and were not familiar with the principles of participation. In the end, the students were able to answer the question of what it means to become active, also because they had become active themselves. Being active did not only mean getting involved in the workshop, but also creating a collage on a specific topic or building an insect hotel. In the end, everyone was very involved and proud of the things they had learnt and tackled during the week. Not only did they participate in this workshop for themselves, but they were also able to give something back to the community or the school.



Insect hotel



Seed Bombs



**Signs/ Campaign
Posters**



Book exchange shelf

- An insect hotel: students independently built an insect hotel to go with the school's flower bed to protect biodiversity
- Seed Bombs: To also support biodiversity, students made seed bombs and created an informational poster where they highlighted their cause at the next school festival and acted as multipliers to inform their peers
- Book Exchange Shelf: Thanks to the initiative, there is now a bookshelf in the school's hallway with books about climate change and climate justice. The bookshelf is intended to initiate a process of sustainable use of books.

Challenges/Learnings

Communication with teachers: For a project week it is very important to have a teacher as a project partner who supports you. Since it is an open programme, you need a teacher who is open to change and supports all the students' ideas. This should be discussed in advance.

Motivation: The trainers had the problem during the project week that the students worked on the tasks at different speeds and the first ones got bored while the others still needed time-> it is good to have more tasks as a reserve. It is also necessary to do more icebreakers.

Access/choice of learning sites: During the preparation we researched which learning sites would be suitable for thematization of the topic environment, environmental racism, social justice. In the area of Berlin it is in theory no problem to get to suitable actors (nature conservation associations, activists) and institutions (museums, political institutions). In rural areas, access to many institutions might be limited.

Enough time and resources: Planning and structuring a whole project week requires a lot of resources, so plan with enough lead time and use resources/presentations from the university (ask your team for help).



Materials developed

Timetable (as pictured above and in the Power Point)

PPP

Participation Format Romania

Smart Cityzens



Participation Format Romania

“SMART CITYZENS” DEBATE, 15-16 OCTOBER 2022

The vision behind team Understanding Europe Romania’s participation format was gathering 15 like-minded young people (Romanian university students from various, multidisciplinary backgrounds and communities) to debate on ideas and solutions for better and more sustainable cities that use technology and innovation to become greener and safer for future generations.

Setting/Material

- 3 conference rooms at a hotel
- Training materials: flipchart, papers, post-its, markers
- Notebooks for participants

Time

2 days, approx. 3-4 hours of sessions each day

Preparations

We started the preparations 2 months before the event and gathered a team of 3 volunteers from UE Romania who helped us only during the event, but not during preparations for it.

Group Size

18 students, but 15 attended (however we could adapt to this number very well)

Budget

2.005 euro

Learning Goals

- Civic engagement and awareness of young people on topics like sustainability and climate change
- Finding solutions for sustainable communities
- Better understanding what sustainability is and involves

The central concept of the discussions was smart cities and what practical measures could be implemented so that we could build better communities from an environmental perspective.

The idea behind the workshop was that young participants work in teams and become a hub of smart citizens (i.e. civically engaged and aware citizens), while also interacting with experts in every debate (so that they get practical insights, knowledge and inspiration in order to be able to develop their own ideas afterwards).

Why is the Participation Format necessary? What does it entail?

This participation format is necessary because it empowers young people to firstly become more aware of the need for sustainable solutions and communities in the future and secondly, it is aimed to help them find concrete and innovative measures to achieve this goal.

This was possible because the 15 participants were split into 3 teams of 5 people and worked together to generate ideas on three dimensions of the topic:

- Political dimension - public policies on sustainability and climate awareness (the

involvement of young people in shaping better policies and initiatives for our future)

- Corporate dimension - the involvement and contribution of the private/corporate sector for climate awareness (through corporate social responsibility of companies for sustainability and environmental protection)
- NGO/Civil society dimension - what can citizens do regarding sustainability?

Each of the three teams discussed all of the three topics with three experts and stakeholders invited to attend. Together with them, they generated through dialogue and debate ideas, solutions and practical proposals for green and sustainable communities.

The Preparation Phase

The stages of the preparations were, in order:

- Finding the speakers - this was the first preparation phase (we brainstormed on possible stakeholders that might be of interest for the topic and contacted them 1 month and a half before the event in order to make the final list well in advance)
- Booking the venue - rooms and meals for the participants as well as conference rooms for the event sessions
- Preparing the content of the event + the agenda
- Launching the event on social media and advertising it for finding participants
- Closing the applications for the event and sending out information to the selected participants (the exact venue, the programme, logistical aspects, their tasks)
- Sending out information to the experts invited (discussing on the final format with them and sending the agenda)
- Preparing the materials for the sessions
- On the day of the event: preparing the rooms, the set-up and the materials

Materials that we prepared: flipchart sheets with a template/canva that the participants had to fill in during the debates with the experts.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/10PwrSW9r4qeOylc8lvqMPNf-pMh-kBs7>

The Methodology

For Day 1: we used open dialogue and debate as the main method of interaction and communication between the participants and the experts/guests. The first day was dedicated to the exchange of ideas, proposals and solutions between the students and the experts. Each expert was given some guidelines of the sessions by us, but they were recommended to adapt the debate session based on their own preferences, style and experience. Thus, the three teams were exposed to three different sessions with three different experts. At the end of the sessions they managed to come up with unique proposals by the fruitful dialogues with the three guests involved.

For Day 2: we organized a public speech session in which each team had to prepare a creative presentation (and at the same time a persuasive speech) on the proposals and solutions they found the previous day. The purpose was to 1) help the participants better understand their ideas discussed with the experts, 2) give them a chance to present them to the bigger group of participants and 3) empower them to voice their ideas and to believe that they are feasible and impactful.

Extra: besides the main sessions, we also used energisers, debriefing&feedback tools as well as a fun and memorable closing game (“what’s on your back?”).

The Event Itself

The workshop extended on two separate days and was implemented by using some of the educational tools and methodologies developed by the Understanding Europe network.

In order to achieve our purpose, the stages and steps of the workshop were:

1. Opening stage of the workshop - intro to the topic

On day 1, the workshop started first of all with an introduction of the participants to the topic of the event. The participants were explained the purpose of the workshop, what is going to happen for the next two days, the agenda of the event, the tasks they will have to fulfill and the role of the experts they are going to meet.

Afterwards, still part of the opening stage, two educational tools developed by Understanding Europe were used in order to better introduce the participants in the atmosphere and topic of the event:

- an **energizer** meant to help them get to know each other, while at the same time create a safe space of collaboration and interaction
- **“Sustainability in 4 corners”** game - an activity in which the participants had to answer two questions related to sustainability by positioning themselves in one of the corners of the room based on their response.

2. Main stage of the workshop - the debating stage

The three experts invited to the workshop were introduced to the participants. Afterwards, the 15 participants were randomly divided into three teams of five participants each. The teams that resulted were the teams in which they had to work until the end of the workshop.

Each of the three experts had one different topic of expertise that they approached with the participants, i.e. one different dimension of the issue of smart and sustainable cities:

- the political dimension: a discussion on public policies and the youth involvement on the matter, conducted by Francesca Cristea (head of Policy and Programs at Europuls organization)
- the corporate dimension: a discussion on corporate social responsibility for the environment, conducted by Adelina Dabu (member of Concordia organization and sustainability expert)
- the NGO/civil society dimension: a discussion on changes and innovation that may start from the civil society, conducted by Ciprian Stanescu (founder of Social Innovation Solutions organization)

Each team got to discuss, in turn, with each of the experts, on their own different subtopic of the main topic approached. Each expert was allocated **45 minutes** for a debate session with each of the teams, with a **15 minutes break** between the three sessions.

The purpose of the debate sessions was to ensure a context in which the young people and the experts would interact and engage through *open dialogue*, by sharing mutual insights and ideas on the issues discussed, for the purpose of generating *solutions/possible action plans*.

At the end of each session, the participants together with the expert had to map the problem and solutions they found by filling in a template on a flipchart sheet with answers to the following questions:

- **What** do I want to fix?/What is the problem/challenge?
- **How** can I fix it? (the solution/action plan for the problem)
- **Who** can I fix it with? who can help? (stakeholders involved in the process)

3. Closing stage of Day 1 - open discussion

At the end of the debate sessions, both the speakers and the participants shared impressions and conclusions on the spot about how the debates worked, what they learned and what the main ideas generated were.

4. “What’s beyond the solutions?” session - creative presentation of outcomes (Day 2)

Day 2 started with a **short energizer** and continued with a **public speaking session**, as a means for the three teams to work together again and present the outcomes generated on the previous day.

For this, each team had to choose one of the three subtopics that they discussed with the experts, which was going to be the topic for their speeches. At the same time, besides the topic, each team also assigned one member (called the leader of the team) who was going to represent the team and deliver the speech).

After deciding on the topic and the group leader, the teams were given **50 minutes prep time** to create their speeches. The participants were given a speech structure to guide and help them in drafting them.

After the prep time, the leader of each team delivered the speech in front of the large audience. Each speech was between **3 to 5 minutes**. The purpose of the speech was to motivate each team to create a

convincing presentation of the solutions/action plans for one issue related to sustainability, and to persuade the audience that those specific solutions are the most important.

After delivering each of the three speeches, the audience had to ask the speaker **questions**. For doing this, the audience played two different roles: first, they had to ask the speaker two questions by playing the role of young children that know nothing about the issue and second, they had to ask the speaker two questions by playing the role of journalists interested in informing the wider public on the issue.

5. Feedback & Wrap-up session

At the end of the day, we had an open session in which we collected feedback from each participant individually. We centralized the feedback on a flipchart sheet, on two different columns: “Learnings” + “Could be improved”.

6. What is on your back? - Final session

Each participant had a paper sheet stuck on their backs and had to move around the room to collect thoughts and feedback from the others, while also writing their own thoughts on the backs of the other participants.



More pictures here:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/1XlnUDY6VFsDAgTfuwi9xrrS5hnGJQG53>

The Impact

At the end of the sessions, through teamwork and open dialogue with the experts involved, the participants managed to propose a list of concrete steps/measures to tackle the three dimensions of the topic. Each of the experts stated that their ideas and proposals are to be taken into account and taken forward by the organizations/think-tanks they are each active in, so that they could be implemented in the future (see the scan with all the outcomes of the sessions - even though in Romanian, it's obvious that the students had a lot of proposals to put forward.

Based on the feedbacks collected from the participants through the feedback form (+see the scanned debriefing&feedback), all the participants stated that they now feel more empowered+entitled to use their ideas and to voice their concerns, more self-confident about their abilities and knowledge and more confident that the future could look brighter since their ideas could be considered and implemented.

Based on their enthusiasm and excitement, we are keen on taking their ideas and proposals further by turning them into a practical tool/project of UE Romania team and Station Europe that we are going to think about more thoroughly in the future (as previously discussed).

Materials developed

Link to agenda template:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1uP8RSfx7ONFujk7-vDiwpoPCRUFcbxel>

Link to a planning sheet that we used:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1uP8RSfx7ONFujk7-vDiwpoPCRUFcbxel>

Link to application form:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1WH1VzAVKAbVDcf2w40j6v8UrOrxAMKwWypXIB3ISiAE/edit?usp=drive_web

Link to feedback form:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1EiQFaBx2BEmSrtDJoblq1z415utX0r3ut071_BTS834/edit?usp=drive_web

Link to the document templates that we sent to the experts invited (with format guidelines):

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1-1504b4m8C0ULV2YJRWmc1AXvUFF7Y0q>

Link to pictures:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1Hji47E8ljmLGFmJlIOfPZ9h3PyC1cZ6M>

Link to IG reel/video:

https://www.instagram.com/p/CkF25M_L8lc/?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=

Participation Format Portugal

Workshop for the Future of Gender Equality



Participation Format Portugal

WORKSHOP FOR THE FUTURE OF GENDER EQUALITY

The goal was to provide young minds with different ways of being politically active citizens applied to the gender equality topic. We organized a 2-day workshop: on day 1 the participants discussed topics under the gender equality theme and plan an advocacy strategy; on day 2 the participants had the opportunity to debate their advocacy strategies with a panel of 4 women with different backgrounds.

Setting/Material

Hybrid format: For presential participants, we booked an open space in the city centre near transportation stops. We had all sorts of materials and online tools for the advocacy strategies assembly.

Time

2 afternoons (8th and 15th of October) in Porto

Preparations

We made partnerships with local organizations (other groups – HeForShe; for the venue with the University and students association). In total we were almost 10 people involved in the event organization.

We started our preparations a few months prior to the event to have the materials ready for the advocacy strategy on day 1 and the group of speakers for the debate on day 2.

Group Size

We designed the event to hold 15-20 participants in each day.

Budget

The maximum budget for the event was 2000€.

Learning Goals

- What does active participation in political topics (namely gender equality) look like, what formats and levels of engagement can it take.
- How can young people put that into practice – assessing the problem, the structures and patterns keeping it in place, stakeholders at our disposal, message to use and methods of action.

Why is the Participation Format necessary? What does it entail?

Participation is a topic that can feel too broad to approach in a Crash Course of maximum 4 hours. A Participation Format that creates a space for young people to really discuss what this can look like for them specifically, to allow them to truly discover their potential as change-makers is a great complement to the work we regularly do in Understanding Europe.

In a Portuguese context specifically, the topic of gender equality was often brought up in school without great opportunities for the Trainers to really explore it with the students. This Participation Format gave us an opportunity to do that – to match interests and questions we couldn't in our brief visits to schools. The same way we shaped this for the topic of gender equality, it could be used to fill gaps like these in other countries.

The Preparation Phase

To prepare for the event, seen as we were dealing with a specific topic we don't have experience focusing on, we looked for support from HeForShe. The particular group that joined us (UCP Porto) had experience in organizing and delivering events in various topics of gender equality, meaning they could provide us with extra Trainers for our Participation Format and contacts for potential speakers.

We reached out to FAP (*Federação Académica do Porto, Academic Federation of Porto*), an association of academic institutions in the city of Porto, to use one of their spaces for our event. The venue was spacious enough to carry out all our activities, located well in the centre of the city which was easier to reach, and close to green spaces for icebreaker activities.

Wanting to reach as many students from as many schools across the country as we could, we created an open call for participants. This call was shared on social media (Understanding Europe PT, EYP Portugal & HeForShe) and with the teachers that have collaborated with us over the years.

We reached speakers in different fields of gender equality activism through Instagram. This type of speaker and this method of contact was where we were most successful, with almost immediate positive responses from Lokas Cruz, a humanitarian doctor and human's rights activist, Catarina Oliveira, a nutritionist, diversity and inclusion activist and digital communicator, and Irene Martins, a scientist with experience in amplifying women's contributions to science.

We also tried emailing politicians and different decision-makers via email (with support from Lena at Schwazkopf Foundation) and on the phone (through the official channels of the City Halls in the area). This is where we were least successful. The replies were rare and always negative. It was, however, important to us to have decision-makers present. The volunteers from HeForShe helped us get in touch with a Clara Sottomayor, a judge at the Portuguese Supreme Court of Justice, who had previously collaborated with them.

To prepare the content, we contacted the activists from Young Feminist Europe who were present at the Kick-Off Workshop in Brussels, to ask to adapt some of their materials, and we collaborated with the volunteers from HeForShe to create some original content, such as the historical milestones posters.

We also reached out to different people/projects inside the UE network and within our national context to make topic introduction videos. These videos were: Gender (In)Equality in the Workplace (by Ema Gonçalves, UE PT Peer Educator), Gender (In)Equality in Education (Lena Strehmann, Schwazkopf Foundation), Sex Education and Reproductive Rights (Communication Team, UCP Porto HeForShe), Period Poverty (Let It Flow, a Portuguese project that tackles this subject via social media and courses in schools), and Women's Rights & Disability Rights (Leonor Amaral, former UE Fellow).

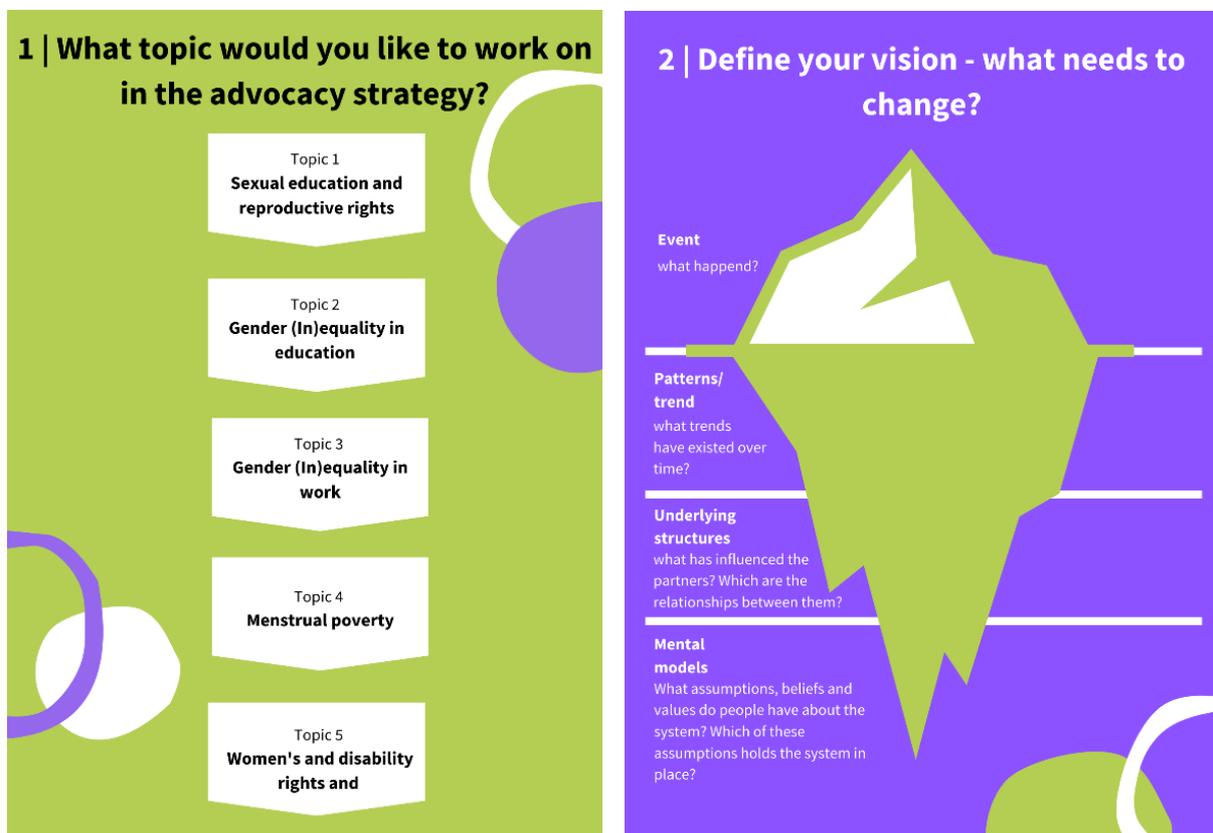
All organizational tasks were distributed between the three members of Understanding Europe PT involved – Rita Vieira, Leonor Costa and Ema Gonçalves. For the actual days, Rita was assigned the task of overseeing all logistical aspects, while Ema was in charge of online moderation and Leonor of presentational moderation.

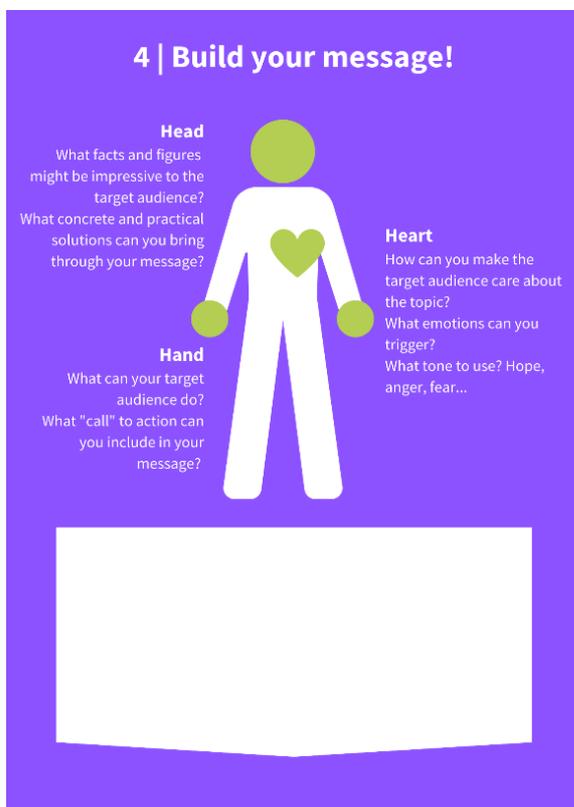
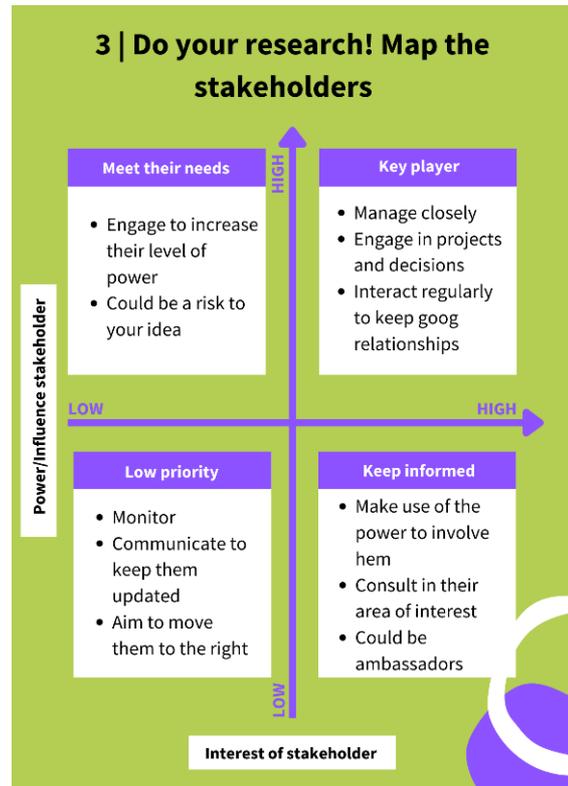
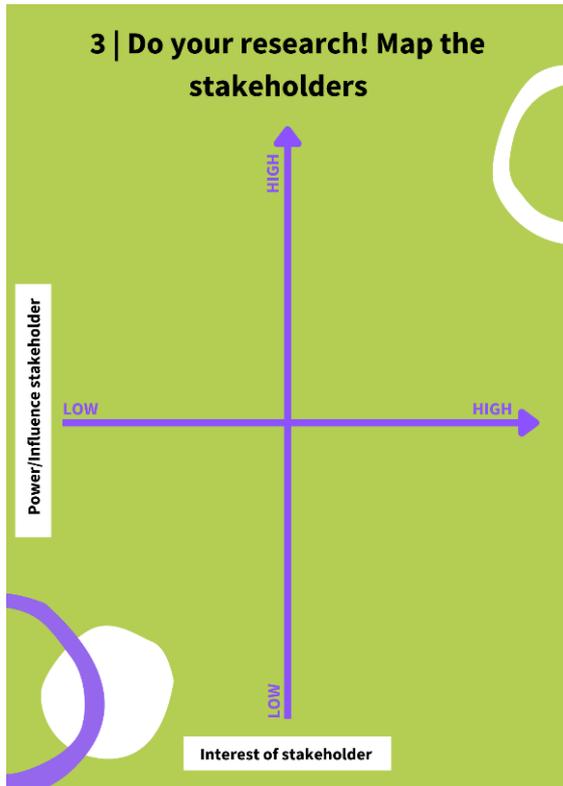
The Methodology

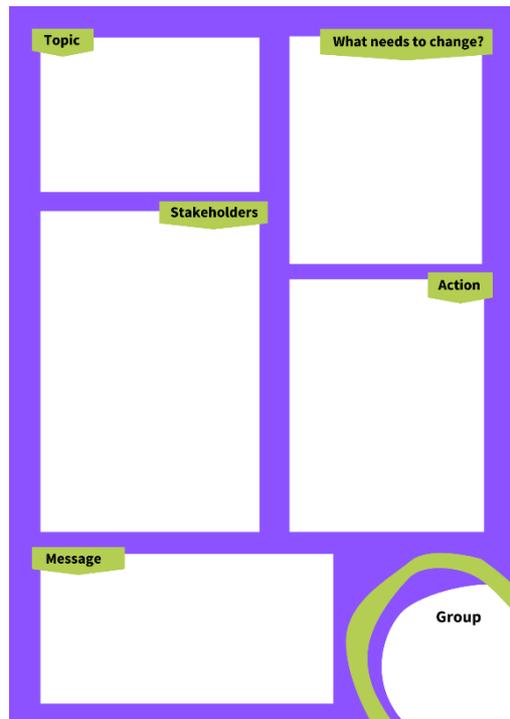
Day 1 | Advocacy strategy (8th October) - [video](#)

Prior to the event, we conducted a search of “hot” topics within gender equality and asked to several individuals/institutions to record quick videos with topics to first launch the discussion in the workshop ([link](#)). The topics chosen were: *((in)equality in education and work, woman's rights and disability rights, menstrual poverty and sexual education and reproductive rights*

For the advocacy strategy, we used the template of “how to plan an advocacy strategy” by the European Youth Forum, first introduced to us by Young Feminist Europe at the Kick-off Workshop in Brussels. We adapted the template for the gender equality topic:







The templates were made available for all the participants on the first day of the event. The participants were separated into small groups and with the help of facilitators, they chose a topic and planned a strategy:



Day 2 | Debate with stakeholders (15th October)

In order to provide validation and promote discussion with experienced people involved in gender equality action we invited four women from as different backgrounds as possible: a judge, a humanitarian doctor, a nutritionist and a scientist that are advocates of gender equality.

The Event Itself

On both days there were delays from the program due to unpredicted technical difficulties. These were primarily difficulties with the Zoom account, which we solved by switching to Google Meet, and with the beamer the venue had made available for us, which did not work.

On the first day, the planned program was as follows:

13:30 | Set-up

14:00 | Welcoming participants

14:30 | Introduction – the format, organizations involved, first notions about feminism

15:00 | Icebreaker outside

15:30 | Advocacy strategy implementation

16:30 | Coffee break

17:00 | Presentation and Discussion

On the second day, the planned program was as follows:

14:00 | Set-up

14:30 | Welcoming participants

15:00 | Reviewing first day and preparing the debate with speakers

15:45 | Break

16:00 | Debate with speakers

17:30 | Social coffee break (informal conversation with speakers)

18:00 | Goodbye

On both days, all physical materials were set-up before the participants arrived. The only difficulties were with the hybrid format and caused both programs to suffer alterations.



Family picture from day 1 (Photographer: Pedro Santos)

The Impact

The feedback from participants was positive. They claimed the event allowed them to discover new ways to get politically involved, not only on the topic of gender equality but other topics as well.

One school in particular (Escola Secundária Quinta das Flores, in Coimbra) sent two students as “ambassadors” of the learnings of this workshop, with the intention to have them share these with the other students in their schools, continuing the wave of peer education and exchange of knowledge between young people.

The speakers also reached out to us with positive feedback, as well as some constructive criticism for future events, namely more time for the interaction between speakers and participants, which we consider an overall positive outcome.

The Participation Format also allowed us as a project to expand our network of connections within our national context, reaching out to new organizations, projects and individuals who were interested and excited about our work.

Materials developed

Advocacy strategy template for gender equality (PT and EN) - [link](#):



Gender equality milestones in Portugal and a blank template for the future (PT) – [link](#):



Participation Format Armenia

Active Citizenship Lab



Participation Format Armenia

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP LAB

On November 12-13th EYP Armenia, in the framework of its Understanding Europe project conducted the Active Citizenship Lab. This two-day event gathered more than 60 participants from all over Armenia to participate in a set of workshops and a panel discussion.

Setting/Material

- 4 rooms for workshops
- Conference hall for the panel discussion
- Stationary used during the workshops.

Time

2 Days

Preparations

We started preparations 2 months prior the event, we had a team of 7 people (3 Coordinators and 4 organisers)

Group Size

We had 60 participants, but the format allows to have from 40-80 participants

Budget

1500-2500EUR

Learning Goals

- Increase awareness about political system, policy making, and decision making bodies.
- Reflect on the importance of democracy and active citizenship.
- Explore how to make your voice heard in Armenia and Europe.
- Give platform to directly interact with decision makers.

Why is the Participation Format necessary? What does it entail?

Armenian youth is facing different obstacles in terms of civic activism and democratic participation. Those obstacles include lack of awareness about the political system and policy-making processes, lack of access and opportunities of engagement, as well as deficient interest from young people. Thus, the outdated educational system fails to provide necessary tools and capacity for dialogue and engagement.

EYP Armenia and the Understanding Europe team, are constantly working on projects aiming to encourage young people to become active citizens and make their voice heard, while also trying to work with state bodies to show them the importance of listening to the youth's opinion. This type of participation format was a great way of supporting the transformational shift to more inclusive political culture and active youth democratic participation in Armenia.

The Preparation Phase

The organisational process of the project went smoothly. During the first phase of the organisational process, the coordinators of UE Armenia finalised the detailed concept and the programme of the “Active Citizenship Lab.” During this phase we also recruited some of the EYP Armenia members as organisers for the project.

The Second phase of organising was about taking care of the logistical aspects of the project. We contacted Cambridge International School in Armenia, who kindly agreed to provide us with a venue for the workshop and training part of the project. For the panel discussion we contacted several hotels with conference rooms and chose Congress Hotel, since its pricing fit our budget, while their hall perfectly matched the picture that we had in mind for the panel discussion. During this phase we also took care of the lunches and coffee breaks for the event.

The third phase of the organising process was all about recruiting participants and inviting panellists. The participants were selected as a result of an open call, while the panellists received an invitation and most of them agreed to join the event.

The Methodology

The project was based on the non-formal educational methodology, including gamification elements, interactive activities, group discussions, reflections and more. The meeting with the activists was laid out to be a Q&A format.

The Panel discussion had the following structure: at first the panellists gave introductory speeches, after which the moderator asked one question per panellist (questions were gathered from members and alumni of EYP Armenia who were not present at the event). This was followed by a Q&A with the participants, and at the end there was a reception and networking opportunity.

The Event Itself

During the first day, the youngsters participated in a series of workshops on the political system of Armenia and the decision-making processes, youth engagement and active citizenship delivered by Understanding Europe and EYP Armenia trainers, they also had opportunity to talk to an activist from civil society sector about the democratic development of Armenia.

On the second day, young people did group brainstorming sessions, where they came up with questions that they wanted to address to the panelists, based on the institutions they represented and their portfolios. During the panel discussion, the participants had the opportunity to directly interact and ask questions to decision makers. After the discussion, the participants had more than an hour to network with the panelists in a more informal atmosphere.

The panelists of the panel discussion were:

- Artur Martirosyan - Deputy Minister of the ESCS Ministry
- Maria Papamikhail - Human Rights Officer of the EU Delegation to Armenia
- Araks Manucharyan – Financial Literacy Expert from the Central Bank of Armenia
- Marine Saribekyan - Expert of the Climate Policy Department of the Ministry of Environment
- Arman Gasparyan – Education Program Coordinator UNICEF



Agenda Saturday

10:00-10:30	Registration
10:30-11:00	General Teambuilding
11:00-12:00	Group Teambuilding
12:00-13:00	Democracy and Active Citizenship Module
13:00-14:00	Lunch
14:00-14:30	Identifying Key Stakeholders Module
14:30-15:30	How to have a say in Europe Module
15:30-16:00	Break
16:00-18:00	Meeting with external Stakeholder

EUROPEAN YOUTH PARLIAMENT
ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆ ARMENIA



Agenda Sunday

10:00-10:30	Registration
10:30-12:30	Preparation of Questions
12:30-13:30	Lunch
13:30-15:30	Preparation of Questions
15:30-16:00	Walking Transfer
16:00-16:15	Welcome Speeches
16:15-17:00	Introductory Speeches by Panelists
17:00-17:30	Questions by the moderator
17:30-18:00	Q&A with participants
18:00	Reception and Networking

EUROPEAN YOUTH PARLIAMENT
ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆ ARMENIA



The Impact

The feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive. For many of the participants this was the first time ever that they were given opportunity to participate in such a project, have discussions on important topics with their peers and directly interact with decision makers.

As for the decision makers attending the event, they were pleasantly surprised by the interest of young people in so many topics and highlighted the importance of such projects, commanding the good work that EYP Armenia is doing in the framework of the Understanding Europe Project.

“EYP Armenia, is doing an important job when it comes to engaging and involving youth in important matters. This year EYP AM is celebrating its 10th anniversary and the Active Citizenship Lab is the perfect opportunity to showcase the important work they are doing and to congratulate them for this important milestone. In the Ministry of Education, we value and support the activities that EYP Armenia is doing, especially since the youth is among the government’s priority areas.” said Deputy Minister of Education, whose portfolio is youth affairs.

Materials developed

Ministry Education coverage of Active Citizenship Lab - [«Բաղաքացիական ակտիվությունն ապահովելը պետության առաջնահերթություններից մեկն է». Արթուր Մարտիրոսյանը հանդիպել է երիտասարդների հետ - ՀՀ ԿԳՄՍՆ \(escs.am\)](#)

[\(English translation here\)](#)

EYP Armenia Social Media Coverage

[EYP Armenia - Posts | Facebook](#)

[Facebook](#)