EducAction – WP5- 5.7
612191— The EducAction – EPP – 1 – 2019 – 1- IT – EPPKA3 – IPI – SOC- IN

Final Monitoring and Evaluation Report

Executive Summary

Project Description

The EducAction Project aimed at promoting civic and social competences among young people strengthening school and local community centrality. The intervention aimed to build an integrated model of education and civic participation that -working at individual, community and institutional level – would be able to create an inclusive and quality civic space for the educational community (adults, educators, teachers, social workers). The action was mainly based on the delivery of two experimental Labs -one within the school and one open to the whole community -which included theoretical and practical learning sessions involving schools' actors and public and private stakeholders as well as the exchange of experiences among the 4 target countries (Belgium, Greece, Italy, Portugal).

The project started on the 15th of January 2020 and ended on the 30th of April 2022. A no cost extension was requested due to the negative impact of the Covid 19 on the implementation of the activities.

The project was implemented by ActionAid International Italia Onlus(Leading Applicant -Italy), A.S.T.E.R.I (Greece), Cooperativa de Educação, cooperação e Desenvolvimento CRL (ECOS- Portugal), UC Limburg vzw (UCLL- Belgium)

The action has targeted 4 "school communities":
- Italy: Oriani Mazzini (Milan)
- Greece: The project started in February 2020 in IEK Alfa which is a professional school targeting older young people because the Greek partner didn't receive the initial permission from the Ministry of Education to enter public schools due to the Covid 19 restrictions. In May 2020, the activities started in ARSAKEIO Lyceum and the White Tower Lyceum.
- Belgium: Antheneum (Hasselt)
- Portugal: Agrupamento de Escolas Pinheiro e Rosa (AEPROSA)

The project was funded by the European Commission-Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).

Evaluation Scope and Purpose

The evaluation has been conducted internally by ActionAid in coordination with the project partners and main stakeholders. The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the achievement of the following project's objectives:

General Objective –*Developing and implementing innovative methods and practices to foster inclusive education and/or youth environments in specific contexts*: GO_Indicator1.1: % of students, teachers, parents, community members/representatives involved who report that the project methods have increased participation in their schools and communities

Specific objective- *Acquisition of social and civic competences, knowledge, understanding and ownership of common values and fundamental rights*: SO_Indicator 1.1: % of students who actively use the acquired knowledge and skills to find solutions to problems in their schools and/or communities; SO_Indicator 1.2: % of targeted teachers/schools that use one of the methodologies developed by the project (such as the school lab) in the second year of the project.[1]

Evaluation Design and Methodology

The evaluation used a mixed methods approach with qualitative and quantitative data collection tools consisting of:
- desk review and analysis of the project documents including partner quarterly reports, facilitator training reports
- a pre/post training questionnaires for students who participated in the School Labs and Community Labs
- Focus Groups and Key Informant Interviews: 4 Focus Groups with students (1 in each country), 1 Focus Groups with teachers from Italy, Greece and Portugal + Interview with a teacher in Belgium, 5 Key Informant Interviews with stakeholders' representatives (1 Italy, 1 Greece, 1 Belgium, 2 Portugal)

Key Evaluation Findings and Recommendations

1.1 Quantitative data: Pre/Post questionnaires for School and Community Labs participants

The questionnaires aimed at **evaluating changes related to the acquisition of social and civic competences, fostering knowledge, understanding and ownership of values and fundamental rights**. In particular, the pre/post questionnaires assessed: "students' use of the knowledge and skills acquired through the project to find solutions to school and community problems: SO-Indicator 1.1: % of students who actively use the acquired knowledge and skills to find solutions to problems in their schools and/or communities". The questionnaire was only administered to students because the engagement of teachers and parents was very limited and ad hoc.

The questionnaire was divided into 3 main sections:

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[1] The project was heavily delayed by the Covid 19 pandemic and it is difficult to measure the adoption of the methodologies by the teachers because little time has passed since the closure of the activities.

- Self-assessment of cognitive and non-cognitive skills including planning, critical thinking, prosocial/cooperative behaviour, self-esteem and self-efficacy (pre and post)
- Evaluation of project effectiveness in terms of a) improving the knowledge of issues and problems, b) enhancing the understanding of the role each one can play and c) improving the relations with others inside and outside the school
- Open ended questions on preferred activities and suggestions for improvements (post only)

The prequestionnaire was administered at the beginning of the School Lab (WP2) and the post questionnaire at the end of the Community Lab (WP3). Indeed, students were expected to experience their citizenship rights through participation in activities proposed during the School and the Community Labs.

As follows you can find the number of pre and post questionnaire respondents divided per country. In general, there is a dropout of respondents of nearly 17% between the pre and the post questionnaire that can be considered normal.

	Italy		Belgium		Greece		Portugal		Total	
	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST
Total students who completed the questionnaire	18	12	18	16	30	24	43	39	**109**	**91**
Total female students who completed the questionnaire	15	10	15	12	15	11	15	16	**60**	**49**
Total male students who completed the questionnaire	3	2	2	3	15	13	28	23	**48**	**41**

1.1.1 Self-assessment of cognitive and non-cognitive skills

The post questionnaires show **a general increase in the percentage of respondents who have a good or very good possession of cognitive (planning, critical thinking) and non-cognitive skills (prosocial and cooperative behaviour skills and self-esteem/efficacy)**. In **10 out of 14 items, the percentage of respondents rating 4 and 5 is higher in the post questionnaire** compared to the previous survey:

- planning to reach a goal: 93% POST vs 89% PRE
- working independently: 89% POST vs 74% PRE
- understanding the causal relationship between things: 90% POST vs 85% PRE
- finding alternative solutions: 85% POST vs 71% PRE
- recognizing someone's feelings: 88% POST vs 86% PRE
- expressing feelings: 66% POST vs 60% PRE

- working in team with people that have different views: 75% POST vs 49% PRE
- discussing without fighting: 86% POST vs 77% PRE
- leading the group: 65% POST vs 58% PRE
- taking the responsibility to make things better: 84% POST vs 67% PRE

In two items there was no increase:

- following rules and instructions: 92% PRE and 92% POST
- coping with failure and trying harder: 78% PRE and 78% POST

In two items there was a decrease:

- reasoning and analyzing problems: 85% PRE and 75% POST
- believing in someone's ability to make the difference: 77% PRE vs 70% POST

PLANNING	PRE	POST
If there is a goal to reach I can plan my work in order to achieve it		
1-Strongly disagree	2%	0%
2-Disagree	1%	1%
3-Neutral	8%	5%
4-Agree	58%	**58%**
5-Strongly Agree	31%	**35%**
I am good at working independently		
1-Strongly disagree	2%	1%
2-Disagree	5%	0%
3-Neutral	18%	12%
4-Agree	46%	**32%**
5-Strongly Agree	28%	**57%**
I can follow rules and instructions that are given to me		
1-Strongly disagree	1%	1%
2-Disagree	0%	1%
3-Neutral	7%	5%
4-Agree	**46%**	**47%**
5-Strongly Agree	**46%**	**45%**
CRITICAL THINKING	**PRE**	**POST**
I am good at understanding the causes and effects of things		
1-Strongly disagree	0%	0%
2-Disagree	1%	1%
3-Neutral	14%	8%
4-Agree	56%	**57%**
5-Strongly Agree	29%	**33%**
I am used to reason and analyze problems to find a solution		

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1-Strongly disagree	0%	0%
2-Disagree	2%	0%
3-Neutral	14%	24%
4-Agree	**60%**	45%
5-Strongly Agree	**25%**	30%
I am good at finding alternative solutions to problems		
1-Strongly disagree	1%	0%
2-Disagree	3%	0%
3-Neutral	26%	14%
4-Agree	55%	**59%**
5-Strongly Agree	16%	**26%**
PROSOCIAL AND COOPERATIVE BEHAVIOUR	**PRE**	**POST**
I am able to recognize another person's feelings		
1-Strongly disagree	0%	0%
2-Disagree	6%	1%
3-Neutral	8%	11%
4-Agree	42%	**62%**
5-Strongly Agree	44%	**26%**
If I feel good or bad about something, I am able to express it		
1-Strongly disagree	7%	4%
2-Disagree	11%	5%
3-Neutral	22%	25%
4-Agree	32%	**53%**
5-Strongly Agree	28%	**13%**
I can work effectively in a team with people that do not behave/think like me		
1-Strongly disagree	3%	1%
2-Disagree	10%	1%
3-Neutral	39%	22%
4-Agree	33%	**59%**
5-Strongly Agree	16%	**16%**
When a person has a different point of view, I know how to discuss without going into a conflict		
1-Strongly disagree	1%	0%
2-Disagree	5%	1%
3-Neutral	18%	13%
4-Agree	50%	**57%**
5-Strongly Agree	27%	**29%**
I think I can be a good leader in group situations with peers		
1-Strongly disagree	6%	1%

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2-Disagree	5%	10%
3-Neutral	31%	24%
4-Agree	39%	**51%**
5-Strongly Agree	19%	**14%**
SELF-ESTEEM/SELF EFFICACY	**PRE**	**POST**
I believe that I have the responsibility to make things better for my family friends and community		
1-Strongly disagree	1%	2%
2-Disagree	6%	2%
3-Neutral	26%	12%
4-Agree	49%	**34%**
5-Strongly Agree	18%	**49%**
I believe that I can make a difference for my family/friends/community using my knowledge and skills		
1-Strongly disagree	1%	1%
2-Disagree	3%	4%
3-Neutral	18%	23%
4-Agree	**45%**	55%
5-Strongly Agree	**32%**	15%
If I fail, I cope with it and I continue to try harder		
1-Strongly disagree	1%	0%
2-Disagree	7%	2%
3-Neutral	12%	19%
4-Agree	**40%**	**54%**
5-Strongly Agree	**38%**	**24%**

1.1.2 Evaluation of project effectiveness

Participants were asked to assess on scale from Not useful to Very useful how effective the project has been to a) improve the knowledge of issues and problems, b) enhance the understanding of the role each one can play and c) improve the relations with others inside and outside the school.

As far as the 3 items related to knowledge improvement of issues and problems, most respondents found the training to be USEFUL:

- Identify issues/problems that exist in the school environment: **68%**
- Identify issues/problems that exist in my community/neighbourhood/city: **52%**
- Understand the causes and consequences of these problems/issues: **69%**

Concerning the 3 items related to the understanding of the role each one can play, once again most respondents found it to be USEFUL:

- Understand what I/we can do to make the school a better place: **54%**

- Understand what I/we can do to make the community a better place: **57%**
- Understand the different roles/responsibilities people have in identifying/addressing those problems: **68%**

Finally, **concerning the 4 items related to improving relations with others inside/outside the school, most respondents found the training to be USEFUL (3 items) and QUITE USEFUL (1 item)**

- Learn how to work with others to achieve common objectives: **64%**
- Improve my relations with the other students: **38%**
- Improve my relations with the teachers/school headmaster etc: **42%**
- Improve my relations with associations/local authorities within my community: **32% (Quite useful)**

As follow you can find the complete table:

	Item	Country	Not useful	Quite useful	Useful	Very useful
Knowledge of the topic	Identify issues/problems that exist in the school environment	Portugal	0	2	16	20
		Italy	0	4	7	1
		Belgium	2	0	14	0
		Greece	0	0	24	0
		Total	2	6	**61**	21
	Identify issues/problems that exist in my community/neighborhood/city	Portugal	0	6	12	20
		Italy	0	6	1	4
		Belgium	5	0	11	0
		Greece	0	0	22	2
		Total	5	12	**46**	26
	Understand the causes and consequences of these problems/issues	Portugal	0	0	25	13
		Italy	0	4	6	1
		Belgium	4	0	12	0
		Greece	0	2	18	4
		Total	4	6	**61**	18
Knowledge of how to address the problem	Understand what I/we can do to make the school a better place	Portugal	0	1	22	15
		Italy	0	5	3	3
		Belgium	4	0	12	0
		Greece	0	7	11	6
		Total	4	13	**48**	24
	Understand what I/we can do to make the community a better place	Portugal	0	5	17	16
		Italy				
		Belgium	4	0	12	0
		Greece	0	0	14	7
		Total	4	5	**43**	23
	Understand the different roles/responsibilities people have in	Portugal	0	6	21	10
		Italy	0	4	5	2
		Belgium	6	0	10	0

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	identifying/addressing those problems	Greece	0	0	24	0
		Total	6	10	**60**	12
Cooperation with others inside/outside the school	Learn how to work with others to achieve common objectives	Portugal	0	4	17	17
		Italy	2	4	5	0
		Belgium	1	0	15	0
		Greece	0	4	20	0
		Total	3	12	**57**	17
	Improve my relations with the other students	Portugal	1	5	16	16
		Italy	4	5	1	0
		Belgium	4	0	12	0
		Greece	0	16	4	4
		Total	9	26	**33**	20
	Improve my relations with the teachers/school headmaster etc.	Portugal	4	10	12	12
		Italy	8	1	2	0
		Belgium	8	0	8	0
		Greece	0	5	15	4
		Total	20	16	**37**	16
	Improve my relations with associations/local authorities within my community	Portugal	2	9	11	5
		Italy	3	8	0	0
		Belgium	8	0	6	0
		Greece	0	7	3	14
		Total	13	**24**	20	19

1.1.3 Open ended questions on preferred activities and suggestions for improvements

❖ **Which activity/ies did you like the most in the school labs/community labs?**

In general, most respondents liked the project and reported that they liked all activities. The activities that were most appreciated were the meetings with external stakeholders, interactive activities (games, labs etc), visits to places outside the school.

Portugal:
➢ Brainstorming ideas about school & community problems, learning about others' opinions, becoming more self-aware;
➢ Walking around the school to identify issues in the school environment;
➢ Discussing the solutions for identified issues.

Italy:
➢ The meetings with people, professionals, associations
➢ The games and the exchange of opinions

Belgium:
➢ The hackathon
➢ The new insights
➢ Learning to communicate and the great opportunities we were given
➢ The contact with external stakeholders and people in Hasselt

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➤ Working as a group
➤ The interactive games
➤ The interaction with other countries
➤ The knowledge about Hasselt but also about the other countries

Greece:
➤ The labs were very interesting, and some kids experienced that for the first time
➤ The outside workshops, visit and discussions in the city
➤ Meetings with the Authorities, but they wanted more interaction which was not able due to online communication

❖ **What do you think we can improve in the organization of the activities? List the main issues that came up**

In general, the reactions are very positive. Interesting feedback is the suggestion to create interaction with the other project groups earlier in the project so that the European character of the action is strengthened.

Portugal:
➤ More interaction with associations and local authorities;
➤ Expose our project to the community school and other local schools;
➤ Spend more time in sharing the results with the majority of school;
➤ Make it more interactive with the use of some technology;
➤ Improve orientation and on-boarding;
➤ Enable and empower employees, communicate effectively with them;
➤ Have tough conversations as well as make tough decisions;
➤ Clarifying the goal so that it's clear what participants are there for;
➤ Ensuring that all groups discuss topics/issues without affecting other groups (e.g. by not being too loud or distracting);
➤ Not scheduling these activities so close to tests/exams;
➤ Pay more attention to the needs of the community and listen to younger generations;
➤ Holding these activities in other places.

Italy: The main suggestions were related to having activities in presence instead of online.

Belgium:
➤ To involve more countries
➤ To increase the duration of the project
➤ To have more interaction with other countries

Greece:
➤ Better internet connection and more computers at school to be able to have more interaction
➤ More meetings with the students from the other countries in order to know each other and communicate better and express themselves easier and make friends

1.2 Qualitative data: Focus Groups and Key Informant Interviews

1.2.1 Students Focus Groups

The project conducted 4 Focus Groups with students who participated in the project (one in each country) as per the table below.

Country	Total	Female	Male
Italy	**8**	7	1
Belgium	**21²**	16	5
Greece	**13**	13	0
Portugal	**10**	6	4

The focus group was organized around 7 main guiding questions/topics:

1.   *If you must use few words, how would you define student participation in classroom?*

In general, the **main definitions of participation are related to being active, being engaged, speaking up**.

➢ Italy: The main meanings of participation that emerged refer to direct activation, being attentive and curious and continuing to learn. These are the main words that came out: being active, participating, paying attention, being curious, putting something of yourself into what you do, learning;

➢ Belgium: The words that are most used to define participation are as follows: getting to know yourself better, working in a group, cooperating, learning things, speaking in front of the class, knowing how to address and involve people better, more courage to act, motivation, learning about other countries, learning about the system in Belgium, being aware of our expertise as young people;

➢ Greece: Participants would define participation like students actively engaging in conversations about their problems and organize projects. They would love to see that the students get to engage in actions and are able to speak their minds.

➢ Portugal: There are different definitions of participation depending on the class in which they are inserted and the personal interests of each one.

2.   *In your opinion, what are the main obstacles for student participation?*

The **main obstacles that emerged are related on one hand to personal characteristics** such as being afraid of speaking up because of judgement and criticism, not being aware/lacking confidence in someone's own role and abilities **and on the other to the school environment** because they feel that they are not listened to, that they are not given the space to participate.

➢ Italy: Some of the obstacles that emerged are linked to personal fears, shyness and/or anxieties while others concern the role that teachers/schools should play in bringing people together, helping them to get to know each other better, and creating a sense of group and belonging in the classroom. These are the issues that were mentioned: Fear of making mistakes, Shyness, Anxiety, Fear of being judged/criticised constructively by teachers and destructively by peers, Teachers should involve us more, Teachers should make people socialise more, try to sort out the small

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² The Focus Group was conducted in the form of class discussion. To give everyone a chance to share their opinion, the interactive tool 'Wooclap' was used. The results were shared in real time on the big screen and further elaborated in the discussion.

groups that form within the class, make us get to know each other better in order to overcome any prejudices we may have.

➢ Belgium: The main obstacles reported are pupils not being aware of their own position; many pupils do not realize that they can really make a change; not everyone is aware of the hierarchy at school; pupils do not feel that they are being listened to; sometimes pupils need to be more daring, sometimes the step is too big to make an extra effort next to homework.

➢ Greece: On one side, the structure of the lesson doesn't support enough interaction and participation. Students want more chances to participate. On the other hand, students sometimes lack confidence to express certain ideas.

➢ Portugal: The main obstacles are related to the personality of each person, people often do not have a personality that allows them to intervene more often in a group context, perhaps for fear of making mistakes, or lack of confidence, as well as the interests of each one according to the topic that is dealt with.

3.   Have you seen changes in students' participation in class thanks to the project? If yes, please give examples - For example, are teachers more supportive now than before?

In general, **the project has helped the students to work on themselves at a personal and group level**. On a personal level, **they have become more aware and confident to speak up**. On a group level, **they have become more able to cooperate and work together as a group without fighting if they have different points of view.**

➢ Italy: The main changes that the pupils report are mainly changes on a personal level, such as an increased ability to communicate/express themselves in public. These are some of the responses: I am very shy and during the project I gained courage and managed to speak in front of everyone even during the hackathon, in English; After the project, I can reflect more on my prejudices. I became much more self-confident because I learned that even if I make mistakes, I can fix them and learn to do it better; I've learnt and I'm learning to feel a bit freer. Marco always told us that it doesn't hurt to jump because it's right to try; I've learned to take courage, to throw myself into life in general.

One student reported a change affecting the whole class: We had more difficulty listening to each other without arguing. We still have different ideas/opinions, but we have learned not to argue, to be more "professional".

➢ Belgium: All pupils noticed a difference in terms of participation in the school after the project. 95% of them reported a personal change in terms of being more aware of their opportunities to participate and wanting to be better informed, 47% noticed a change among their classmates and 5% among other fellow pupils in the schools and teachers.

➢ Greece: Participants reported that teachers were helpful as far as coordination was concerned. However, in the regular classes they did not see a major change. One main change they observed is the fact that they are now able to cooperate more successfully among them as a group.

➢ Portugal: Several students reported that the project offered them the first opportunity to speak openly, without fear of judgment from the rest of the class. It has changed the way some students started to interact in the rest of the classes. The fact that the opinion of each one was taken into account during the project was essential, because students are used to be evaluated in a

quantitative way and without considering their opinion, in this way it led them to let go and share their opinion. In addition, at the beginning of the project, the classes were recent and did not know each other well, so there was not much communication, which changed throughout the project as it allowed the students to get to know each other better.

4.   According to you, how often are young people involved in decisions related to the life in the community? Why do you think that?[3]

In all countries, **students reported that young people are generally not involved in the decision-making processes that affect their lives both in school and outside**. If they are involved, **they feel that their opinion is not really considered and doesn't influence the final decision**.

➢ Italy: The group shares the feeling that young people are generally not involved in decision making processes at the community level. As follows some issues that came out:

　◦ We know now that we have a chance to do something because we have participated in the project.

　◦ I live in my neighbourhood, and I don't even know what there is beyond the oratory. I've never felt part of anything. Now we've organised the graffiti for the nursery, we're doing something.

　◦ Honestly, I never thought about it before, and I've never been interested.

　◦ We used to see things and not think we could do something to change things and how to do it. Now that I know how to do something I can think that I can change things in the future, that I can improve.

　◦ We can't change something we don't know about, if the possibilities were more socialised it would be easier, it would be very different. For example, yesterday we were talking about the youth centres that could be in our neighbourhood and like in my area there is only one public library, but few people know about it.

　◦ I agree, there is no one to tell us what is around our neighbourhood, the schools should inform us about what is there and what we can do for our city. They should inform us already when we are in primary and secondary school. They should tell us where to find places where we can do these things and participate.

➢ Greece: Students reported the feeling of not being very involved in decision-making processes. There are no procedures for young people to cooperate with the municipality and the government. Their ideas are not taken into consideration. Most of the time they are not taken seriously by adults because they are teenagers.

➢ Portugal: Most students feel young people do not interact with any social decision-making bodies, despite some belonging to associations (for example scouts, student associations etc). Even young people who belong to organizations often do not have decision-making powers, the bodies are merely formal, and decision-making processes are very much based on the same form. Young people do not participate because they feel that their opinion is just an opinion and that it will not matter when making the final decision.

5.   How much has the project contributed to enhance young people participation in the life of their communities? What do you do now that you had not done before?

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[3] This question was not addressed in the FG in Belgium

In general, **students have been able to meet institutions and associations in their communities however they feel that their involvement in community-based decision-making processes is still quite limited.**

➢ Italy: The participants reported having met with different associations but not all interested them at the same level. In addition, the youth shared the feeling of being a little bit detached from the people whom they met in terms of communication/language, especially when it comes to institutions and local authorities.

- We talked to several associations but in general I was not always interested because they do not work in areas in which I would like to make/bring about change, with the possible exception of Le giardiniera

- We met the CDE Creta that organizes many interesting activities, such as the memory train which I think is a good idea, Handicap Su La Testa, Le giardiniere, Officine della produzione with which we also worked.

- When we had the meeting with Rita Barbieri, she thanked us, and she seemed to be moved. She said well done for what you're doing and then talked about what she's doing, but didn't encourage us to do more.

- I partly agree with my colleague. However, she told us that she is on our side. I don't know what more she could have done.

- When we talk about the type of involvement we would like to have from those who come to tell us about their experience, it is also important to use a language that reaches us more, that is simpler, that can interest and motivate us. Everything Barbieri said was interesting, but if a person talks non-stop for hours, then you lose attention.

➢ Belgium: Most pupils indicate that they feel more involved on a passive level. This means that they are more open to information and show more interest in participation initiatives. Four pupils even expressed an interest in actively participating in politics. Their motivation was mainly thanks to the encouragement they felt during the process of this project.

➢ Greece: The students reported that little has changed in terms of participation at the community level. This is what they said:

- We met the Municipality and the mayor of Kalamaria. However, we don't think we got the results we were hoping for because we are still not very heard by the Municipality. Nonetheless, the project did inspire us and helped us to understand that as young people we need and deserve more space and claim it. It gave us helpful ideas on how to do it. The project didn't promote a mass participation of youth. We were only 25 youth so other youth in Thessaloniki do not know that they should participate.

(At this point of the discussion, ASTERI informed the participants that the Municipality will shortly open a call for participating in the Youth Municipal Council thanks to the project)

The reactions to the news are positive but cautious.

- It is exciting. Young people have great ideas and do not have the chance to express their ideas to a big audience.

- It is good to know that there will be this opportunity. We will be able to have our own voice in the Municipality. We will be in charge of our own lives for once. In Greece it doesn't

happen so often with youth. But we will see if we will be able to use it correctly and if it will actually work.

➢ Portugal: The participation in this project helped the students to feel part of a decision- making process whereby all participants could contribute with ideas, without being judged. In a post-project view, we realized that those who participated had the opportunity to have a voice and contribute to real change in our community, and that the projects we outlined are being taken into account to be put into practice.

6.   Which project activity did you like the most? Why?

In general, **students liked all project activities but those that were most appreciated were the ones that offered them the possibility to meet new people, to explore their cities/neighbourhood, to interact with students from other countries and to express their creativity like in the video making**.

➢ Italy: In general, the activities I liked the most were the video and the meeting/hackathon. These are some of the comments made:
  ◦ One of the activities I liked the most was the video, which was interesting, funny, involving. I also really enjoyed the meeting with the other countries because we got to know how they implement change, we exchanged ideas and influenced each other.
  ◦ For me it was the video because it was something completely new, never done before and it was fun in the end.
  ◦ The video because it was really engaging
  ◦ The meeting allowed us to have a cultural exchange and made us understand that even if we come from different countries, we have the same problems.

➢ Belgium:[4] Participants mentioned the new insights offered by the project, the interaction with other countries, getting to know other countries, contacts with external stakeholders and other people in Hasselt, working in group, the interactive games, learning to communicate, the great opportunities given by the project, the hackathon.

  A specific point was made on the hackathon that revealed that the students found interesting to interact with students from other countries to put themselves in a different perspective. They were surprised how quickly they felt connected to other pupils. Not a single pupil had a negative feeling about the hackathon.

➢ Greece: Students really liked working on the Manifesto because they had the opportunity to share ideas and spread awareness. They liked that their voices could be heard and that they had the chance to address people in power. Finally, they really liked the chance to talking with students from other countries and they would have loved to meet them in person.

➢ Portugal: Students liked all project activities because of the opportunities that they were given, the fact that activities managed to strengthen the union between students, the possibility of learning about organizations and decision-making methods. They liked the final activity of interaction with students from other countries because they could exchange perspective with people from different cultural and social backgrounds. It was something new to them. They could understand that the

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[4] The question in Belgium was slightly revised from "Which project activity did you like the most? Why?" to " What is your most positive memory of the project so far?"

problems in their communities as well as their solutions were common to those found in other countries. They realized that young people experience similar problems despite the distance and cultural differences. They often look at other countries and believe that because of their economic level they will have more or less opportunities and quality of youth participation.

7. *Do you have any suggestions for changing or improving the project?*

The main suggestions are related to spending more time on **strengthening cooperation and interaction both in the class, with students from different classes as well as countries.**

➢ Italy: The main suggestions are related to the fact that this kind of projects need time to get people engaged and to create the feeling of being part of a group.

  ◦ We started the project in third grade, but we really got involved in fourth grade. There should be more focus on the involvement of participants. The meetings should be more constant to make people understand how important the project is.
  ◦ At the beginning there were so many discussions among us, we didn't understand each other. The project should work more on this.
  ◦ Creating a bond, creating a connection. The project should spend more time on creating collaboration between people.
  ◦ I think it is important to divide tasks better, to distribute responsibilities better. There are people who have done a lot and those who have done nothing. In my opinion, the opportunity to go to BXL for the hackathon should have been a reward/incentive for those who participated more.

➢ Belgium: In general, the reactions were very positive. Interesting feedback is the suggestion to create interaction with the other project groups earlier in the project so that the European character of the action is strengthened. Other students suggested to involve more European countries and to increase the duration of the project.

➢ Greece: All participants were very happy to have taken part in the project and shared few suggestions to make it a bit better:
  ◦ To communicate more with the students from other countries and have more opportunities to exchange ideas throughout the process and not only at the end. In this regard, it would be good to have one final last meeting with the other students even online.
  ◦ To provide more guidance and directions on how to organize different outputs such as the Manifesto as well as the Hackathon. We were not really prepared in advance for the meeting;
  ◦ To ensure that all project participants have the same treatment. We observed that students in other countries received different treatments in terms of opportunities, facilities, structures.

➢ Portugal: The following are the main suggestions that came out:
  o Better organization and communication between ECOS, students and teachers. As the project is developed by an organization outside the school, the official channels of dissemination take a long time to reach the students, for example the organization has to send it to the school, then the school to the teachers, then to the students.

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- More communication between the students participating in the project throughout the work, perhaps ideas could have been shared that would solve some of the problems in different places through these shared experiences, since in the end they found many similarities.

1.2.2 Teacher Focus Group

The project conducted **1 Focus Group with 5 teachers**: 1 from Italy (Female), 2 from Greece (Female) and 2 from Portugal (1 Female and 1 Male). Teachers from Belgium could not participate, and one teacher (1 Female) was interviewed separately. Her responses are reported at the end of the Focus Group responses with a different bullet point. The guiding questions were very similar to those used with the students to allow comparing the different points of view.

1. *According to you, what is the definition of student classroom participation?*

In general, all teachers reported that **participation is a key element of the teaching practice, and that learning cannot happen without participation**.

➢ Italy: For me student participation is a must because I can't teach alone. In two years of online distance learning, this was the most difficult thing and I have been a teacher for a long time. Participation is the first thing I ask to my class. If they do not participate, they can't learn anything.

➢ Greece: Teacher 1: Class participation is an important aspect of student learning. They learn to express their ideas in ways other can understand. They learn how to obtain information on a topic. Student participation is also a valuable tool for teachers because through their questions you learn what they do not understand and adjust your teaching accordingly. It can reinforce the learning environment.

Teacher 2: Participation is connected to the feeling of freedom to express their ideas, to the feeling of being welcomed and respected, the feeling that they will be listened to and that they will be accepted. This feeling of being respected and accepted by teachers and fellow students is very essential for a true participation

➢ Portugal: Student participation means to give everyone the opportunity to speak and to ask questions, although sometimes we are limited by time.

❖ Belgium: Students have input on different topics (deadlines, work format, lesson content, subjects, ...). I think it is important that young people's opinions have a place in the daily school culture and that they dare to stand up for themselves and for other pupils.

2. *In your opinion, what are the main obstacles for students' participation?*

Teachers identified 2 main obstacles for students' participation: on one side, **the way teachers organize the lessons** including the topics and the activities/methods they choose; on the other side, **students' skills and attitudes** that might be also influenced by the class/school environment.

➢ Italy: The teacher has the main role in this situation. We must create a situation in the class whereby anybody can speak. We as teachers have this responsibility. If students do not participate, we have to change our teaching approaches and practices and try new things, methods and activities. This is a big part of the issue.

Then there is the students' responsibility. Most of the time they spend in class they are passive; they are just listening. Listening is not participating. We need to organize our classes to make the students the main subject of the lesson. Now we have technologies that can help us in doing that. Sometimes I had classes that were difficult but most of the time you can change their attitude and their way of staying in class. If I get bored myself, they can't be interested and active. I must enjoy my way of teaching so maybe they can enjoy it. And again, the importance of technology. It can help us to change/improve the way we teach. For example, technology can help more shy students to participate without speaking but using drawings or expressing themselves in anonymous way through avatars.

➢ Greece: Teacher 1: Students do not always perceive participation as a possibility for the whole group but mainly as an individual possibility. Sometimes students may not have communication skills, may not feel motivated.

Teacher 2: There are several things that we do not know about what is going on in their lives that might inhibit their ability to express themselves. For example, somebody who is being bullied might fear the consequences of being marginalized if she/he expresses his/her opinion in the class. We must be sure that everybody feels respected. I repeat myself here because I think this feeling of being respected is important. Sometimes there is also the lack of interest or the lack of passion/motivation.

➢ Portugal: It is important for teachers to be enthusiastic and to choose topics that are closer to the students. They can be shy, they might not feel comfortable, they might not be interested but we need to create a relaxed atmosphere for them to participate.

❖ Belgium: We notice at our school that pupils dare to give their opinion, but that they often stop when that opinion needs to be developed further. That is where it goes wrong. Thinking along is okay, but when they must actively get to work, many pupils drop out. What has this to do with? Pupils doubt that they will be listened to and that their actions will be carried out. Their freedom is also sometimes limited by practical difficulties (money, time, etc.). This is often frustrating for them. This also extends beyond our school. Still, I notice that some pupils do like to participate. A large group of pupils at this school participate in a youth parliament (KRAS - Globelink - political project).

When I think of pupil participation in the classroom, the pupils do have a say, but they do not always dare to do so. Some teachers like this, others don't. In my opinion, this is not always clear to the pupils. Pupils also do not always know how to participate. The way they communicate can sometimes be offensive to a teacher. Our school is open to participation. Pupils can take part in two types of pupil councils inside the school (organising actions OR sharing opinions and thinking along). In addition, pupils are always welcome to bring their ideas to the headmaster and the coordinator. We also participate in School for Rights[5] to give pupils (and parents) a greater say.

3. *Have you seen changes to students' participation in class after the project? If yes, please give examples*

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[5] It is an initiative that provides tools for schools to support pupils and teachers to make children's and young people's rights central at school. School For Rights offers free materials to be used in projects at Het Atheneum.
https://www.schoolforrights.be/nl/wat-een-school-rights

In general, **teachers in Italy, Greece and Belgium have seen changes in student's attitude at the class level**. In particular, they have **become more curious, critical and open about their future**. **In Portugal, changes were more limited to specific students like the shyer**.

➢ Italy: The class who participated in the project is one of the classes that participate more in the school life even before the project, so the starting point was good. They have changed a lot in these 2 years for better. For instance, in the 2 days meeting they were extremely serious and concentrated. It was not like that 1 or 2 years ago. After the meeting closed, students remained there and kept exchanging their feelings, ideas, and projects for the next year. They are in the last year of high school. They were more open and curious about things that they can do in their future. It was impressive for me to observe their new attitude.

➢ Greece: Teacher 1: The project engaged the students in addressing a real problem such as increasing student participant in school or local affairs. They developed critical thinking, communication skills. The projected created energy among students and teachers.

Teacher 2: There is a difference now. I see enthusiasm and I see that a new vision has emerged about their future lives. They are now very interested in different topics including sustainability of the cities, public transportation, accessibility etc. This has a great impact in their everyday live. They feel part of a bigger thing that is going on in Europe and they feel it. This feeling is stronger now after they had the meeting with the students from all the project countries. Now they realize that the change in the future is not something vague, but it can happen only if they participate. They found a new meaning. In addition, I would say that the group work was amazing because shy people now feel that they can express themselves. Finally, there was a change in gender roles. Now the girls are leaders in these classrooms. The girls are the persons who decided what to do in the project.

➢ Portugal: The classes that participated in the project were already active, but we saw that the students who were shyer now participate more.

❖ Belgium: There has been a change of course, but our pupils already dared to give their opinion, they were already participating in the youth parliament (see ref. to the previous question). They might dare to give their opinion faster now. I think this project has made them more critical. They look at the City of Hasselt and politics with different eyes.

4. *How do you as a teacher promote students' participation in class? Has the project changed your understanding, approach?*

One recurrent element is **the teacher overall attitude in creating the right environment for students to learn and to grow as persons**. In general, participating in projects/activities beyond the class, group work, brainstorming activities, integrating topics/contents that are familiar to the students are those that are most used to promote participation.

➢ Italy: It is difficult to answer because every class is different, and it is difficult to find something that works for everyone. Not to judge is important for me. I need to put a grade, but I don't judge the student as a person. I need to make them understand that they can come to me, that I'm there for them. It is an attitude, something you must learn day by day. Looking at them, paying attention to them, to the way they sit in the class, to the way they move, or speak to each other and to the teacher, calling them by their names is important. I must create a relationship between me and them like with anybody else. First, they are people and second, they are my students.

➤ Greece: Teacher 1: I create a climate where students can ask questions and I take the students' questions and comments seriously, I reinforce their comments with positive statements and encourage their participation. I must be patient when waiting for a response. I am using small group work.

Teacher 2: The first thing I do is to get to know the students better, their character, their opinions. I try to make lessons enjoyable. I try to create connections with their own lives and problems. I try to show how things that we deal with in class might affect them. I use several techniques like brainstorming techniques so that they can express themselves freely without stopping them.

➤ Portugal: We were already used to use different techniques before the project, but this has helped us to focus less on the subject and promote more activities like the ones in the project. The project didn't change what we were doing before but made us realize we have to do more in this sense.

❖ Belgium: I try to promote participation in different ways using in different methods: involving them in deciding the deadlines for tasks, participating in tests, responding to student interests for example by integrating popular TV programmes into the lesson, making them chose assignments, participating in the School For Rights project, theme at GOK[6] (I am responsible for GOK at our school), using Sidekick Sam.[7]

5. Which project activity worked best?

In general, the activities that worked best for the teachers were **those that promoted interaction and collaboration** such as the hackathon, the city visits/urban walks, and the video because **they enabled students to express themselves differently**.

➤ Italy: I think that they enjoyed the European meeting. I have seen that the interest in the project has increased over time. At the beginning I had to push them to complete the activities on time. When they started to meet people from outside the school and when they made the video, they became very engaged. They were on holiday, but they met to do the job and they were proud of their video.

➤ Greece: Teacher 1: The project encouraged students to be more engaged. It promoted group work and activities outside the school timetable.

Teacher 2: They were excited to visit areas of the city that were unknown to them and see the local problems there. The freedom to take photos and express themselves differently was important. Above all the group work they were doing all the time enhanced their collaboration and communication. Their creativity has improved a lot. They had some great ideas like interviewing city members, and it was a great success. They interview them cleverly.

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[6] GOK is the Flemish Government policy for equal educational opportunities aimed to offer all children the same optimal opportunities to learn and develop. The policy consists of 3 pillars: registration right, legal protection and support of schools.

[7] Sidekick Sam is a public initiative open to all Flemish school that can use money raised from a youth welfare project to provide a teacher (Sidekick Sam) with whom pupils can talk in all confidence about everything that is on their mind.

- ➢ Portugal: We weren't present in all the activities but the ones we attended were all effective. Students had the opportunity to express and participate. Team-work was really great.

- ❖ Belgium: I think that involving pupils in making a film of the research project (does not always have to be a classroom presentation) was a great idea. Also having pupils do solution-oriented research (instead of explanatory or comparative research) was good, but time-consuming.

6. *What would you suggest for improving the project's approach?*

All teachers shared the opinion that **the project was a positive experience but that there could have been interactions among students from different countries** and that **the project should have been more widely communicated** even inside the target schools to increase the sense of ownership.

- ➢ Italy: There should be more meetings among students from different countries. Some years ago, I was part of an ERASMUS project and we had a lot of virtual meetings. It was good. In addition, it would be important to involve more the school and all the teachers in general. Some of my colleagues do not know anything about what we are doing in the project. They used to tell me: It is "your" project, but it is not my project. I think the whole school should be involved like in the other project that ActionAid has in the school (ref. Youth For Love 2).

- ➢ Greece: Teacher 1: Students should have more time for working on the project. They need more time to work on such project.

  Teacher 2: There should be more international exchange meetings to share ideas. If there had been more meetings like that, students would have connected better.

- ➢ Portugal: Because of the Covid we were really limited and there were a lot of breaks in the implementation of the activities. There should be more activities like the hackathon and the project should be more widely communicated and disseminated. We should have more time to exchange opinions and give visibility to the project.

- ❖ Belgium: The project was a success. The pupils experience was very positive. They were motivated and involved. I am proud of the students and their results. The pupils did notice difficulties in realising their actions. This sometimes can cause frustration. They would have liked to see their actions put into practice, but they realise that this is difficult. At our school, we try to develop some of the actions they mentioned, but money and people who can take on this task limited what we could do.

  I found it positive that the pupils also received some theoretical background. They have learned a lot from this project, and they will certainly take the learned skills with them to higher education.

  Maybe one more tip: I think it would be nice if the students had regular contact with the foreign schools. The internationalising aspect was sometimes lost. Chloë and Nele have guided this project well. It was well organised. Nice!

1.2.3 Key Informant Interviews

The project conducted **6 Key Informant Interviews** as per the following table.

Country	Name	Surname	Role	Gender

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Italy	Luca	Sansone	Director of CDE Creta	M
Belgium	Ellen	De Grauwe	Representative of Bataljong	F
Greece	Christos	Blatsiotis	Head officer in the Press Office in the General Secretariat for Information and Communication	M
Portugal	André	Ramos	Deputy Director and Coordinator of projects outside the school	M
Portugal	Sofia	Martins	Project Coordinator- Municipality of Faro	F

In general, all stakeholders interviewed found the project relevant because **there is the need to inform youth about participation and to engage them in participatory processes**. **All of them liked the fact that the project promoted exchanges across countries and that it had a strong European dimension.** The main **challenges identified were the Covid 19, the Euroscepticism and the need to respect the tight timeline of the projec**t. Below you can find the complete interviews.

Name and Surname of the person	Luca Sansone
Role of the person	I am the Director of the Cde Creta - I work in the field of accompaniment and growth for adolescents and pre-adolescent children.
Can you please tell me about your involvement in the project?	We were addressed by ActionAid, which was looking for contacts to start the project. We work in an integrated way with schools in the area and we contacted the Oriani Mazzini school, to which we proposed this possibility. In addition, two girls from our youth group applied to become project educators/facilitators. So I would say that our role was to make available the resources of the territory and to facilitate the participation of the school. Our role was to ensure that ActionAid paid attention to building participatory planning processes that respected all the necessary steps.
Are you aware if there had been similar projects in your community before?	All our work is based on developing and implementing participatory processes aimed at addressing the needs of the territory and at activating the resources in network with different actors. We are involved in all the community development work in the area. This project is in proximity and continuity with the work we do in the area, including the work of the youth group, which has had a lot of visibility. The strength is the ability to give continuity and presence on the territory. With respect to this project, which is much more specific, we think that the ability to build interventions of youth leadership

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	requires time, to be in a relationship with the young people themselves so that they feel part of a group and a territory.
Considering the needs and problems that there are in your community, how relevant was the project for you?	I think that the final outcome of the project, i.e. the improvement of the kindergarten walls, responded to a real need mainly of the teacher. I think that making the courtyard of the municipal kindergarten in the working-class neighbourhood more beautiful, more welcoming, more colourful is significant, even if it is a specific and sectoral need because it means solving a small problem which otherwise remains and adds up to other small things, creating a situation of institutional abandonment.

However, I don't think only the outcome needs to be looked at but the whole process that brought to it. I was less involved in the meetings with the students, but I have seen some pieces of analysis of the needs and resources of the area made by the young people and I think there were some interesting things. They have become more aware about the territory.

Finally, I think it was interesting that they had the possibility to confront with young people from other countries. |
| **In your opinion, how effective has the project been in involving and motivating community members in particular young people?**

Why do you think that? | I know that other organisations in the area have been involved and that they have also had discussions with institutions, in particular the 6th Municipality.

Regarding the engagement of young people, we need to take into consideration that the target group was a class from the Oriani Mazzini Institute. These young people have a lower level of competence and a slightly more complicated living situation than the average young people. It was difficult to keep the group together, they have other visions and perspectives of life. Perhaps for many of these young people going to school or participating in this kind of projects was not a priority based on their personal and family history, but they coped well and remained.

In addition, thanks to the project we managed to get in touch with young people who then came to us also for other specific needs, for example a girl at risk of eviction or a pregnant girl. |
| **Which were the greatest obstacles that the project faced?** | One big challenge is linked to the nature of the project itself. Indeed, the timing of a project is not always compatible with that of a participatory design process. Project's duration and deadlines sometimes force you to skip fundamental steps in the process.

Both in terms of investment of human and economic resources but also in terms of deadlines, there must be more freedom to go along |

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with the process. One has to understand when a further step can be taken according to the degree of awareness of those involved in the process. You have to navigate a bit by sight in participatory planning, while project times are a bit more dictated by the timetable and fixed deadlines. Donors that fund similar projects must be aware that participatory planning and active citizenship only work if they are inserted within a dimension of activation that the territory is already doing. This is also a safeguard for the young people involved, who are not involved in something very small but they are part of something bigger that continues beyond the project. Projects must fit into long-term participatory planning processes that already exist and should not be an end in themselves.

People are involved in participatory planning processes because they are passionate about it, they feel recognised and involved. The relatrionship with the people involved must be taken care of. The only changes I have seen in these years of work have happened when there was a strong relationship with the people involved in the process. When I know people's story and they know mine, we can navigate together towards a common direction. The institutional approach in recent years has been very sectoral and imposed from above and this is not effective.

What suggestions do you have in terms of addressing these obstacles?	I think that ActionAid has somehow made this step of listening and involving those who work in the territory. Its approach was to try to build something with those who were already working in that area. I think that an interesting perspective is to imagine a more constant collaboration. ActionAid, like other large organisations, should try to find actors with similar visions and analytical skills with whom to build shared projects and not to contact them only when the project is already approved. This could give continuity to places and projects that already exist. For example, I like Save the Children's approach of creating "Punti Luce" in the territory because it means putting down roots in a place and therefore, every time you go to design, you build with those who work there. ActionAid has a strong capacity and authority in terms of advocacy towards national institutions, compared to the small and medium-sized organisations that are in the area. However, ActionAid lacks the ability and the possibility to be on all territories and live them. Families have our phone numbers and call us if they don't have food, if they don't have computers to do the DAD, etc. This is the bargaining chip, the possibility of effective collaboration between us, the local agencies, and you. We tested it in the Covid emergency (e.g. on the issue of distributing tablets to those in need) but it could/should

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	become a common practice to be built together, understanding with what perspectives and horizon of meaning.
Do you have any other comments/suggestions?	I would suggest organizing a closing discussion with the project educators. For us, it was also important to get young people of our youth group into the world of work through the project. They were users of the center and now have become promoters and are active in various social fields, demonstrating that the work we did was effective.

Name and Surname of the person	Ellen De Grauwe
Role of the person	I work for Bataljong- I gave a presentation on participation as a guest speaker during the international hackathon. Bataljong also previously involved in the national advocacy event.
Can you please tell me about your involvement in the project?	I gave an online workshop about the participation level in Flanders and more information about Youth councils: How do they work, what are the challenges and illustrated with some examples.
Are you aware if there had been similar projects in your community before?	Yes. Our organisation is involved with other international projects via Erasmus +.
Considering the needs and problems that there are in your community, how relevant was the project for you?	It was nice to bring some information about participation to the young people of different countries. It was very nice to hear what their questions were. They really understood what the presentation was about and could use the information to discuss in their groups.
In your opinion, how effective has the project been in involving and motivating community members in particular young people? Why do you think that?	This kind of international projects give new perspectives to young people. Learning each other's backgrounds, culture, and discover each other's ideas .. it's a formal and non-formal learning process.

Which were the greatest obstacles that the project faced?	I think it was the covid pandemic... organising everything online is big shift to make.
Do you have any other comments/suggestions?	In my opinion, international experiences for young people are something special. They can learn so much just from talking to other young people and try to understand different cultures. Good job!

Name and Surname of the person	**Christos Blastiotis**
Role of the person	Head officer in the Press Office in the General Secretariat for Information and Communication in Thessaloniki
Can you please tell me about your involvement in the project?	I participated as a speaker in project's workshops.
Are you aware if there had been similar projects in your community before?	There are similar projects conducted by local organizations and the government but not many with the same European dimension of the EducAction project.
Considering the needs and problems that there are in your community, how relevant was the project for you?	Thessaloniki is the most second populated city in Greece. There is a great need for information about the European Union. Youth are looking for information about opportunities for their lives in terms of education, civic participation inside their communities but also about what happens in Europe. I think the project was relevant because it addressed this need.
In your opinion, how effective has the project been in involving and motivating community members in particular young people? **Why do you think that?**	I think there was a great interest around project's meetings among young people, teachers and local government.

Which were the greatest obstacles that the project faced?	The Covid 19 situation was the main problem. Second, there is an issue among young Greek people related to this question "Do I have the same the opportunities like other young people in Europe?". The economic crisis in Greece has increased the Euroscepticism among young people who do not have access to adequate information about the opportunities they have like other young Europeans. Some young people feel that they are not educated enough to engage with the EU. Fortunately, during the workshops we faced little scepticism and we addressed it.
What suggestions do you have in terms of addressing these obstacles?	I think that Europe should focus on young people and fight the Euroscepticism. It should encourage their participation through organizations like yours. Europe needs projects like EducAction alongside other civil actions. We need to inform young people that we are all equal in the European Union and that there are opportunities for everyone at all levels.

Name and Surname of the person	**André Lara Ramos**
Role of the person	Deputy Director and Coordinator of projects outside the school
Can you please tell me about your involvement in the project?	I supported the overall implementation of the project, identified the classes to be involved in the activities and helped with the logistical part and the communication with the school.
Are you aware if there had been similar projects in your community before?	There are national programmes such as the Youth Parliament but also some Erasmus+ projects that have similar objectives.

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Considering the needs and problems that there are in your community, how relevant was the project for you?	I think that the project has been able to create a participation routine more than solving specific issues or problems.
In your opinion, how effective has the project been in involving and motivating community members in particular young people? **Why do you think that?**	In my opinion, the project has helped student to understand and reflect about their role in the society.
Which were the greatest obstacles that the project faced?	Because of the Covid 19 we were very focus on addressing concrete situations and problems and we did not have much time to think strategically about the project.
What suggestions do you have in terms of addressing these obstacles?	I think that we, as schools and community organizations, must find ways to increase our cooperation to achieve long-term objectives like establishing/strengthening more open and deeper mechanisms of democratic participation.

Name and Surname of the person	**Sofia Martins**
Role of the person	Project Coordinator- Municipality of Faro
Can you please tell me about your involvement in the project?	I participated in the project's webinar and meetings.

Are you aware if there had been similar projects in your community before?	There are a lot of projects going on in Faro arounf the topic of youth participation including national programmes, Municipality's initiatives as well as Erasmus+ projects. I think that the connections among different projects should be further strengthened.
In your opinion, how effective has the project been in involving and motivating community members in particular young people? **Why do you think that?**	I think that the duration of the project allowed the students to reflect well on the process. They had the time to understand needs, problems, exchange views and propose solutions. It is not with one event that you are able to promote participation.
Which were the greatest obstacles that the project faced?	I think that one of the main challenges is to create synergies and build on other processes that are ongoing to sustain the results.
What suggestions do you have in terms of addressing these obstacles?	As I said, my suggestion is to strengthen the connections with other projects and with stakeholders that are working on similar issues.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

❖ **RELEVANCE**

The Focus Group Discussions with the students in all target countries **confirmed that the project addressed a relevant problem because young people report that their degree of participation is quite low and limited both inside and outside the school**. Most young people are not aware of existing opportunities for participation or do not trust institutional decision-making processes because they feel that their opinion will not matter in terms of the final decision. In addition, sometimes young people lack confidence in themselves and in their skills.

This was also confirmed by the teachers and the stakeholders interviewed.

❖ **COHERENCE**

The project was aligned with other projects and interventions that were active in the target contexts. I**t promoted a good networking and connection with other initiatives implemented by the project partners**

and other organizations. This was confirmed in the Key Informant Interviews with national stakeholders in particular by the one in Italy.

❖ **EFFECTIVENESS**

Analysing the findings of the questionnaires, the Focus Group Discussions with students and teachers as well as the Key Informant Interviews with relevant stakeholders it is evident that **the project activities have been effective in terms of enhancing participants' confidence in their skills and in the role that they can play**. The project enabled the participation of students, strengthened their ability to express themselves, their perspectives and opinions on things that affect them, enabled them to identify problems and find creative solutions, made them work together and strengthened class cohesion.

On the other hand, **the project has been less effective in terms of engaging teachers and the school in general**. This is also likely linked to the Covid 19 situation that limited school's ability to widely engage in the project. Finally, **the project has enabled the students to meet and engage with local associations and institutions that they were not familiar with**. This has made them **more aware of the opportunities of participation that might exist in their neighbourhood/city**. However, **most young people who participated in the project do not feel that their participation in institutional decision-making processes is valued** by adults.

❖ **IMPACT**

The main impact of the project can be seen at the individual level meaning at the level of the students who participated in the activities. Indeed, the evaluation shows that they have increased their cognitive and non-cognitive skills and they have become more aware and active. **At structural level, both at the level of school and community, the impact was likely to be negatively affected by the delay and the changes to the project implementation due to the Covid 19 pandemic.**

❖ **SUSTAINABILITY**

Economic sustainability: The project focused on a topic that is key to several European policies including the EU strategy on the rights of the child (2021-24), the EU Youth Strategy (2019-2027), the CoE Youth sector strategy 2030 etc. This means that **there might funding to replicate and scale up project activities and methodologies in new projects and programmes**.

Institutional sustainability: The project has promoted the engagement of local authorities, institutions, associations that might be able to adopt, promote and replicate the project results. Unfortunately, **their engagement was lower than expected due to the Covid 19 emergency**.

Recommendations:

The following recommendations aim to improve future planning and implementation of similar projects.

→ To provide a clear and strong methodological framework for the activity implementation to ensure that results and objectives are comparable across context of interventions.

→ To make sure that objectives of activities, meetings, workshops etc. are clearly explained to project participants to avoid frustration and unmet expectations.

→ To ensure that more international exchange activities are organized throughout the project implementation. It is clear that Covid 19 has limited the possibility to travel but more exchanges could have been organized online.

→ To strengthen the engagement of teachers and the whole school in general towards the project implementation to ensure that the impact is widely disseminated and maximised. This would contribute to the achievement of Specific Objective Indicator1.2: % of targeted teachers/schools that use one of the methodologies developed by the project (such as the school lab) in the second year of the project.

→ To promote a stronger engagement of the wider community and local institutions. This part was heavily affected by the COVID 19 situations that limited the ability to work outside the schools and with external stakeholders.