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YouthProAktiv

COLLECTION OF BEST PRACTICES

Inclusive Non-Formal Education Activities Fostering and Promoting the Six Core EU Values



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1. INTRODUCTION

The European Union is founded on a set of core values that underpin its mission for a united, peaceful, and inclusive Europe. These values - Respect for Human Dignity, Freedom, Democracy, Equality, Rule of Law, and Respect for Human Rights, including those of minorities- are essential to fostering a society that prioritises individual rights, social justice, and equal opportunities for all. Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights lay out these values as pillars that guide EU policy and influence member states in promoting a democratic and fair society.

In alignment with these values, this report highlights an Exchange of Best Practices on Non-Formal Education Activities led by members of the YouthProAktiv International Coalition. This initiative aims to foster awareness and better promotion of these EU values, specifically among disadvantaged youth groups. Through this exchange, participating organizations have shared their unique approaches to engaging youth in non-formal education, each of which is designed to uphold one or more of the EU's core values.

Each organization's contribution has been implemented at a local level, providing young people with valuable tools for civic engagement, social inclusion, and personal development. These practices not only raise awareness but also encourage youth to embrace and advocate for these fundamental values within their communities. The exchange provides an inspiring example of how non-formal education can play a transformative role in promoting the EU's vision of a cohesive and democratic society.

This document captures the insights, methodologies, and challenges faced by the organizations, showcasing innovative practices that align with and support the six EU values. By fostering knowledge sharing and collaboration across borders, the report serves as a practical resource for organizations aiming to deepen their commitment to the EU's core values in a meaningful and impactful way.

1.1 Who this collection of best practices is for

This collection serves as a practical resource for educators, youth workers, community leaders, and policymakers engaged in fostering inclusivity, social cohesion, and democratic participation. It aims to support professionals and organisations who work with young people, particularly those from disadvantaged or marginalised backgrounds, by offering concrete examples of non-formal education activities that uphold the EU's core values.

By using these best practices, stakeholders can enhance their programs, encouraging young people to engage meaningfully with principles such as democracy, human dignity, and equality.

1.2 Objective

The objective of this collection is to promote and strengthen the implementation of EU values through innovative non-formal education activities. It highlights effective practices that have been successful in empowering young people, particularly those who may feel excluded from traditional educational settings or civic processes.

By sharing these insights, the collection aims to inspire replication and adaptation of these models across various contexts, helping to create an inclusive European community where young people are equipped to contribute to societal development and social justice.

1.3 Using this collection

This collection is organised to provide easy access to best practices and insights. Each activity or project is presented with a detailed methodology, effectiveness analysis, and key findings, along with challenges faced and solutions employed. Readers are encouraged to explore these examples to gain inspiration and practical strategies for their own initiatives.

The collection is structured for quick navigation, allowing users to identify relevant approaches to their specific needs, whether they are developing a new program or enhancing existing non-formal education activities.

2. PARTICIPANT ORGANISATIONS



PADIL Association (Tunisia)

Association Promotion & Support to the Development of Local Initiatives (PADIL), is a non-profit organisation dedicated to fostering sustainable and inclusive development within local communities across Tunisia.

PADIL believes in the power of local communities to address socio-economic and environmental challenges effectively. Through capacity-building initiatives, resource facilitation, and partnership-driven projects, PADIL supports activities in areas such as sustainable agriculture, natural resource management, education, healthcare, and youth employment. Its vision is to be a catalyst for equitable and environmentally friendly community development, promoting local development, solidarity, civic engagement, innovation, and environmental respect.



Amicos Association (Spain)

Founded in 2000, Amicos provides essential support to individuals with intellectual disabilities, autism, cerebral palsy, brain injuries, and their families.

Amicos aims to be a resource of support for families and individuals by providing basic education, social skills training, and occupational opportunities that encourage independence and integration into society.

The organisation emphasises environmental responsibility, fostering a diverse and inclusive community consciousness, aspiring to provide holistic support across all stages of life, and advocating for disability rights and building a society where everyone is recognised as a valued citizen.



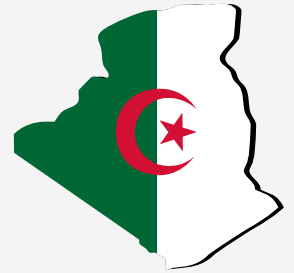


Youth Led Algeria

Inter-wilayale association operating under the approval of Algeria's Ministry of Interior and Local Authorities. With a mission to foster youth civic engagement, the association serves young Algerians across six different wilayas: Algiers, Boumerdes, Mostaghanem, Constantine, Bouira, and Mila.

Youth Led Algeria empowers young people aged 18 to 38 by enhancing their skills in communication, entrepreneurship, and leadership, aiming to build a generation equipped for civic engagement and community betterment.

The association is committed to creating spaces for constructive dialogue, skill exchange, and networking opportunities among Algerian youth. Through various initiatives, Youth Led Algeria works to bolster young people's capacity to participate actively in their communities, encouraging positive social change and fostering a sense of shared responsibility among its members.



Alba Eglesia Foundation (Romania)

Founded in 1996 in the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Viscri, Alba Eglesia focuses on sustainable transformation within rural communities in Transylvania.

The foundation's work centers around community-based initiatives that bring together local actors to set and achieve sustainable development goals. Alba Eglesia partners with academic institutions, promotes ecological agriculture, advocates for participatory democracy, and works to ensure equitable access to education for all children.

By supporting innovative business models and aligning with democratic principles, Alba Eglesia strives to harmonize community development with environmental stewardship, making a lasting impact in rural Transylvania.





União das Mutualidades Portuguesas

Founded in 1984, this higher-grade mutual association brings together mutual aid societies from across Portugal, promoting their interests and representing them at national and international levels.

Rooted in values of solidarity, equality, and social protection, União das Mutualidades Portuguesas offers a unique approach to social inclusion through mutualism – a system where individuals collectively mitigate life’s risks, ensuring shared security without reliance on state resources.

The organisation focuses on building civic engagement, inclusivity, and transparency within its membership. Their programs enhance citizen participation, especially among the elderly, marginalised, and economically vulnerable groups, strengthening Portugal's social safety net and fostering a culture of active citizenship.

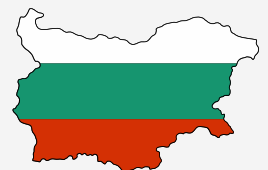


Balkan Agency for Sustainable Development (Bulgaria)

BASD operates with a vision to enhance the quality of life in the Balkans through sustainable economic growth, social inclusion, and cultural development.

Committed to fostering human potential, BASD promotes lasting change through its partnerships with local communities, governmental bodies, and international organisations. Its work includes enhancing social inclusion, providing education and skill-building opportunities, supporting green energy initiatives, and strengthening democratic processes.

BASD’s mission is rooted in the belief that a collaborative, inclusive, and ecologically balanced approach is essential for sustainable development and that everyone deserves the opportunity to thrive within their communities.





YouthProAktiv (Belgium)

We are a Belgium-based organisation dedicated to creating a proactive, entrepreneurial generation committed to societal betterment. YouthProAktiv trains young people, youth leaders, and youth workers to become future leaders capable of generating jobs, supporting sustainable development, and fostering a culture of active citizenship.



We advocate for entrepreneurship-friendly policies at both the national and international levels to empower young people and promote decent employment opportunities.

Our ultimate goal is to transform the mindset of young people from reactive to proactive, foster entrepreneurship, and champion educational reforms that allow youth to explore and develop their talents. Through its advocacy efforts and training programs, we cultivate a new generation equipped to lead, innovate, and contribute to their communities in meaningful ways.

3. COLLECTION OF BEST PRACTICES

PADIL ASSOCIATION

Name of the Activity/Project: Let's Cultivate a Sustainable Future in Metline - CULTAV-METLINE Project

Core EU Values Promoted: Respect for Human Dignity, Equality, and Respect for Human Rights, including those of minorities

Target Groups: The project is focused on disadvantaged local communities in Metline, including youth, women, and underrepresented community groups. By supporting sustainable agriculture and environmental stewardship, the project aims to empower these communities economically and socially.

Methodology:

Implementation Approach	Effectiveness Analysis
<p>The project promotes sustainable agricultural practices and environmental conservation through workshops, community meetings, and hands-on training. PADIL collaborates with local agricultural cooperatives and environmental experts to provide tailored support for community members, focusing on eco-friendly farming techniques and natural resource management.</p>	<p>This approach has effectively engaged local residents, helping them develop practical skills in sustainable agriculture while fostering a sense of community responsibility. Participants reported feeling empowered by the knowledge gained, with many expressing a renewed commitment to preserving their environment.</p>



Main Findings and Learning Points:

Empowerment through Knowledge: Participants gained essential skills in sustainable farming, which contributed to greater economic independence and self-sufficiency.

Community-Building: The collaborative nature of the project strengthened community ties and encouraged collective environmental responsibility.

Respect for Natural Resources: By promoting eco-friendly practices, the project fostered a deeper respect for natural resources and encouraged participants to adopt long-term sustainable practices.

Challenges and solutions

Cultural Resistance to Change: Some community members were initially resistant to adopting new agricultural practices. PADIL addressed this by incorporating community feedback, highlighting success stories, and providing continuous support to build trust and encourage gradual adoption.

Limited Resources and Technical Knowledge: Access to resources and specialised knowledge in sustainable agriculture was limited. PADIL partnered with local experts and secured funding to ensure participants had access to necessary materials and expertise.

Future Sustainability

PADIL plans to make the CULTAV-METLINE project a model for other regions by documenting the project's methodologies and outcomes for broader application. This project serves as a foundational step towards creating a long-lasting framework that combines economic empowerment with environmental stewardship.

AMICOS ASSOCIATION

Name of the Activity/Project: People with Disabilities as Active Citizens: Independent Living Model Approach and Environmental Actions.

Core EU Values Promoted: Respect for Human Dignity, and Respect for Human Rights.

Target Groups: The project primarily supports individuals with intellectual disabilities, autism, cerebral palsy, brain injuries, and their families. It also engages the wider local community to foster a supportive and inclusive environment for these individuals.

Methodology:

Implementation Approach	Effectiveness Analysis
<p>The project was designed with a focus on empowering individuals with disabilities to live independently. The approach involved training sessions, skills workshops, and hands-on support activities that allowed participants to develop essential life skills and gain confidence in daily living tasks. Environmental responsibility was integrated through activities like community clean-ups and environmental awareness workshops, aiming to install a sense of responsibility and active citizenship.</p>	<p>The methodologies applied were largely successful. By combining skill-building with community involvement, the project helped participants to develop greater self-esteem, environmental consciousness, and independence. Positive feedback from participants and their families highlighted the success of this holistic approach in enhancing both practical life skills and social integration.</p>



Main Findings and Learning Points:

Building Self-Esteem and Autonomy: Through consistent, skill-focused support, the project effectively improved participants' independence and self-esteem.

Community Engagement: Environmental activities created a sense of purpose and connection with the local community, further strengthening participants' sense of belonging and civic responsibility.

Holistic Benefits: Combining life skills training with environmental actions provided a balanced approach that fostered personal growth and community engagement, proving the effectiveness of multi-faceted, supportive programming.

Challenges and solutions

Engaging Participants Consistently: It was challenging to maintain consistent participation due to varying physical and cognitive abilities among participants. To address this, the team adapted activities to different ability levels and offered personalised support, creating an inclusive environment for all participants.

Limited Resources: Limited funding and resources made it challenging to meet all individualised needs. Amicos engaged community volunteers and established partnerships to maximise resource availability, ensuring sufficient support across activities.

Future Sustainability

Amicos aims to create long-term partnerships with local authorities and community groups to secure ongoing support and funding for the programme. The success of the initiative has also inspired plans to scale up by incorporating more community-led environmental projects.

Balkan Agency for Sustainable Development (BASD)

Name of the Activity/Project: *Workshop: Making Bread, Arts, and Friends*

Core EU Values Promoted: Equality

Target Groups: This project primarily targets young people from diverse backgrounds, including disadvantaged and minority groups within the community. The focus is on fostering inclusivity, building social cohesion, and encouraging mutual understanding.

Methodology:

Implementation Approach	Effectiveness Analysis
<p>BASD designed a hands-on, participatory workshop where participants learned traditional bread-making techniques and engaged in creative arts activities. These sessions encouraged collaboration, social interaction, and cultural exchange, helping participants to connect with one another while learning practical skills.</p>	<p>The workshop successfully engaged a diverse group of participants, creating an inclusive atmosphere where individuals could express themselves and learn about each other's backgrounds. Feedback indicated that participants felt a strong sense of belonging, which reinforced the workshop's impact in promoting equality and social cohesion.</p>



Main Findings and Learning Points:

Promoting Equality through Shared Experiences: The shared experience of making bread and engaging in arts created an equal platform for all participants, fostering mutual respect and understanding.

Cultural Exchange and Social Skills: The workshop allowed participants to share aspects of their cultural backgrounds, enhancing their social skills and appreciation for diversity within the community.

Skill Development: In addition to social benefits, participants acquired practical skills in bread-making and arts, which added value to their personal development.

Challenges and solutions

Language Barriers: Engaging participants from diverse linguistic backgrounds posed communication challenges. BASD overcame this by incorporating visual aids and demonstrations into the sessions, making activities accessible to all, and facilitating better understanding across language differences.

Resource Limitations: Managing resources effectively for a hands-on workshop was a challenge due to budget constraints. BASD addressed this by sourcing low-cost materials and collaborating with local businesses to donate ingredients, ensuring the workshop could proceed without compromising on quality.

Future Sustainability

BASD aims to make this workshop a recurring event within the community, strengthening its network with local organisations and cultural centres. By building long-term partnerships, BASD envisions extending the workshop's reach and creating additional community-led activities that promote equality and intercultural understanding.

YOUTH LED ALGERIA

Name of the Activity/Project: *EmpowerU Bootcamp*

Core EU Values Promoted: Equality, Democracy, and Respect for Human Rights.

Target Groups: The primary focus is on young Algerians aged 18-30, particularly those from underrepresented backgrounds, with the goal of developing their civic engagement, leadership, and entrepreneurial skills.

Methodology:

Implementation Approach	Effectiveness Analysis
The <i>EmpowerU Bootcamp</i> was structured as an intensive workshop series, featuring interactive sessions on communication, leadership, and civic engagement. Activities included group discussions, role-playing, and project-based learning that allowed participants to practice these skills in a supportive setting.	The bootcamp successfully enhanced participants' civic awareness and provided practical tools for engaging in local governance and democratic processes. Participants reported feeling more empowered to advocate for their rights and contribute positively to their communities.



Main Findings and Learning Points:

Increased Civic Engagement: By focusing on civic skills, the bootcamp encouraged participants to become more active in their communities and more aware of their roles within democratic processes.

Leadership Development: Practical exercises helped participants gain confidence in their ability to lead and collaborate, fostering a sense of responsibility and capability.

Positive Peer Influence: The group-based structure created a supportive environment where participants could learn from each other's perspectives and experiences.

Challenges and solutions

Participant Engagement: Sustaining engagement across intensive sessions was challenging. The facilitators addressed this by incorporating varied activities and providing frequent breaks, maintaining participant interest and energy throughout the programme.

Access to Resources: Limited access to digital resources affected certain aspects of the programme. Youth Led Algeria collaborated with local NGOs to provide laptops and other necessary equipment, ensuring all participants could fully engage in the bootcamp activities.

Future Sustainability

Youth Led Algeria plans to expand the *EmpowerU Bootcamp* to more regions, aiming to establish it as a recurring programme. The organisation is exploring partnerships with local authorities to secure sustainable funding and resources.

Alba Egliseia Foundation

Name of the Activity/Project: Children-Youth Exchange within Volunteering Initiatives

Core EU Values Promoted: Equality and Respect for Human Rights, including those of minorities.

Target Groups: This project serves children and youth from rural communities in Transylvania, with an emphasis on fostering inclusive, community-based initiatives that celebrate cultural diversity and heritage.

Methodology:

Implementation Approach	Effectiveness Analysis
<p>Alba Egliseia facilitated exchange programmes where children and youth participated in volunteer activities focused on heritage conservation, environmental protection, and social inclusion. The programme included cultural workshops and collaborative projects, enabling participants to work together on local community initiatives.</p>	<p>The exchange was highly effective in fostering intercultural understanding and a sense of community pride. Participants reported feeling more connected to their heritage and more motivated to contribute positively to their communities.</p>



Main Findings and Learning Points:

Community Connection: Engaging in heritage-related volunteer work allowed participants to deepen their understanding and appreciation of their local culture.

Increased Empathy and Inclusion: Working alongside peers from different backgrounds helped foster empathy and respect for diversity among participants.

Skill-Building through Volunteering: The hands-on volunteer activities provided valuable skills in teamwork, project management, and environmental stewardship.

Challenges and solutions

Logistical Challenges: Coordinating travel and activities across rural areas was complex. Alba Iglesia addressed this by partnering with local transportation services, ensuring participants could attend and engage fully.

Cultural Differences: Navigating different cultural norms posed initial communication challenges. The programme incorporated cultural orientation sessions to familiarise participants with each other's backgrounds, fostering smoother collaboration and mutual respect.

Future Sustainability

Alba Iglesia aims to expand the exchange to include more rural areas and engage a broader youth demographic. The organisation is working on securing additional funding and building stronger partnerships with educational institutions to ensure the programme's continued growth and sustainability. These efforts are intended to empower more young people to become active, culturally aware citizens in their communities.

União das Mutualidades Portuguesas

Name of the Activity/Project: *Beyond NEET – Promoting Youth Social Inclusion through Volunteering.*

Core EU Values Promoted: Respect for Human Dignity, Equality, and Respect for Human Rights.

Target Groups: The project primarily serves young people who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET) and includes civil society organisations (CSOs) and local communities that benefit from increased social inclusion.

Methodology:

Implementation Approach	Effectiveness Analysis
The project included needs assessments, capacity-building sessions for CSOs, and inclusive volunteering programmes tailored for NEET youth. It incorporated mentorship systems to guide participants and help them engage with their communities.	The project achieved significant success in empowering NEET youth through skill-building and social inclusion. Both participants and civil society organisations reported positive outcomes, including improved self-esteem, enhanced social skills, and stronger community ties.



Main Findings and Learning Points:

Personal Growth through Volunteering: The inclusive volunteering programme allowed NEET youth to gain confidence and practical skills, facilitating personal growth and community integration.

Increased Capacity of Civil Society Organisations: Capacity-building sessions strengthened CSOs' ability to support NEET youth, creating a more inclusive support network.

Awareness of Human Rights: By participating in inclusive activities, NEET youth gained awareness of human rights, which encouraged them to advocate for their own rights and those of others.

Challenges and solutions

Engaging NEET Youth: Initially, some NEET youth were hesitant to participate due to various personal barriers. The project addressed this through targeted outreach and one-on-one engagement, building trust and motivating youth to join.

Resource Constraints for CSOs: Ensuring CSOs had sufficient resources posed a challenge. The project provided continuous support and supplementary training sessions, equipping CSOs to better engage NEET youth in the programme.

Future Sustainability

União das Mutualidades Portuguesas is working to create a transnational network of CSOs dedicated to youth social inclusion. Through these collaborations, the project's frameworks and resources can be replicated and scaled across different regions, enhancing social inclusion opportunities for NEET youth. The programme's sustainability plan includes ongoing mentorship and knowledge-sharing platforms, allowing organisations to continue supporting NEET youth effectively.

Name of the Activity/Project: *Your Vote. Your EU*

Core EU Values Promoted: Democracy and Rule of Law

Target Groups: The project engaged young European citizens, particularly first-time voters, NEET youth (Not in Education, Employment, or Training), and marginalised youth from Belgium, Spain, and Greece. The primary aim was to equip these groups with the knowledge and motivation needed to participate actively in the democratic process, especially in the European Parliament elections.

Methodology:

Implementation Approach	Effectiveness Analysis
<p>YPA organised a series of webinars, workshops, and an extensive social media campaign aimed at raising awareness about the EU democratic processes and the importance of participating in the 2024 European Parliament elections. Activities included an introductory webinar on entrepreneurship and youth employability, a seminar on understanding EU elections, and workshops on analysing MEPs' entrepreneurial profiles, contacting MEPs, and coordinating a social media campaign. The social media campaign was designed to engage a wider audience, encouraging young people to register and participate in the elections.</p>	<p>The combination of educational events and social media engagement proved successful. Feedback from participants indicated an increased understanding of the EU's democratic processes and the role of MEPs, as well as heightened motivation to vote and engage with policy-makers.</p>



Main Findings and Learning Points:

Increased Civic Awareness: The project significantly improved participants' understanding of EU democratic processes and the impact of their vote.

Empowerment to Engage with MEPs: Workshops provided participants with practical skills to contact and communicate with MEPs, giving them a direct avenue to voice their concerns.

Enhanced Social Media Reach: The social media campaign extended the project's impact, effectively mobilising a broader youth audience in support of EU democratic participation.

Challenges and solutions

Maintaining Youth Engagement: While engaging young people over an extended programme presented an initial challenge, the team successfully created a dynamic learning environment by incorporating diverse activities and interactive online tools.

Maximising Reach with Limited Resources: To broaden the project's impact across multiple regions, YPA leveraged strategic partnerships with local NGOs and engaged dedicated volunteers. This resourceful approach enabled the organisation to reach a wider audience in Belgium, Spain, and Greece, ensuring effective delivery and meaningful connections with young participants.

Future Sustainability

YPA plans to continue building on this project by strengthening partnerships with local organisations and expanding similar campaigns to other EU countries. The success of the social media outreach highlights the potential for further digital campaigns to promote democratic engagement. Additionally, YPA has created several educational resources to sustain civic awareness and participation in EU democratic processes among youth.

4. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The Best Practices on Non-Formal Education Activities project has demonstrated the powerful role of non-formal education in advancing the core values of the European Union. By focusing on disadvantaged and marginalised youth, each initiative within the project successfully fostered inclusion, civic awareness, and empowerment, strengthening community bonds across diverse groups.

The participating organisations illustrated several key outcomes that reinforce the EU's commitment to a fair and democratic society:

- Strengthened Civic Engagement: Projects emphasising Democracy and Rule of Law empowered young people to engage actively in democratic processes, showing the impact of targeted educational efforts on building informed, proactive citizens.
- Enhanced Social Inclusion: Activities centred on Equality and Respect for Human Rights offered crucial support to marginalised youth, equipping them with valuable skills, resources, and the confidence to participate meaningfully in their communities.
- Community Empowerment through Environmental Responsibility: Initiatives that incorporated environmental actions gave participants a shared sense of responsibility, underscoring how sustainable practices can foster social cohesion alongside ecological awareness.
- Resourcefulness and Adaptability: In overcoming challenges, each organisation demonstrated remarkable resilience by forming strategic partnerships, using available resources creatively, and tailoring activities to meet participants' diverse needs. This adaptability was essential to ensuring impactful and sustainable programming.

To build upon these successes, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Expand Partnerships for Greater Impact: Organisations are encouraged to further develop collaborations with local and regional entities to extend the reach of their initiatives and secure resources for long-term sustainability.
- Develop Digital Resources for Continuous Engagement: Establishing online platforms with accessible workshops and resources can help maintain engagement even after project completion, especially for those in remote or marginalised communities.
- Prioritise Inclusivity in Programme Design: Ensuring activities are designed to meet the needs of diverse participants will maximise engagement and foster a truly empowering experience for all.
- Integrate Environmental Stewardship in Social Programmes: Including environmental responsibility within educational and social activities supports a holistic approach, promoting ecological sustainability alongside social development.
- Encourage Knowledge Sharing and Replication of Best Practices: Documenting successful methodologies and sharing them widely can serve as a valuable resource for other non-formal education providers, facilitating the spread of impactful practices across the EU and beyond.

Together, these insights and strategies provide a roadmap for sustaining and expanding the influence of non-formal education, empowering young people to embrace EU values and contribute positively to their communities.



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