



Co-funded by
the European Union



A Research-based Guide to Engagement & Activism

Empowering Youth through hiking





Co-funded by
the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.
Project: PATH - Promoting Activism Through Hiking, nr: 101183333.

Image Credits:
Images from Canva and PATH Consortium.

This document is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 Int



PATH



vals



Table of Contents

<u>Foreword</u>	1
<u>Introduction - The PATH to Youth Engagement</u>	2
<u>Chapter 1</u> Understanding today's young hiker: insights from our survey	7
<u>Chapter 2</u> The power of Co-Design: involving youth from the start	13
<u>Chapter 3</u> Digital trails: crafting an engaging online presence	22
<u>Chapter 4</u> Clearing the PATH: overcoming barriers to youth participation	32
<u>Chapter 5</u> Cultivating a community: long-term engagement and leadership	39
<u>Chapter 6</u> Sustining Momentum: ensuring future youth involvement	49
<u>Chapter 7</u> The Youth Engagement Action Toolkit	60
<u>Annexes</u>	71

FOREWORD

Welcome to 'Empowering Youth through hiking,' a methodology developed as part of the PATH - Promoting Activism Through Hiking Erasmus+ project.

PATH is a European co-funded project coordinated by F.I.E (Federazione Italiana Escursionismo), in partnership with four other organizations — ASD Trekkify APS, Inovatyvi Karta, Viaje a la Sostenibilidad, and ERA - European Hiking Association. Together, these partners represent three EU countries plus an umbrella organization (ERA), bringing diverse perspectives and expertise.

The core idea of the PATH project is that increased **youth participation in the associative life of hiking federations and associations** will bring huge mutual added value: to the associations benefiting from young people's perspectives and skills, and to young people benefiting from healthy activities and new forms of civic participation.

This document is inspired by the need to address several key **challenges**: the lack of youth participation and leadership in hiking associations, potential communication skill gaps within these associations, and the desire to promote co-design activities in outdoor sports.

To better understand these challenges, an **online survey** was designed and distributed across the EU by the PATH Consortium, with over 168 young people aged 16-25 completing it. The results, presented throughout this document and summarized in Appendix 1, offer valuable insights.




This document outlines the **PATH methodology**, which includes strategies and resources for engaging young people in sports associations and federations through outdoor sports activities, promoting meaningful and long-term youth involvement.

Our goal is to help hiking (and outdoor) associations create more **effective, inclusive, and relevant solutions** by ensuring the voices of **young people** are heard and valued.

The PATH to Youth Engagement

This section outlines the context that inspired the Consortium to develop the **PATH methodology**, designed to promote greater youth engagement and active participation in both the social life and decision-making processes of sports clubs and organizations.

The specific objectives of this section are:

-  To explore the key challenges faced by sports associations, particularly hiking clubs, in attracting young members and promoting their active involvement.
-  To emphasize the importance of the PATH methodology as a tool to promote youth engagement.
-  To present a comprehensive approach to foster meaningful and long-term youth involvement.

1. What's the context for the PATH Methodology?

Recent statistics show that 65% of young people aged 15-24 participate in sports, fitness, or recreational physical activities at least once a week – a promising figure. However, this encouraging level of physical engagement contrasts with another reality: young people remain **largely absent from active roles** within sports associations and federations across Europe.

It's this gap that inspired the creation of the PATH methodology—a new approach aimed at not just getting youth moving in the outdoors but also getting them meaningfully involved.

PATH seeks to empower young people (aged 16-30) to step into leadership, contribute to their communities, and build lasting connections within hiking and outdoor associations.

To attract and inspire young people to become active participants, sports clubs must evolve. This begins with experimenting with and embracing **innovative engagement strategies** tailored to the needs and interests of the younger generation.

Co-design – a collaborative approach that brings together multiple stakeholders, including young people, in the design and development of products, services, or systems – is crucial. It actively involves young people in shaping the strategies and activities meant for them. By involving youth directly, associations can better align their activities with **young people's interests**, boosting **engagement** and fostering a **stronger sense of belonging**.

2. The PATH project aims

PATH aims to address three key needs identified by the Consortium:



Lack of participation in sports (hiking) associations among young people: most sports federations, particularly those related to hiking, lack youth representation and leadership.



Lack of communication skills in hiking associations/federations: an aging management structure can impact the ability to communicate and promote services effectively.



Promote co-design activities in outdoor sport: actively involve specific groups (youth, in our case) to ensure club activities are engaging, inclusive, and reflect their interests.

PATH pursues four main objectives:



To involve young people in hiking activities as a tool to enhance their **participation in associative activities**.



To improve **communication skills** within sports and hiking associations/federations.



To promote **European paths through co-design activities** to foster European transnational natural heritage.



To raise awareness of **environmental protection** issues among young people through hiking.

3. The PATH Methodology development: six key steps

The development of the PATH methodology followed six key steps:



Step 01 - Research: A field analysis, including the online survey (results in [Appendix 1](#)), was conducted to explore challenges and understand low youth participation.

Step 02 - Development of the methodology: This document, outlining strategies and material, was created to develop more effective, inclusive, and relevant solutions by ensuring that young people's voices are heard and valued.

Step 03 - Testing and review: Methodology testing during a transnational training event (Lithuania, July 2025).

Step 04 - Preparation for piloting: National training sessions for staff and young people in co-design activities.

Step 05 - Pilot actions: In each of the three countries—Spain, Italy, and Lithuania—a group of young people (5 participants per country) will be engaged in pilot actions along designated E-paths. Each group will select a specific section of the E-path that crosses their country. With support from staff members of the participating organisations, the young participants will actively promote their chosen section. Activities may include mapping, storytelling, local engagement, digital content creation, and awareness-raising to highlight the cultural, natural, and historical significance of the E-paths.

Step 6 - Promotional campaign: Creation of a promotional campaign based on piloting results and creation of a *Booklet* containing the promotional campaigns of the E-paths.

4. Who is this Methodology intended for?

This methodology and its tools are designed for a wide audience, including:

- Hiking associations.
- Sports clubs seeking to engage young people.
- Youth organizations.
- Policymakers.

What makes this approach especially valuable is its **transferability**. The practical tools included are adaptable to different local, cultural, and organizational contexts.

Whether you're a grassroots hiking group or a large-scale sports federation, these tools can be customized to fit your environment, sparking a broader movement of inclusion, innovation, and active participation.



Understanding today's young hiker: insights from our survey

This section presents and analyzes the **findings from the research** conducted by the PATH Consortium to develop an effective strategy to engage young people in hiking associations and federations, enabling them to play a key role in these organizations.

The specific objectives of this section are:



To understand the current landscape of young hikers.



To inform the development of an engagement strategy to involve young people in hiking clubs, fostering their active participation and leadership in these organizations.

1.1 Findings from the field research

To effectively engage young people in hiking, we must first understand their current habits, motivations, and the challenges they face.

The PATH project survey, involving 168 respondents aged 16-25 from several European countries (primarily Italy, Lithuania, and Spain), sheds light on these aspects.

Total respondents:

168

Female



Male



Age groups

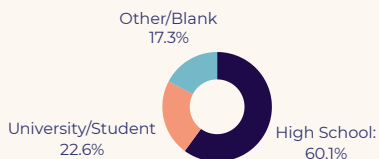
110

16-18 years

58

18-25 years

Education level



Countries represented



Hiking interest & participation: a paradox?

At first glance, hiking seems popular among youth – but most remain disconnected from formal associations. Our survey explored this paradox:

● Interest in hiking: Average rating of **7.05 out of 10**.

● Participation:

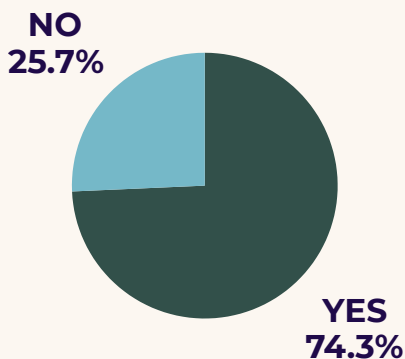
☐ **Yes: 74.3%** of surveyed youth participate in hiking.

☐ No: 25.7%

● **Membership in hiking associations:** Despite high participation, only 12% are currently members of hiking associations (85% are not current members, 3% were past members).

This gap reveals deeper challenges and opportunities that must be addressed through thoughtful, youth-centered approaches.

Do you participate in hiking?



How do you hike?

Frequency (among participants):

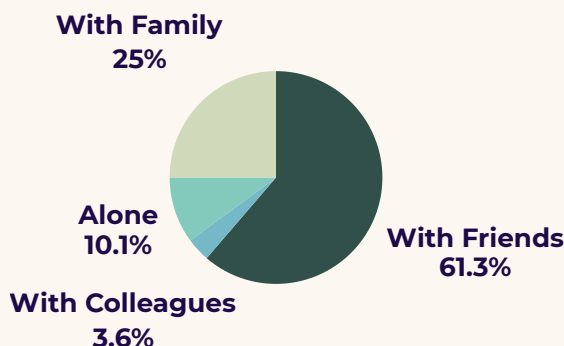
- ☐ Occasionally: ~52.1%
- ☐ Rarely: ~24.3%
- ☐ Monthly: ~15.3%
- ☐ Weekly: ~8.3%

Preferred hiking groups: Hiking is a social experience

- ☐ With friends: 61.3%
- ☐ With family: 25.0%
- ☐ Alone: 10.1%
- ☐ With colleagues: 3.6%

Insight: The challenge? Many youth don't have friends who hike. This can lead to exclusion, especially for beginners.

Preferred hiking groups



What motivates you?

Understanding motivations is key to designing appealing activities.

Top 5 reasons for hiking:

1. Nature: 83.9%
2. Physical activity: 60.1%
3. Adventure: 59.5%
4. Socializing: 55.4%
5. Scenery: 50.0%

Most enjoyable part of hiking (open-ended responses):

1. Scenery/Views: 29.8%
2. Socializing: 21.4%
3. Nature: 13.7%

"Hiking through forests and taking breaks to admire the view."
Luca, 17, Italy

Insight: Hiking fulfills multiple needs – from wellness to friendship to curiosity. Events organized by associations should aim to amplify these layers.



Preferences & habits

Preferred activities during hiking (average ratings 1-10):

- ☐ Group activities: 8.06
- ☐ Camping: 7.79
- ☐ Learning about how to survive in nature: 7.29
- ☐ Night hiking: 7.20
- ☐ Group games: 7.11

Preferred hike length (distribution):

- ☐ 5-10 km: 38%
- ☐ 11-15 km: 35%
- ☐ 16-20 km: 12%
- ☐ Less than 5 km: 9%
- ☐ More than 20 km: 7%

Seasonal preferences (average ratings 1-10):

- ☐ Spring: 7.91
- ☐ Summer: 7.73
- ☐ Autumn: 7.18
- ☐ Winter: 5.57

What holds you back? The top barriers to hiking

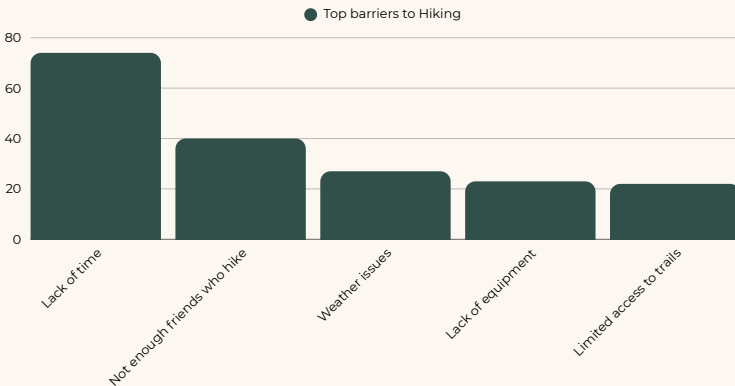
Identifying barriers is the first step to overcoming them.

1. Lack of time: 74%
2. Not enough friends who hike: 40%
3. Weather issues: 27%
4. Lack of equipment: 23%
5. Limited access to trails: 22%

“Lack of time, I don’t have enough friends who hike.” – Luca, 17, Italy

“Lack of time, limited access to trails.” – Ieva, 16, Lithuania

Insight: While 74.3% of youth say they hike, and 61.3% report doing so with friends, 40% still say they don’t have friends who hike. This highlights a divide: some youth are supported by active peer circles, while others are motivated to hike independently but lack social reinforcement. These more isolated youth might hike less frequently or feel excluded from deeper engagement. Addressing this could involve beginner-friendly, peer-led group events, or systems that help match young hikers with each other.






These survey findings provide a clear foundation. Young people are interested in nature, adventure, and social connection through hiking. However, practical constraints, such as time, a lack of companions, and access issues, often stand in their way, alongside a disconnection from formal hiking associations. The following chapters will explore how your association can bridge these gaps and harness the enthusiasm of young people.

In the next chapter, we explore how **co-design** can bridge these gaps and empower young hikers to shape their own experiences.

The power of Co-Design: involving youth from the start

Once we understand young hikers' needs and motivations (as explored in Chapter 1), the next crucial step is to involve them directly in crafting solutions. This is where co-design becomes a fundamental element of the PATH methodology. This chapter explores the **principles of co-design** as a fundamental element of the PATH methodology, aiming to foster greater involvement and active participation of young people in hiking associations and federations.

The specific objectives of this section are:

-  To apply co-design principles in hiking associations to enhance youth engagement.
-  To explore effective strategies for implementing co-design in youth-focused hiking initiatives.
-  To provide guidance on planning and organizing successful co-design sessions.

2.1 What is Co-design?

Co-design is about creating something **together**, rather than designing something solely **for** others. Instead of letting experts make all the decisions, co-design actively involves the people who will be most affected by the outcome—in this case, young hikers—right from the start. In co-design, participants are not just consulted or studied; they are equal partners, collaborating to shape ideas and solutions.

Co-design involves creating both the process and the outcome together, this way, the process feels more relevant and natural, rather than being imposed by outside experts who may not fully understand the association's context. Through this approach, the ideas generated make sense of everybody's needs, which in turns foster **belonging** and **trust**.

For example, if we engage youth in a co-design process to make activities that are attractive also for them, they will be extremely interested in proposing ideas that consider their expectations and desires. This approach not only increases participation but also makes the results more sustainable, as people are more likely to support projects they helped shape.

Let's imagine together some scenarios of possible topics to treat in the PATH co-design activity:

- plan engaging hiking activities for youth;
- engage youth in decision-making within the association;
- engaging youth in communication strategies.

How can we transform these challenges into opportunities? With the How Might We technique, we can start thinking about problems in other terms, opening up our minds to new possibilities.

- Challenge: Youth are not joining our hikes.
 - *How Might We* plan engaging hiking activities for youth so that they are willing to join them?
- Challenge: Youth are not involved in decision-making.
 - *How Might We* engage youth in decision-making within the association to nurture young participation?
- Challenge: Our communication doesn't reach the youth.
 - *How Might We* create an effective communication strategy for the association so that youth are engaged?

These questions prompt action and exploration, opening the floor for several solutions.

Participation is not just about being present but about having a real voice in the decision-making process.

Co-design ensures that diverse perspectives are heard, reducing the risk of solutions that overlook or exclude certain groups.

When people feel valued and included, they are more motivated to invest time and effort into the project's success. The goal of co-design is to move from '**designing for**' to '**designing by**'.

2.2 The core principles of Co-Design

To be effective, the PATH methodology's approach to co-design is guided by five core principles. These principles, which synthesize concepts from across this manual, ensure the process is inclusive, empowering, and genuinely collaborative.

Shared power: This is the foundation. It means moving from a top-down model to a partnership where decision-making is distributed. Youth are not just consulted; they are given a real voice and influence over the project's direction and outcomes.

Prioritize relationships: The process is built on strong, authentic connections. Taking the time to build trust and mutual respect between all participants, especially across generations, is essential for open and honest collaboration.

Experience-based action: Co-design is about learning by doing. The process should be active and participatory, using hands-on workshops and real-world testing rather than just discussion.

Mutual growth & capability: The goal is to build skills and confidence in everyone involved. The association's staff learn more about youth perspectives, while young participants develop valuable leadership, communication, and planning skills.

Responsive dialogue & recognition: The process should be flexible and responsive, involving active listening, plan adaptation, and consistent recognition of each participant's contributions to foster ownership and appreciation.

2.3 How to apply co-design in hiking associations/federations

Co-designing techniques can be adapted to many fields and can help find innovative solutions to a wide range of challenges. Let's explore how co-design can be applied to the hiking world, integrating this valuable approach into our methodology.

In hiking associations and federations, co-design offers a collaborative way to develop solutions that genuinely address the needs of members and the broader community.

To effectively implement co-design within hiking associations, it is essential to understand that it involves a shift from traditional decision-making processes. Rather than leaders making choices on behalf of the group, co-design emphasizes working together, actively listening, and valuing each perspective to build inclusive and community-driven solutions.

The following approaches can help you effectively engage young people within your organization:



Creating a Youth Council within your club: Young people should regularly meet to co-create trail ideas, event themes, and influence the hiking calendar, gear choices, and safety protocols—bringing fresh, relevant perspectives to the club.



Encourage peer leadership: Train young hikers as ambassadors and assign them select weekends to lead hikes—planning routes, managing groups, and sharing insights—offering real-time, hands-on leadership experience.



Organization of Co-design workshops: Give young people a meaningful role in shaping events, routes, and promotions—supported by a dedicated facilitator to guide the process.

2.4 The role of facilitator in Co-Design

The facilitator is a designated staff member within the association who will play a central role in supporting and guiding the co-design process. His/her contribution will be essential to ensure that co-design is both practical and effective in the context of hiking and outdoor activities.

Steps to integrate Co-Design:



2.5 Co-Design into action: the co-design workshop

Imagine your hiking club/federation wants to attract more youth participants. Where should you start? Let's put our co-design knowledge into action! This is a great opportunity to involve young people in shaping solutions that directly impact them.

1) Recruit: Gather a small group (around 10 people) from both inside and outside your organization—including young people and staff—to ensure a mix of perspectives.

2) Prepare materials: Tailor materials (sticky notes, markers, templates like the PATH Canvas) to the co-design techniques you'll use.

3) Introduction and context: Begin with a presentation of the organization (if needed) so participants understand its background. This sets the stage for the PATH Canvas (see Chapter 7 for additional guidance) which the facilitator will explain.

4) Define the challenge/opportunity: Clearly articulate the problem: finding effective ways to engage and attract youth participants to our hiking club.

5) Introduce techniques and practice: The facilitator introduces co-design techniques (see below). All participants practice them in small groups, focusing on real challenges and solutions (e.g., more engaging online communication, adventurous outdoor experiences).

6) Generate ideas and co-create: Encourage a wide variety of ideas using techniques like Six Thinking Hats or Brainwriting. Use the PATH Canvas to co-create new ideas.

7) Develop a roadmap: The workshop should involve creating an implementation timeline. This is fundamental to drawing a concrete strategy. Ideally, at least one suggested activity will be selected and brought to life.

8) Evaluation: The final stage is dedicated to evaluation: What worked well? What could be improved? Facilitators can choose methods like observation, surveys, or pre/post-tests.

Click [here](#) to explore another example of how to evaluate the team's experience with co-design.

2.6 Key Co-Design techniques (with examples)

As a facilitator, there are several methods you can incorporate into your co-design process (e.g. conducting feedback surveys; using shared Google Docs to gather comments and suggestions etc.).

Below, you'll find more detailed examples of co-design techniques.

- **Parallel thinking process: Six Thinking Hats**

A structured method where participants “wear” different metaphorical hats representing specific thinking modes to explore an idea from multiple perspectives without conflict.

- **6-3-5 Method: Brainwriting**

A silent, collaborative idea-generation technique where 6 people each write 3 ideas in 5 minutes, then pass their sheet to the next person to build on the previous ideas, fostering quick and diverse contributions.

- **Idea generation: Crazy 8s**

A fast-paced sketching exercise where participants fold a sheet into 8 sections and sketch 8 different ideas in 8 minutes, pushing creativity and rapid exploration of concepts.

- **Inventive thinking: SCAMPER**

A checklist-based technique that prompts innovation by encouraging you to Substitute, Combine, Adapt, Modify, Put to another use, Eliminate, or Reverse elements of an idea or process.

- **Decision-making: Dot voting**

A democratic way to prioritize ideas where participants place colored dots next to their favorite concepts or solutions, visually identifying the most favored options.

- **Co-design template**

- **PATH Canvas**

- This set of canvases, adapted from the GREEN CULTURE Europe Next Gen project, is a helpful guide for facilitating the co-design process. From clustering and analysis to building a roadmap, these tools support facilitators and participants in developing realistic and concrete solutions to engage youth participation in hiking clubs.



Use Post-its and markers to help everyone visualize each step of the process—and remember, mistakes are part of the journey!

In the next chapter, we explore how to **communicate more effectively with young people** through the channels they already use and trust.





Further reading & resources for this Chapter

- [What is co-design?](#) (EN)
- [Guide to co-design](#) (EN)
- [Co-designing with young people](#) (EN)

Additional resources related to co-design

1. [Community-Led Co-design Kit](#)

An open-source toolkit for sharing knowledge about how to do co-design led by community members and organizations.

- LANGUAGE: EN

2. [How Might We \(HMW\)](#)

Introduction to a design thinking method that allows designers to reframe and open up their problem statements for efficient, targeted and innovative ideation session.

- LANGUAGE: EN

3. [Service Design Tools](#)

The open collection of tools and tutorials that helps dealing with complex design challenges.

- LANGUAGE: EN

Digital Trails: crafting and engaging online presence

To attract young people and foster their active participation in hiking associations, it's necessary to **communicate** with them through the most **appropriate channels** they already use—especially digital tools and online platforms.

The specific objectives of this sections are:



To provide hiking associations with tips to improve their social media presence and visibility.



To identify digital tools and platforms to be included in hiking associations' communication strategy and activities.



To attract younger generations to actively take part in hiking associations.

3.1 Where do youth engage online?

Younger generations are significantly more likely to use the internet and social media daily.

- EU Statistics: 96% of EU young people aged 16-29 use the internet daily, compared to 84% of the adult generation. Their main activity is participating in social media networks. (96% of young people in the EU uses the internet daily, Eurostat).

- **Survey insights - Most used social media platforms:**

Our PATH survey found the following platforms most used by respondents (16-25 years):

- Instagram: ~93% (156 responses)
 - TikTok: ~60% (100 responses)
 - YouTube: ~54% (90 responses)
 - Facebook: ~24% (41 responses)
- Visibility gap: Despite these high usage rates, 65% of our survey respondents reported never seeing hiking promotions online.

This data underscores the need for hiking associations and federations to strengthen their digital communication skills and implement a targeted strategy. While many associations may not be actively present on all these platforms, understanding where youth spend their time is crucial for increasing visibility and participation.

"Many respondents recommended using technology to boost the visibility of hiking activities among young people by increasing advertising and promotion on social media." (from Survey Summary).

Although hiking is popular as a physical and recreational activity, younger generations often don't engage with formal hiking associations, preferring to organize activities within their friend groups. A targeted Social Media and Digital Strategy is essential to change this trend.



3.2 Best Practices for digital outreach: visual identity

An effective social media and digital strategy begins with a strong Visual Identity. In today's digital world, a well-defined visual identity is essential for any organization looking to build recognition and connect with its target audience. For hiking associations aiming to attract young people, a modern, simple, and engaging visual identity is key.

A cohesive brand image differentiates an association and fosters belonging. This includes a well-designed logo, consistent color palette, typography, and high-quality visual content reflecting adventure, nature, and exploration. Young people are drawn to fresh, clean aesthetics.

The visual identity should embrace the following key elements:

- **A modern and simple logo:**
 - Minimalist yet symbolic, incorporating elements representing the association's activities (nature, trails, mountains, etc.), possibly alluding to a symbolic local element.
 - Adaptable for different platforms (social media icons, merchandise, event banners).
- **A consistent color palette:**
 - Using natural, earthy tones (greens, browns, blues) combined with vibrant accents can create a fresh, energetic feel.
 - Recommended: 2 main colors and 2 complementary colors to enhance brand recognition.
- **Typography that reflects the brand:**
 - Clean, modern, and easy-to-read fonts, balancing professionalism with an adventurous spirit. Avoid overly decorative or outdated fonts.

- **A unified social media aesthetic:**

- Maintain a consistent style for posts, reels, and stories.
- Predefined templates for announcements, challenges, and testimonials ensure a polished, professional look.

3.3 Content strategy: channels, quality, and format

a) Identifying the **right channels**:

- To reach a younger audience, prioritize social media channels like Instagram, TikTok (especially for teens), and YouTube.
- Online communication is crucial for reaching a wider audience who can then spread the message to their peers.
- Be mindful that digital trends change quickly; strategies may need constant adaptation.

b) Choosing the **right content** (according to objectives):

- Instagram Reels, TikTok videos, and YouTube Shorts: Ideal for more interactions and reaching new audiences.
- In-feed posts and Instagram carousels: Better for showcasing detailed content about the association, its values, and main activities.

c) Focusing on the **quality of the content**:

- Visual content must follow quality standards. Use visually striking and aesthetically appealing photos/images from hiking events or online stock images.
- Prioritize high-quality images over a large quantity of lower-impact visuals.
- Audiovisual material: Highly impactful for younger generations.
- Videos should be short (90 seconds maximum) and attractive.

- Music choice plays a key role.
- Showcase scenic trails, community events, and hiking activities.
- Featuring personal experiences from young participants adds authenticity and relatability.
- A vlog-style approach (hikers documenting adventures, behind-the-scenes, fun facts, practical tips) can enhance audience connection.

3.4 Connecting authentically: storytelling, collaboration & gamification



Peer-to-peer communication

- One of the most effective ways to engage young people. Messages are delivered in a way that resonates.
- Young people relate more to content created and shared by peers than by institutions.
- Authentic, relatable, and informal communication is more impactful.
- Build a local youth network: Establish a small network of local young people already engaged. These “young ambassadors” play a crucial role online and offline.
 - Recruit local young hikers: Identify enthusiastic members and encourage them to become digital ambassadors. Partner with youth clubs, schools, universities.
 - Empower them to share content: Provide tools, resources, and creative freedom.



Influencer collaborations

- Influencers play a key role in promoting products/services.

- Consider partnering with influencers focused on outdoor activities, nature, and healthy lifestyles to promote hiking and association benefits. This enhances visibility and can bring new ideas.



User-generated content and hashtags

- Strengthens community engagement and creates organic growth.
- Launch hashtag campaigns (e.g., #HikeWithUs, #TrailChallengeEU, #ExploreMore) for members to share experiences.
- Reshare featured content from members on official pages to create belonging and recognition.



Game-based activities and competitions bring a non-formal approach that enhances youth engagement.



- **Photo contests:** Thematic (seasonal, festive), with awards.
- **Hiking challenges:** Complete a specific trail for digital badges/rewards.
- **Best Hiking Meme Challenge:** Create and share hiking-related memes.
- **Treasure hunts:** QR codes along trails reveal fun facts, challenges, or riddles.
- **“Trash” hunts:** Pick up litter, post before-and-after photos with a dedicated hashtag.
- **Group challenges (Relay Hike):** A group collectively covers a long-distance route.
- **Virtual hiking challenges:** Log hikes to complete a virtual route (e.g., “Hike the Mount Everest” challenge) for digital rewards, tracked on an interactive map.
- **Storytelling quest:** Follow a story challenge with tasks (e.g., “Find a hidden waterfall,” “Take a photo with a hiking buddy”).



Gamified Challenge: QR Code Treasure Hunt

Title: “Explore the hidden secrets of Galachos”

- Overview: Participants follow a marked hiking route (e.g., Galachos de Juslibol), scanning strategically placed QR codes. Each QR code unlocks fun facts, environmental trivia, or mini-challenges highlighting the area's biodiversity, geology etc.
- Duration: 60 to 90 mins
- Materials needed: Printed QR codes, mobile phones with QR reader (1 per group), Instagram/other platform for tagging, optional small prizes/digital badges.
- **Stop 1: Welcome to the Galachos!**
 - Location: Entrance near the Ebro river
 - QR code unlocks Fun fact: “Did you know Galachos were formed after a major flood of the Ebro River in 1961?”
 - Mini-challenge: “Take a selfie with the information board and tag it #GalachoExplorers!”
- **Stop 2: The Reed Beds (Cañizales)**
 - Location: Along the trail near the wetlands
 - QR Code unlocks Fun Fact: “This habitat is home to rare birds like the purple heron and little bittern.”
 - Riddle: “I build my house on water reeds. I sing at dawn, but you won't see me unless you wait. Who am I?” (Answer: A reed warbler)
- **Stop 3: The Fossil Wall**
 - Location: Near the gypsum cliff
 - QR Code unlocks Fun Fact: “These walls date back millions of years and contain marine fossils —Zaragoza was once underwater!”
 - Mini-Challenge: “Spot and sketch a fossil shape you see in the wall. Share it online!”
- **Stop 4: Final Stop – The Mirador (Viewpoint)**
 - Location: Panoramic viewpoint
 - QR Code unlocks Environmental Message: “This natural reserve is a protected space. Thank you for discovering it responsibly!”
 - Final Challenge: “Group photo challenge: recreate a famous hiking pose. Best photo gets featured on our social media!”

3.5 Awareness of E-Paths & online information

Our survey revealed very low awareness of E-paths among young people:

- Awareness of E-paths: Yes: 9% (24 respondents), No: 91% (144 respondents).

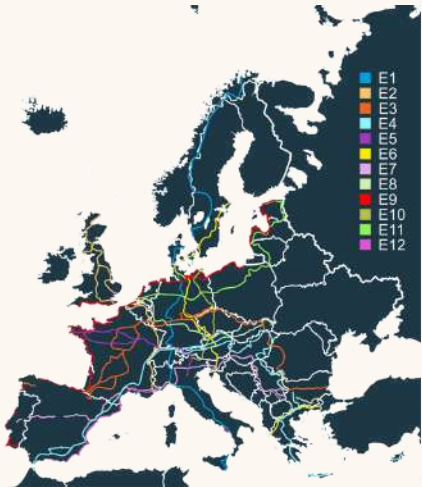
This highlights an opportunity for associations to promote these European long-distance paths through their digital channels, potentially linking them to local trails and youth-focused activities. Connecting E-Paths local contexts, investing in digital media, implementing a strategic online communication and collaborating with educational and youth institutions can significantly raise awareness and participation among younger generations.

Some example of good practices that offer an effective model:

- The link between E3 and Camino de Santiago: The E3 partially overlaps with the iconic pilgrimage path that attracts thousands of walkers every year - the Camino de Santiago. Dedicated signage has been installed alongside the traditional Camino signs to highlight its connection to the European network. Some regional tourism portals now include information about the E3, with maps, route and services descriptions for pilgrims.
- E-Paths meeting in Tarifa: In 2019, FAM (Andalusian Mountaineering Federation), FEDME, the Cádiz Provincial Council, and the local municipality, organized an international meeting in Tarifa, the convergence point of E4, E9 and E12. The event included guided walks and was supported by the Andalusian Regional Government and the Provincial Council, which amplified the campaign through digital tools and regional visibility.

- Integration into regional ecotourism corridors: In 2023, Galicia, Asturias, Cantabria, and the Basque Country joined forces to launch the "Green Spain Ecotourism Corridor", funded by NextGeneration EU program. The initiative includes E9 routes, integrating them into a transregional, sustainable tourism corridor. Thanks to this collaboration, E9 is gaining visibility through an online promotion campaign that includes the use of interactive maps, drone footage, and trail itineraries. Collaborations with bloggers and influencers are enhancing visibility through strong visual storytelling.

In the next chapter, we explore the main **barriers** faced by young people who participated in the PATH online survey and offer **possible solutions** to overcome them.



Source: [ERA](#)



Further reading & resources for this Chapter

- *We are social, Meltwater (2024). Digital 2024: 5 billion social media users* (EN)
- *Eurostat (2023). 96% of young people in the EU uses the internet daily* (EN)
- *Schuurman, H. (2025). Digital technology and the expansion of outdoor experience in outdoor activities. Current Issues in Sport Science (CISS), 10(2), 060.* (EN)

Additional resources related to Digital engagement

1. *How to build a brand kit + examples*

An exhaustive article with guidelines and examples on how to build a visual identity.

- LANGUAGE: EN

2. *DigiHike Toolkit for the digital promotion of outdoor activities*

A digital manual that contains useful tips and exercises on how to promote outdoor activities through digital channels and social media.

- LANGUAGES: EN/IT/ES/HR/PT

3. *Gamification as a Methodology to Enhance Analytical and Sustainable Engagement on Social Media*

A research that examines the impact of gamification on the development of critical thinking skills, recognizes gamification as a motivating educational tool.

- LANGUAGE: EN

Clearing the PATH: overcoming barriers to youth participation

Understanding why young people don't hike, or don't engage with associations, is as crucial as knowing why they do so. The PATH survey identified several key **obstacles**. This chapter offers practical **tips** and **strategies** aimed at overcoming these identified barriers, with the goal of encouraging greater participation in hiking activities among the target age group (16-30).

The specific objectives of this section are:



To raise awareness about the barriers that prevent young people from engaging in hiking.



To highlight strategies to reduce these barriers and attract more young people to hiking activities.

This section will provide solutions to the most significant barriers revealed by our research: a widespread **lack of time**, the difficulty of finding **hiking companions**, limited **access to trails**, and concerns about **cost and equipment**.

Let's address each of these challenges in turn.

1

Challenge 1: Lack of time (74% of respondents)

Many young people are fully occupied during the week with work or university (often 8-10 hours a day). By the weekend, they are typically exhausted. They may not be disposed to spend a full day on demanding outdoor activities, especially if it involves long travel.

- **The need for respite:** Contemporary hectic lifestyles involve high stress. Escaping the daily routine to reconnect with oneself and cultivate friendships through activities like hiking is valuable. Hiking offers a direct connection to nature, which research shows has beneficial effects on mind and body (e.g., release of endorphins and dopamine).
- **Practical solutions for associations:**
 - **Organize short, efficient hikes:** Offer hikes lasting two to three hours.
 - **Flexible scheduling:** These can be half-day commitments (morning or afternoon) on selected weekends.
 - **Local focus:** Coordinate hikes through local hiking associations to minimize travel time.
- **Examples of shorter hikes (from partner countries):**
 - **Italy:**
 1. ECO-MUSEO DELL'ADDA DI LEONARDO: Route from Porto d'Adda to Brivio (part of E7 trail), admiring Leonardo da Vinci's inventions. Duration: 3 hours 30 minutes.
 2. SAN QUIRICO D'ORCIA E PIENZA (Tuscany): Easy, accessible trails in Val d'Orcia (part of Via Francigena). Round-trip: 8 km, ~2 hours 30 minutes.
 3. CAPO PALINURO: Stunning sea views, Mediterranean scrub. Round-trip: 5 km, ~2 hours.

- **Lithuania:**

1. PARTISAN TRAILS IN ŽADEIKIAI FOREST (3 km): a short hike to learn about partisan struggles and nature
2. RAUDONDVARIS MANOR DISCOVERY TRAILS (3 km): A short walk to learn about the history and architecture of Raudondvaris Manor.
3. HEALTH TRAIL OD "DIDŽIOSIOS SVEJONĖS" (3 km): A wellness route for physical and spiritual well-being.
4. KAMŠA FOREST (4 km): A nature and wildlife hike in Kamša Forest.

- **Spain:**

1. SENDA DEL OSO (Bear's Trail, Asturias): Easy, scenic path (former mining railway) through valleys and tunnels. Popular short section: ~12 km round trip, 2.5-3 hours at a relaxed pace.
2. CAMINITO DEL REY (Málaga, Andalusia): (Note: While spectacular, the full 7.7km, 3-4 hour route might be borderline for "short and efficient" depending on travel/access time. Consider if a shorter segment or a different example fits better for "time-poor" youth, or frame it as a "special half-day adventure".) A spectacular walkway along steep gorge walls. The full route is ~7.7 km, 3-4 hours.

Challenge 2: Lack of companions or social connections (40% of respondents)

Approximately 40% of survey respondents don't hike due to a lack of friends to hike with. Limited youth participation in existing hiking groups (often made up of adults and elderly hikers) is a recognized issue. PATH aims to boost youth involvement in these communities.

The social dimension is crucial: hiking goes beyond physical activity—it is a powerful means of fostering connections. Group hikes, gatherings, and meetups capture the essence of the hiking spirit, offering opportunities to build relationships, discover new places, and share meaningful experiences.

- **Practical solutions for associations:**

- Awareness campaigns: Implement effective systems for raising awareness about existing outdoor activities organized by hiking clubs, targeting young audiences.
- Youth-Specific meetups: Regularly organize regional and national meetups tailored for young hikers.
- Leverage social media (cautiously):
 - Platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Telegram can help find hiking companions. (See Chapter 3 for more on social media strategies).
 - Caution: While social media can encourage group formation, overuse can also contribute to loneliness. Promote a balance.
 - Examples of online groups: on Instagram: Lupi del Raparo (IT), Badizo Trekking (IT), Và Sentiero (IT), on Telegram: RELAPS HIKING (IT).

- **Adrenaline-Filled activities:** Consider incorporating activities like rafting or rope climbing to attract a younger audience and encourage the formation of youth explorer groups.



Challenge 3: Limited access to trails (22% of respondents)

Hiking requires dedication, financial resources, time, transport, and knowledge of the area. Not everyone owns a car or lives near reliable public transport.

Overcoming the obstacle: Despite these challenges, the joy of joining group activities, meeting fellow enthusiasts, and discovering scenic beauty can be a strong motivator.

- **Practical solutions for associations:**

- **Promote accessible trails:** Highlight trails reachable by public transport or offer carpooling coordination for events.
- **Provide clear trail information:** Many beginners don't know where trails are or what path to follow. Offer resources (online and offline) with:
 - Start/end points, overall distance, altitude difference, duration, effort grade, availability of refreshments, etc.
- **Collaborate with park authorities/guides:** Partner to organize activities led by specialized guides, enriching the experience with insights into local history, wildlife, etc.
- **Recommended Apps for Trail Finding & Navigation:** To help beginners find and navigate trails, numerous mobile applications are available. These apps provide detailed maps, user reviews, photos, and GPS tracking to make exploring new areas easier and safer.
- For a comprehensive, categorized list of recommended apps for navigation, nature identification, safety, and more, please see the 'Integrating Digital Tools' section in Chapter 6.



4

Challenge 4: Costs (perceived) & lack of equipment (23% of respondents)

Many respondents perceive hiking as expensive due to membership fees, gas, and equipment.

- **Addressing cost misconceptions:**

- **Communicate true costs:** For a basic half-day hike, actual costs can be minimal (decent clothes, trail shoes, backpack, water, snacks). Associations should focus communication on this.
- **Tackling equipment barriers:** Many people don't have proper equipment (e.g., only sneakers, city clothing). Basic gear might be okay for simple walks, but more challenging hikes require appropriate technical equipment for safety and comfort.
- **Affordable options:**
 - Borrowing: Initially, from relatives or friends.
 - Renting: From partner stores if passion develops.
 - Association discounts: Membership often includes discounts on technical equipment.
 - Second-Hand gear: A budget-friendly and sustainable option (platforms like Facebook Marketplace, Vinted/Weply were mentioned as examples).
- **Emphasize quality:** Good quality gear ensures comfort and safety.
- **Association partnerships:** Hiking associations often have partnerships or discounts with outdoor gear brands.
- **Personal willingness: A final note**

Ultimately, personal willingness to get involved and explore new opportunities is essential. No matter how well something is organized, success is impossible unless individuals take an active role. Mental and physical laziness can block engagement.

The next chapter will highlight ways to cultivate **lasting youth involvement** in hiking associations.



Further reading & resources for this Chapter

- *Le migliori APP per pianificare e memorizzare le escursioni* (IT)
- *Convenzioni* (IT)
- *Parco Migliarino San Rossore Massaciuccoli* (IT)
- *Castello dell'Innominato da Vercurago* (IT)
- *Patirk keliones po Lietuvą* (LT)
- *Caminito del Rey* (ES)
- *Senda del Oso* (ES)

Additional resources related to overcoming barriers

1. *DigiHike – Shaping sustainable local development in outdoor sports through volunteers' skills development* (Erasmus+ Sport Project). DigiHike intends to respond to the needs of the staff and volunteers of organizations active in the field of outdoor and rural development through: a) Guide for the development of basic hiking skills; b) Toolkit for the digital promotion of outdoor activities

- LANGUAGES: EN, IT, ES, HR, PT.

2. *FIE MAPS*

FIE Maps is a free mobile app that guides you along the European Trails—and beyond—throughout Italy. Available for download on Google Play and the Apple App Store.




- LANGUAGE: IT

Cultivating a community: long-term engagement and leadership

Engaging youth is an ongoing journey, not a one-time event.

To create sustainable youth participation in hiking associations, it's essential to integrate **strategies** for youth-led event planning, leadership training, and potentially international exchange programs. This chapter explores how to foster a community where young people feel valued, empowered, and motivated to contribute in the long term.

The specific objectives of this sections are:

-  To empower young people to plan and lead activities within hiking associations.
-  To support the development of essential leadership, event planning, and outdoor safety skills among youth.
-  To foster long-term engagement through inclusive participation and opportunities like international exchange programs.

5.1 Bridging the Engagement gap

As outlined in Chapter 1, our survey highlighted a crucial disconnect: while a majority of young people hike, very few are formally connected to hiking associations.

This chapter explores how to bridge that gap by building a lasting community.

Further data provides context for this challenge:

- Awareness of existing hiking associations is moderate, with 54% of youth aware of them.
- However, the average interest level in actually joining an association is only 5.11 out of 10.

This disconnect often exists because associations may seem largely adult-led, with structures and communication styles that don't always resonate with younger generations. By focusing on youth-led initiatives and clear pathways to leadership, associations can bridge this gap.

What we learned from the Survey Results and youth feedback :

- There's **interest** in hiking, but not always in how it's traditionally organized by associations.
- Associations often need generational **renewal**; many are still led by older adults.
- Leadership development can thrive through **co-design** (see Chapter 2), where youth help shape what they lead.
- Informal, peer-led sports can build **civic growth**, openness, responsibility, and connection (Long & Pantaléon, 2014).
- When **youth lead**, associations evolve with new ideas, better outreach, and a stronger community.

5.2 Youth-led initiatives through the lens of Co-Design

Traditional models often transfer knowledge from adults to youth, but co-design flips this by treating young people as partners and creators from the very beginning. This approach is guided by the core principles established in Chapter 2.

By applying principles like Shared Power and Mutual Growth & Capability, youth are not just seen as future leaders—they are empowered as current leaders who help set goals, choose methods, and lead parts of the process themselves. This builds a powerful sense of ownership, confidence, and long-term commitment.

5.3 Growing young leaders: skills that matter

Training young people to become leaders in hiking associations means more than teaching map reading. It's about helping them discover their potential, express creativity, and build real-life skills.

Based on insights from the PATH co-design process and survey results, here are key areas:

1) YOUTH-LED EVENT PLANNING: FROM IDEA TO ADVENTURE

When young people lead event planning, they shift from participants to decision-makers.

- **Planning and execution:** Organizing a hike involves figuring out the target audience, what they'll enjoy, duration, and memorable elements. Youth-led planning allows them to take responsibility, from designing schedules to managing breaks and safety.
- **Understanding the group:** Good planning starts with asking, "What does this group need?". Young leaders learn to read a group's energy, interests, and abilities.

- **Managing resources:** Event planning teaches practical skills like logistics, team communication, and time/materials management (booking transport, preparing materials, ensuring water/sunscreen).
- **Creative vision:** Allow young leaders freedom to create themed hikes (e.g., “Survival Skills Challenge,” “Nature Art Walk”). Their imagination can bring events to life in ways adults might not consider. (Survey: “Ideas to Attract Youth” included Group Activities/Games: 23.8%, Social Aspects: 17.9%, Challenges: 11.9%)
- **Learning from experience:** Encourage reflection after hikes: What worked? What was surprising? What could be better? This transforms events into leadership learning steps.

Example: Instead of planning the whole hike, ask a youth group to design a section themselves—perhaps with games or storytelling points.

2) LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Outdoor leadership is about being responsible, flexible, and emotionally attuned to others.

- **Outdoor safety & navigation:** Confidence in safety basics (map reading, weather checking, leading through rough terrain) is foundational.
- **Facilitating the group:** Managing group energy is crucial—encouraging quiet participants, resolving tension, knowing when to break, and creating an inclusive vibe. (Survey: *Interest in group activities/games during hikes* rated 6.88/10).
- **Communication skills:** Today’s leaders need to communicate across platforms—clear in-person guidance and social media use for promotion, updates, or sharing memories. Young people are often naturally good at this; support their thoughtful use.
- **Decisiveness and adaptability:** Hikes don’t always go as planned. Leaders must be ready to make decisions (rerouting, changing plans based on group needs) calmly and thoughtfully.
- **Emotional intelligence:** Knowing how to listen, empathize, support, and encourage. Emotional awareness helps navigate group dynamics and build trust.

Example: Assign a young leader to co-lead a hike with an experienced adult. Let them plan pacing, suggest group activities, and check in with participants.

5.4 Methods for developing youth leadership: from passive participation to active roles

Developing young leaders isn't about assigning responsibility all at once. It's about offering gradual, meaningful invitations to participate, reflect, and take ownership. Leadership can emerge, especially for those more introverted or uncertain, if nurtured. Skills like confidence and communication can be developed through structured practice, emotional safety, and repeated low-pressure exposure.

Here are four methods grounded in co-design:

1

Progress through practice

Leadership grows through experience. Start by offering youth simple, visible tasks: carrying materials, welcoming participants, choosing music for a reflection point, preparing part of a trail. These actions provide a sense of contribution and competence. Structured, low-risk opportunities are key.



Ask a young participant to introduce a short segment of the hike, or help guide a silent walk — giving them room to try leadership in a supportive environment. This aligns with the SAFE framework (Sequenced, Active, Focused, Explicit learning) for social-emotional development (Durlak et al., 2011).

2

Peer mentorship

Youth support each other best when they can relate. Pairing less experienced participants with those who have taken part before creates trust and lowers barriers. Peer mentorship also helps young leaders develop skills by supporting others, rather than always performing for adults.

TIPS

Establish a “youth support circle” before each event, where returning volunteers check in with new ones and share their experiences. (Ref: Dugan & Komives, 2010).

3

Active and creative leadership opportunities

Not all leadership is verbal or extroverted. Offer options for youth to lead through creativity, movement, or storytelling. Some associations invite volunteers to take on mythical or symbolic roles during events (guided by scripts, using masks/costumes), allowing youth to explore leadership without pressure. This is effective for introverts or those building confidence.

TIPS

Use character cards, symbolic tasks, or movement-based rituals to invite youth into leadership on their own terms (Ref: John Antonakis, Marika Fenley and Sue Liechti on charisma research).

4

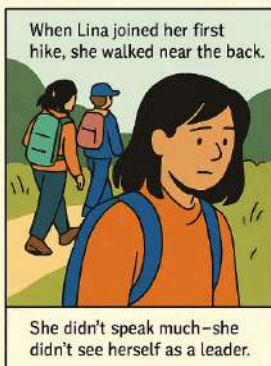
Co-Design in real time

Leadership begins with authorship. When young people help design activities, themes, or an event’s rhythm, they are more invested and ready to lead. Associations can hold co-design sessions where youth choose a hike’s emotional focus, set reflection questions, or invent trail challenges. This turns participants into contributors and, later, co-leaders.

TIPS

Use collaborative planning tools (e.g., idea walls, prompt cards, visual mapping) to give youth creative agency.

A QUIET START: LINA'S PATH TO LEADERSHIP



Created by the PATH Consortium with AI tools.

5.5 The power of international exchange

Stepping outside one's usual world and connecting across cultures builds confidence. Programs like Erasmus+ Youth Exchanges can be life-changing.

- **Program benefits:** Participants learn through workshops, shared projects, and hiking with peers from across Europe. Youth exchanges last between 5 and 21 days. Travel/participation costs are covered.
- **Benefits for youth:**
 - *Intercultural communication:* Navigating languages and cultural norms builds patience and understanding.
 - *Teamwork with diversity:* Planning or completing tasks (like a group hike) with diverse backgrounds builds collaboration.
 - *Adaptability:* New environments force young people to be flexible and grow.
 - *Becoming Global Citizens:* Exchanges expand identity and connection to a shared European/global community.
 - *Courage & confidence:* Speaking up, navigating transport, running activities – all build immense confidence.
 - *Skills development:* Fosters soft skills (empathy, communication, initiative) and leadership/event planning.
- **Benefits for associations:** Youth returning from exchanges often bring new energy, ideas, and skills. They are more engaged, experienced, and likely to stay active. It's a win-win.

Examples:

1. *Invite young participants to organize part of an international hike or cultural evening during an exchange, giving them responsibility and visibility.*
2. *After an Erasmus+ trip, host a debrief where returning youth share what they learned and propose new projects or activities.*

5.6 Understanding motivations for joining associations

To encourage long-term membership, it's vital to understand what motivates youth to join. Our survey asked about this:

- Interest in joining a hiking association: Average rating of 5.11/10.
- Top motivations for joining:
 - a.Organized group hikes and events – 68%.
 - b.Discounts on hiking equipment, gear, or related services – 55%.
 - c.Opportunities to network and meet like-minded outdoor enthusiasts – 50%.
 - d.Access to exclusive or better-maintained trails – 45%.
 - e.Expert guidance, training, and safety tips – 42%.
 - f.Information and updates on local/regional hiking opportunities – 38%.

Associations can highlight these benefits in their communications and program offerings to attract and retain young members.



In the next chapter, we explore strategies to sustain **youth engagement** through **digital tools** and **co-designed programs**.



Further reading & resources for this Chapter

- *Project How's pocket book* (EN, LT, LV, BG, HU)

Know-how about how to implement and be involved in Erasmus+ youth mobilities: useful for involving young people in those activities.




- *The Co-Create Handbook for Creative Professionals* (EN)

A practical handbook developed under the Erasmus+ CO-CREATE project, offering step-by-step guidance for implementing co-design training activities, including collaborative methods, workshop facilitation, and self-evaluation.

Sustaining Momentum: ensuring future youth involvement

Ensuring the active participation of younger generations in the long term requires hiking associations and federations to evolve continuously. This involves not only attracting youth but also empowering them to play **leading roles in decision-making** and shaping the future. This chapter focuses on strategies to guarantee the **sustainability of youth engagement**, incorporating digital tools, and co-designing new programs with youth input.

The specific objectives of this sections are:

-  To provide hiking associations and federations with best practices on how to engage young people sustainably.
-  To help hiking associations and federations incorporate digital tools effectively in their activities, co-designing new programs with youth input.
-  To outline strategies for expanding leadership roles for young people within associations.

6.1 The evolving role of hiking associations: social and environmental impact

As outlined in Chapter 2 (Co-Design), involving new generations means rejuvenating hiking associations, making them more appealing by adding a modern approach. Younger generations bring different perspectives, values, and new energy, transforming how hiking is practiced, promoted, and perceived.

- **Hiking as a tool for social change:** Hiking isn't just a physical activity; it can be a strong tool for social change. Young people are often more sensitive to environmental issues, and hiking can be a way to raise awareness about sustainability challenges.
 - Practicing outdoor sports enhances one's connection to nature and the necessity of taking care of it.
 - Associations should strive for changes and involve young people if they want to be relevant and attractive in modern society.
- **Programs with impact:** Initiatives that combine hiking with ecological restoration, biodiversity monitoring, or climate awareness campaigns tap into the strong desire among young people to make a positive impact. *(Survey by European Youth Forum (2021) indicates environmental concerns are top priorities for youth, with 67% citing climate change as a key area for engagement.)*

6.2 Youth-driven content and the integration for deeper engagement

Digital technologies are transforming the outdoor experience. While some traditionalists may view smartphones and GPS devices as distractions, younger generations see these tools as extensions of their lifestyle and as opportunities for deeper engagement.

YOUTH IN CONTENT CREATION & DECISION-MAKING

To maximize the impact of social media (see Chapter 3) and reach wider audiences, young people should be involved in the decision-making process and content creation.

Example: Associations can launch social media contests inviting young audiences to create a poster for a hiking event, an illustration, a picture, or a short video. The winner (receiving a prize like sports gear) gets recognition, and the association benefits from youth-generated content and increased visibility.

INTEGRATING DIGITAL TOOLS INTO HIKING PROGRAMS

Many digital platforms can be included in hiking activities to foster engagement and add value. Here are some examples by category:

NAVIGATION & TRAIL PLANNING APPS

- AllTrails: Discover trails, read reviews, view difficulty ratings, and track hikes with GPS.
- Caltopo: Offers detailed map layering and backcountry planning tools.
- DIGIHIKE - Trails in Europe: Promotes natural/cultural heritage via 15 mapped trails across Europe with rural area info.
- FIEMAPS: Guides hikers along European paths, trails, and itineraries by affiliated associations.
- Gaia GPS: Provides advanced topographic maps, offline access, and route planning features.
- Komoot: Supports route planning with turn-by-turn voice navigation for hiking, biking, and running.

- MAPS.ME: An offline map app with downloadable regions, trail paths, and points of interest (Available on Apple App Store and Google Play).
- MAPY.CZ: Comprehensive maps with a focus on Central Europe, showing official trails, lodges, and viewpoints.
- Outdooractive: A European favorite with trail maps, GPS tracking, and community features.
- Topo Maps+: Offers offline USGS topographic maps for remote hiking.
- Wikiloc: Features user-contributed content and trails compatible with smartphones.

NATURE & WILDLIFE IDENTIFICATION APPS

- GeoCaching: The world's largest treasure hunt, where users visit natural sites and answer geology-based questions.
- iNaturalist: A science-focused platform where users contribute to biodiversity research.
- Merlin Bird ID (Cornell Lab): Identify birds by sight or sound.
- Mushroom Identifier: Snap a photo to identify wild mushrooms (caution: never rely solely on apps for edibility!) - Available on Apple App Store and Google Play.
- NatureID: Identify plants, trees, flowers, and plant diseases with your camera. Available on Apple App Store and Google Play.
- PictureThis: Provides fast and accurate plant identification.
- Seek by iNaturalist: Identify plants, animals, and fungi by pointing your camera.

STARGAZING APPS

- SkyView Lite / Star Walk 2: Use AR to identify stars, planets, constellations, and satellites.

FITNESS, MINDFULNESS & TRACKING APPS

- MapMyRun: Record hikes, route stats, and track calories burned.
- MyRadar: Provides real-time weather radar to avoid dangerous conditions.
- Strava: Track stats, compete on segments, and share with a social network.

SAFETY & EMERGENCY APPS

- Spyglass: Combines a compass, altimeter, and speedometer for backcountry navigation.

PHOTOGRAPHY & SOCIAL SHARING APPS

- Day One Journal: A digital journaling app for hikes with photos, maps, and reflections.
- GoPro Quik: Quickly edit trail videos and photos into shareable reels.
- Relive: Turn GPS-tracked hikes into dynamic 3D video stories with photos and stats overlaid.
- Snapseed: A powerful photo editing tool (available on Apple App Store and Google Play).
- Instagram Threads: A lightweight app for private sharing with close friends, good for youth ambassador updates.



6.3 Expanding leadership roles for young people

One of the most impactful steps associations can take is to empower young people in leadership roles, involving meaningful participation in planning, decision-making, and policy development.



Advantages of youth in decision-making

- *Perspective*: Young people bring fresh views on accessibility, technology, equity, and sustainability.
- *Engagement*: When youth feel heard and included, they're more likely to engage long-term and take ownership.
- *Sustainability*: Building youth leadership networks ensures continuity and innovation for future generations.
- *Relevance*: Policies reflecting youth values (inclusivity, climate justice, mental health) resonate more with today's evolving outdoor culture.



Strategies to attract youth to leadership roles

Hosting youth-led hiking summits: Associations can prepare training programs for young people who want to lead their first hiking event. This should cover event design, preparation, leadership, safety, communication, and promotion. After training, youth should be ready to design and propose their own events, possibly themed or combined with other activities (photography, mindfulness, music etc.). This provides new skills, boosts self-esteem, and models youth-driven policy design.



Formal leadership roles

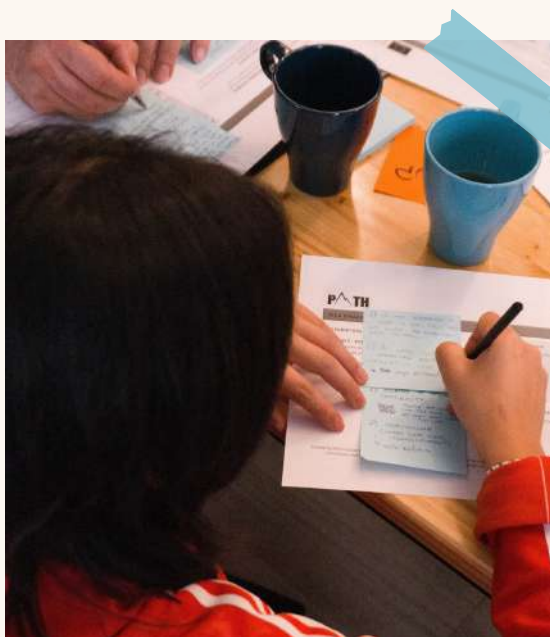
Hiking organizations should reserve at least 20% of board seats, advisory positions, or committee roles for people under 30. This shows a clear commitment to equity, generational balance, and forward-thinking.

This encourages mentorship, intergenerational collaboration, and infuses policies with youth values.

Support needed: Associations must back this with mentorship programs, leadership development resources, and safe environments where young voices are heard without being tokenized or dismissed.

Major **outcomes** of youth's active participation:

- Expanded accessibility, as policies account for diverse backgrounds and needs.
- Innovation accelerates, driven by digital fluency and fresh thinking.
- Engagement deepens as youth see their values reflected in organizational missions.
- Community thrives because everyone, regardless of age, is empowered to lead.



6.4 Practical tools for sustained youth engagement: a checklist & recommended actions

Use this checklist to self-assess your association's current state and identify key areas for development in youth engagement:

- Self-Assessment Checklist

Area	Yes/No	Notes/Actions Needed
Do young people (under 30) currently participate in your events regularly?		
Do you involve youth in the design and promotion of activities?		
Is there a youth advisory group or ambassador program?		
Are at least 20% of leadership or decision-making roles held by youth?		
Do you use digital tools (apps, social media, content platforms) to engage youth?		
Is your communication adapted to the platforms and formats young people use (Instagram, TikTok, Reels)?		
Have you conducted training for staff on youth inclusion and digital trends?		
Are your activities environmentally and socially relevant (e.g., eco-hikes, inclusive events)?		

- **Recommended actions for sustained engagement**

A. Youth Co-Leadership

1. Create a Youth Advisory Council with direct input into board decisions.
2. Allocate 20% of leadership roles to people under 30.
3. Establish a Youth Ambassador Program: participants lead hikes, speak at events, and co-create content.

B. Digital integration

1. Choose one digital platform to master (Instagram, TikTok, or YouTube Shorts).
2. Provide training in basic digital content creation for staff and volunteers—ideally led by youth themselves to empower them and encourage peer-to-peer learning.
3. Use apps like iNaturalist, Komoot, or Relive during hikes and teach young participants how to use them.
4. Encourage digital storytelling after hikes: photos, short videos, or journals posted on your channels.

C. Youth-Led event formats

1. Allow youth to design and lead hikes periodically.
2. Mix hiking with other passions: photography, music, wellness (e.g., a “Sunset Hike + Journaling”).
3. Implement eco-action hikes: hikes with litter cleanups or biodiversity spotting.

D. Capacity building & mentorship

1. Pair young leaders with experienced members for mentorship.
2. Host biannual workshops on leadership, communication, and project planning.
3. Offer digital literacy support to older members for intergenerational exchange



In the next chapter, we present practical tools, templates, and guides to help your hiking association implement youth engagement strategies—focusing on **actionable resources for co-designing youth-led initiatives**.



Further reading & resources for this Chapter

- European Youth Forum (2021). Youth and Environment (EN)
- UNEP & United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth (2022) (EN)

Additional resources related to the integration of digital tools into hiking programs

1. Geocaching

A complete overview of what geocaching is and how to implement the activity.

LANGUAGE: EN+ ALL

2. iNaturalist Educator's Guide

- An extensive guide on how to use the "iNaturalist" app.

LANGUAGE: EN+ ALL

3. REI CO-OP Classes & Events





Free courses and guides on hiking, navigation, first aid, and DEI in outdoor spaces.

LANGUAGE: EN

The Youth Engagement Action Toolkit

This chapter provides a collection of **practical tools, templates, and guides** to help your hiking association implement the **youth engagement strategies** discussed throughout this document. The focus is on actionable resources you can use immediately, particularly for co-designing youth-led initiatives.

The specific objectives of this sections are:

-  To provide actionable templates that enable youth to take on distinct planning roles (e.g., Trail Masters, Experience Weavers, Hearth Keepers) in organizing hiking activities.
-  To offer a step-by-step facilitator script for running a 90-minute co-design workshop aimed at planning a youth-led hike.
-  To equip facilitators and youth leaders with practical tools, such as the Hike Planning Team Templates and a Visual Hike Timeline, to structure and coordinate the co-creation process effectively.
-  To promote the use of collaborative online documents to enhance real-time teamwork, transparency, and seamless coordination during the hike planning process.

7.1 Co-Designing a youth-led hike: templates & facilitator guide

One of the most effective ways to engage youth is to empower them to plan and lead their own hiking experiences. This section provides templates for different planning roles and facilitator scripts for co-design sessions.

The power of collaborative online documents for co-design

To facilitate true co-design for a hike planning session, we strongly recommend transferring the “Hike Planning Team Templates” (provided below) into a shared online document. Platforms like Google Docs, Microsoft OneDrive, shared Word documents, or Notion are excellent for this purpose.

- **Real-time collaboration:** This allows all participants in their different roles (e.g., Trail Masters, Experience Weavers, Hearth Keepers) to work on the same document simultaneously.
- **Transparency:** Everyone can see each other’s contributions and how different parts of the hike plan are developing in real-time.
- **Seamless coordination:** It makes it easier to coordinate details, avoid overlaps, and ensure all aspects of the hike are covered.
- **Quick access:** Once the shared document is set up, you can generate a QR code that links directly to it. Participants can scan this QR code with their phones for instant access during planning sessions, making the process smoother and more interactive.



Hike Planning Session – Facilitator Script

This session is designed for 90 minutes and guides participants through co-designing a hike. Participants are split into three planning teams. The session emphasizes real-time collaboration and coordination, using a shared editable document.

Session Overview

Total Time: 90 minutes

Participants: ~16

Goal: Plan a full-day hike through co-creation and shared roles.

Tools: Shared Google Doc or editable file with templates, maps, pens, phones.

Team Roles

- Trail Masters (Route Planners)
- Experience Weavers (Game/Activity Planners)
- Hearth Keepers (Food/Campfire/Logistics Coordinators)

Session Flow

0–10 min | Welcome & Team Formation

- Welcome participants and introduce the purpose: 'You will design the hike we'll do together.'
- Introduce roles and let participants choose their teams.
- Emphasize: 'You're not doing this alone—you're coordinating, not carrying it all yourself.'

10–40 min | Deep Team Planning (30 min)

- Each team works on their section of the shared document using the templates.
- Facilitators circulate and support each team:
 1. Trail Masters: route, stops, timing.
 2. Experience Weavers: games/activities, space needed, estimated time.
 3. Hearth Keepers: needs list, fire plan, water/lunch logistics.
- Encourage use of phones/maps and clarify the shared timeline.

40–65 min | Structured Team Collaboration (25 min).

- Use two focused rounds of live meetings between teams.
- Round 1 (10–12 min): Trail Masters + Experience Weavers
 - Where can activities fit into the route?
 - Are there stops with enough time and space?
- Round 2 (10–12 min): Trail Masters + Hearth Keepers
 - When are food, water, or fire breaks?
 - Confirm what's needed and who's bringing it.
- Use the shared hike timeline to plug in decisions in real time.

65–85 min | Final Coordination & Planning Push (20 min).

- Teams revisit their templates to:
 - Finalize materials lists
 - Assign who leads what (games, fire, etc.)
 - Note any open questions for Day 2
- Facilitators check the shared doc and help polish timeline clarity.

85–90 min | Quick Reflection or Intentions (5 min).

- Gather in a circle or seated group.
- Prompts (choose one):
 - 'What are you most excited about?'
 - 'What will you offer to the group on hike day?'
- Optionally end with a symbolic gesture: group clap, rhythm, breath, or hands-in moment.

Hike planning templates

Welcome! Each team has a unique role in preparing for the hike. You're not doing everything alone—you're the coordinators who help make things happen.

1. ROUTE PLANNERS (Trail Masters)

Your Mission:

Design the journey of our hike. You decide where we start, where we go, how long we walk, and where we stop to rest, eat, and play. You're not doing this alone — someone with expertise in these areas will be there to support you every step of the way!

Responsibilities:

- Choose start, end, and key stops.
- Estimate total time and distance (e.g., use $3.5 \text{ km/h} \approx 17 \text{ min per km}$ for a hike that will mostly take place on a flat terrain).
- Coordinate stop locations with other teams.
- Use printed or digital map (phone/GPS is okay).

Stop #	Location name	Purpose (rest/view/game/ food)	Estimated time
1	Stream Crossing	Rest/Game	30 min
2	Lakeside	Lunch/Game	2 h
3	Crossroads	Rest/Game	20 min
(add more rows as needed)			

Total Estimated Distance: _____ km

Estimated Total Duration (with stops): _____ hours

Checklist for Hike Day:

- ☐ Route saved on phone/GPS
- ☐ Stop schedule shared
- ☐ Timekeeper(s) chosen
- ☐ Everyone understands the route

Hiking Route:

<https://www.komoot.com/tour/your-hike-link>

(Replace with actual planned route link)

2. GAME / ENTERTAINMENT PLANNERS (Experience Weavers)

Your Mission:

Create moments of connection, energy, or reflection during the hike. Design 2–3 flexible games or experiences.

You're not doing this alone—you're the coordinators who help make things happen. You focus on great ideas and finding the right support.

Day 1 Responsibilities:

- Design 2–3 adaptable activities.
- Describe the kind of space needed.
- Estimate duration and energy level.
- Suggest the best moment in the day to use each activity.

Planning table (with examples)

Activity Name	Type	Space Needed	Energy Level	Best Moment (Suggestion)	Duration
Passion Walk Intro	Icebreaker / Reflection	Start of trail, or any open, relatively flat area	Beginning of the hike, after initial greetings	Low	15-20 min
Catch the Dragon's Tail	Energizer / Game	Open field, wide path, relatively flat area	After lunch, or when energy levels dip mid-afternoon	High	10-15 min
Micro World Observation	Nature Connection / Mindfulness	Anywhere with interesting ground/plants/insects	During a rest stop, or a quiet moment on the trail	Very low	5-10 min
Rope Game: Human Knot	Team Building / Problem Solving	Small open space where group can stand in a circle	Before a challenging section, or as a mid-hike energizer	Medium	10-15 min

Extra Prompts:

- Materials needed: _____
- Who might help lead? _____
- Could this work in rain? Y / N / Adapt

Checklist for Hike Day:

- ☐ Materials prepared or delegated.
- ☐ Game leaders identified.
- ☐ Activity timing confirmed with Route Planners.
- ☐ Backup plan ready.



3. FOOD / SPACE PLANNERS (Hearth Keepers)

Your Mission:

Help ensure the group has what it needs to eat, rest, and recharge. You're the organizers who make comfort and food logistics happen.

You're not doing everything alone—you're the coordinators who prepare and delegate.

Responsibilities:

- Make a checklist of supplies (snacks, tarp, water, fire gear, etc.).
- Coordinate optional campfire.
- Confirm lunch and water plans with kitchen/participants.

Planning table (with examples)

Item	Purpose	Who brings it?	Notes
2 Knives	Cooking	Two participants	Done
Water	Drinking	Each participant	10 LT, done
Dishes and cups	Eating	1 participants	Done

Lunch: Provided by the kitchen.

Where might we eat lunch? ____camp site next to lake_____

Campfire (optional):

- Do we want a fire? Y / N
- What would we cook? _____
- What is needed? _____
- Who can help prepare it? _____

Checklist for Hike Day:

- ☐ Materials arranged or delegated.
- ☐ Campfire setup coordinated.
- ☐ Lunch and water confirmed.
- ☐ Trash/cleanup plan ready.



Visual Hike Timeline Template

Use this timeline to sketch out the flow of your hike. This is especially useful during the cross-team collaboration phase or in the final session before the hike.

You don't need to fill every slot—just use it to plan the sequence of movement, rest, activities, and transitions.

Planning table (with examples)

Time slot	Distance (if any)	Activity or Stop	Who's Responsible	Notes (Game, Food, Story?)
10:00–10:15		Gathering & welcome	Organizers	
10:15–10:30		Intro to hike & story	Organizers	
10:30–11:00	1.5 km	Walk to first stop	Trail Masters	
11:00–11:30		Stop #1: Story/Visualization	Experience Weavers	
Etc.				

Annexes

ANNEX 1

COMPREHENSIVE *PATH* SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY

Summary of Results

Total number of respondents—168

Age – 16-18 (110), 18-25 (58)

Female ~ 62,5%

Male ~ 37,5%

IT – 106

LT – 38

ES – 5

- **Country:**
- **Italy:** 106 respondents (63.1% of 168)
- **Lithuania:** 38 respondents (22.6%)
- **Spain:** 13 respondents (7.7%)
- **Serbia:** 6 respondents (3.6%)
- **Greece:** 3 respondents (1.8%)
- **Czech republic:** 1 respondent
- **Slovenia:** 1 respondent

Education Level:

- - High School: 60.1%
 - University/Student: 22.6%
 - Other/Blank: 17.3%

HikingInterest &Participation

- **Interest in Hiking:** Average rating of **7.05/10**.
- **Participation:**
 - Yes: 74.3%
 - No: 25.7%
- **Frequency** (among participants):
- **Occasionally:** 75 responses (~52.1%)
- **Rarely:** 35 responses (~24.3%)
- **Monthly:** 22 responses (~15.3%)
- **Weekly:** 12 responses (~8.3%)
- **Usual Way of Hiking:**
- **With friends:** 103 / 168 ≈ 61.3%
- **With family:** 42 / 168 ≈ 25.0%
- **Alone:** 17 / 168 ≈ 10.1%
- **With colleagues:** 6 / 168 ≈ 3.6%

Motivations for Hiking

- **Top 5 Reasons:**
 - Nature: 83.9%
 - Physical Activity: 60.1%
 - Adventure: 59.5%
 - Socializing: 55.4%
 - Scenery: 50.0%

Preferences for Activities During Hiking

- **AverageRatings (1-10):**
 - Group Activities: 8.06
 - Camping: 7.79
 - Learning about how to survive in nature: 7.29
 - Night Hiking: 7.20
 - Group Games: 7.11

Preferred Hike Length

- **Distribution:**
 - 5-10 km: 38%
 - 11-15 km: 35%
 - 16-20 km: 12%
 - More than 20 km: 7%
 - Less than 5 km: 9%

Seasonal Preferences

- **AverageRatings (1-10):**
 - Spring: 7.91
 - Summer: 7.73
 - Autumn: 7.18
 - Winter: 5.57

Barriers to Hiking

- **Top 5 Barriers:**
- **Lack of time:** 74%
- **Not enough friends who hike:** 40%
- **Weather issues:** 27%
- **Limited access to trails:** 22%
- **Lack of equipment:** 23%

Open-Ended Responses

- **Most Enjoyable Part of Hiking:**
 - Scenery/Views: 29.8%

- Socializing: 21.4%
- Nature: 13.7%
- Adventure: 7.7%
- Reaching Destination: 5.4%
- **Suggested Improvements:**
 - Nothing: 19.6%
 - Better Preparation (e.g., clothes, food): 15.5%
 - More Company: 11.3%
 - Weather: 7.7%
 - Activities: 5.4%
- **Ideas to Attract Youth:**
 - Group Activities/Games: 23.8%
 - Social Aspects: 17.9%
 - Challenges: 11.9%
 - Music: 7.7%
 - Nature Focus: 5.4%

Awareness& Membershipin Hiking Associations

- **Awareness:**
 - Yes:** 91 responses (54%)
 - No:** 53 responses (32%)
 - Not sure:** 24 responses (14%)
- Membership:**
 - Not currently a member:** 143 responses (~85%)
 - Currently a member:** 20 responses (~12%)
 - Was a member in the past:** 5 responses (~3%)
- **Interest in Joining:** Average rating of **5.11/10**.
- Top Motivations for Joining:**
 - Organized group hikes and events – 68%
 - Discounts on hiking equipment, gear, or related services – 55%
 - Opportunities to network and meet like-minded outdoor enthusiasts – 50%
 - Access to exclusive or better-maintained trails – 45%
 - Expert guidance, training, and safety tips – 42%
 - Information and updates on local/regional hiking opportunities – 38%

Social Media&Technology

- **Awareness of E-paths:**
 - Yes: 9% (24 respondents)
 - No: 91% (144 respondents)
- How interested are you in hiking experiences that involve group activities or games?:**
Average **6.88/10**.

•**How important is it for you to hike with friends/people of the same or similar age?:**
Average 7.6/10.

•**Would you be more likely to participate in hiking with people of the same or similar age?:** Average 7.77/10.

•**Most Used Social Media Platforms:**

- Instagram: 156 responses (~93%)
- TikTok: 100 responses (~60%)
- YouTube: 90 responses (~54%)
- Facebook: 41 responses (~24%)

•**Notice Hiking Activities on Social Media:**

- Yes: 30.95%
- No: 64.88%
- Sometimes: 4.17%

•**Use Social Media to Find Hiking Activities:**

- Rarely: 32.14%
- Never: 38.10%
- Sometimes: 21.43%
- Often: 6.55%
- Always: 1.79%

• **Technology Ideas to Attract Youth:**

- Social Media/Ads: 21.4%
- Apps: 13.7%
- Videos: 9.5%

Many respondents recommended using technology to boost the visibility of hiking activities among young people by increasing advertising and promotion on social media. They suggested partnering with influencers and creating engaging, high-quality videos, reels, and photos that showcase scenic trails and the fun of hiking. Some also proposed developing dedicated apps or digital platforms to provide trail information, live streaming, and interactive challenges, making hiking more accessible and exciting for a younger audience

Category	Key Findings
Total Respondents	168
Age Groups	16-18 (110), 18-25 (58)
Gender Distribution	Female: 62.5%, Male: 37.5%
Countries Represented	Italy (63.1%), Lithuania (22.6%), Spain (7.7%), Serbia (3.6%), Greece (1.8%), Czech Republic & Slovenia (1 each)
Education Level	High School: 60.1%, University/Student: 22.6%, Other/Blank: 17.3%
Hiking Interest	Avg. rating: 7.05/10
Hiking Participation	Yes: 74.3%, No: 25.7%
Hiking Frequency	Occasionally: 52.1%, Rarely: 24.3%, Monthly: 15.3%, Weekly: 8.3%
Preferred Hiking Groups	With Friends: 61.3%, With Family: 25%, Alone: 10.1%, With Colleagues: 3.6%
Top Motivations for Hiking	Nature (83.9%), Physical Activity (60.1%), Adventure (59.5%), Socializing (55.4%), Scenery (50%)
Preferred Activities During Hiking	Group Activities (8.06/10), Camping (7.79/10), Survival Skills (7.29/10), Night Hiking (7.20/10), Group Games (7.11/10)
Preferred Hike Length	5-10 km (38%), 11-15 km (35%), 16-20 km (12%), >20 km (7%), <5 km (9%)
Seasonal Preferences	Spring (7.91/10), Summer (7.73/10), Autumn (7.18/10), Winter (5.57/10)
Top Barriers to Hiking	Lack of Time (74%), No Hiking Friends (40%), Weather (27%), Limited Trail Access (22%), Lack of Equipment (23%)
Most Enjoyable Aspects of Hiking	Scenery/Views (29.8%), Socializing (21.4%), Nature (13.7%), Adventure (7.7%), Reaching Destination (5.4%)
Suggested Improvements	Nothing (19.6%), Better Preparation (15.5%), More Company (11.3%), Weather (7.7%), Activities (5.4%)
Ideas to Attract Youth	Group Activities/Games (23.8%), Social Aspects (17.9%), Challenges (11.9%), Music (7.7%), Nature Focus (5.4%)
Awareness of Hiking Associations	Yes: 54%, No: 32%, Not Sure: 14%

Membership in Hiking Associations	Not a Member: 85%, Current Member: 12%, Past Member: 3%
Interest in Joining a Hiking Association	Avg. rating: 5.11/10
Top Motivations for Joining	Group Hikes (68%), Discounts on Gear (55%), Networking (50%), Exclusive Trails (45%), Expert Guidance (42%), Info on Local Hikes (38%)
Awareness of E-Paths	Yes: 9%, No: 91%
Interest in Group Activities During Hikes	Avg. rating: 6.88/10
Preference for Hiking with Similar-Aged People	Avg. rating: 7.6/10
Likelihood of Participating if Peers Are Involved	Avg. rating: 7.77/10
Most Used Social Media Platforms	Instagram (93%), TikTok (60%), YouTube (54%), Facebook (24%)
Noticing Hiking Promotions on Social Media	Yes: 34%, No: 65%
Using Social Media to Find Hiking Activities	Never: 38%, Rarely: 32%, Sometimes: 21%, Often: 7%
Technology Ideas to Attract Youth	Social Media Ads (21.4%), Apps (13.7%), Videos (9.5%)

ANNEX 2

TEMPLATE FOR REFLECTING ON A CO-DESIGN ACTIVITY

Contributors:

Reflecting On A Co-Design Activity

How did participants respond to the topic?

Was it understandable for the participants?
How could the topic be redefined to facilitate discussion?

How to maintain relationships?

How will the community be enabled to give feedback?
How will the community know the impact of their contribution?

How did the activities go?

Did they go as planned?
Did they help to meet the objectives?
What were the challenges in carrying them out?
How could the format / structure be changed to make the activity more accessible?
What other activities could be helpful?

Who was missing?

Who wasn't included in the activity? Why?
What were the challenges in engaging certain communities?
Did participants feel safe to contribute ideas?
Who else should be included in future activities?

How were the logistics managed?

What kind of resources could help with engaging more diverse perspectives? What technical challenges were experienced during the activity? What were the challenges of working with communities with different needs, context, and culture?

What is the impact of the co-design process?

What is learned from this process?
What could be done differently in the future?



Designed by: Inclusive Design Research Centre (IDRC)
This work is licensed under CC BY 4.0

cities.inclusivedesign.ca

ANNEX 3

PATH CO-DESIGN CANVAS

SKILLS CHECKLIST

Please discuss together and check the answers as a group.

Creative & Promotional Skills

1. **Is anyone in your group confident using video or editing tools?**
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ A little
2. **Can someone in your group take good photos with a phone or camera?**
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ A little
3. **Does anyone feel comfortable writing short texts in English (for posts, brochures, etc.)?**
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ A little
4. **Is anyone happy to speak in front of a camera or audience?**
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ A little
5. **Can any of you use design tools like Canva or Photoshop?**
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ A little
6. **Has any one used social media (Instagram, TikTok etc.) or promoting a project or event?**
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ A little
7. **Does any one know how to manage or update a website or blog (e.g. WordPress, Wix)?**
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ A little
8. **Can anyone edit audio or create simple soundtracks (e.g. for a podcast or video)?**
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ A little
9. **What kind of promotional material do you think your group could create best?**
☐ Video ☐ Photos ☐ Brochure ☐ Social Media Post ☐ Other: _____

Hiking & Outdoor Experience

10. **Does anyone in your group know how to read a map or follow a hiking route?**
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ A little
11. **Can someone in your group use a GPS app or device for hiking?**
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ A little
12. **Has anyone in the group ever planned a hiking route before?**
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ A little

Opportunity

Report and group here the main opportunities identified after the first discussion.

Examples:

- *Upcoming collaboration with another outdoor organization.*
- *A new member of the organization has a broad network of young trekking enthusiasts that can be leveraged.*
- *Gaining new skills in social media management.*

Facts

Use this space to carry out initial analysis and reflections, starting from what emerged during the discussion.

Examples:

- *The board is aware of its lack of skills in co-designing events with young people.*
- *Need for new inspiration.*
- *Extensive experience in organizing new types of events.*

Critical points

Report and group here the main critical issues identified after the first discussion.

Examples:

- *Lack of young members within the association.*
- *Lack of time to organize new activities that also involve young people.*
- *Limited skills to engage a young audience through social media.*

OPPORTUNITIES DEFINITIONS

Build opportunities for your organization starting from the problems identified



OSERVATION & DATA	KEY ISSUE	OPPORTUNITY	PRIORITY
<p>What's happening in your organization?</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong team spirit among association members Difficulty engaging young members in the organization Lack of skills in using new channels to attract members 	<p>What is the root problem behind the previous observations?</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulty in engaging new members Lack of tools to communicate effectively with a younger audience Lack of social media skills 	<p>How to turn a problem into an opportunity using HMW (How Might We)?</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How might we create new association activities to attract new members? How might we acquire new skills to communicate effectively with a younger audience? 	<p>What's the priority level of this opportunity?</p> <p>0 → 5</p>
			<p>0 → 5</p>
			<p>0 → 5</p>
			<p>0 → 5</p>

Taken and adapted from GREEN CULTURE

OPPORTUNITIES IDEATION

Generate as many ideas as possible for every opportunity identified (feel free to replicate this page as necessary)

Opportunity name

IDEAS

Taken and adapted from GREEN CULTURE



**IDEA'S
NAME** _____

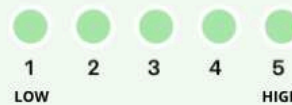
**OPPORTUNITY'S
NAME** _____

DESCRIPTION

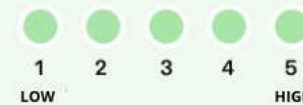
**WHY IT SHOULD
WORK**

**WHAT COULDN'T
WORK**

IMPACT



FEASIBILITY



(feel free to replicate this page as necessary)

Taken and adapted from GREEN CULTURE

ACTIVITIES' DEFINITION

Detail the idea as much as possible to define it in every aspect

ACTIVITY'S NAME.....

IDEA'S NAME.....

1. DESCRIPTION

What's the activity about?

Example:

- to create a specific event for youth engagement (e.g. youth week)
- to create an ad hoc social media strategy

2. OBJECTIVES

What's the activity scope?

Example:

- to augment youth participation in hiking activities
- to attract new young members

3. ACTIONS

What are the necessary steps to reach the objective?

Example:

- to create a website
- to appoint a social media leader
- to reach out to youth networks

4. KPI - Key performance indicators

What should we observe to evaluate the progress of the initiative?

Example:

- Launch of the online platform
- Nr. of followers on media pages

5. STAKEHOLDER

Which stakeholders do we need the most?

List the top 3

Example:

- Young members
- Youth networks
- Municipality

6. RESOURCES NEEDED

What resources do we need the most? List the top 3

Example:

- social media channels venue to do
- the event An external social media
- manager

(Feel free to replicate this page as necessary)

ROADMAP

Define the resources, partners, and KPIs needed to implement the identified activities

	Month 1 - Month 6	Month 7 - Month 12	Month 13 - Month 18
PLANNED EVENTS/ACTIVITIES			
FIRST ACTIVITY Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> social media engagement 	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of ad hoc pages on the main social media platforms Appointment of a social media manager within the association Start posting once a week 	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Posting on every social media once a week Creation of specific formats (e.g. youth week, benefits of trekking with other people) 	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Posting on every social media once a week Go live on social media channels Sponsor and market an event that is going to be created for youth in the next months
KPIs	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch of social media pages Nr. of social media posts 	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch of a new format for youth Nr. of interactions on social media 	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nr. of interactions on the live on Instagram ad Facebook
SECOND ACTIVITY			
KPIs			

Taken and adapted from GREEN CULTURE



**Co-funded by
the European Union**



Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

Project: PATH - Promoting Activism Through Hiking, nr: 101183333.

