

WHY

WE CONSIDER THAT THE 1.2 SUB-ACTION OF THE 'YOUTH IN ACTION' PROGRAMME NEEDS OUR SUPPORT NOW MORE THAN EVER. JOIN OUR CAUSE TO PROMOTE AN ACTION THAT BRINGS THE EUROPEAN UNION CLOSER TO ALL YOUNG PEOPLE!

YOUTH NEED ACTION!

YOUTH

BECAUSE

WE

WE CONSIDER THAT THE 1.5 SUB-ACTION OF THE

'YOUTH IN ACTION' PROGRAMME NEEDS OUR

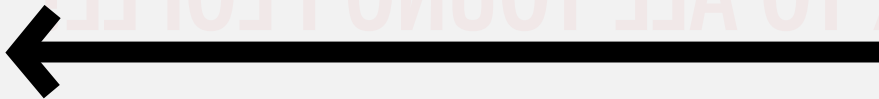
SUPPORT NOW MORE THAN EVER. JOIN OUR

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YOUTH NEED ACTION

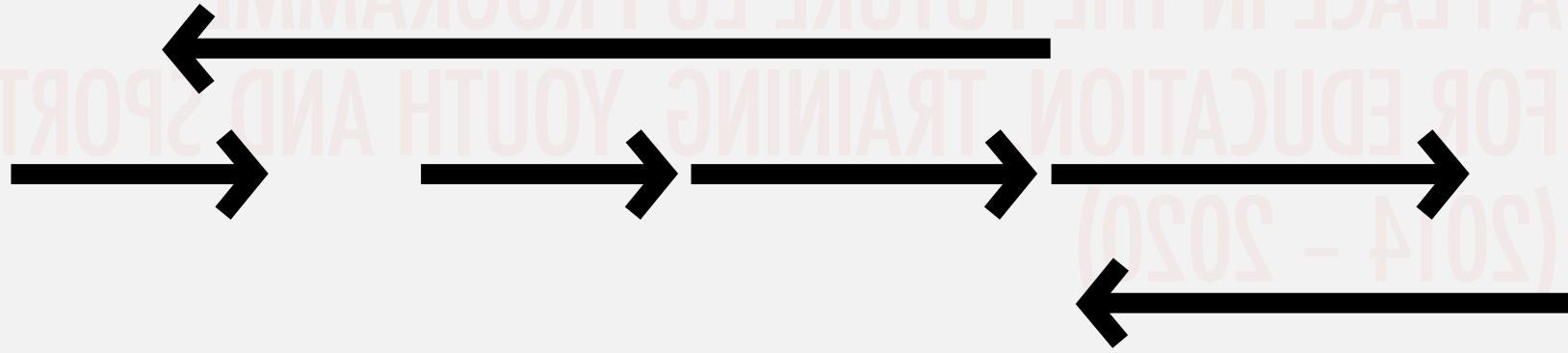
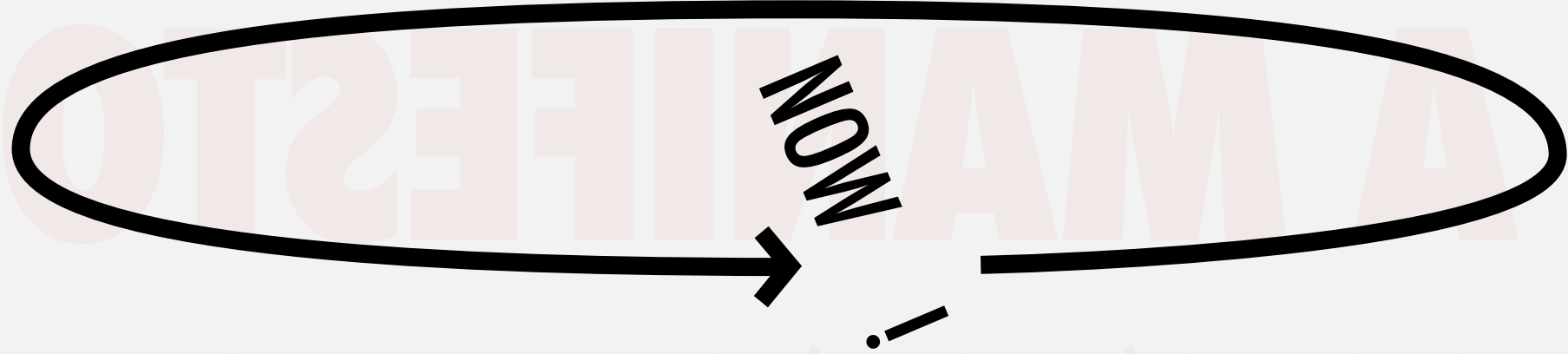


A MANIFESTO

FOR GIVING (NATIONAL) YOUTH INITIATIVES
A PLACE IN THE FUTURE EU PROGRAMME
FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, YOUTH AND SPORT
(2014 – 2020)

STATING THE CASE FOR YOUTH INITIATIVES

THIS IS AN INITIATIVE OF THE SALTO-YOUTH PARTICIPATION RESOURCE CENTRE TO MARK ITS 10TH ANNIVERSARY (2003-2013),
IN COLLABORATION WITH ACTION 1.2 PROJECT OFFICERS OF 'YOUTH IN ACTION' NATIONAL AGENCIES.



STATING THE CASE FOR YOUTH INITIATIVES



**WHY
WE SPEAK
UP FOR
(NATIONAL)
YOUTH
INITIATIVES**

INTRODUCTION:

IN VIEW OF THE FUTURE PROGRAMME STARTING IN 2014, WE, THE 1.2 OFFICERS AND SALTO-YOUTH PARTICIPATION, STRONGLY SUPPORT THE CONTINUING FUNDING OF YOUTH INITIATIVES AT EU LEVEL.

We see the need to put forth arguments for the significance and value of Youth Initiatives because it might not be apparent at first sight why projects such as Youth Initiatives, especially if they are carried out at a local/national level, are relevant in a European context or, more specifically, in the context of EU (youth) policy frameworks. Based on our long-term, direct experience of all aspects of Youth Initiatives, including the expertise that has accumulated around them, we are strongly aware of the relevance of 1.2 projects and want to draw attention to it in this statement. We focus on national Youth Initiatives because we see less of a need to speak up for Transnational Youth Initiatives; their European dimension and relevance is clearly apparent as groups of young people from different countries cooperate and engage in mobility. In our opinion, however, it is crucial to recognize the value of strengthening and investing in young people nationally in addition to promoting mobility across borders. Our arguments are in line with the 'Proposal of the network of National Agencies: A new EU-Programme, Youth in Action beyond 2013' which we strongly support.



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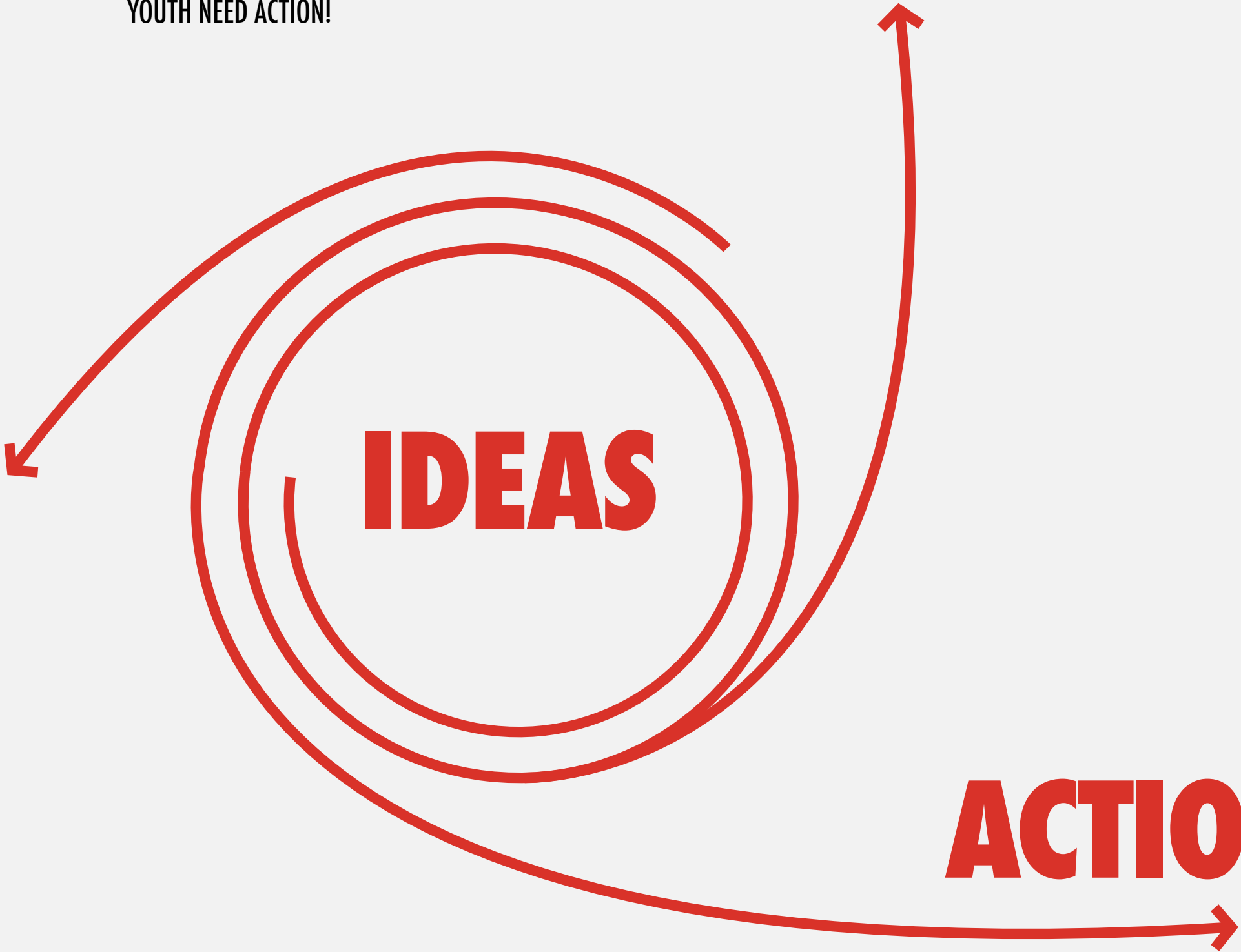
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YOUTH NEED ACTION!

IDEAS

ACTIONS



**WHAT
ARE
YOUTH
INITIATIVES?**

YOUTH INITIATIVES OFFER YOUNG PEOPLE THE OPPORTUNITY TO TURN THEIR OWN IDEAS INTO ACTIONS. THEY ARE THE EMBODIMENT OF ACTIVE YOUTH PARTICIPATION.

On the website of the European Commission, Youth Initiatives are defined in the following way:

Youth Initiatives are projects entirely devised, planned and implemented by young people at local, regional, national or international level. The goal of these important non-formal learning experiences is to stimulate young people's creativity, enterprise and initiative. Youth Initiatives are aimed primarily at 18-30 year olds, but 15-18 year olds can take part if accompanied by a coach or youth worker.

There are two types of initiative: National Youth Initiatives, which are developed by single groups in their own countries; and Transnational Youth Initiatives where two or more groups from different European countries are involved. The themes that groups choose to work on must be relevant to the young people themselves and to the local community. Possible topics include art and culture, social exclusion, homelessness and unemployment, youth sports and leisure, media and communications, etc. The European dimension is crucial. This could be

highlighted by ensuring that a chosen theme is examined in a European context. Project teams could also choose a specific European theme, such as enlargement and its cultural impact on young people. These strategies offer the chance to promote common European values like equal opportunities, human rights and democracy¹.

Youth Initiatives can take 3-18 months. As many young people as possible should get the chance to participate actively in the projects. Visibility measures must be taken to ensure that the project as well as the Youth in Action Programme is promoted. There is a special focus on the dissemination and exploitation of results in order to achieve a sustainable impact.

Link
¹ http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/youth-for-europe_en.htm
04/10/2011

Depending on the country, the grants per project, including costs for a coach, range from €4,950 (e.g. in Turkey, Romania) to €8,150 (e.g. in Norway and the UK) for National Youth Initiatives and from €6,850 to €11,350 for Transnational Youth Initiatives.

TAKE

THE

INITIATIVE



YOUTH NEED ACTION!

**WHY DO YOUTH
INITIATIVES
DESERVE A PLACE
IN THE FUTURE
EU PROJECT
LANDSCAPE?**

YOUTH INITIATIVES: A SUCCESS STORY

YOUTH INITIATIVES ARE AMONGST THE MOST DEMANDED SUB-ACTIONS OF THE YOUTH IN ACTION PROGRAMME, WITH LESS THAN ONE THIRD OF THE PROJECTS SUBMITTED BEING AWARDED.

In 2010, 4,987 projects were submitted of which 1,554 were granted. In 2011, 5,539 were submitted of which 1,714 were granted.² 14,225 young people participated in the projects in 2010 and 16,057 young people participated in 2011. The funding amounts to about €10 million per year. Because of the high demand, there is a need to reallocate additional funding from other sub-Actions. This data proves that Youth Initiatives are much sought after and firmly established in Europe. In France, for example, the number of Youth Initiatives projects is constantly increasing: from 2007 to 2010 there was an increase of 78% in terms of submitted projects and of 73% in terms of granted projects. Most of the projects are run by informal groups. Furthermore, in this action we can notice the largest number of first time applicants.³

- 2 **Source of information**
Education and Culture DG: Youth in Action Programme, Overview of Activities 2007-2011

Links
http://ec.europa.eu/youth/documents/overview_2007_2010.pdf
p.5

- 3 **Source of information**
Anna Seguin, French National Agency

- 4 **Source of information**
1.2 Officer Loreta Eimontaitė,
Lithuanian National Agency

- 5 **Links**
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/evalreports/youth/2011/interimreport_en.pdf
p. 76

STATING THE CASE FOR YOUTH INITIATIVES

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL EUROPEAN YOUNGSTERS

In the EU, the funding landscape varies considerably from country to country. In some European countries, national or local funds are available for young people to carry out projects. However, these funds are, in many cases, very limited and have decreased due to the economic crisis (e.g. in Lithuania and Greece), competition is very high and the funds are not available or very difficult to attain for informal groups (e.g. in Poland or Germany), let alone for youngsters with fewer opportunities (e.g. in Italia and Estonia). Furthermore, there is no or hardly any focus on a European dimension in the projects funded locally or nationally. In some European countries no funds are available at all for young people to carry out their own projects (e.g. in Latvia and Malta), so the youngsters are disadvantaged in this respect.

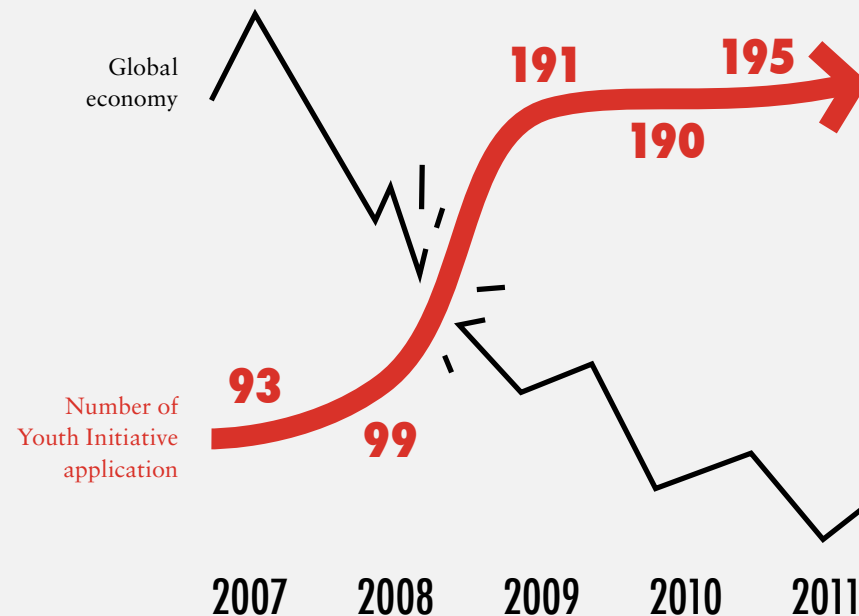
As an example, the situation in Lithuania⁴ is described aside:

LITHUANIA'S CASE

Due to the economic crisis, funds on national and on municipality levels for national youth projects were reduced to a minimum. Since then, our National Agency has received 50% more applications for Youth Initiatives:

These numbers show a big demand for European support. Some municipalities still give support for projects of young people, but the budget is very, very small. For example, in Akmene municipality where about 6,500 young people live (total number of inhabitants: about 26,000), the yearly budget for youth activities is €4,600, the same amount as the lump sum for project costs of one national Youth Initiative within the Youth in Action Programme in Lithuania. With this amount, the municipality organizes conferences, seminars for young people and gives grants to local youth projects. The total annual budget for all projects is €3,500.-, the maximum amount for one project is €290. The situation in a number of other municipalities is the same. The financial support is simply too low to fulfil the real demand for non-formal youth activities.

YOUTH INITIATIVE VS ECONOMIC CRISIS

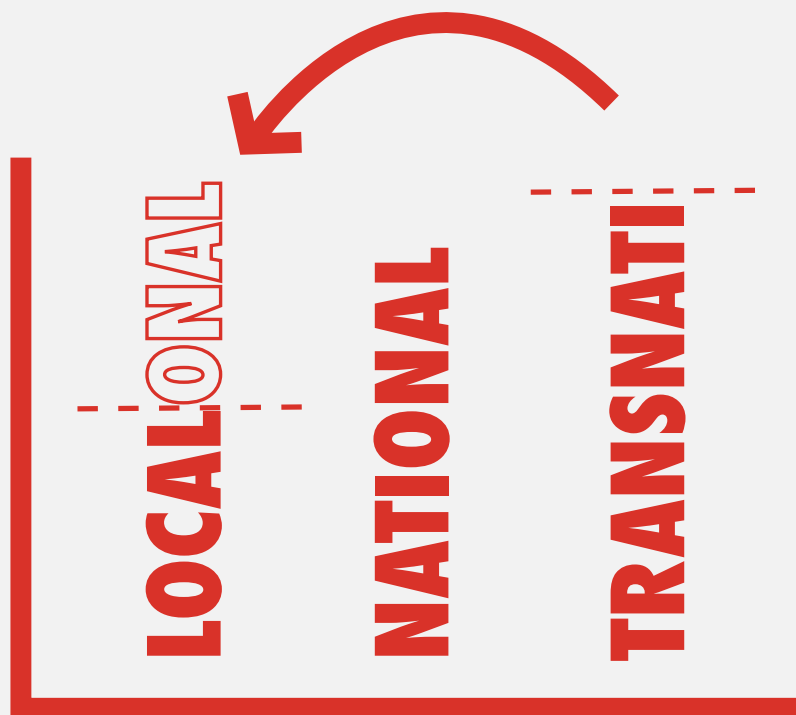


It is justified that the EU provides funds also for national projects because all European youngsters should have the opportunity to do (local) projects, even if no or very limited national/local funds are at their disposal. It is a question of democracy and equality within the EU and all the programme countries that there is a standardized European programme providing the

same opportunities and possibilities to European youth, no matter which country or region they live in. National funds are diverse and a complement to European funds but cannot replace the impact and importance of Youth Initiatives as the single most significant tool for young people to implement their own ideas, whether it is at a local or transnational level.

EUROPEAN ADDED VALUE

Youth Initiatives are the only activities in the current Youth in Action programme in which everything is up to the young people themselves. This also means that the EU can reach young people and their communities via Youth Initiatives. Funding these projects is a chance for the EU to be directly relevant to young people's lives and the lives of their communities at a local level. Young people's awareness of being not only national citizens but European citizens as well can thus be raised and strengthened.



BRING EUROPE 'CLOSER TO HOME'

EU4YOU

The national Youth Initiative 'EU4YOU – An initiative to strengthen the European awareness of young people in Steyr and the Ennstal region' took place in a rural area of Upper Austria. Four young people pursued the objective to inform other youngsters about the EU, its programmes and to motivate them to initiate projects of their own and to engage creatively with the concept of Europe. The core of the initiative was to set up a 'EU4YOU' room in a youth centre which would continue to exist after the project ends. There, youngsters could find all relevant information on what the EU has to offer for young people. A 'Europe library' was installed and a collection of relevant websites on topics such as the EU and education, politics, languages etc. were compiled. The room was designed by youngsters together with a local artist. Activities such as creative workshops on themes like cultural identity, European awareness, discussions and an intercultural theatre workshop were planned. The results were presented to other youth centres and to local politicians.

Giving youngsters the opportunity to carry out Youth Initiatives is a way of empowering young European citizens. Local projects funded by the EU bring Europe 'closer to home' which fosters a positive image of the EU and demonstrates what it has to offer for all (young) people, not only those who are able and/or willing to go abroad or who have access to formal EU programmes which require a certain

level of education or qualifications. Visibility measures and measures for the dissemination and exploitation of results, both of which are obligatory in Youth Initiative projects, also provide a clear promotional added value for the Youth in Action Programme and thus for the EU.

NEXT DOOR EUROPE

In 2009, the informal group 'Young Scientists for the promotion of the European Idea in Thrace' realized the national Youth Initiative 'Next door Europe'. In view of the elections for the European Parliament, the group took action together with young people from the prefecture of Evros, Greece. Equipped with cameras and pens, the twelve participants of the group recorded every single sign of presence of the politics and institutions of the EU in the area and met local people who worked within the EU framework. Moreover, having a first contact with the role and the working methods of EU institutional bodies and their policies for young people, they expressed their questions, concerns and dreams for Europe through a short film. The group also created a promotional spot in order to encourage the local community to vote in the European Parliament elections.

YOUTH NEED ACTION!

According to the Youth in Action Interim Evaluation, 65% of the youngsters who participated in Youth Initiatives feel more European as a result of participating in their projects.⁵

As stated above, the European added value of transnational Youth Initiatives is clearly apparent as groups of young people from different countries cooperate and engage in mobility.



'Mission Europe' is a Transnational Youth Initiative initiated by 18 youngsters from Belgium, Germany and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg in order to encourage young people to become politically active citizens. The project took place in Ypres (Belgium), Berlin (Germany) and Luxembourg (G.D. Luxembourg). The participants take part in debates, discussions, workshops, sight-seeing tours mainly related to WWI, Freedom and the EU as well as Human Rights and pan-European issues.

'Mission Europe' is mentored by young adults who lead discussions, give lectures and lead bicycle trips. As such, the methodology of 'Mission Europe' is based on peer-to-peer education, not only by absorbing knowledge passively through lectures but also by giving the participants the opportunity to engage actively through discussions and debates.

The aims of 'Mission Europe' are to improve the awareness of the EU, to create cooperation and cultural understanding across borders in order to turn the participants into engaged and tolerant youngsters and to give them the skills needed in a globalized world, to inspire them to be politically active in their own countries and to provide them with the necessary tools. Thus, the project aims to contribute to the formation of a social, open-minded, aware and skilled future generation.

In 2010, the project was successfully carried out for the first time with Flemish and German youngsters. In 2011, they're busy organising with Flemish, German and Luxembourg youngsters. The core groups consist of very young people aged 17-19, organising EU-weekends for youngsters from the age of 15.

Although national Youth Initiatives are carried out at a local level, they have a clearly recognizable European dimension which is stressed in the European Commission's definition of Youth Initiatives (see above). It is assessed in the application form and represents one of the quality criteria on the basis of which it is decided whether a project is funded or not. In order to increase the European added value of national Youth Initiatives, a stronger emphasis could be put on the European dimension in the future by making it obligatory that the European dimension is reflected in the activities themselves (extra question in application form), by stating it as a top priority in the

Programme Guide and consequently by allocating more points to it in the award criteria. In this way, a focus on the EU, its values and related issues can be established in national projects, once again fostering European awareness. The European dimension can also be strengthened by putting more emphasis on it in training (e.g. in Youth Initiative trainings, coaching trainings etc.).



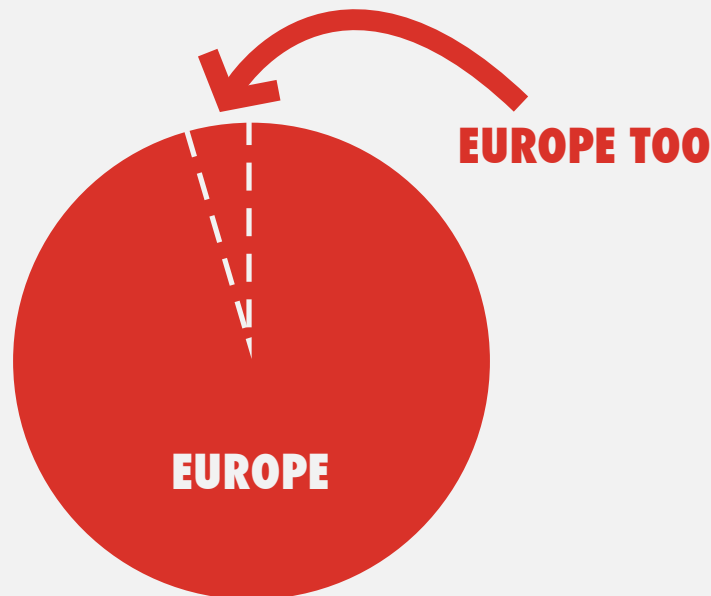
EXPERTISE

In Youth Initiatives, young people deal with a wide spectrum of topics which are of common interest to European society, such as youth participation, social inclusion, youth unemployment, tolerance, solidarity etc. In the framework of Youth Initiatives, which have existed in the EU youth programme since the year 1995, a broad range of expertise has been accumulated.

The aim of the SALTO Participation Resource Centre is to ensure the participation of young people in democratic life by providing training tools and modules (the 'Get in Net' training course for transnational youth initiatives), publications (e.g. Coaching Guide, A Good Connection) and opportunities for networking and international cooperation.

The National Agencies have also been working e.g. on the exploration

of the participation topic and the coaching process, developing various support measures for young people and youth workers in the form of trainings, publications, etc. Youthpass, a tool to visualise and validate learning outcomes gained in Youth in Action projects and to support the employability of young people and youth workers, has been introduced. The expertise created in the projects themselves should not be underestimated either. If Youth Initiatives are no longer included in the EU Programme, a lot of this expertise, which is relevant to European youth policy, will probably be lost and wasted. Valuable training possibilities for young people and youth workers e.g. in the field of youth participation, coaching and project management, which are now offered in the framework of Youth Initiatives, would no longer be available resulting in a disadvantage for European youngsters, as well as a setback for the European youth field.



INCLUSION

Youth Initiatives have a low threshold for participation and are therefore especially valuable for young people with fewer opportunities. Thus, Youth Initiatives strongly contribute to the social inclusion priority. In the framework of national Youth Initiatives, young people who, for whatever reasons, are not able or confident enough to engage in mobility projects (e.g. due to the lack of foreign language skills, educational problems, health problems, etc.), have the opportunity to carry out meaningful projects themselves or can be included as participants and/or beneficiaries.



Backed by the 'Panhellenic Cultural Educational Association of Greek Rom', six young people from the Rom community carried out the National Youth Initiative 'Lexis'. They did linguistic research and created a dictionary in which most of the Rom words were translated into Greek and English. They contacted older Rom who knew the origin of the words and translated them with the support of a literature teacher. As most of the young Rom had left school at an earlier age to work for a living, the main challenges was to gather for the project, to work together as a team and to combine manual and cognitive work. The Youth in Action Programme gave them the chance to develop their linguistic skills in a pleasant way and encouraged their inclusion into the local community.

EUROPEAN



For youngsters with fewer opportunities, a Youth Initiative can represent a first step towards European mobility. By participating in a local project they may acquire social competencies, self-confidence, the capacity for interpersonal relations and an interest in European values.

STATING THE CASE FOR YOUTH INITIATIVES

LOCAL, NATIONAL, INTERNATIONAL: BROADENING HORIZONS AND SUPPORTING EMPLOYABILITY

As Youth Initiatives are easily accessible - especially national ones - they are ideal starting points for becoming involved and, consequently, ideal entry points into the Youth in Action and other European programmes. Young people who have a positive experience with a national Youth Initiative often gain the experience and confidence to go transnational or international. These experiences can pave the way for better chances in the labour market.



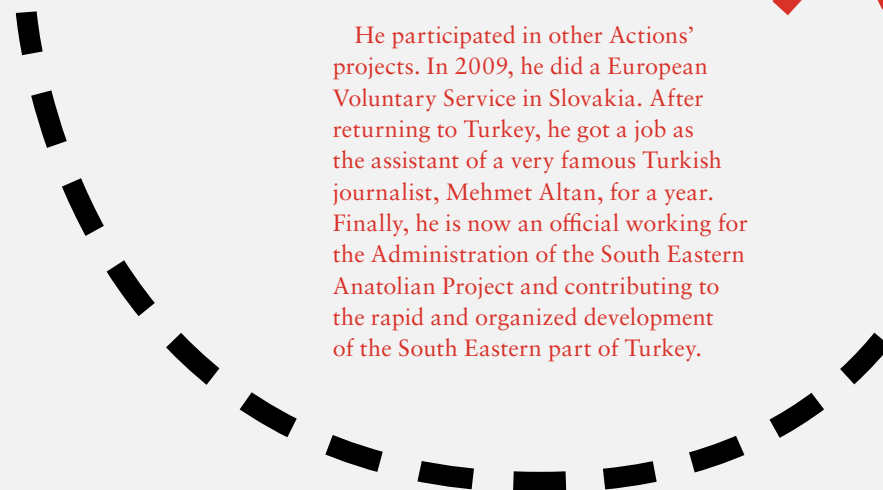
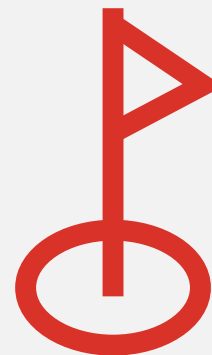
In 2004, an eighteen-year-old youngster, Ahmet Katiksiz, was the contact person for the national Youth Initiative 'Books for All', realized in Bingol, a province in the Eastern part of Turkey. He did not speak any foreign language at that time. After finalising the project successfully, he developed more self-confidence and participated in a training course on Youth Exchanges (Action 1.1) in 2004 and a training course of multipliers in 2006. He learned a lot about the Youth Programme and later on the Youth in Action Programme. Consequently, he got interested in international projects and other actions of Youth in Action and started to study the English language.

According to the Youth in Action Interim Evaluation, 58% of the participants in Youth Initiatives agree that they have a clearer idea about their future educational path and 55% believe that their job chances have increased.



A group of young people who are registered by the State Employment Agency as job-seekers established an NGO called 'Uz vilna' to carry out the project 'From old to new' by involving other youngsters who are unemployed and also students from the local high school. 59 youngsters were involved in the project from city of Jurmala and Riga, Latvia, most of them registered as unemployed. Young mothers with children joined the project activities as well. They started a movement to promote an environmentally friendly lifestyle and an understanding for the creative reuse of objects, in this way reducing the impact of consumer culture on society. During the project, youngsters gained new skills and innovative methods to create new things from used materials. In the end, they made a short documentary about the reuse of objects and an animation (cartoon) which was disseminated in schools. Unemployed youngsters gained entrepreneurial skills and developed their creativeness in order to be able to use them in different life situations.

JOB ?



He participated in other Actions' projects. In 2009, he did a European Voluntary Service in Slovakia. After returning to Turkey, he got a job as the assistant of a very famous Turkish journalist, Mehmet Altan, for a year. Finally, he is now an official working for the Administration of the South Eastern Anatolian Project and contributing to the rapid and organized development of the South Eastern part of Turkey.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Youth Initiatives are excellent instruments for stimulating and strengthening entrepreneurship. They offer unique opportunities for young people to experiment with their ideas and to turn them into action on a relatively small scale and with relatively little risk, in a safe environment. In Youth Initiatives, young people employ and develop entrepreneurial skills, namely the ability to take initiative, the capacity for innovation, creativity, flexibility, organization skills, responsibility, identification with the project etc. The youngsters draw up and manage a budget, look for co-sponsors, find ways to promote their projects, establish contact with the media and fulfil many other tasks which entrepreneurs have to carry out. A youth initiative can be a stepping stone and an ideal preparation for founding an organization or for developing or expanding a business idea and starting up a business or social enterprise once an idea/project, implemented in the Youth Initiative, has proved to be successful.



'ProjectoMayonaise' is the name of the national Youth Initiative initiated by a fast-growing collective of youngsters with the objective to change the 'organical dynamic' of the city of Kortrijk, Belgium-Flanders and to make young people aware of the place they take in Europe and the rest of the world. Kortrijk has a very intercultural and socio-economic diverse spectrum of inhabitants and has the advantage of

being part of one of the rare European Regions that crosses different language and country-borders: the Euregio Lille-Tournai-Kortrijk. In this framework, the project group developed an open creative house in the city where creative and innovative socio-cultural actions and activities to be part of the new dynamics of the city can be developed. An old movie-theatre in the city is used as the location. In the building and in different spaces in the city easily accessible interventions were organized that bring people together and involve them to take part in and help to create a new city-dynamic. (Activities: intercultural evenings, clandestine cooking in the street, streetgames, thematic evenings, courses on creativity, etc.) The Youth Initiative lasted for a year and the aim was to continue the project in a more structured way afterwards.

Nowadays, Pro Mayo is an international collective of creative grassroots-minded human beings willing to inspire, train and support people and organisations to think positive, love change and to play with the world around us. proMayo.be is a training and expertise service, specialised in play, personal & creativity development and socio-cultural entrepreneurship. The organisation is recognized by the Flemish government as experimental youth work and receives funds to employ a youth-worker who works for Pro Mayo.

Entrepreneurship cannot be taught, it must be experienced. According to the Youth in Action Interim Evaluation, 69% of participants in youth initiatives indicated that it was true that they had developed competencies in relation to their sense of initiative. 'All actions

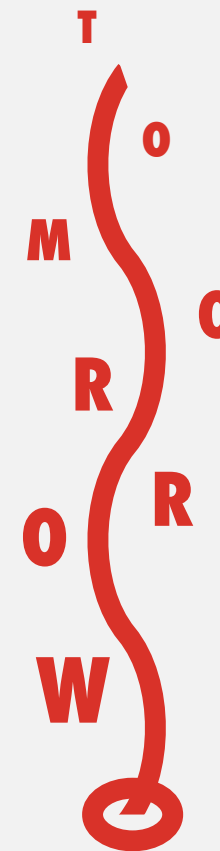
contribute successfully to this objective [of encouraging initiative, enterprise and creativity], but youth initiatives is clearly the sub-action that contributes the most.' The external evaluators state that '[...] it is worth keeping these specifics in mind [...] for future Programmes in terms of linking objectives and Actions'. The non-formal learning-by-doing setting of Youth Initiatives provides fertile soil for the (social) entrepreneurs of tomorrow.



In the Flemish Youth Initiative 'Zuiddag', high school students work one school day voluntarily in a company, shop or organisation in their neighbourhood. The project was initiated in 2007 with 8 schools. Local enterprises can put vacancies on a database on the project website or students can look for a place themselves. The students donate what they earn that specific day to a selected NGO which works around the Millennium Goals (e.g. Diaconia, Brazil). Anticipating the 'work'-day, there is an educational week. Every school that participates can get visitors from the South, young people from the projects of the NGO which they will support financially. This educational exchange is well-prepared. The students in Belgium have to organize themselves in school committees, encourage each other to look for a job, prepare the educational week in their school, convince local enterprises to offer vacancies etc. The students in the partner country (e.g. Brazil) also

prepare an educational week so they can offer presentations and cultural workshops in every school. Educational material for teachers and students on the project website is available as well as a brochure. The educational week is concluded with a big cultural event in the city where the project takes place.

'Zuiddag' goes on. In the edition of 2011, 10,000 youngsters and 124 schools participate all over Flanders. In 2007, the project was carried out solely by volunteers. Now 'Zuiddag' employs 2 people.



WHY

A MANIFESTO

BECAUSE