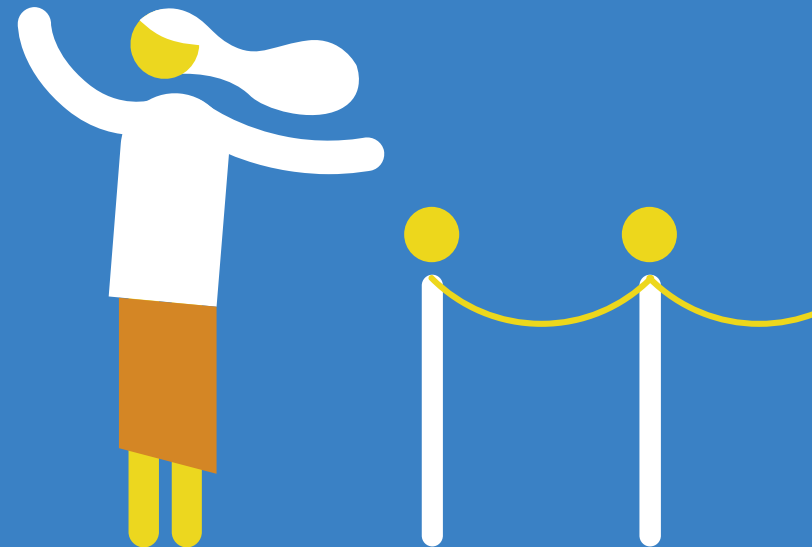


Welcome youth participation enthusiasts!



**ARE YOU INTERESTED
IN ENHANCING
THE PARTICIPATION
OF YOUNG PEOPLE?**

**ARE YOU CURIOUS ABOUT THE
PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES
THAT THE EUROPEAN UNION'S
YOUTH PROGRAMMES OFFER?**

**ARE YOU
WONDERING
WHERE AND
HOW TO BEGIN?**

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, then you are reading the right publication!

The European Union is set, among other aims and objectives, to encourage youth participation in democratic life in Europe¹. The [EU Youth Strategy](#) places high emphasis on youth participation, and it is one of the eleven key priorities outlined as [European Youth Goals](#) by young people active in the EU Youth Dialogue.

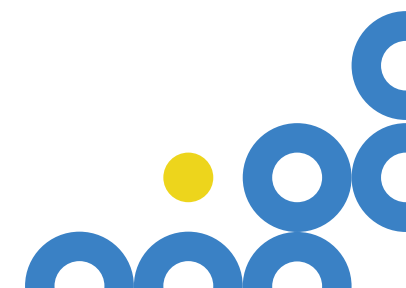
To put those policies in practice, the [Erasmus+](#) and [European Solidarity Corps](#) programmes ('the EU youth programmes') have, among their objectives, *enhancing youth participation in democratic life*. A strategy for enhancing youth participation in democratic life through the youth programmes was developed by the [SALTO Participation & Information Resource Centre](#)² following a consultation process in 2019 and 2020. The [Youth Participation Strategy](#) defines what youth participation in democratic life is and identifies ways in which EU youth programmes can support it. This toolkit is an additional resource to accompany the [Youth Participation Strategy](#). The toolkit is for all those that enable and foster youth participation and are interested in doing so through the EU youth programmes. It provides practical ideas and guidance to the community of practice in their efforts to foster youth participation and in taking on board the ideas, concepts and good practices for participation that the youth participation strategy presents.

SALTO PI has also created an online platform for participation resources, the Participation Resource Pool. This site brings together valuable information and resources in three main areas: *Youth Participation; Media, Information & Critical thinking and Promotion & Outreach*. The Participation Resource Pool is an important resource for this Toolkit and will be referenced throughout.



¹Embedded in Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

²It is a knowledge hub for networking the European Union youth policy and programmes and young people, their organisations, and people who work to support them



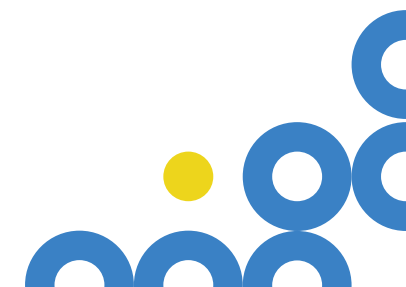
What is in this module?

In this module, you will find a step by step guide on how the toolkit is built, and what is in it. This module is the introduction. It is intended to help you understand how you can use it to support the participation of young people.

This module addresses the following questions:

1. Who is this toolkit for?
2. How is this toolkit built?
3. What is in this toolkit?
4. What can you use this toolkit for?

We invite you to dive right in and find out more about how the European Union youth funding schemes and their support mechanisms can help you to support the participation of young people.



Who is this toolkit for?

This toolkit is for all those that enable and foster youth participation and are interested in doing so through the EU youth programmes!

You might be the leader of a youth group, a youth worker in a youth centre, on the board of a youth organisation, a peer educator, the representative of other young people, a trainer or simply someone working to get other young people involved in an active way in their communities.

This toolkit is for those interested in

- ✓ developing an understanding of youth participation theory and concepts and/or
- ✓ improving the quality of the thinking and practice on youth participation and/or
- ✓ building experience in implementing youth participation and/or
- ✓ using Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes to support young people's participation and/or
- ✓ accessing resources and additional information about youth participation in the context of the EU youth programmes.



How is this toolkit built?

This toolkit aims to improve and develop practice, rather than give “best” practice advice. The information outlined in it will help you to consider young people and their participation needs more. This will help you to make informed choices that make sense for the specific context. Using the toolkit will support you in developing thinking and practice on youth participation that is guided by the values of youth participation promoted by the European institutions, through the [EU Youth Strategy](#), in general, and through the [Youth Participation Strategy](#), specifically.

For this reason, this toolkit is built on three core principles:

First, it is MODULAR. Each module focuses on a different topic, but is presented in a similar format for ease of use. Each module is usable as a freestanding resource, and all 12 combine to form a toolkit for specific types of actions/projects of EU youth programmes. The content is presented in both online and offline formats.



Second, all the modules are PARTICIPATION PRACTICE FOCUSED, linking directly to the EU youth programmes. This means that the largest part of the content of each module is about how to enhance participation using the opportunities provided by Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps. At the same time, each module also presents ideas and concepts of youth participation. This ‘theoretical foundation’ will help you to better understand the practical guidance on developing participation experiences for young people that it provides. The concept of participation presented in this guide is directly informed by the Youth Participation Strategy mentioned above.

Third, all modules address three issues of importance for youth participation today: INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY, DIGITAL TRANSFORMATIONS AND SUSTAINABILITY.

To be real and meaningful for young people, participation experiences must be sensitive to diversity, accessible to all and inclusive of all young people, no matter their background, social situation, level of opportunity, ability or disability. Digitalisation affects every aspect of life, including participation; therefore, each module will address how youth participation workers can use digital tools and methods to enhance the participation experiences of the young people they are working with. Each module also provides tools for self-assessment that can help youth participation workers think about how the participation experiences they are developing can not only avoid doing harm to the environment, but also contribute constructively to climate goals and sustainability.

Furthermore, the toolkit is developed on the basis of a premise that the participatory approach works well when built from the level of an individual young person and local youth group and when carried and transferred onwards to international projects that involve the cooperation of more young people/youth groups. Projects under Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps are often precisely about connecting two or more local groups of participants from different countries, with one group leading the project.

What is in this toolkit?

This toolkit comprises 12 modules with this introduction.

🔗 **Module 2: What is youth participation?**

This module provides an introduction to the main concepts of participation that have been developed as part of the SALTO PI Participation Strategy.

🔗 **Module 3: Promoting participation for all.**

This module develops ideas about how participation can be accessible, inclusive and sensitive to the diversity of young people.

🔗 **Module 4: Learning by doing.** This module discusses learning by doing as a basis for young people to develop participation competence.

🔗 **Module 5: Young people leading projects.**

This module develops ideas about how young people can lead within projects, thereby gaining meaningful participation experiences.

🔗 **Module 6: Creating change with projects.**

This module reflects on change. How do participation projects contribute to positive change in society? How can change projects improve the participation experience of young people?

🔗 **Module 7: Mobility projects for young people.**

This module looks specifically at how to implement a participation dimension in Key Action 1 mobility projects, namely youth exchanges.

🔗 **Module 8: Youth participation activities.**

This module outlines what it takes to make a Key Action 1 participation project meaningful for participating young people.

🔗 **Module 9: Discover EU.** This module reflects on how to enhance the Discover EU programme and the opportunities it offers young people to travel and experience Europe with participation experiences.

🔗 **Module 10: Solidarity Projects.** This module considers the link between participation and solidarity and how to integrate a participation dimension into Solidarity Projects.

🔗 **Module 11: Volunteering.** This module presents ideas about how to develop a participation dimension in European Solidarity Corps volunteering activities.

🔗 **Module 12: Planning for participation.**

This module suggests some practical tools for planning the integration of participation into projects.



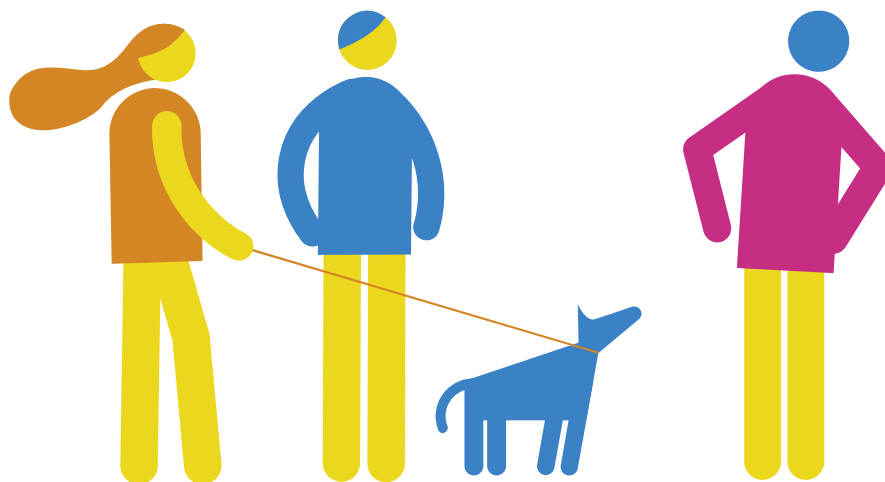
What can you use this toolkit for?

This toolkit will provide you with information, tools and access to further reference material about participation concepts, the EU youth programmes and the opportunities they offer you for enabling and fostering youth participation.

You will also find guidance that can help you to think about youth participation and your practice critically, and to improve its relevance and effectiveness - in other words, its quality.

You can use the ideas and tools in this toolkit to develop your own experience of implementing youth participation in specific activities and projects with young people, and to evaluate these activities and projects.

And, you can gain access to resources that can help you to utilise the Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps to support the participation of young people, whether by applying to do a project or by gaining access to new partners and networks.



Where can you find more information?

This toolkit has the potential to act as a gateway for you to get to know more about youth participation and the EU youth programmes that support young people. Each module links to specific resources that lead to further information, inspiration and know-how.

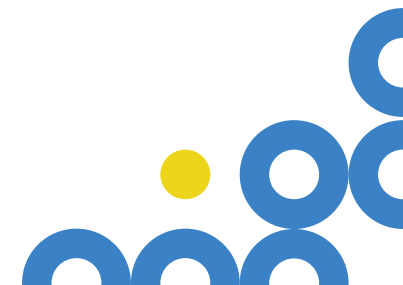
In particular, we recommend that you make use of the complementary resources available on the [SALTO PI Participation Resource Pool](#).

On that site, you can find more information about the participation opportunities offered by the EU youth programmes through the [Participation Resource Pool](#), such as:




The Programme Guides for Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps explaining which opportunities the programmes offer and how to apply;

Contacts for the [National Agencies](#) who manage the implementation of the programme in each participating country;

Furthermore, you can access [A Glossary of Terms and definitions](#) important for youth participation work.



Acknowledgements

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