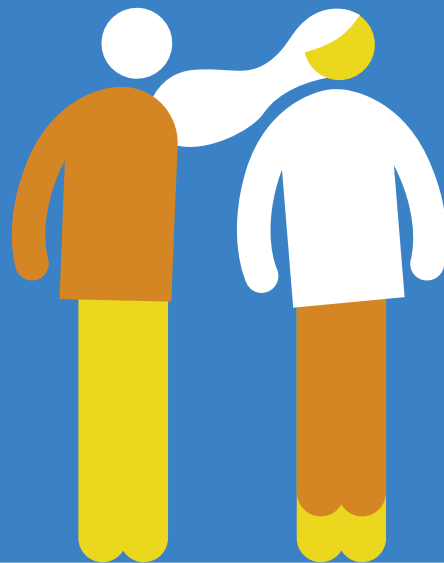


3

Promoting participation for all



Every young person has the right to participate in democratic life. Participation for all is about increasing the number of young people participating in democratic life overall, AND about ensuring that young people with fewer opportunities have an equal opportunity to participate. Outreach and inclusive participation are both key in this.

Outreach is about contacting young people who are not already involved in youth participation activities and informing them about the possibility to become more involved. It can also mean contacting those that can help you to reach young people (e.g. schools, non-governmental organisations, media, employment agencies or others whom you find to have access to those young people). Outreach can be a stage within your project. This is when you try to attract more project participants to join the activities. It can also be the main purpose of your project. For instance, you could run an outreach project that encourages more young people to join an existing youth forum or youth organisation.

Inclusive participation is about ensuring the participation of young people who have fewer opportunities to participate in democratic life as a result of:

- ✓ Disability;
- ✓ Educational difficulties;
- ✓ Cultural differences, e.g. immigrants or refugees or people belonging to a national or ethnic minority;
- ✓ Geographic obstacles, such as being in a rural area;
- ✓ Social problems, such as facing discrimination because of gender, ethnicity or sexuality,
- ✓ Health;
- ✓ Economic circumstances;
- ✓ any other aspects of their identity or circumstances or a combination thereof ¹.

There are many factors that could exclude young people from your project. For example, deliberate exclusion occurs as a result of prejudice or hate speech directed towards young people belonging to particular groups. Exclusion also occurs when the design of a project makes it harder for some young people to take part, even if this was not the intention. For instance, a project that only takes place on Saturdays might exclude young Jewish people who wish to observe the Shabbat as a day of rest. Or, young people with autism could be excluded if they do not receive clear information about the order of activities within a project meeting. Identifying which groups of young people have fewer opportunities in your context is a crucial first step towards working inclusively.



² European Commission, Directorate General for Education and Culture (2014) [Erasmus+ Inclusion and Diversity Strategy](#), Brussels, provides more details on situations young people can be in that prevent them from participating.

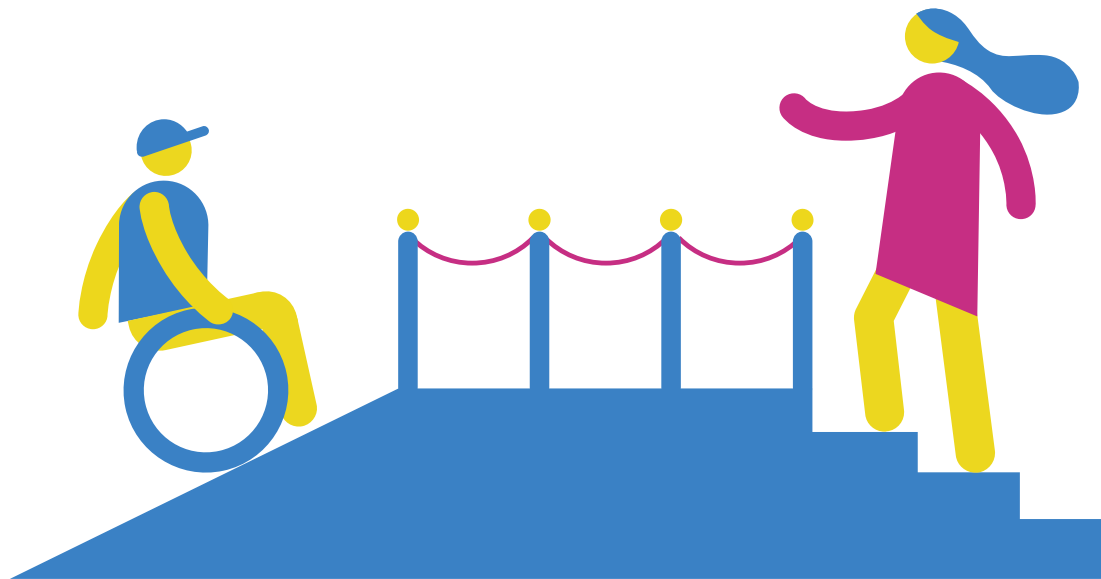
There are different ways to take an inclusive approach to participation

1. Ensuring young people from all backgrounds have equal access to your project.

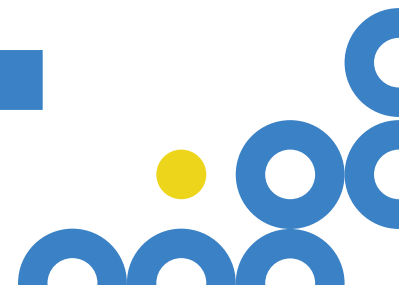
This means performing outreach work to contact and engage with young people with fewer opportunities or who may not feel very welcome to join your project right now. It also means identifying who already has access to those young people, with whom those young people communicate and whom do they trust. It also involves identifying the barriers that prevent them from being involved and providing additional support to overcome these.

2. Developing a project focused on one particular group of young people with fewer opportunities, to promote their participation in democratic life. For example, setting up a leadership programme or youth event for young LGBTQIA+² people. This can help create a safe space for young people from that group to explore issues and topics that are important to them, which might not get discussed in other projects. It helps ensure that this group has equal opportunities to participate in democratic life overall.

Once young people with fewer opportunities have access, promoting participation also means ensuring that all young people involved in an activity have a chance and receive the support they need to take up leadership in the project.



² For the meanings of different acronyms, look at the Acronyms Explained page of the Outright International Website: <https://outrightinternational.org/content/acronyms-explained>

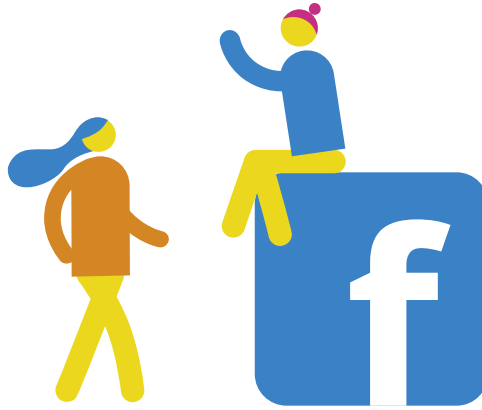




Focusing on: Outreach in practice



Start by identifying which groups of young people are in your community. Try to identify any groups that might not have been involved in your previous projects. Consider how you might get in touch with those groups of young people (i.e. map relevant organisations who could help to reach out to them). Consider what you can do, in cooperation with others too, to encourage them to join your project.



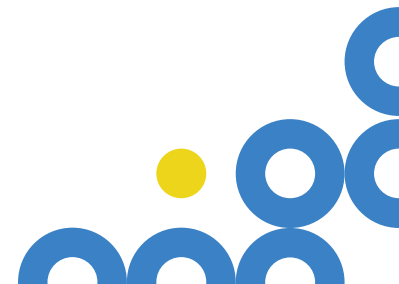
You can use a range of methods for outreach work, such as social media campaigns or youth work that involves visiting public spaces to contact young people. You can also run taster events and activities in schools, with other youth organisations, or in community spaces.



During outreach work, think about the main messages you want to use to promote your project. Try to communicate the benefits of getting involved in order to motivate young people to join.



Before going public with your messages or campaigns, if possible, test them on the target group representatives. Make sure the message also feels attractive, trustworthy and authentic for them.





Focusing on: Inclusion and Diversity

When creating a project, start by thinking about which different groups of young people are in your community. Consider how you can reach out and invite them to be involved in the design of your project from the start.

During outreach, spend time talking to different groups of young people to identify the barriers that might prevent them from accessing your project. Try to remove these barriers from the design of your project and while implementing it.

Consider providing additional support during your project for those young people with fewer opportunities. This will help overcome barriers and enable young people to participate fully. Different groups of young people may need different types of support.

Young people are not a homogenous group. Different groups of young people might have different voices and opinions. Reflecting and promoting a diversity of voices in your project outcomes is an important part of inclusive youth participation.

Create opportunities for young people with fewer opportunities to take up leadership positions in your projects. This will help ensure the project design meets their needs.





Focusing on: Digital transformations

Social media and online promotion can be a very effective way to conduct outreach activities and inform young people about the possibility of joining your project.

Digital tools and communication channels have wider reach; however, they are not automatically inclusive. Not all young people have internet access and digital tools may not be accessible to everyone.

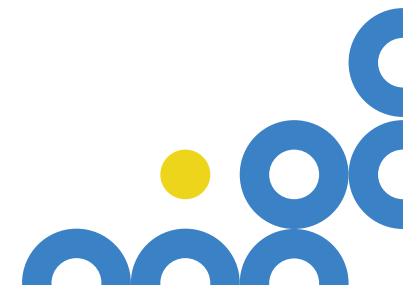
If you are using a digital tool to deliver your activities, pay attention to which groups of young people engage with it. Just as you would in a face-to-face activity, try to identify who might be excluded and why. Put in place steps to change this, or provide alternative face-to-face activities to compliment your digital work.



Instead of creating your own communities, go where the young people are.

Do not forget that you are competing for young people's attention in the digital world, so:

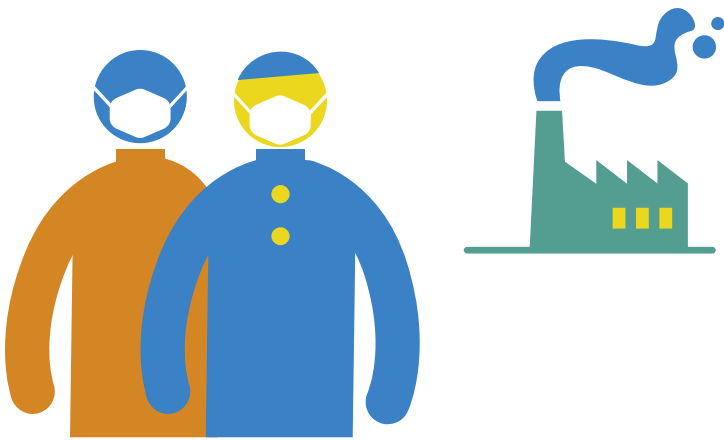
- 1. invest in design and messages;**
- 2. choose your channels wisely;**
- 3. consider that not all information that is shared about your important topic is correct (fake news);**
- 4. improve your audiences' critical thinking and media and information literacy skills**





Focusing on: Sustainability, environmental and climate goals

Sustainability, climate change and environmental issues have an inclusion dimension to them. This can be thought about in two ways:



Excluded or marginalised groups of people suffer disproportionately from the effects of climate change and the impact of environmental degradation. For example, people with health conditions are more likely to be affected by air pollution, or people in rural areas may be more affected by the extreme weather conditions resulting from climate change.



As new generations of young people grow up, they will have to live with the consequences of the climate change caused by their elders and previous generations. They will suffer from the consequences of the previous generations' overconsumption of the world's resources, and lack of care for the environment.

This means it is vital for young people, particularly those with fewer opportunities, to have a say and influence in the climate agenda.



If you want to go deeper...

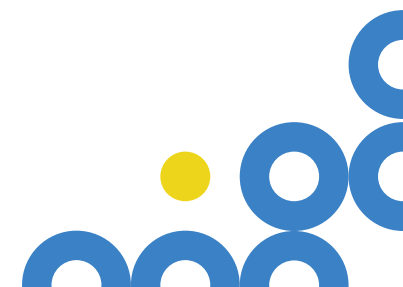
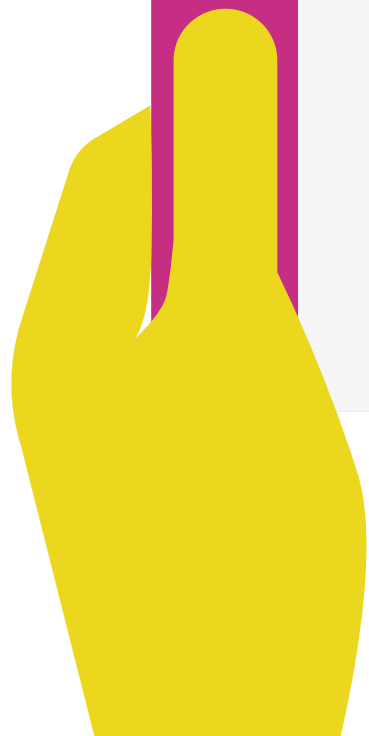
check out:

🌐 [SALTO Inclusion and Diversity's website](#) for more advice on working with young people with fewer opportunities.

The 🌐 [promotion and outreach section](#) of SALTO PI's Participation Pool for more advice on outreach and how to communicate your project to young people.

The 🌐 [webinar: Reaching young people online](#) sheds light on how young people interact online and looks into pathways to reach them in those online spaces.

Zero Waste Europe 🌐 [guide to organizing zero waste events](#) for ideas on how to reduce waste at an event.





Make an outreach action plan

You can use this tool to help you plan the outreach work for your project. Use it when you are designing your project.



Which groups of young people are in your community?

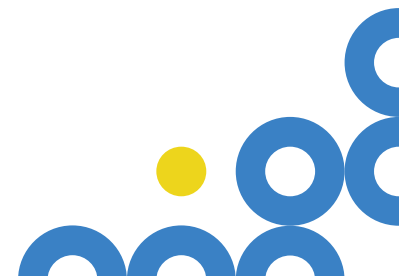


Which of those groups have fewer opportunities to participate in democratic life?

Are there any specific groups that your project focuses on?



What are the realities, interests, needs and barriers that might prevent those groups of young people accessing your project?





Make an outreach action plan



What can you change about your project to support their interests and needs and remove the barriers they are facing?



How will you communicate the possibility to join your project to young people, including those with fewer opportunities?



What messages and information will you give out about your project to motivate new young people to join?



What elements does your communication plan include (e.g. social media, outreach events, other activities presented in a time frame)?

