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# Solidarity Projects



**Youth participation** is about **ACTION** and **VOICE**, and while Solidarity Projects are primarily **ACTION** oriented, they could also focus on both of these things.



**ACTION** - Young people taking collective or individual action to make a change to the world around them.



**VOICE** - Young people expressing their views with the aim of encouraging decision makers to make changes.

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## The tools in this module focus on:

### How to create

a participation experience for young people in a Solidarity Project

### How to make a change

in youth participation through a Solidarity Project

### How to continue

with youth participation after a Solidarity Project

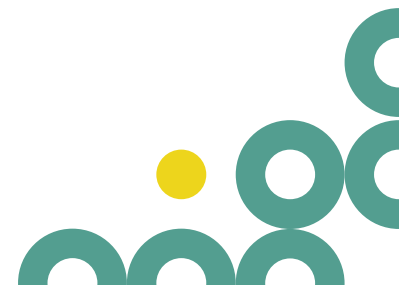


If you are not sure where to start and feel this is all too much for you, please bear in mind that there are youth workers that can support you and other young people around you that might have experience with Solidarity Projects and that have gone through some of the same issues you are now facing. They can be in some other organisations near you, in the National Agency for the European Solidarity Corps programme and their project labs<sup>1</sup>, at the [European Youth Portal](#) or elsewhere online, and are perhaps already sharing their experience. Look them up, reach out to them and ask for support! Also, in a Solidarity Project, you can have a coach and they can support you with this, as well.

<sup>1</sup> Activities aiming to support enabling potential applicants to hand in high quality applications in the frame of the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps.

# How to create a participation experience for young people in a Solidarity Project

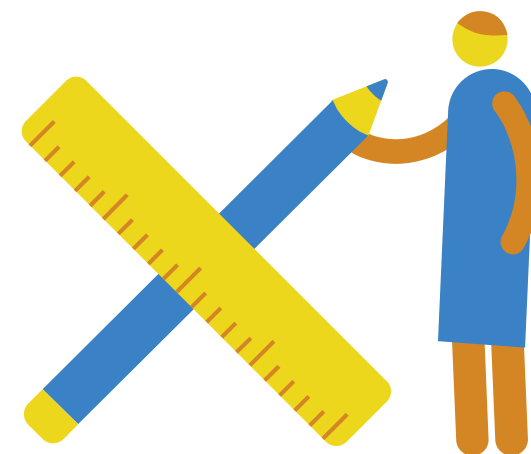
A good place to start is at the very beginning – when you see something you would like to change in the community. You want to make a positive change and you have an idea for a Solidarity Project. Start by sharing this idea with your peers. There are various channels for this, including face-to-face meetings, social networks and online communication tools and info-boards, among others, and you can also be creative in how you do it, including creating an social media story, poster or video. Use your imagination and think about what your peers will find most interesting. Think about why they would be motivated to work on solving the challenges with a Solidarity Project, and ask them about that.





# Designing participation experience

Your Solidarity Project group wants to make a difference. In that process you will gain valuable experience, and not only of solidarity. You will also gain experience of youth participation. For this experience to be meaningful, it is crucial that you understand what youth participation is about (check the [What is youth participation?](#) module for more details). There are so many ways in which young people can participate. If motivated to participate and bring about changes, young people will find that a Solidarity Project can provide the right framework for them to gain meaningful experience (check the [Young people leading projects](#) and [Creating change](#) modules for more details). With your Solidarity Project group you can decide whether you want your Solidarity Project to be a participatory experience. This tool can help you decide on that and start you thinking about the different programme elements you need to design into your joint project.



## Looking at different groups that you are a part of – how would you describe your participation?

Are you informed about decisions?

☐

Are you consulted about decisions?

☐

Are your ideas taken into account and are you able to influence decision-making?

☐

Are you the one initiating and sharing the decision-making with others?

☐

Are you the one initiating and making the decisions?

☐



## Designing participation experience



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**In which of those situations do you feel most comfortable?**



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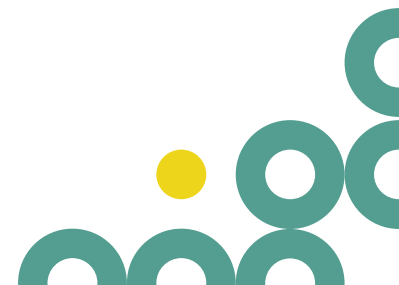
**How would you like the decision-making power to be distributed in your Solidarity Project group?**

Could you imagine challenging yourself and going for a degree of participation other than the norm?



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**Check the [Degrees of Participation](#) and see where you feel confident and what you would like to experience, test and improve when it comes to different participation opportunities in this Solidarity Project.**



## Designing participation experience

Based on what you have discovered and decided you can review the programme of the Solidarity Project and see if in the design you can add elements that focus primarily on providing group members with participation experiences, in relation to their interests, of course. Participation should strive to either give young people a VOICE or to support them to take an ACTION. You could think about adding some of the following elements to your programme, while implementing your project:



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**Visiting youth organisations and joining their activities in the areas of your interest;**



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**Visiting youth events, initiatives and activities;**



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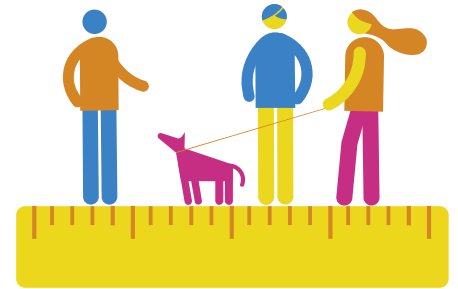
**Asking a coach and/or an organisation that is supporting you, or a National Agency for European Solidarity Corps that could support you, to organise meet-ups with local young people to discuss issues of joint interest.**





# Evaluating group's participation needs and interests

Once you have decided what kind of participation experience you want your Solidarity Project to be, you can look into ways to understand and support each other to accomplish that. Everyone in the group could look at the following questions and share their ideas:



**Why are you interested in this Solidarity Project?**



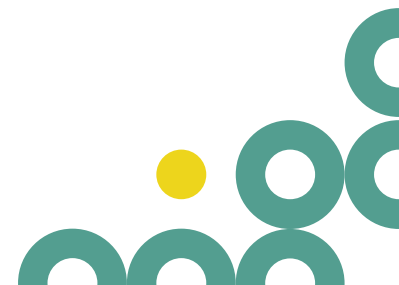
**What would you like to accomplish by doing this Solidarity Project?**



**What might be a genuine obstacle to your involvement?**



**What kind of support would you need to fully participate?**





## Evaluating group's participation needs and interests



**Could you invest in this activity if the support is provided?**



**How much responsibility for the project would you feel confident to have?**



**Consider the needs and any potential obstacles or fears that were shared in the group.**

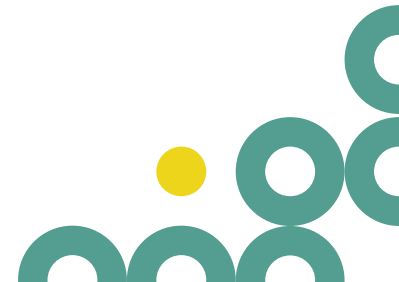
Perhaps you can support them to overcome those.

What kind of support could you offer to others in the group?



**You can propose this tool to your coach. You could use it on your own as a group and then decide to share the results with the coach. In any case, do use all the support you need.**

Depending on what your group has agreed about their participation, you could apply some of the following tools for informing, consulting and sharing decision-making with group members.





# Informing and consulting within group

You need an **information and/or consultation channel**. Agree within your group which channel is most appropriate and then use this channel to inform and/or consult each other on any relevant milestones and issues.

**Not sure what you need to consult on?** The following are possible suggestions; however, it really depends on the specific Solidarity Project, as well as the interest and competences of the involved group members.

**Preparation phase** - You could share with each other opinions regarding the concept of the Solidarity Project, as well as timetable of activities, the nature of activities to undertake, external communication and visibility, etc.

**Implementation phase** - Set up daily reflection and evaluation meetings to consult each other about decisions you need to make regarding programme and/or technical arrangements. Share inspiration moments and get ideas about how to share stories from the Solidarity Project with other young people. Potentially, you can get ideas for other projects after the Solidarity Project that you are implementing is completed.

**Online tools and platforms** for informing and consulting could be useful if the whole group has no opportunity to meet face-to-face in the run up or during the activity. In this case, use your chosen information/consultation channel and add pooling options, or as needed use other tools that have features for the easy collection of opinions. Explore the participation resource pool to find more info about [internet safety](#).





# Reflection on learning about participation



As a group implementing a Solidarity Project, you could plan reflection about your own participation and learning. This will help you to understand if your Solidarity Project is contributing to positive change in the participation of young people, especially the project group. You could implement some of those strategies:



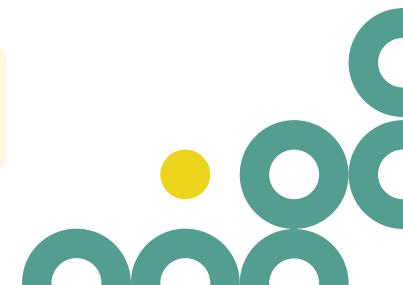
Schedule specific **reflection time slots** after major activities are organised as part of the Solidarity Project and discuss your participation experience. Compare your experience with what you had initially perceived to be the experience ([🔗 designing participation experience](#) in this module).



Propose to group members to create a **learning diary**. It can be in different forms – written in notebook, scrapbook from activities with side notes and drawings, written in notes on a phone, recorded as audio or video on a phone, physical (or online) in written, audio or video format. A learning diary could serve as a good reference for discussions during reflection sessions or during meetings with a coach and/or organisation that is supporting you in implementing a Solidarity Project.



If there is a coach and/or an organisation that supports you to apply and implement the Solidarity Project, they could potentially also offer further support and guidance in identifying and documenting learning outcomes.



# How to make a change in youth participation through your Solidarity Project?



## Assessing the impact of your Solidarity Project for participation

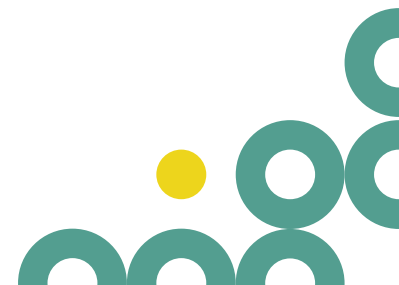
Review the approach and programme of the Solidarity Project to see if you can address the issue of youth participation in the community in which you are implementing the project. Participation can strive to either give young people a VOICE or to support them to take an ACTION. A Solidarity Project is usually in itself an ACTION type of participation for the group members involved, so based on this assessment you could engage with other young people. You can think about adding to your programme some of the elements that would help engage more young people and give them a VOICE and/or support them to take ACTION.



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### **Is your Solidarity Project intending to inform young people in the community about your plans and consult them on ways forward?**

How will you do that? Think about which channels are the most appropriate for that particular community and how the information could also reach young people with fewer opportunities.





## Assessing the impact of your Solidarity Project for participation



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### **Is your Solidarity Project intending to motivate and support young people in the community to raise their voice and/or to take an action?**

How will you do that? Think about ways to understand their participation needs and how through your Solidarity Project you might support them in meeting them.



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### **Is your Solidarity Project intending to map existing actors, resources and initiatives and seek synergies with them?**

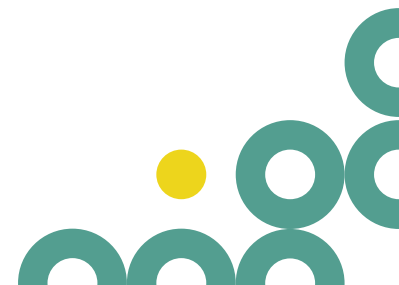
How will you do that? Think about all those formal and informal leaders that you could initiate contact with and promote to them the concept of youth participation.



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### **Are you planning to share the experience from your Solidarity Project with other young people?**

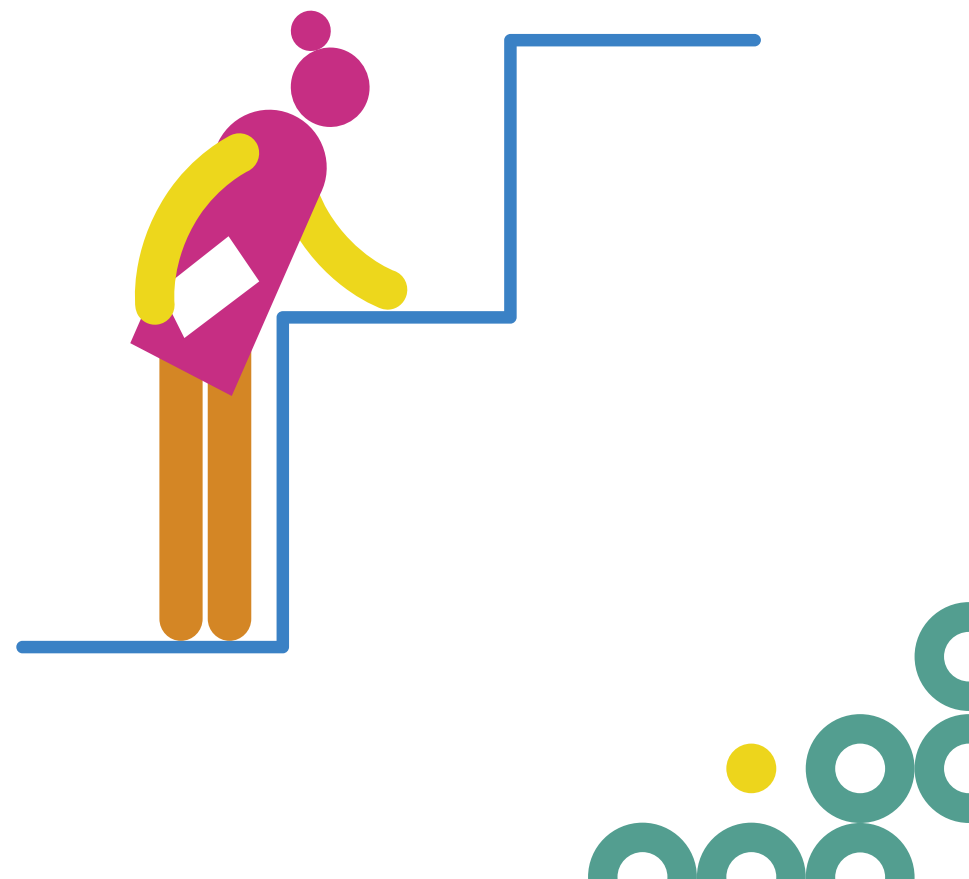
How will you do that? Think about which channels and means are the most appropriate for sharing information with young people that might be most interested to join and/or initiate a Solidarity Project. It would be good if you also add a short explanation about the opportunities offered by European Solidarity Corps.



# How to continue with youth participation after the Solidarity Project?

Your Solidarity Project might be developed in a participatory manner and/or it may have been a participatory activity ([🔗 How to create participation experiences](#) section in this module). This already means that you had a meaningful experience of participation that would set a standard for other such experiences.

In either case, in the follow-up phase of your Solidarity Project you can already start by looking at the ideas. While you work on dissemination and present your experience and learning from the Solidarity Project to other young people, you could also think about the next steps. You could plan activities that would further provide you with opportunities to learn and experience, as well as to raise a voice and take action.





# Planning next steps

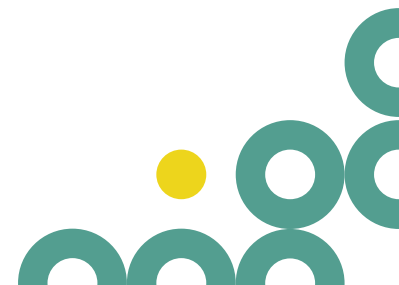


After the Solidarity Project, depending on your group experience and interest topics, you may think about:

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## **Organising group meetings to plan how to raise your VOICE or take an ACTION on the topic that interests all of you. You could:**

- ✓ initiate and/or participate in another Solidarity Project;
- ✓ check the [European Solidarity Corps](#) and opportunities for implementation of volunteering activities;
- ✓ check [Erasmus+](#) and opportunities for:
  - starting a youth participation activity;
  - initiating youth exchange on the topic of your interest.
- ✓ you could check the opportunities offered by [Eurodesk](#) platform;
- ✓ you could check the [European Youth Portal](#) and the opportunities for the participation in the [EU youth dialogue](#).





## Planning next steps



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**Conducting research into youth organisations and initiatives that address the topics you find interesting and initiating contact with them in order to explore ways in which you could come together and cooperate on some activities of interest.**



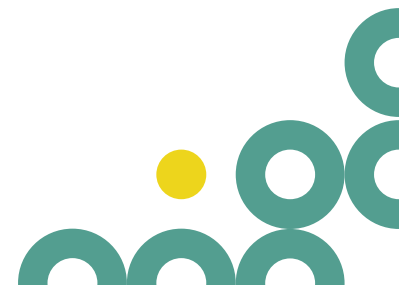
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**Agreeing with group members to share information with each other about youth organisations and their initiatives, campaigns and events that you find and believe might be interesting to join in and participate.**



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**Exploring with a coach and/or an organisation that supported you about other ways they could support you and/or ways they would recommend for you to explore as potential next steps.**



# Where are you at now?



## Self-assessment for Solidarity Projects

You can use this self-assessment tool, both before you even start your Solidarity Project – to know what you should pay attention to – or after you have implemented it and used some of the tools proposed in this module, in order to assess how it worked for you.

### Self-assessment for Solidarity Projects

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#### **How well do you know what youth participation is?**

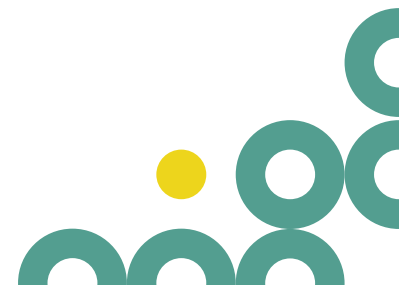
Check it against what is explained in the [What is youth participation?](#) module.



#### **How well do you understand different degrees of youth participation?**

What do you have least experience with?

Check it against what is explained in the [Young people leading projects](#) module.





## Self-assessment for Solidarity Projects



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To what extent do you **feel competent** to take ACTION (and raise VOICE) **during** the Solidarity Project? How come?



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To what extent do you **feel motivated** to take ACTION (and raise VOICE) **during** the Solidarity Project? How come?



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***After the Solidarity Project***

Do you feel motivated and competent to raise a VOICE and/or take ACTION subsequently and on other issues?

How come?

