

A Guidebook for the
Development of a
Sustainable Rural
Youth Assembly

A SEAT AT THE TABLE FOR RURAL YOUTH



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Development of a Sustainable Rural
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01 Introduction

“How can we ever build Europe if young people do not see it as a collective project and a vision of their own future?”

Jaques Delors (1925 – 2023), former President of the European Commission

Europe faces numerous challenges, as recognised by many scientific papers, decision-makers, citizens, and of course, our young people. These challenges are associated with major trends that increasingly shape everyday life and alter the socio-economic landscape of the continent, which still wields significant global influence. In 2022, the EU Annual Report confirmed the existence of a significant divide between rural and urban areas, which has been a notable issue in recent years.

Rural areas are shrinking rapidly, with ageing populations and an almost unstoppable outmigration of young people fundamentally changing rural societies. If no action is taken, rural Europe will face further population decline. To build a rural Europe that is resilient, inclusive, and inspiring, we need to give a voice to young people. As recognised by the 6th European Youth Goal: Moving Rural Youth Forward, it is crucial to ensure that young people in rural areas actively participate in decision-making processes. Ensuring equality for young people in both urban and rural settings is essential.

This guide, "A Seat at the Table for Rural Youth," is part of our suite of resources for youth-inclusive rural development aimed at creating more inclusive and resilient European rural areas. It provides a six-step guide to establishing the Rural Youth Assembly in rural European areas. Developed through a partnership involving five different European countries, each offering unique perspectives on the challenges facing rural areas, this guidebook is designed for anyone who wants to bring change to the countryside. Whether you are a young person wanting to make a difference, a decision-maker, or a youth worker, we hope this guide will serve as a tool, an inspiration, or even a companion in shaping a new future for rural areas.

In 1989, when Jacques Delors spoke about the future of Europe with young people in mind, the continent was at a crossroads, heading into the unknown. In 2024, we face another crossroads, this time concerning rural young people. Can young people lead the future of rural areas? We believe they can!

02 How to use this Guide?

A Seat at the Table for Rural Youth, A Guidebook for the Development of a Sustainable Rural Youth Assembly consists of six chapters or steps that will help you establish your own Rural Youth Assembly in your local rural area. You don't need to read the guide in order; instead, use it as a companion or a roadmap while organising a rural youth assembly.

Each chapter or step is provided by one of our partner organisations within the ACORN project and is based on their experiences in setting up rural youth assemblies in their local areas. By following the checklist provided in each step, you can benefit from their recommendations. Each point in the checklist is described in more detail on the following pages.

For more inspirational ideas, you can explore the good practices shared by partner organisations. Some of these come from the "Best Practices Compendium for Inclusive Rural Development in

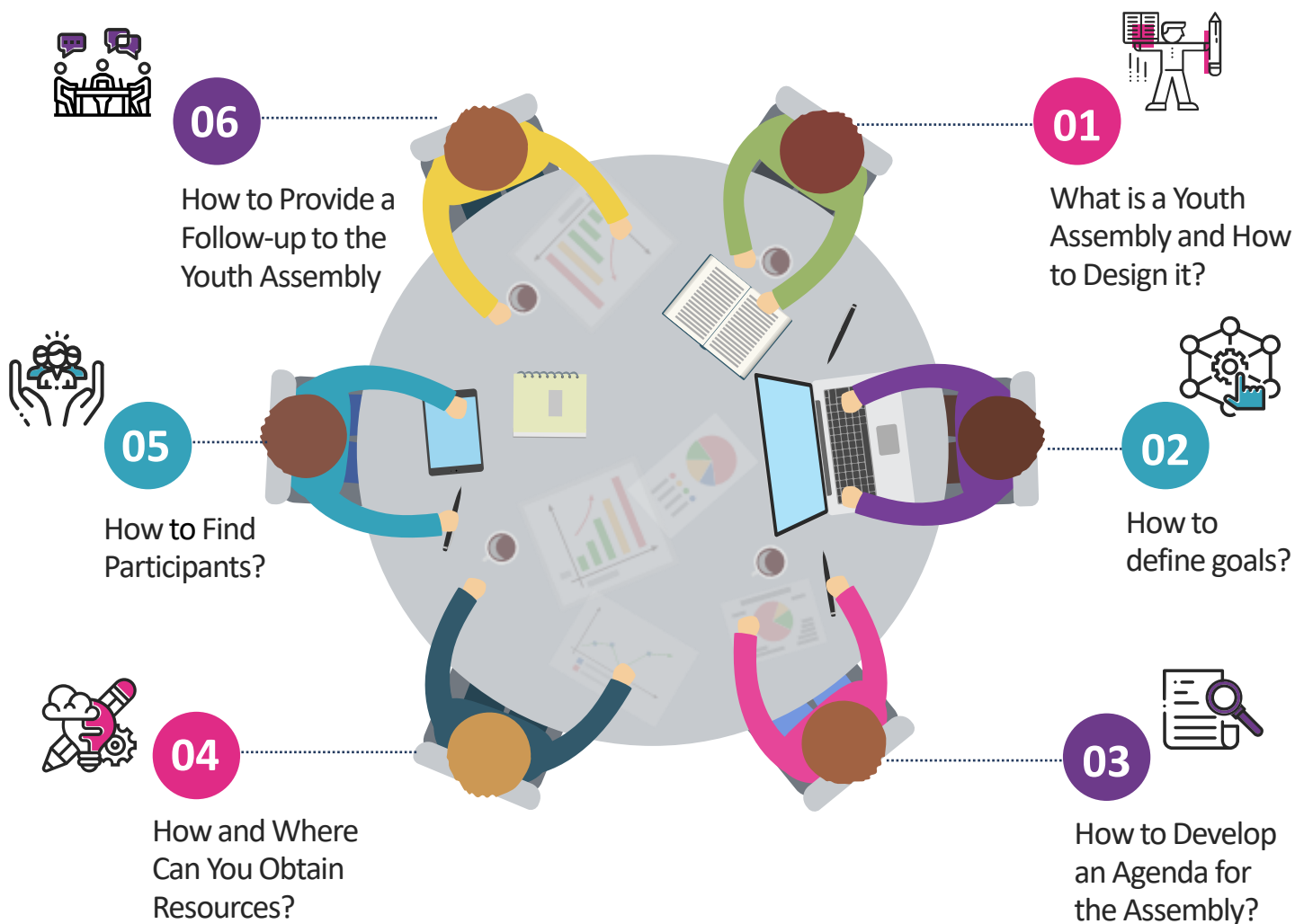
Europe," also developed within the ACORN project. At the end of each chapter, we have included a useful page for notes.

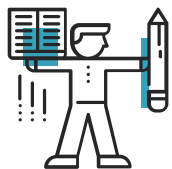
In the final section of the Guide, you will find a report on the four Rural Youth Assemblies implemented in Ireland, Malta, Slovenia, and Spain as part of the ACORN project. This report includes a brief description of each event, basic information about the participants, achievements, and specific goals of the rural youth assemblies. Each partner organisation has also provided recommendations for organising a rural youth assembly in their area.



03

6 Steps to Developing a Rural Youth Assembly





What is a Youth Assembly and How to Design it?

01

Developed by Momentum

Welcome to the first step of A Seat at the Table for Rural Youth, A Guidebook for the Development of a Sustainable Rural Youth Assembly. Very much an introduction to the power and potential of rural youth assemblies, we learn how rural youth assemblies benefit

rural areas and get to know the steps and processes in designing one that is both engaging and relevant. Of course, we want our young people to increase their skills and benefit from sustainable conversations.

YOUR CHECKLIST



1. Define Your Vision and Objectives
2. Identify Your Target Audience
3. Foster Inclusive Participation
4. Collaborate with Stakeholders
5. Design Engaging and Relevant Content
6. Focus on Skill Development
7. Ensure Sustainable Conversations
8. Create Spaces for Policy Dialogue

01 Understand what a Rural Youth Assembly is

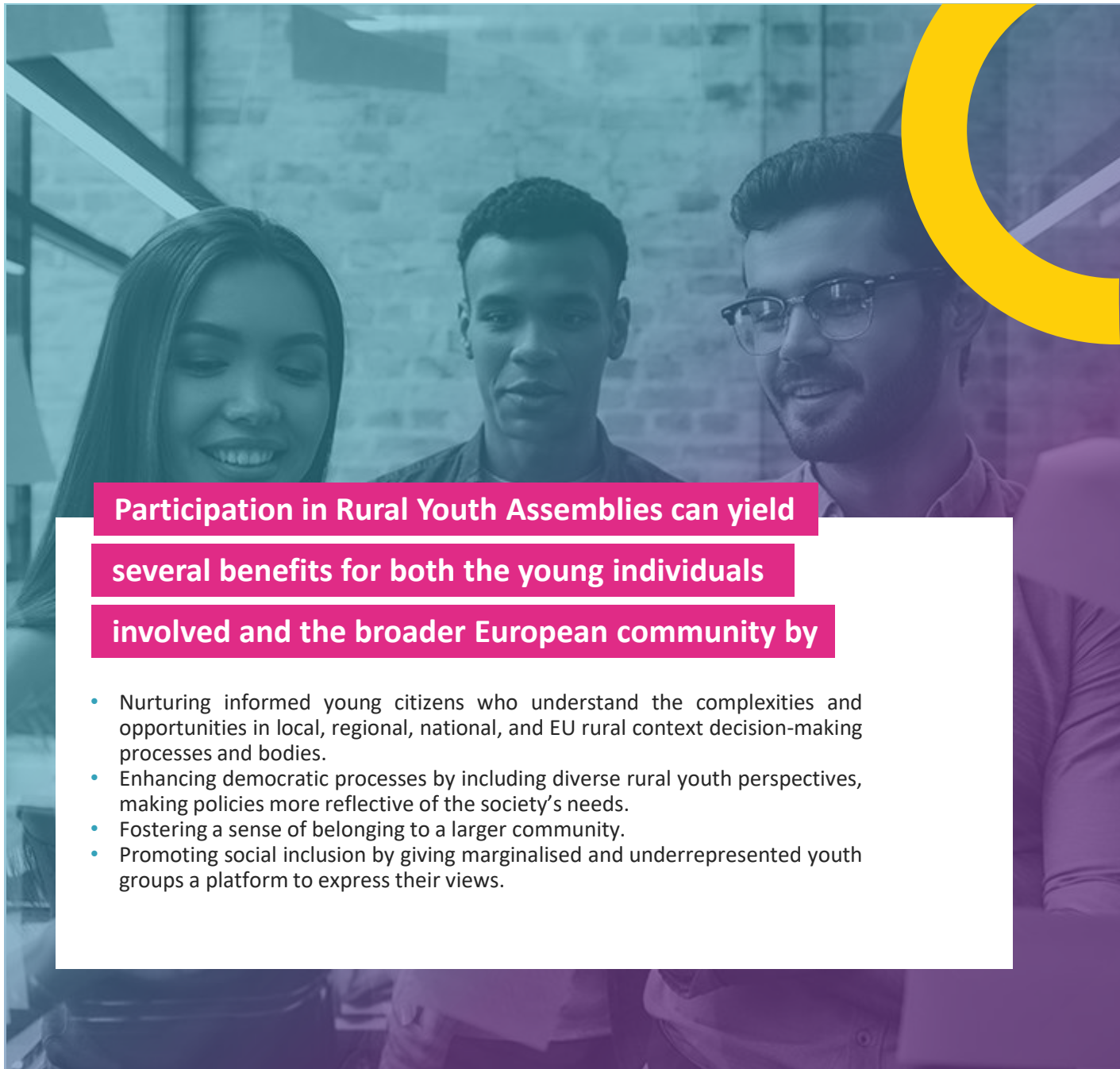
A Rural Youth Assembly is a space/platform designed to activate young people's participation in democratic processes and decision-making, where their voice is valued in discussions about rules and decisions that affect their lives in their rural areas. Think of a Rural Youth Assembly as a bridge between young citizens and policymakers.

Our rural areas can really benefit from the introduction of Rural Youth Assemblies, which create a tangible opportunity for a culture of youth participation in topics like access, connectivity, education and jobs, environment, and more. It goes beyond talking; it's about learning how decisions are made and finding ways to influence these decisions. And in the process, young rural participants learn valuable skills like public speaking, negotiation, and teamwork.

Rural Youth Assemblies often aim to:

- Facilitate dialogue between young people from rural areas and those in decision-making positions, ensuring that rural youth perspectives are considered in policy development. These discussions can influence sustainable policies at local, regional, national, and even EU levels, focusing on long-term environmental, economic, and social well-being issues.
- We love that they can create sustainable conversations, encouraging active participation of young people in addressing the sustainability challenges facing rural communities and tackling issues from climate change and environmental action to job creation, access to services, and rural economic, social, and cultural development, with a particular focus on the impacts these have on young people living in rural areas.
- Inform rural young individuals about the workings and reach of institutions, policies, and the democratic process, with tailored content that reflects their rural context and highlights how policy and governance can align with sustainable development goals, which matter to young people.
- Equipping young rural participants with the necessary tools and knowledge to actively participate in civic life and influence policies that affect their communities directly. This empowerment enables them to advocate for and implement policies and practices ensuring a healthier and more resilient future for their rural environment.

Rural Assemblies come into their own and gain importance in regions facing distinct rural challenges that directly affect young people, such as depopulation and brain drain, limited access to essential services, and lack of economic opportunities.



Participation in Rural Youth Assemblies can yield several benefits for both the young individuals involved and the broader European community by

- Nurturing informed young citizens who understand the complexities and opportunities in local, regional, national, and EU rural context decision-making processes and bodies.
- Enhancing democratic processes by including diverse rural youth perspectives, making policies more reflective of the society's needs.
- Fostering a sense of belonging to a larger community.
- Promoting social inclusion by giving marginalised and underrepresented youth groups a platform to express their views.

Youth Assemblies are not new – they can be traced back to movements for civil rights, environmental protection, and peace, which were significantly propelled by the energy, activism, and idealism of young people. These movements underscored the potential of youth as agents of change and led to the establishment of platforms where young individuals could express their views and contribute to policy discussions.

02 Identify who needs to be Involved

Targeting specific groups is essential for an inclusive and sustainable assembly. By understanding the specific interests, needs, and challenges of your target demographic, you can create a sense of ownership and relevance among rural youth participants. Having a precise grasp of your rural target group also guarantees that the assembly's themes, activities, and ways of reaching out are all tailored to address the realities and aspirations of rural participants, boosting involvement, and making a real difference in their communities.

Defining the Age

Defining the age range for your assembly's participants is crucial and should be based on the objectives of your assembly. For instance, if the focus is on students' engagement in local community projects, an age range of 14-18 might be appropriate. Conversely, for discussions on policy change, a broader age range of 15-30 could be more suitable, considering the varying levels of maturity and experience. The rationale behind setting an age range is to ensure the content is relevant and accessible, facilitating effective participation and learning.

Diverse Interests

Ensuring a mix of voices in a Rural Youth Assembly is crucial for creating a welcoming and rich space where every viewpoint is heard and respected. Diversity interests can span various dimensions, including but not limited to, cultural backgrounds, gender identities, economic conditions, interests, and the different rural areas they come from.

The Unique Challenges and Opportunities faced by Rural Youth In Your Area

With their fresh outlook, energy, and willingness to challenge the status quo, young individuals are uniquely positioned to drive sustainable change.

03 Foster Inclusive participation

Fostering inclusive participation in Rural Youth Assemblies involves actively reaching out to and engaging young individuals from all types of rural areas, ensuring a broad spectrum of voices, including those from underrepresented groups, are heard.

To truly embrace inclusion, it's important to proactively engage with groups that are often left out, use language that everyone feels comfortable

with, and consider providing financial support like scholarships or travel grants to remove barriers to participation. Highlighting this range of representation deepens discussions and enhances the assembly's outcomes, offering a fuller picture of rural life's complexities and fostering a true sense of community and fairness.

04 Collaborate with Stakeholders

Collaborating with stakeholders in organising Rural Youth Assemblies means partnering with local organisations, educational institutions, and community leaders to garner support and resources. This collaborative effort increases the impact of the

assemblies but also ensures that they are grounded in the real needs and aspirations of rural communities, making the initiatives more effective and sustainable.

05 Design Engaging and Relevant Content

Rural Youth Assemblies offer a unique opportunity to address local rural issues by incorporating the diverse perspectives of young individuals from the region. Crafting content that mirrors the unique realities and challenges of rural life is essential.

Include interactive workshops, panels, and activities that align with the interests of rural youth and their goals for sustainability, ensuring the material is both engaging and pertinent to their experiences.

Some ideas include

- **OFFER WORKSHOPS** focused on the issues that matter in your area to equip participants with actionable skills for their communities.
- **HOST DISCUSSIONS** with local leaders and experts to delve into key issues that rural youth care about.
- **INCORPORATE ACTIVITIES THAT CELEBRATE RURAL LIFE**, fostering a deep connection to the local environment and community. Who said all meetings have to be held inside? Head into nature and be inspired!
- **LAUNCH COMPETITIONS** that encourage creative solutions to rural challenges.
- **PROVIDE TRAINING** on rural development and activism, public speaking, and project management, essential for advocating for rural communities and sustainability.
- **ESTABLISH LEADERSHIP CIRCLES:** Establish peer-led groups for sharing leadership experiences, fostering a supportive environment for growth.

By involving youth in tackling local issues, assemblies foster a sense of ownership and commitment towards their communities, encouraging long-term engagement in sustainable development practices.

06 Ensure Sustainable

Conversations

Facilitate dialogues on rural development topics that matter to young people in your area. Facilitating these conversations encourages a deeper understanding and commitment to sustainable practices among participants.

- Choose discussion topics that directly impact young people and rural sustainability, focusing on environmental and community well-being.
- Invite experts (ideally other young people) to provide insights and spark informed dialogues among participants.

07 Create Spaces for

Policy Dialogue

Arrange for meetings with policymakers. Enable youth to present their ideas and concerns directly to those in decision-making positions. You can do this by:

- **IDENTIFY KEY POLICYMAKERS:** Research and list policymakers relevant to the rural youth's concerns. Understanding their policy areas ensures you approach the right individuals or committees.
- **PREPARE YOUTH PARTICIPANTS:** Conduct preparatory workshops for youth to articulate their ideas clearly and constructively, ensuring effective communication during meetings.
- **USE FORMAL INVITATIONS:** Send formal invitations to policymakers, clearly stating the purpose of the dialogue and the value of their participation to encourage their attendance.
- **FACILITATE CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE:** During meetings, ensure a structured yet open environment where both parties can exchange ideas respectfully and productively.

FIND INSPIRATION!

Dáil na nÓg

Dáil na nÓg is the national parliament in Ireland for young people aged 12-17 years. It is an initiative of the Department for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCYA) and was first established in 2001. Dáil na nÓg provides a platform for young people to speak about and debate the issues that matter most to them.

Find out more about Dáil na nÓg in the ACORN best practice compendium by clicking on this [link](#) (you can find it on p.10-12).





KEY LEARNING AND IDEAS FROM THIS STEP

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.



How to define goals?

02

Developed by AJS

In this chapter, you will learn how to align your Assembly's objectives with the actual needs of your community or target group. Following a structured checklist, you'll explore steps to identify community interests, decide on pertinent topics, consider desired impacts, and set both main and specific goals. By employing the SMART method—ensuring

goals are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound—you can effectively organise and achieve meaningful outcomes. Let's dive into the details and ensure your Assembly makes a real difference!

YOUR CHECKLIST



1. Find out the needs and interests of your community
2. Decide the definitive topic to be addressed
3. Consider the impact you are looking for
4. Set up your main goal
5. Set up the specific goals of your Assembly



Example:
A post on Instagram with one question and the possibility for the public to answer through a survey tool or a reaction button.

01 Find out the needs and interests of your community

Before organising any event, you need to find out if the action you want to undertake matches the needs of the community. Those needs can have been pointed out already or can be “slumbering” and when mentioned, people can identify with them easily. Remember, people DO NOT participate in any actions with which they can’t identify.

- Talk with individuals that are your target group,
- Make a survey in your community or among the target group you want to engage,
- Collect information using the survey option in your social media,
- Analyse the information collected.

02 Decide the definitive topic to be addressed

It is important to find out if the action you want to undertake is seen as important for the community. It may happen that it is not perceived (yet) as important and so you want to create awareness about it. Nevertheless, it has to be relevant to the context of the community.

- Brainstorm with your team about the needs and interests detected,
- Brainstorm about which of the needs and interests you as a group/organisation can address,

- Discuss with your team what outcomes you are searching for,
- Be realistic with the skills and knowledge your team has,
- Don’t forget the possibility to include experts on certain topics. They will add quality and professionalism to your assembly and with that the participants will probably take the event more seriously.
- Decide the definitive topics,
- Combine time-bounded topics that address immediate challenges with those that are timeless.

Example:
Waste and garbage on our beaches.

03 Consider the impact you are looking for

The desired impact will depend on your context and the topic you have chosen for the event. Start by clearly defining the overarching objectives of your youth assembly. These objectives should align with

the broader mission or purpose of your organisation or with the aims of the initiative you want to take place.

Probably, you hope to:

- Create awareness around the topic,
- Share and exchange ideas among peers,
- Create a platform that can voice young people's ideas and concerns,
- Create a debate on the topic among different sectors (public, private, intergenerational, ...)
- Generate ideas and possible solutions,
- Establish networks etc

Example:
We want to reduce the waste on our beaches that comes from the sea industry and touristic activities.

04 Set up your main goal

The impact you are looking for will determine your main goal

Example:
If the impact you look for is:
We want to diminish the waste on our beaches that comes from the sea industry and touristic activities.
In accordance with the upper impact expectation, your main aim of the Assembly could be:
To raise awareness about sea waste that contaminates our beaches and to encourage young people to action.

05 Set up the specific goals of your Assembly

Once you have identified the main objectives of the assembly, break them down into more detailed goals that make the following steps easier to follow. To achieve that those goals have to be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound).

The SMART Method

The SMART Method will allow you to check and organise your goals in a structured way. It also allows you to reflect on your aims beyond “wishful thinking” and good intentions. The SMART method helps you reflect on all aspects of a goal and finally evaluate the impact and the results of your project.

S
SPECIFIC



- In order for a goal to be effective, it needs to be specific. A specific goal answers questions like:
 - What needs to be accomplished?
 - Who is responsible for it?
 - What steps need to be taken to achieve it?

M
MEASURABLE



- Specificity is a solid start, but quantifying your goals makes it easier to track progress and know when you’ve reached the finish line. Here you have to assign indicators for measurement of the progress and results. Express it by numbers, percentages, and deadlines.

A
ACHIEVABLE



- This we call a “reality check”. Ask yourself: is your objective something you and your team can reasonably accomplish? Is this within your knowledge, skills, and financial possibilities?

R
RELEVANT



- Here’s where you need to think about the big picture. Are the reason and the expected outcomes relevant for you, your organisation, the participants, and the community? What will everybody take out of it?

T
TIMEBOUND



- Every objective has to be set in a time frame and for that, the whole team has to be on the same page. When do you start, when do you finish, how long does it take for each objective to be accomplished and what are the time margins to assure the success of the project despite the delays?

Example:
In accordance with the main aim: Raise awareness about sea waste that contaminates our beaches and encourage young people for action.

Your specific aims could be

- Organise a meeting with at least 25 young people to discuss the issue.
- Come up with a minimum of three concrete proposals on how the community and the young people can diminish the waste on the beach.
- Engage at least 10 young people between 13 and 25 in a cleaning action.
- Create an audio-visual report about the action to be published on social media.
- Together with the youngsters reach the minimum of 1000 visualisations of your post.



KEY LEARNING AND IDEAS FROM THIS STEP

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes.



How to Develop an Agenda for the Assembly?

03

Developed by ID20

In this step, you'll learn how to create a detailed agenda for your youth assembly, ensuring it runs smoothly and achieves its goals. A well-thought-out agenda keeps participants engaged and focused throughout the event.

YOUR CHECKLIST



1. Select a Date and Venue
2. Prepare a mix of basic activities
3. Do quick Activities for Engagement
4. Incorporate Youth-Led Sessions
5. Engage Youth Influencers
6. Provide workshops for skill Development
7. Create a Detailed Schedule
8. Facilitate Networking Opportunities
9. Allocate Time for Reflection and Feedback
10. Incorporate Breaks and Meals
11. Address Transportation Solutions
12. Ensure Accessibility



01 Select a Date and Venue

Before finalising the agenda, choose a suitable date and venue for the assembly. Consider factors such as accessibility, availability of necessary equipment, and the capacity to accommodate all participants comfortably.

Here are some suggestions to consider

- **PLAN IN ADVANCE** - check venue availability and avoid conflicts with other events.
- **YOUTH-FRIENDLY VIBE** - plan an event in the venue and timeslot accessible to young people.
- **NECESSARY FACILITIES** – your venue should have a toilet, small kitchen, or parking space.
- **TECHNICAL SETUP** – you might need a projector, screen, Wi-Fi, and sound system.
- **AVOID HARVEST TIMES** – don't organise your activities on busy dates for farmers.
- **THINK BEYOND TRADITIONAL** – Placing a venue in a renovated barn can be more efficient.

02 Prepare a Mix of Basic Activities

Determine the basic mix activities to be included in the agenda, aligning them with the goals of the assembly. Prepare a mix of interactive sessions, workshops, discussions, and networking opportunities, which you can enrich with additional activities.

Here are some suggestions to consider

- **THEME-FOCUSED DISCUSSIONS.** Outline at least ten ideas for each topic; choose only the best.
- **VARIETY IS KEY** - include panel discussions with experts on relevant topics.
- **YOUTH-LED** - include young people as guests or even hosts of the panel discussions.
- **OUT OF THE BOX.** Think interdisciplinary – why not combine youth work and entrepreneurship?

03 Do Quick Activities for Engagement

Incorporate quick and engaging activities into the agenda, ensuring they are clearly defined and structured to maximise participation within a limited timeframe. By incorporating interactive elements, participants will be motivated to engage in hands-on activities and collaborate with others.

Here are some suggestions to consider

- **ICE-BREAKERS** - encourage interaction among participants.
- **INTERACTIVE** - Include world-café style, Q&A Sessions, and other interesting methods.
- **PROVIDE CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS AND OBJECTIVES.** Use activities strategically.
- **VISUALS EVERYWHERE** - Mind maps, sticky note walls, etc. Everyone should see the big picture!

04 Incorporate Youth-Led Sessions

Empower young participants by including sessions they lead. Provide opportunities for project showcases and peer-led workshops. Ensure diverse representation by inviting youth from different backgrounds, interests, and geographical areas to lead sessions and contribute to the agenda

FIND INSPIRATION!

VIVO.19

Four volunteer rural firefighter organisations from Slovenia, Austria, Italy, and Croatia carried out the mobility of youth workers and the youth exchange with a special focus on including youth. The key was good preparation, which motivated young people to engage and contribute to activities.

Find out more about Vivo.19 in the ACORN best practice compendium by clicking [here](#) (you can find it on p. 28-30).



05 Engage Youth Influencers

Want your youth assembly to make waves beyond its immediate participants? Partnering with the right influencers can be your megaphone, amplifying your message and attracting a whole new audience of young people passionate about similar issues.

Here are some suggestions to consider

- **WHAT'S IN IT FOR THEM?** Pitch your assembly in a way that improves their outreach.
- **LOCAL HEROES** - Include local influencers in the panel discussions.
- **MAKE THEM FEEL SPECIAL** - Publicly thank them, tag them in posts, and give them credit.

06 Provide Workshops for Skill Development

It's not just about ideas; it's about making things happen! Include workshops that help young participants develop the practical skills they need to turn their passions into action.

Here are some suggestions to consider

- **THE ESSENTIALS** - offer workshops for everyone on project management and communication.
- **TAILOR TO YOUR THEME** - include also workshops on specific themes (e.g. entrepreneurship)
- **PEER POWER** - Highlight young success stories AND the failures they learned from.



07 Create a Detailed Schedule

Develop a comprehensive schedule outlining the timing of each activity and allowing for smooth transitions between sessions. Allocate sufficient time for each activity, including 15 extra minutes per activity, for effective time planning and flexibility within the agenda.

Here are some suggestions to consider

- **BE SPECIFIC** - create a detailed schedule for each activity's specific start and end times.
- **BE CONCRETE** - the event should not be more than 4-5 long to maintain momentum.
- **SHIFTING GEARS** - Ensure smooth transitions between sessions to maintain engagement.
- **ADD THE BUFFER** - Allocate 15 extra minutes per activity for effectiveness and flexibility.
- **PLAN B POCKET** - Have 2-3 activities (e.g. icebreakers) ready if things run ahead of schedule.

08 Facilitate Networking Opportunities

Create structured networking sessions to foster connections. Organise speed networking sessions and designate areas for informal discussions. Encourage participants to exchange contact information.

Here are some suggestions to consider

- **BREAK ICE** - Start with fun activities to help everyone feel comfortable.
- **MIX-AND-MINGLE AREAS** - Designate spaces for informal chatting with some snacks and drinks.
- **CONTACT SWAP** - Make it easy for people to exchange info (email, social media).

09 Allocate Time for Reflection and Feedback

Give everyone a chance to share their thoughts and suggestions on the assembly. Set aside time to think about what went well and what could be improved. Consider creating a team to collect and review everyone's feedback to improve future events.

Here are some suggestions to consider

- **OPEN MIC** - Let people share what they liked, what inspired them, and ideas for the future.
- **QUICK FEEDBACK FORMS** - Prepare short questionnaires that people can fill out immediately.
- **BRAINSTORMING** - Facilitate a brainstorming session about how to improve future events.

10 Incorporate Breaks and Meals

When organising your event, remember to schedule breaks for rest and meals. Offer a variety of meal options to accommodate different dietary needs. Utilise mealtimes as opportunities for networking and socialising among attendees.

Here are some suggestions to consider

- **SUSTAINABLE & LOCAL** - Offer healthy snacks and drinks with local flavours.
- **DIETARY DIVERSITY** - Be mindful of different dietary needs (vegetarian, vegan, or allergen-free options).
- **MINI-ACTIVITIES** - Plan optional mini-activities (outdoor activities, mini-games) if you have longer breaks.



11 Address Transportation Solutions

No one should miss out on the youth assembly because of transportation! Make sure to provide information on various travel options.

Here are some suggestions to consider

- **INFO IS KEY** - Well before the event, send out a "Getting There" guide with clear directions.
- **SHUTTLE SOLUTION** - You might organise a shuttle service if the location is remote.
- **ENCOURAGE PUBLIC TRANSPORT** - Promote eco-friendly commuting practices.

12 Ensure Accessibility

When considering accessibility for your event, prioritise the needs of all participants. Select venues with features that accommodate individuals with disabilities and share information in formats that are accessible to everyone.

Here are some suggestions to consider

- **VENUE AUDIT** - Carefully assess the accessibility of the venue (e.g. accessible restrooms, clear signage).
- **ASK AND ADAPT** - Include a section on your registration form where participants can specify accessibility needs.
- **ACCESSIBLE INFO** - Provide large print, plain language event information, and simple graphics.



KEY LEARNING AND IDEAS FROM THIS STEP

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.



How and Where Can You Obtain Resources?

04

Developed by VisMedNet Association.

In this step, you'll learn how to assess what resources you need for your youth assembly, ensuring that you are aware of what it takes to make it run smoothly and achieve its goals. An internal inventory is the first thing to do and then engage in efforts to build what you need to organise a successful event.

YOUR CHECKLIST



1. First Go Introspective
2. Build New Ideas, Based on Your Resources
3. Have a Clear and Visible Approach
4. Prepare a Feasible Budget
5. Make a Partnership With Other Organisations
6. Take Care of Staff Resources
7. Manage the Budget With Care
8. Think about the Future Work



01 First Go Introspective

Good intentions do not guarantee success and therefore looking inwards is very important as a first step. See who is in your team and embark on this together. Make an internal inventory of the talent resources you have, your track record, experience and lessons learnt.

Here are some suggestions to consider

- **DIGITAL SKILLS IN THE TEAM** - this includes digital tools for images, video making etc.
- **SOCIAL MEDIA SAVVINESS** - content writing might be an important part of the teamwork there
- **EXPERIENCE IN THE TEAM** - you might be excellent at organising events, but you will need experience as well in the youth sector
- **EQUIPMENT** - be it a good mobile phone, sound etc. It should also include equipment that you could borrow.
- **TIME** - are the team members hands-on all the time? can they block days or hours to work on it?
- **MONEY** - this may be money in the kitty or reliable sources of funding such as a sponsor or grant.

02 Build New Ideas, Based on Your Resources

Be ambitious but remember that to run you need feet touching the ground. Build the idea with your team so that all talents become resources in the ideation and remain resources during the implementation of the event. Build your event according to resources that you have, others that you know you can get and yet others you would love to have to make your event look and feel how you imagine it to be.

Here are some steps to consider

- **CREATE A WILD CARD** - imagine your event even if the first idea is beyond your resources.
- **BUILD A CHECKLIST** - make an inventory and cost of such an event.
- **TAME THE WILD CARD** - trim the idea in components or size to make it within half realistic reach.
- **GO SHOPPING** - this includes seeking social partnerships, platforms, and sponsors in two steps

03 Have a Clear and Visible Approach

With your Wild Card now somewhat tamed engage all the team to tap networks. This is easier if you have a track record or ongoing partnerships that will be your source of resources -be they financial, in-kind, higher visibility, social partnership etc. Diplomacy is key here.

Here are some suggestions to consider

- **THE APPROACH** - sounding potential partners or financial supporters may require an outing with an idea that is not final so that those who may support you may see space to give their bit on the idea (at times one needs to meet halfway with the agendas of others).
- **BE SLIGHTLY HUMBLE** - you may not be out to save the world but show that you are ready to go as soon as you put the right resources together.
- **CONVEY CLARITY** - sounding possible sponsors and partners needs preparation, showing that you have clear plans even if with some flexibility.
- **PROMISE VISIBILITY** - and co-ownership if necessary provided this maintains the identity of your Youth Assembly.

04 Prepare a Feasible

Budget

Being resourceful is as important as having the resources to start. Money aspects are of utmost importance. Your budget should be planned in the way that it covers all costs. Budgeting is an opportunity to go back and think of possible in-kind supporters, partnerships etc.

Considerations suggested in budgeting

- **EQUIPMENT** - whether owned, rented or needs to be bought
- **VENUE** - rent or concession, cleaning, insurance
- **PUBLICITY** - from images, paid promotion, printing only if necessary
- **SERVICES** - catering, transport, utilities etc.

05 Make a Partnership with other Organisations

Alone is bold but it can also be lonely. A Youth Assembly comes with a theme or topic and this may be your opportunity to embark on this voyage with social partners who have more visibility and clout than you do. This is gold as long as your partnership maintains the character and personality that you would like your Youth Assembly to have. At times bigger partners can gobble you up into their dynamics so it is important to have clear arrangements beforehand. Local and regional institutions, however not youthful in character and social mission, all yearn to gain visibility in this area so you can be their asset.

Make sure that

- **DIALOGUE IS ABOUT YOUR YOUTH ASSEMBLY** - and not about having a corner somewhere
- **YOUR YOUTH ASSEMBLY HAS ITS OWN AGENDA** - and not an item on a programme
- **YOUTH ASSEMBLY HAS ITS OWN BRAND** - because this ensures your own footprint and identity

FIND INSPIRATION!

YOUZ project

The Region of Emilia Romagna in Italy organised YOUZ as a programme with large funding and with events covering all the rural peripheries in the region. Though it had its broad agenda of cultivating youth engagement in these areas, its local activities came in various forms and various forums such as VET schools, youth centres, public areas of the small Municipalities etc.. However, region-wide, the local events allowed space for local youth organisations to have their event with their agenda.

These had to be proposed and approved. However, a closer look makes one see that a Youth Assembly could have easily fit in a local event with local youths without losing its identity but gaining from the support, brand and visibility of the Regional Authorities.

Find out more about the programme on their [website!](#)





06 Take Care of Staff Resources

We have already mentioned that you should provide a reflection and an inventory of talents in the team (see point 1). It may be a challenge to maintain your team especially if the planning of your Youth Assembly takes months to plan. Assuming the team is not personnel on full-time employment with your organisation, they may and will have other commitments. It is often difficult to retain the longer-term commitment of volunteers.

You may come across these challenges

- **TURNOVER IN MEMBERS OF THE TEAM** - this may cause hiccups in the implementation of the Assembly therefore it is always preferred to have each task shared by two persons for continuity
- **LOSS OF MOMENTUM IN SOME MEMBERS OF THE TEAM** - some of us may not be as resilient as others and not all of us can feel ownership of an initiative in the same way or at the same level. Therefore, seek to motivate your team - if possible with payment/pocket money or by making it a socialising opportunity.
- **LACK OF OWNERSHIP** if one or more persons in the team dominate the conversation others may feel of secondary importance and irrelevant.

07 Manage the Budget With Care

Three areas merit attention regarding financial resources for your Youth Assembly, namely

- **CONTINGENCY FUNDS.** If it is money from your kitty or a budget has been assigned from some fund – always leave at least 7% of that fund aside for contingency since there are always unexpected costs or else budget 7% higher than the minimum when starting so that you are covered
- **KEEP A GOOD VISION.** Whether it is money from your organisation or coming from a sponsor you must always keep a good vision of where the money is going, seeing what items are costing higher or where you are saving so that you have a full picture at any time...and why not running your budget plan with a third party if you feel that you are not experienced in this area?
- **DOUBLE CHECK THE PROPOSED BUDGET.** If it is a kind of financial situation where you are accountable to someone else for the use of the budget, make sure that all items of cost are really necessary, they contribute to the quality of the experience and outcomes therefore always treat other people's money with double the care for many reasons.

Assign a dedicated person to manage the budget and finance and run expenses with the whole team in order to improve transparency or to reduce costs (for example, you can borrow instead of renting etc.).

08 Think about the Future Work

It's not easy to build resources to organise any event and it might be demanding to carry out fundraising efforts and build relationships with partners, attracting and retaining audiences. Such effort is bigger if one thinks in terms of an effort for a one-time event. Anyone would seek to draw from experience and relationships that have already worked before. It is advisable therefore to think ahead.

Think of

- Reusing resources and relationships in the future work and develop new events in your area;
- Supporting local and regional agendas or areas of youth interests as one of your future pathways. You can use the youth assembly as a sounding board since audiences may want more, come up with suggestions for topics and similar events etc.;
- Establishing a medium-term vision for the financial support, your team, and relationships in the community;
- Establishing an agenda for future work with young people and their engagement with your team.

If you follow these suggestions, you will reduce stress in organising the next youth assembly or similar activities.

FIND INSPIRATION!

InternPrize

VisMed Association is not a youth centre and therefore a specific effort was needed to rebuild a team of youths each time when they were part of the plan. As a result, it began focusing on subjects related to media, video production, and content writing. This strategic shift allowed VisMed to cultivate and sustain a dedicated group of youths who bridge the gap between technical skills and artistic creativity.

This group, with some turnover, has been consistently maintained through three European projects by fostering a medium-thinking approach shared with the youths. The young participants viewed VisMed's efforts to engage in their areas of interest as an investment in their collaboration and development.





KEY LEARNING AND IDEAS FROM THIS STEP

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.



How to Find Participants?

05

Developed by RLP

In order for the Youth Assembly to be successful young people must be actively involved and participate. In this chapter, you will discover the strategies, tools, and insights needed to connect with youth from diverse backgrounds, spark their interest, and inspire them to join the assembly and, in shaping a better future.

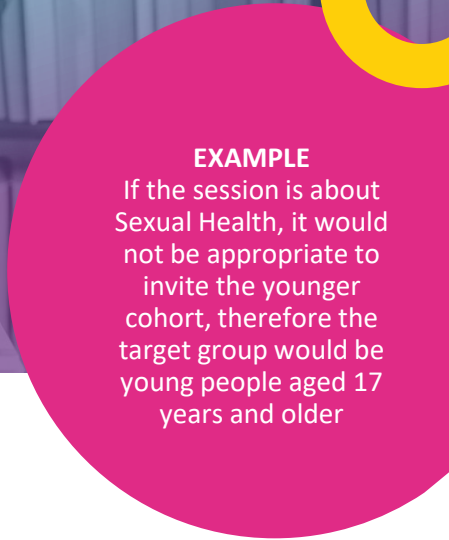
As advocates for youth empowerment, we recognise the invaluable contributions that young people make to our communities and society as a whole. That's why recruiting youth

isn't just a task—it's a mission. It's about amplifying their voices, championing their ideas, and creating opportunities for meaningful participation. So, whether you're a seasoned organiser or new to the world of youth engagement, this manual is your roadmap to success. Together, let's embark on this journey of empowerment, collaboration, and positive change. The future is in our hands, and with your help, we're ready to make it brighter than ever before.

YOUR CHECKLIST



1. Identify Target Audience
2. Establish Partnerships
3. Create Promotional Materials
4. Utilise Social Media
5. Organise Information Sessions
6. Offer Incentives
7. Facilitate Peer-to-Peer Promotion
8. Engage Ambassadors
9. Ensure Accessibility



EXAMPLE

If the session is about Sexual Health, it would not be appropriate to invite the younger cohort, therefore the target group would be young people aged 17 years and older

01 Identify Target Audience

Identifying the target audience is vital. This will determine the best way to recruit. In order to do this, look at the topic and what you hope to get from the Youth Assembly. Who the session is appropriate for, and will all target groups be able to access the Assembly? Is this a gender specific Assembly or are

there particular cohorts of youths you aim to engage? This will allow you to make the decision. Create a list of questions around what you aim to achieve from the Assembly and decide who best fit is to participate.

02 Establish Partnerships

It is crucial to research and create a list of the various organisations working with young people throughout the region. This involves identifying and engaging with a diverse selection of stakeholders, including local schools, youth groups, sporting clubs, and community organisations. By establishing partnerships with these organisations, the assembly gains access to pre-existing networks and channels of communication within the community and the targeted youth. These partnerships not only facilitate the promotion of the event but also ensure that it is

tailored to the interests and needs of the youth population. Collaborating with a variety of organisations working with young people will foster a sense of ownership and investment in the assembly among the youth currently engaged with these groups, thereby improving participation and overall impact. Through strategic collaboration with key stakeholders, the assembly can effectively reach and engage a broader variety of youth, maximising its potential for success and meaningful impact within the community.

03 Create Promotional Materials

Creating promotional materials for a youth assembly is essential to attract young people and ensure their participation.

Firstly, these materials serve to communicate the purpose and benefits of the assembly in a way that resonates with the target audience. Youth are more likely to engage with content that speaks to their interests, concerns, and aspirations.

Secondly, promotional materials can utilise various channels such as social media platforms, posters, videos, and interactive websites to reach a wide

audience effectively. By employing creative visuals, catchy slogans, and engaging messages, youths can generate excitement and curiosity about the assembly, encouraging peers to attend.

Additionally, personalised invitations and testimonials from previous participants can enhance credibility and encourage trust among potential attendees. Overall, by strategically crafting and disseminating promotional materials, youths can inspire their peers to join the assembly, fostering a sense of community and collective action among the youth.

04 Offer Incentives

Offering incentives is a strategic approach for young people to recruit their peers to attend a youth assembly because it provides additional motivation for participation and helps to overcome potential barriers.

Firstly, incentives can take various forms such as discounts on registration fees, freebies, or exclusive access to workshops or networking events, which appeal to the interests and preferences of young people. These incentives create a sense of value and exclusivity, encouraging attendance by making the experience more enticing and rewarding.

Secondly, incentives can also serve as a means of recognition and appreciation for attendees, validating their contribution and commitment to the assembly. This recognition fosters a positive relationship between organisers and participants, enhancing engagement and loyalty to future events.

Moreover, incentives can facilitate word-of-mouth promotion, as attendees are more likely to share their positive experiences with peers, thereby expanding the reach and impact of the assembly. By strategically offering incentives, young organisers can effectively attract and retain participants, creating a vibrant and inclusive environment for meaningful dialogue, collaboration, and action within the youth community.

05 Facilitate Peer-to-Peer Promotion

Facilitating peer-to-peer promotion is a highly effective approach for young people to recruit their peers to attend a youth assembly because it harnesses the power of personal connections and peer influence.

Firstly, peer-to-peer promotion relies on the authenticity and relatability of peers sharing information about the assembly with their friends and networks. Young people are more likely to trust recommendations from their peers, making peer-to-peer promotion a credible and persuasive recruitment strategy.

Secondly, young organisers can empower their peers to become advocates for the assembly by providing them with the necessary tools and resources to promote the event effectively. This may include creating

shareable content, organising peer-led information sessions or workshops, and offering incentives for peer-to-peer referrals. By empowering peers to take ownership of the recruitment process, organisers can amplify the reach of their efforts and tap into diverse social circles and communities.

Additionally, peer-to-peer promotion fosters a sense of camaraderie and collective responsibility among young people, as they work together to promote a shared cause or initiative. By facilitating peer-to-peer promotion, young organisers can create a grassroots movement that mobilises their peers to attend the youth assembly, driving engagement, participation, and ultimately, impact within the youth community.

06 Engage Ambassadors

Engaging ambassadors is a powerful strategy for young people to recruit their peers to attend a youth assembly because it leverages the influence and credibility of individuals who are respected and well-connected within their communities.

Firstly, ambassadors, who are typically passionate advocates for the cause or theme of the assembly, can authentically communicate the importance and relevance of the event to their peers. Their personal stories and testimonials resonate with potential attendees, making the invitation more compelling and relatable.

Secondly, ambassadors can utilise their networks and social influence to amplify the reach of

recruitment efforts, sharing information about the assembly through various channels such as social media, student organisations, and community groups. Their endorsement lends credibility to the event and encourages trust among potential attendees.

Additionally, ambassadors can serve as mentors and guides for newcomers, providing support and encouragement throughout the assembly experience. By engaging ambassadors, young organisers can tap into existing social networks, foster community-driven recruitment, and create a sense of belonging and ownership among young people, ultimately maximising participation and impact at the youth assembly.



07 Ensure Accessibility

Ensuring accessibility is paramount for young people to effectively recruit their peers to attend a youth assembly because it promotes inclusivity and removes barriers that may hinder participation.

Firstly, young organisers should consider the diverse needs and circumstances of potential attendees, including physical disabilities, financial constraints, and geographic location. By offering accessible venues, providing transportation assistance, and offering financial aid, organisers can make the assembly more inclusive and welcoming to a wider range of participants.

Secondly, utilising digital platforms and technology can enhance accessibility by providing alternative

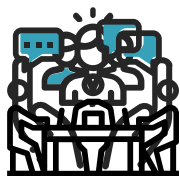
options for participation, such as live streaming or virtual attendance options for those unable to attend in person.

Additionally, providing materials in multiple languages, offering interpretation services, and ensuring the availability of assistive technologies can further enhance accessibility and accommodate the needs of diverse participants. By prioritising accessibility in recruitment efforts, young organisers can create a more equitable and inclusive environment, ensuring that all young people have the opportunity to participate and contribute to the youth assembly, regardless of their background or circumstances.



KEY LEARNING AND IDEAS FROM THIS STEP

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.



How to Provide a Follow-up to the Youth Assembly

06

Developed by EUEA

Following a youth assembly, it's crucial to ensure that the momentum generated does not dissipate. A structured follow-up strategy not only gauges the impact of the event but also reinforces the connections and ideas developed during the assembly. This step

focuses on methods to measure the success of the activities, enhance their impact, propose subsequent projects, communicate achievements, and explore possibilities for scaling up the event to reach a wider audience.

YOUR CHECKLIST



1. Measure the Impact of the Activities
2. Maximise the Impact of the Rural Youth Assembly
3. Build a Supportive and Engaged Community
4. Start With New Activities/Projects
5. Communicate the Success
6. Scale Up the Event
7. Secure Funding and Resources



01 Measure the Impact of the Activities

To accurately measure the impact of the activities conducted during the youth assembly, it is essential to have clear, predefined objectives against which outcomes can be evaluated.

Here are a few strategies to consider:

- **FEEDBACK SURVEYS:** Design post-event surveys that ask specific questions about the participant's experiences and the perceived value of each session. These surveys should be distributed shortly after the assembly to capture immediate reactions and thoughts.
- **PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION:** Employ trained observers to note interaction levels, engagement rates, and overall enthusiasm during the activities. This qualitative data can provide insights that are not captured through surveys.
- **FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEWS:** Conduct interviews with a select group of participants and stakeholders to delve deeper into their personal experiences and the long-term impact of the assembly on their actions and perspectives.
- **OUTCOME METRICS:** Define and track key performance indicators (KPIs) such as participation rates, social media engagement, and subsequent involvement in related activities or groups.
- **COMPARISON STUDIES:** If applicable, compare the outcomes with those of previous assemblies to identify trends, improvements, and areas needing attention.

02 Maximise the Impact of the Rural Youth Assembly

Maximising the impact of activities in a youth assembly involves careful planning and strategic execution. The aim is to leave a lasting impression that encourages continued engagement and growth.

Here are a few strategies to consider:

- **EXTEND ENGAGEMENT BEYOND THE EVENT:** Engage participants before the assembly through pre-event readings, online discussions, or challenges that spark interest. Assign actionable post-event tasks related to the event's goals, such as project proposals, community initiatives, or advocacy activities to keep the momentum going.
- **LEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY:** Utilise social media and dedicated apps to create a community around the assembly's theme for sharing updates, educational content, and continuing discussions. Schedule follow-up webinars or workshops to revisit topics discussed during the assembly and update on progress towards goals set.
- **ENHANCE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES:** Encourage active participation through interactive workshops that require hands-on involvement and problem-solving. Involve experts who can offer deeper insights and stimulate more advanced discussions, bridging the gap between novice understanding and expert knowledge.

03 Build a Supportive and Engaged Community

Building a supportive and engaged community around the youth assembly is crucial for sustained impact and ongoing involvement

Here are some key strategies:

- **BUILD A SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY:** Pair assembly attendees with mentors who can provide guidance, feedback, and support as they apply what they learned. Design specific activities that facilitate networking, ensuring these are structured to allow meaningful interactions rather than just superficial exchanges.
- **INCREASE VISIBILITY:** Highlight and share success stories of past participants who have made significant strides in related areas. Engage the broader community through public talks, exhibitions, or collaborative projects that showcase the work being done by the youth.
- **CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT:** Gather detailed feedback not just on what went well, but also on what could be improved, including the format of the assembly, the relevance of the content, and the effectiveness of speakers.

04 Start With New Activities/Projects

Maintaining engagement and capitalising on the enthusiasm generated from a successful youth assembly is crucial. Follow-up activities can help ensure the momentum continues and the ideas discussed are put into practice.

Here are some effective strategies:

- **ESTABLISH ACTION GROUPS** focused on specific themes or challenges highlighted during the assembly.
- **ORGANISE SMALLER, MORE FOCUSED WORKSHOPS OR MEETUPS** facilitated by experts or peers to explore topics in-depth, including skill-building activities relevant to participants' interests or future careers.
- **LAUNCH A SERIES OF VIRTUAL DISCUSSIONS OR WEBINARS** to promote continuous learning and reflection.
- **ORGANISE COMPETITIONS OR CHALLENGES** to drive innovation and commitment among the youth.
- **PUBLISH A NEWSLETTER OR CREATE A BLOG** to track project progress and highlight individual and group achievements, keeping everyone informed and motivated, and showcasing the real-world impact of the assembly to encourage ongoing participation.

FIND INSPIRATION!

Youth Fit for 55 – Youth Contest

The "Youth Fit for 55" contest serves as a good practice example of a follow-up activity to a youth assembly because it directly extends the engagement and initiative of the participants beyond the event. It encourages young people to put into practice the sustainable ideas and solutions discussed during the assembly, offering a platform for their development and recognition. By participating in the contest, youths can actively contribute to Europe's green transition, thereby ensuring that the momentum and inspiration from the assembly have a lasting impact and real-world application. This approach not only maintains participant engagement but also fosters a sense of accomplishment and ongoing commitment to environmental stewardship.

Find out more about the "Youth Fit for 55" on their [website!](#)



05 Communicate the Success

To effectively communicate the success of a youth assembly, framing it as an "Awareness Campaign" is an excellent strategy. This approach involves multiple communication channels to highlight the achievements and impact of the assembly, fostering a broader awareness of its outcomes.

Here are a few strategies to consider:

- **DIGITAL MEDIA:** Utilise social media platforms to share stories, photos, and videos from the assembly. Regular posts and updates about ongoing projects initiated during the assembly keep the momentum alive and inform a wider audience.
- **PRESS RELEASES AND MEDIA ENGAGEMENT:** Crafting press releases and engaging with local and national media help reach an audience beyond the immediate community. This can include interviews with participants and organisers, showcasing the positive changes and initiatives that have stemmed from the assembly.
- **SUCCESS STORIES:** Publishing success stories of individual participants and groups who have implemented ideas from the assembly can be particularly inspiring. These stories can be shared through newsletters, websites, and local community boards.
- **PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS AND EVENTS:** Organising public events where participants can present their projects and the outcomes of the assembly can serve to both celebrate their achievements and inspire new audiences. These events can also attract potential sponsors and supporters for future assemblies.
- **ANNUAL REPORTS AND IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:** Creating detailed reports that assess the qualitative and quantitative impact of the assembly helps in documenting successes and areas for improvement. These reports can be shared with stakeholders, sponsors, and future participants to demonstrate the assembly's effectiveness.

06 Scale Up the Event

Scaling up a youth assembly event involves expanding its reach, impact, and sustainability

Here are some strategies to effectively scale up:

- **EVALUATE THE SUCCESSES AND LIMITATIONS** of previous events through participant feedback and impact assessments, refining the model of the assembly to ensure it is adaptable to larger audiences or multiple locations.
- **INCREASE PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS** to provide additional resources and wider exposure; engage with schools, universities, non-profits, and corporations.
- **UTILISE TECHNOLOGY TO EXTEND THE ASSEMBLY'S REACH BEYOND GEOGRAPHIC LIMITATIONS**, allowing global participation; use online platforms to host webinars, workshops, and continuous learning modules to keep the community engaged year-round.
- **DEVELOP A ROBUST VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME AND TRAIN FACILITATORS** to help replicate the assembly in various locations without compromising quality and core objectives.

07 Secure Funding and Resources

Ensuring the financial sustainability of the youth assembly is crucial for its long-term success and growth.

Here are some strategies to secure funding and resources:

- **IDENTIFY FUNDING SOURCES:** Research and identify potential funding sources, including grants from governmental bodies, foundations, and non-profit organisations focused on youth development and community engagement.
- **CORPORATE SPONSORSHIPS:** Approach businesses and corporations for sponsorship opportunities. Highlight the benefits for them, such as brand visibility and association with positive community impact.
- **CROWDFUNDING CAMPAIGNS:** Launch online crowdfunding campaigns to gather small donations from a large number of people. Use social media and other digital platforms to promote the campaign and share compelling stories about the assembly's impact.
- **IN-KIND DONATIONS:** Seek in-kind contributions such as venue space, technology, supplies, and volunteer time from local businesses and community members.
- **PARTNERSHIPS WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS:** Partner with schools, colleges, and universities that can provide resources, expertise, and facilities in exchange for involvement in the assembly's activities and goals.



KEY LEARNING AND IDEAS FROM THIS STEP

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes.

ACORN

empowering young rural developers



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ID20,



momentum

