



# Youth-led REBUILD Strategy Paper



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

# Deliverable information

<b>Grant Agreement No.</b>	624760-EPP-1-2020-1-IT-EPPKA3-EU-YTH-TOG
<b>Project acronym</b>	REBUILD
<b>Project title</b>	REBUILDing society through youth engagement
<b>Project timeframe and duration</b>	15.05.2021-14.05.2023
<b>Project reference number</b>	624760-EPP-1-2020-1-IT-EPPKA3-EU-YTH-TOG
<b>WP</b>	WP5. Dissemination and Mainstreaming
<b>Task</b>	T5.4 Consultations with policy makers and delivery of the REBUILD Strategy Paper
<b>Deliverable</b>	O5.7
<b>Status</b>	Second draft
<b>Version number</b>	2.0
<b>Deliverable responsible</b>	OTB
<b>Dissemination level</b>	Public
<b>Due date</b>	15.05.2023
<b>Date of submission</b>	15.05.2023

# Project coordinator

<b>Name</b>	
<b>Organization</b>	CESIE
<b>Email</b>	Alice.valenza@cesie.org
<b>Postal address:</b>	

# Version history

Version	Date	Author	Description
1.0	24.04.2023	Auguste Taruskaite	First Draft
1.1	26.04.2023	Marko Paunovic	Revision
2.0	03.05.2023	Auguste Taruskaite	Second Draft


# Author list

Name	Organisation
Auguste Taruskaite	OTB
Marko Paunovic	OTB
Alice Valenza	CESIE

# About the REBUILD Project

The project REBUILD aims to empower youth organisations/informal groups of young people, and underrepresented young people by enhancing their participation, dialogue, civic engagement and networking at local and EU level while supporting the rebuilding of more inclusive and greener societies in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis.

The specific objectives are:

- ❖ to strengthen capacities of youth organisations/informal groups of young people by stimulating an exchange of good practices on social solidarity and green lifestyle initiatives and by developing local and transnational networks;
- ❖ to enhance skills of underrepresented young people by providing them with tools needed to foster innovative forms of civic participation, constructive dialogue and awareness raising campaigning;
- ❖ to empower underrepresented youth to play a key role by engaging them directly in project design and implementation for rebuilding more inclusive and greener societies;
- ❖ to promote new strategies for the inclusion and participation of underrepresented young people by actively engaging in a dialogue with youth stakeholders and policy makers;

# POLICY CONTEXT

Building an inclusive and resilient post-COVID-19 society poses significant and intricate challenges for public institutions. These challenges encompass a broad range of areas, including public health, employment, education, and social protection. Additionally, these challenges are intertwined with other urgent issues that must be addressed to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These issues include eradicating poverty, addressing climate change, as well as mitigating energy and food crisis.

The European Commission and the High Representative adopted the “Youth Action Plan”<sup>1</sup> in the European Union external action for 2022-2027, the first-ever policy framework for a strategic partnership with young people around the world to build a more resilient, inclusive and sustainable future. It will help deliver on international commitments, such as the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Climate Agreement, by encouraging meaningful youth participation and empowerment in the EU's external action policies. Taking into account the undergoing demographic shift that affects young people on a global level, a bigger need to spotlight youth at the centre of the EU's action for sustainable development, equality, and peace and giving them a real voice to shape the solutions for a better future arises.

The active engagement of youth in sustainable development efforts is central to achieving sustainable, inclusive and stable societies by 2030. The new Eurobarometer survey shows growing youth engagement: today, a majority (58%) of young people are active in the societies they live in and have participated in one or more youth organisations over the last 12 months. This is an increase of 17 percentage points since the last Eurobarometer in 2019. In addition, young people's most common expectation for the 2022 European Year of Youth is for decision-makers to listen more to their demands and act on them, and to support their personal, social and professional development (72%). The same survey also indicates on the main priorities of the youth: preserving peace, reinforcing international security and promoting international cooperation is the very first objective of the EU (37%); the next highest expectations are for the EU to increase job opportunities for young people (33%); fight poverty and economic and social inequalities (32%) and promote environmentally friendly policies and fight climate change (31%).<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Youth Action Plan; [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/european-year-youth-2022-eu-adopts-first-youth-action-plan-eu-external-action-strengthen-engagement-2022-10-04\\_en](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/european-year-youth-2022-eu-adopts-first-youth-action-plan-eu-external-action-strengthen-engagement-2022-10-04_en), last accessed 20th of April, 2023

<sup>2</sup> New Eurobarometer survey 2022 <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/news/new-eurobarometer-survey-shows-growing-youth-engagement>, last accessed 20th of April, 2023

The World Programme of Action for Youth and the UN Youth Strategy enshrine engagement and participation as key pillars of the UN decision-making and actions related to youth development. The ECOSOC Youth Forum accentuates the role of youth in the monitoring, review and implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as its main focus and provides a global platform for youth to voice their opinions, share ideas and think together about the ways to achieve the 2030 Agenda[ UN DESA Policy Brief No. 149: Promoting Youth Participation in Decision-Making and Public Service Delivery through Harnessing Digital Technologies, UN DESA Policy UN.<sup>3</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted young people across the globe. The disruption of their education and job loss have been widespread, and their mental health and safety has been severely affected. Despite these challenges, a considerable number of young people are optimistic and believe that it is feasible to achieve an inclusive, resilient, and sustainable recovery from the pandemic. Through their creativity and perseverance, young people are actively working towards developing solutions that will help their communities emerge from the pandemic even stronger than before. The newly released Global Youth Mobilization progress report[ Global Youth Mobilization progress report<sup>4</sup> demonstrates the power of collective action and decision-making by young people, for young people with abundant examples of global youth-led projects and conclusions developed from discussions with young people and youth-led organisations in order to help multinational agencies and institutions, governments, policymakers, and the private sector to address and prioritise the needs of young people and future generations.<sup>5</sup>

The COVID-19 crisis has proven that youth organisations and non-organised youth can be partners in rebuilding efforts to follow. According to preliminary data from the OECD Global Report on Youth Empowerment and Intergenerational Justice, almost 7 out of 10 OECD countries have national volunteering programmes and strategies in place (68%). Preliminary analysis also confirms that in countries with a youth volunteering programme, young people are in fact more likely to volunteer. In a similar way, youth workers that engage young people (especially vulnerable groups) in non-formal education and out-of-school activities can be mobilised by governments in building up youth's resilience. Currently, less than half of OECD countries (44%) for which preliminary data is available (OECD, 2020) have youth work strategies in place. Governments should adapt existing

---

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/un-desa-policy-brief-no-149-promoting-youth-participation-in-decision-making-and-public-service-delivery-through-harnessing-digital-technologies/>, last accessed 20th of April, 2023

<sup>4</sup> <https://globalyouthmobilization.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Global-Youth-Mobilization-Interim-Impact-Report-February-2022.pdf> last accessed 26th of April, 2023

<sup>5</sup> Powering change: Young people leading the COVID-19 response and recovery, <https://globalyouthmobilization.org/impact/>, last accessed 20th of April, 2023

strategies and formulate new ones to ensure that the youth sector is ready to deal with the fallouts of the COVID-19 crisis and address emerging areas.<sup>6</sup>

## WHY THIS POLICY PAPER?

The aim of the REBUILD strategy paper is to provide evidence-based policy recommendations on lessons learnt from activities and tips on how to replicate the REBUILD model and youth-led initiatives in order to inspire new ones. The REBUILD Strategy Paper addresses the key role of youth and collaborative networks in fostering real changes in attitudes towards stronger social solidarity and green lifestyles, thus contributing to rebuilding society in a more resilient way after the crisis brought by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The strategy paper has been co-designed taking into account the input from young people, youth leaders, youth stakeholders and youth policy makers active on local, national and international level. Consultation activities coincided with the end of youth-led initiatives implementation, and overall presented a chance to collect policy makers' opinion on process and results. Their feedback and expert advice was taken into consideration for the elaboration of policy recommendations on the Youth-led REBUILD Strategy Paper.

The stakeholders noticed the need to recognise the fact that following the pandemic and the recent geopolitical shift brought with itself even more hardships for young people on psychological, social, economic and community life. Defending values such as solidarity, empathy, and social justice has been the key to all the initiatives implemented during the REBUILD project; at the same time, a crucial need for greater sustainability, certainly environmental, but also economic and social was noted upon. In some cases, the interviewed stakeholders noted the need to understand the local context when involving underrepresented youth, and the different hardships they face with concerns to quality of life, engagement and sustainability matters.

As part of the subsequent process, a circular strategy for youth engagement has been designed:

---

<sup>6</sup> OECD Policy Responses to Coronavirus (COVID-19) Youth and COVID-19: Response, recovery and resilience, <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/youth-and-covid-19-response-recovery-and-resilience-c40e61c6/>, last accessed 20th of April, 2023

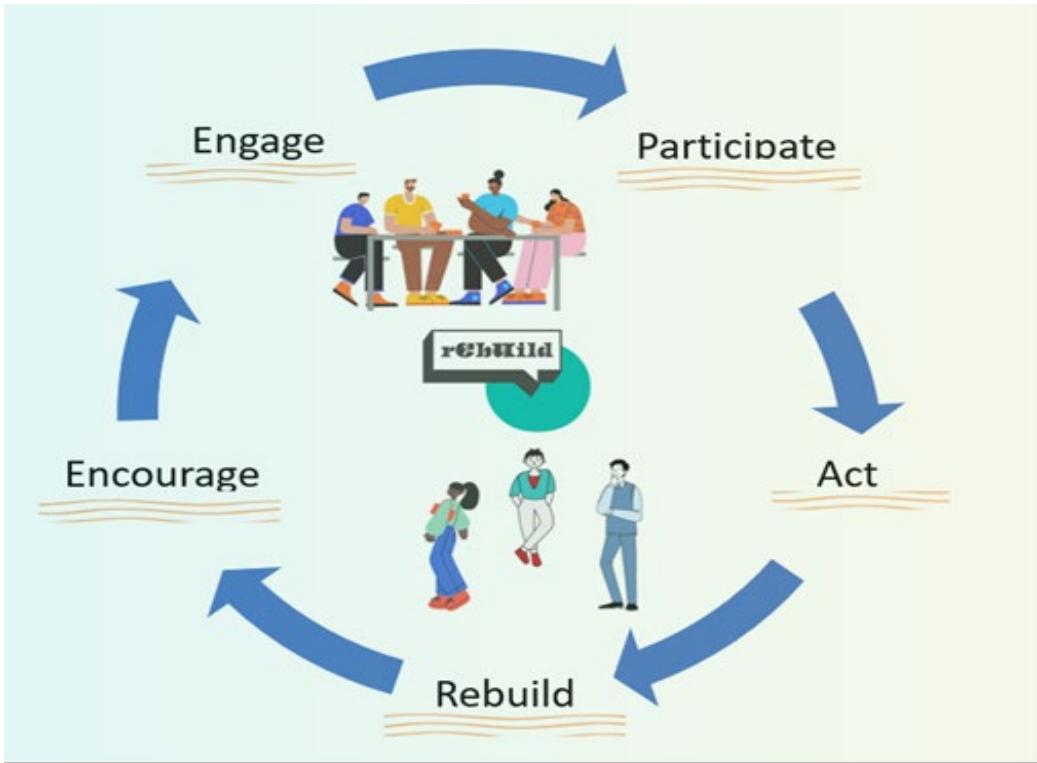


Figure 1. The REBUILD Engagement Cycle

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## ENGAGE!

Youth organisations and organisations for youth should establish networking and collaboration pathways with actors within and beyond the youth field, such as educational institutions, youth representatives, youth centres, and NGOs, to better outreach and engage young people, particularly underrepresented ones. Policymakers should create a structural engagement process for young people and youth stakeholders on a local, national, and international level by directly involving all stakeholders and supporting them through constant consultations.

## PARTICIPATE!

Youth organisations and organisations for youth should act as information hubs and mentorship platforms through participation processes within their communities and beyond to encourage active participation of young people. Local policymakers should involve young people in all stages of participation and create systematic solutions for them to advocate for matters that concern them, tailored to their needs and contexts. European stakeholders should propose evidence-based



strategies based on local experiences to facilitate meaningful youth participation on a European level.

## ACT!

Youth organisations and organisations for youth should provide training, mentorship and peer-to-peer support to young people, enabling capacity building and competence exchange. They should guide youth through initiative development and execution, providing continuous support for the implementation of youth-led initiatives on local, national, and European level. Policymakers should support and promote young people's initiatives by providing resources, simplifying processes, and creating opportunities for dialogue and exchange of good practices.

## REBUILD!

Youth organisations and organisations for youth should put great importance on following through with young people through all cycles of youth-led initiatives from the planning to follow-up phases in order to promote and mainstream youth resilience, social cohesion, solidarity and social inclusion. Local policymakers should take critical steps to capture, retain and build on current youth mobilisation to strengthen resilience of local communities. European stakeholders should create and facilitate opportunities for learning, exchange and collaboration between young people and stakeholders at local, national and European level, putting in focus rebuilding of societies hit by current challenges.

## ENCOURAGE!

Young people have demonstrated and continue to demonstrate that they are able to anticipate and construct innovative responses to the current challenges. Youth stakeholders (organisations, policy makers) should take into account the great capacity of young people to adapt and respond to challenging realities. They should ensure that the young people can see and feel the positive changes their engagement brings, thus ensuring their ongoing motivation and empowering them to continue on rebuilding communities across Europe.

*The full version of the Strategy Paper and all translated versions will be accessible soon on the REBUILD website at this link: <http://rebuild-europe.net/>*



Coordinator  
**CESIE**  
*Italy*  
[cesie.org](http://cesie.org)



**DA&DA - D'ANTILLES ET D'AILLEURS**  
*Fort-de-France, Martinique*  
[www.dantillesetdailleurs.org](http://www.dantillesetdailleurs.org)



**KMOP - SOCIAL ACTION AND INNOVATION CENTRE**  
*Athens, Greece*  
[www.kmop.gr](http://www.kmop.gr)



**AIIJ - INICIATIVA INTERNACIONAL JOVEN**  
*Malaga, Spain*  
[aiij.org](http://aiij.org)



**ACTIVE YOUTH ASSOCIATION**  
*Vilnius, Lithuania*  
[activeyouth.lt](http://activeyouth.lt)



**CARDET - CENTER FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT IN EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY**  
*Nicosia, Cyprus*  
[www.cardet.org](http://www.cardet.org)



**OTB - OUT OF THE BOX INTERNATIONAL**  
*Brussels, Belgium*  
[outofthebox-international.org](http://outofthebox-international.org)

# rebuild-europe.net



This work is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>



The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.