

## YourEP – “Political games are a serious business”

Erasmus+ KA2, Strategic Partnership for the Exchange of Good practices

Designing and implementing a political simulation method for Youngsters with fewer opportunities

### Context

In line with past and current YES Forum projects (Level Up!, Yes Academy, EVS4All), this new project proposal starts from a shared observation: Citizenship has become yet another area of exclusion, especially for youngsters with fewer opportunities.

Active citizenship, EU and political awareness, and Social inclusion are indeed closely intertwined issues in the field of youth: in particular, the older a youngster is when leaving education, the more likely he is to be active in politics and the civil society as a whole. And what goes for educational inequalities is also valid for geographical disparities, ethnical background or other exclusion factors.

While these issues can only be tackled altogether, **youngsters with fewer opportunities are still underrepresented** in initiatives promoting political participation and political awareness.

This is even more striking in the specific case of **political simulations**, a powerful tool designed to involve youngsters in “make-believe” politics to teach them how political institutions work while promoting their civic participation. A lot of public and private initiatives offer young people such opportunities, but several obstacles make it difficult – if not impossible – for youngsters with fewer opportunities to participate:

- Youngsters with fewer opportunities lack information and awareness about such opportunities;
- Most events are designed for students, *de facto* excluding young people without higher education;
- Participating fees prevent youngsters with financial difficulties to participate.
- Linguistic requirements are also a huge obstacle.

### Objectives

YourEP will consist of **3 Transnational Project Meetings and 2 Blended Mobility activities** aimed at developing and implementing a **political simulation of the European Parliament (EP) specifically designed for youngsters with fewer opportunities**, who are particularly underrepresented in such initiatives, even though they can benefit the most from these powerful educational tools.

To better suit their needs, the EP simulation method will be **designed with the active involvement of 24 youngsters with fewer opportunities from 7 different EU countries**. They will be accompanied by experienced youth workers from the partners, while the whole process will be supported by the European expertise of JEF Europe (Young European Federalists). All activities will take place in Brussels, Strasbourg, Stuttgart and in partner countries in 2017 and 2018.

In the context of the *Blended Mobility*, the process will be supported by online activities in between the main events.

## Foreseen Activities and Agenda

### A1 – Preparatory meeting

May 2017, Stuttgart – 2 days (including travel)

First **preparatory meeting with partners**, involving 1 staff and 1 youngster per group. Focus on planning the upcoming *Blended Mobility* meetings, with a special attention on how to adapt their format to youngsters with fewer opportunities.

### A2.1 – Pre-departure preparation

July-September 2017, Partner countries

**Pre-departure preparation** with the youngsters with fewer opportunities carried out separately by each partner. Format and length to be defined during the preparatory meeting, also depending on each partner's preferences.

Focus on fostering good conditions for the following events: building trust within the groups, talking about intercultural learning, linguistic issues and how to cope with them, brief overview and contact with local politics etc.

### A2.2 – 1st “Physical” meeting (Blended Mobility)

November 2017, Brussels – 5 days (including travel)

**Training sessions on EU institutions**, their role and functioning, meeting with MEP(s), visit of EU institution(s) (EU Parliament, Commission's Visitors Centre and DG EAC, Parlamentarium ...). Non-formal activities will be prioritized.

Development of the political simulation method with the young participants (Definition of rules, roles, length ...).

### A3.1 – Online activities (Blended Mobility)

December 2017 – March 2018

Online activities in the context of the *Blended Mobility of young people*, to support the learning process of participants.

The format and content will be defined by the youngsters, but could include: simulated elections online to select everybody's roles, vote for the topic of the EP simulation, first debates to define early positions on the topic ...

### A4.1– Partners' meeting

February 2017, Pitea (SE) – 2 days

**Mid-project meeting with partners**, involving 1 staff and 1 youngster per group. Focus on finalising the future simulation.

### A4.2 – 2nd “Physical” meeting (Blended Mobility)

May 2018, Strasbourg – 5 days (including travel)

**Final Transnational meeting to carry out the simulation** itself, involving all participants, with a possible visit of the EP in Strasbourg.

### A4.3 – Evaluation and capitalization

May/June 2018, Partner countries

Post-project **evaluation meetings** with the participants, carried out separately by each partner organisation. Format and length to be defined later. Focus on the young people's learning outcomes, their transfer in their daily life, their view of politics and their own political participation ...

### Dissemination

July-November 2018, Brussels and Partner countries

Dissemination, to youth organisations, political institutions, as well as organisations carrying out this kind of events with a focus on advocating for reaching more youngsters with fewer opportunities (NEETs especially).

Final conference in Brussels in November.

## Outcomes

The young participants will thus improve transversal skills such as social, civic and intercultural competences, as well as leadership and entrepreneurial skills thanks to their active role in the project, while gaining more EU and general political awareness.

Moreover, the main achievement of YourEP will be the method for a political simulation of the EP specifically designed for youngsters with fewer opportunities. The dissemination phase will then be focused on spreading this innovative tool to other youth organisations, while advocating towards organisations carrying out such simulations on a regular basis for a better inclusion of disadvantaged youngsters.

The main outcomes will be:

- ✓ **EU awareness, active citizenship** promotion, and learning process strengthened by the involvement of the youngsters in designing the political simulation.
- ✓ **Political simulation method adapted to youngsters with fewer opportunities** as final output.
- ✓ **Advocacy towards organisations carrying out such simulations** on a regular basis for a better inclusion of certain categories of youngsters (NEETs especially).
- ✓ For youth workers and their organisations, **strengthening of learning outcomes from previous projects** regarding participatory methods and active citizenship (YES Academy, Level Up).

## Target Group

The project will involve **24 youngsters with fewer opportunities**, that is: young people facing educational difficulties, economic obstacles (NEETs), cultural differences (migrant background, minorities), and/or social obstacles. The participants should preferably have no or few experience abroad. Ideally, the participants should be the same for the whole project duration.

The young participants will be supported throughout the project and accompanied during the international meetings by **youth workers from the partner organisations**.

## Partners' responsibilities

The partners' main responsibilities will be:

- To **recruit, prepare and accompany a group of 3 youngsters** with fewer opportunities throughout the whole project, with the support of **1 youth workers** during the main events (Brussels and Strasbourg).
- To **organise the training activities in collaboration with the YES Forum** Secretariat, including the animation of the meetings and the political simulation of the European Parliament itself.

## Financial arrangements

If approved, the project will be **funded according to the rules of Erasmus+ KA2** Strategic partnerships, thus covering transport, accommodation and staff costs based on the amounts set by the Erasmus+ Programme guide.