

Summary

On 22-23 of June, YES Forum held its 2021 General Assembly and Annual Event online. Good practices and recent activities were shared and discussed, as YES Forum always strives to be a platform of exchange for its members and partners all across Europe.



During the different sessions offered to participants, were presented the new YES Forum Youth Empowerment Strategy as well as new European calls and programmes relevant to youth work. In addition the YES Forum members elected its new board of directors for 2021-2023!

The keynote speech given by Hannah Maes (Youth Outreach Unit of the European Parliament) followed by discussion and exchanges gave an insight into the organisation of the European Youth Event (EYE) and the continuous effort made by the European Parliament to organise inclusive and relevant events for young people from all backgrounds.

We encourage the participants and all of those, who were not able to take part to stay in touch. We hope to have further inspired you and your peers, that progress is possible.

Tuesday 22nd June

YES Forum wants to act as a platform for exchange and promotion of good practices. In spite of the challenges that appeared because of the current pandemic, online events were organized throughout the year to stay close to members and partners. To give them a voice, two projects around the topic of inclusion and education from the YES Forum network were presented during the first day of the General Assembly:

- Bürgerbeteiligung und Demokratieförderung, presentation by Philip Morath (Bürgerstiftung Stuttgart, Germany)
- Work-Track, presented by Lotta Karlsson-Andersson (Activa Foundation, Sweden)

The 2020 activities of YES Forum were then presented, as well as an outlook on the future with new exciting projects starting! Participants were able to reflect on the future thanks to an interactive and creative session around the theme of photography.

To close the first part of the day, former chair of the YES Forum Board Ronald de Haan expressed his wishes for a successful future of the network, adding a special focus on the impact of Brexit on cooperation with UK partners.

Future cooperation between British members and YES Forum

The EU has not been the same since the decision of the UK to leave in 2016. Indeed, the relationship between Britain and mainland Europe has changed, but the UK is and will remain European.

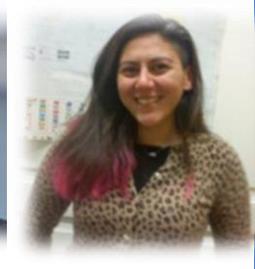
We have always built YES Forum as a European network and not a EU network, and we value more than ever our relationship with our UK members and partners. We believe past collaborations have always been extremely valuable on both sides and we want to keep them going.

From the UK comes one of the three founding members of YES Forum and also with our UK partners we have built a more European and inclusive YES Forum.

The UK will be a non-associated third country in the new programme. There will be opportunities for mobility between the EU and the UK as a third country in several actions of the new Erasmus+ programme. And thus there will be also concrete actions in the context of YES Forum membership. We also look forward to collaborations in other projects and programmes. For example the UK is associating to the full Horizon Europe programme and we plan to engage in meaningful partnerships in that regard.

YES Forum will continue any collaboration that would arise in the future.

Regarding organisational information, the balance sheet of 2020 was approved as well as the release of the board. The financial situation of the Network is stable with a positive outlook into 2021. One of the most important outcomes of the GA was the election of the new YES Forum Board for 2021-2023:

				
Gwen Birza Project Manager at Jongerenwerk Barkema de Haan, Netherlands	Hannah Degerman Skills development and Community building at Pitea Kommun, Sweden	Sebastian Frank Project Manager at ÖJAB Vienna, Austria	Alexander Hauser Youth social work & Europe, BAG KJS, Germany	Lilika Trikalinou Director of IEKEP, Greece

Lastly, the latest activities of the YES Innovation and Research were presented, and the goals for the future including the training of young people, keeping youth social work as participatory as possible and accompanying students and researchers in their projects.

Wednesday 23rd June

Key note: Towards a more inclusive EYE Event?

The second day started with the key note speech of Hannah Maes, who is working for the Youth Outreach Unit of the European Parliament. She gave the Assembly an insight into the current developments of the organisation of the European Youth Event. The need for a multidimensional inclusivity was presented, including geographical balance, gender balance, language, disability, background and other factors. Participants were then able to share about their experience and reflect on ideas to make such events more accessible to all young people.

Please find the link to her presentation: <https://austausch.yes-forum.eu/f/ffb194647b72460f9db1/?dl=1>

YES Forum Youth Empowerment Strategy

The new YES Forum strategy for the years to come was presented in details. This new strategy comes at a moment of looking back at the work that was carried out in the previous five years and reflecting on what we want to keep and which new actions should be put forward. We have revised the existing Strategic Objectives along with the Vision, Mission, and Values, to include more positive wording.

This New Strategy presents the YES Forum's **Sustainable Principles**. These principles are actually not new, they have always been at the foundation of our work; however, we found it was time to write them down and share them with you! The six principles are at the heart of the YES Forum and represent who we are.

Relevant calls and programmes for youth

After an introduction on the new Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027, an overview of future calls was presented. In addition to Erasmus+, a special focus was made on the European Social Fund + which is EU's main instrument for investing in people with the aim of building a more social and inclusive Europe. The Horizon Europe programme was also shown as an opportunity for the network to reach a wider audience and maximize its impact. In this programme, YES Forum plans to collaborate with universities. For this reason, please share here possible contacts with whom the YES Forum could collaborate:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1u3eUH4jfBJYFK4jKF9nCEQWLs5V0zErQGwe3iG5TMSI/edit?usp=sharing>

Future of the network

We are happy to announce that YES Forum will celebrate its 20 years Anniversary in 2022, with a face-to-face meeting in Viareggio, Italy! During the General Assembly, participants reflected on their expectations and the way they could contribute. We are launching a collection of memories from the last 20 years, so please share with us any story/picture/idea related to YES Forum and send it to us at office@yes-forum.eu. In addition, we want this event to not only act as a platform to look at what was achieved, but it is also to build a bridge for future activities.