

Project DAY - Democratic Activation of Youth

YOUTH PARTICIPATION MODEL

Funding body: European Commission, CERV Programme

Leading body: Fondazione L'Albero della Vita ETS

Partner: CIDIS ETS, Eurochild

Associated partner: Municipality of Naples

Period: January 2023 - September 2024

THE OBJECTIVES

- Create youth participation mechanisms for local governance;
- Improve decision-making processes by integrating the voices and experiences of young people to define policies and interventions that concern them;
- Create opportunities for young people to grow as active, responsible and aware citizens;
- Raise awareness and train local policy makers on the principle of youth participation and actors.

THE TERRITORY

The pilot project was carried out in three districts of East Naples, which exist in a territorial context characterized by high rates of school dropout, educational poverty and social exclusion:

- **II° District** - Avvocata, Montecalvario, Mercato, Pendino, Porto, S. Giuseppe (91,536 inhabitants)
- **IV° District** - Poggioreale, San Lorenzo, Vicaria, Zona Industriale (96,078 inhabitants)
- **VI° District** - Ponticelli, Barra, S. Giovanni a Teduccio (117,641 inhabitants)

Districts are the political and administrative level closest to citizens and through which young people can exercise their citizenship rights

THE TARGET

The target of the project was represented by 1350 boys and girls aged between 14 and 18, elected in 9 high schools and professional institutes of 3 Districts of the metropolitan city of Naples.

Politicians and officials at local, national and European levels were involved.

THE EXPERIMENTATION

Raising awareness and involvement in the DAY project

Key words: Information – Raising awareness - Empowering - Capability

- Information and awareness of all trial subjects through **awareness workshops** on the **right to participate and to be heard** at the **institutes** involved; awareness sessions aimed at **local political leaders**, so that the participation rights of the new generations become rooted in politics and administrative practice.
- Start of the election and voting process, through a **spontaneous nomination process**, of the members of the three Local Youth Advisory Boards.

The formation of the Local Youth Advisory Board

Key words: Capability - Peer to peer - Advocacy

- Identification of **4 delegates for each school** to establish **3 Local Youth Advisory Boards (LYAB)**, one for each District, each composed of **12 elected representatives**, for a total of **36 delegates**.
- **Team building** action aimed at young representatives to acquire the skills necessary to support the **democratic participation** of young people in the decision-making process in their city and in Europe.
- At the end of the training process, the members of the 3 LYAB started **discussions with the Districts** by activating mechanisms of discussion with the thematic Commissions.

Definition of the Youth Civic Agenda

- The LYAB met to examine and study the areas of intervention of the Districts, including: **infrastructure, mobility, environment, legality, health and urban greenery, sport and equal opportunities, education and families, urban planning, social policies, culture, youth policies and work**.
- Approximately 2,000 of the delegates' classmates were asked to select the thematic areas on which to work through a **vote**. Once the areas of intervention had been specified and democratically determined, the LYAB took action to define the three **Youth Civic Agendas**.

Topics addressed in the Youth Civic Agendas

Training on sexuality and affectivity – Maintenance and urban hygiene – Improving waste management by promoting differentiated waste collection - Public transport - Removal of architectural barriers

Constitution of the transversal board

- Following the drafting of the Civic Agendas, from the 3 LYABs were democratically elected **12 delegates** who became the **youth participation leaders (YPL)**. The YPLs have received **training** to acquire skills to support young people's democratic participation in decision-making in their cities and in Europe.
- The YPL interacted with the **Municipality of Naples** and the Councilors according to the thematic priorities highlighted in the Civic Agendas, they organized **14 meetings to disseminate the model** to encourage understanding and sharing, by all the Districts of the metropolitan city of Naples, of the good practices of youth participation in democratic processes implemented.
- Within the group, **6 delegates** were elected and met in **Brussels** representatives of the European Union institutions, public and private stakeholders.

IMPACT AND RESULTS

With the creation of the DAY model we intend to demonstrate the sustainability and replicability of this pilot at a local level.

The medium-term effect is the actual practice of young people's participation in local decision-making. During the ten months of the project, young people, political leaders, teachers and parents witnessed the benefits of active citizenship: students made their voices heard, they understood local administrations and political dynamics and they were proactively involved to transform their Districts following the programs of the Youth Civic Agendas. The long-term effect is the incorporation of a model of youth participation in the proceedings of the Municipality of Naples, so that the right of young people to be heard becomes a solid principle also on a cultural level.



Partner associato

Youth Participation Model - DAY

1) DAY Project - Democratic Activation of Youth

1.1 Purposes

Consistently with the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, the *DAY - Democratic Activation of Youth* pilot project aims to test and institutionalise a mechanism for youth participation in the local democratic life.

The concluding observations of the *Committee on the Rights of the Child* report outline three strands of action:

- ⇒ The adoption of a specific legal framework to ensure that the opinions of children and young people are duly considered without any discrimination on grounds of age, gender, ethnicity, disability;
- ⇒ The promotion of meaningful and conscious forms of participation for young people, including them in the decision-making process of all issues concerning them;
- ⇒ The establishment of boards and committees representing young people to foster and implement active participation.

EU countries are therefore required to create the appropriate conditions to support children and young people in expressing their opinions, through the development of institutionalised procedures transposed in law and policy. Meaningful participation requires states to provide adequate materials, mechanisms and institutions to make participation become a continuous and ongoing process rather than a one-time-only event, especially with regard to some key issues in the development process of the new generations:

- ⇒ Access to education
- ⇒ Gender equality and the prevention of gender-based violence
- ⇒ Prevention of racism and discrimination
- ⇒ Access to political and cultural life
- ⇒ Environmental Protection and Urban Policies

Finally, the project has also attached great importance to the transnational sphere, both in terms of raising the awareness of the national governments of the EU countries with regard to the implementation of youth participation models in institutional fora and by actively contributing to the development of concrete opportunities for young people to participate in European and national decision-making processes.

1.2 The vision and mission of the actions

The rationale behind the project is to consider boys and girls as experts in their own lives and, therefore, to promote their participation in the decision-making process of all issues concerning them. Therefore, the implementation of the pilot project has been a call to action for young people, schools and local institutions, with the aim of establishing a sustainable, meaningful and inclusive local participation mechanism capable of contributing to:

- **Improving the decision-making process:** integrating the voices and experiences of young people in the definition of policies and interventions concerning them.
- **Creating opportunities** for young people to **grow as active, responsible and aware citizens.** Fostering a well-rounded development of young people.

In line with the priority of the call, the DAY project contributed to the systematic development of all the conditions essential for developing effective and sustainable participation mechanisms.



1.3 Context and target

In this framework, the project partnership, composed of the lead partner Fondazione L'Albero della Vita ETS and the partners CIDIS ETS and EUROCHILD, as well as the associated partner Municipality of Naples, decided to develop a tailor-made initiative in the eastern area of one of the most complex and densely populated cities in Europe: Naples. The project has been designed for a specific administrative level, for cities with more than 250,000 inhabitants: the Districts.

Districts are the political and administrative level closest to citizens and through which young people can exercise their citizenship rights, especially with regard to issues with an impact on their lives. As a matter of fact, the municipality delegates to the Districts on issues such as city maintenance, traffic, public spaces, cultural and sporting events and monitoring social distress.

More specifically, the pilot project was developed in three districts of East Naples, which develop on a local area characterised by high rates of school drop-outs, educational poverty and social exclusion:

- II District - Avvocata, Montecalvario, Mercato, Pendino, Porto, S. Giuseppe (91,536 inhabitants)
- IV District - Poggioreale, San Lorenzo, Vicaria, Zona Industriale (96,078 inhabitants).
- VI District - Ponticelli, Barra, S. Giovanni a Teduccio (117,641 inhabitants)

The target group of the project involved 1350 boys and girls aged between 14 and 18, selected from high schools and vocational institutes, who were made aware of their right to be heard and the pillars of the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child. Some of the young people who took part in the training were then actively involved in the pilot project through election, consultation and active representation in the *Local Youth Advisory Boards (LYAB)* and as *Youth Participation Leaders (YPL)*.

Nine schools were involved in the project, three from each district. The following schools took part in the pilot project:

- *Liceo Statale "Vittorio Emanuele II - Garibaldi"*
- *Istituto di Istruzione Superiore "Elena di Savoia - Diaz"*
- *Istituto Tecnico Professionale "Alfonso Casanova"*
- *Istituto Tecnico Industriale "Alessandro Volta"*
- *Liceo Statale "Pasquale Villari"*
- *Istituto Tecnico Industriale "Leonardo da Vinci"*
- *Liceo Statale "Piero Calamandrei"*
- *Istituto di Istruzione Superiore "Sannino - De Cillis"*
- *Istituto Tecnico Industriale "Marie Curie"*

Upon assessing the specific needs, the objectives identified were as follows:

- ⇒ Structure, strengthen and model a **mechanism for youth participation** in the metropolitan city of Naples;
- ⇒ **Strengthen** young people's **skills** and awareness of their rights to actively and autonomously participate in the decision-making process;
- ⇒ **Support the youth participation** in the decision-making process;
- ⇒ Facilitate connection and integration with youth participation mechanisms at **European level** and mutual peer learning.
- ⇒ **Model the pilot project** with the aim of disseminating good practice in youth participation throughout the city of Naples.



2) Pilot project

2.1 Awareness-raising and involvement in the DAY project

The first step concerned the preliminary dissemination of information and an awareness-raising action involving all the parties of the pilot project: awareness-raising workshops with the boys and girls involved on the right to participation and listening, starting with the theoretical framework of the *European Strategy for the Right of the Child* and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, up to the presentation of the core actions of the pilot project; awareness-raising sessions for local policy-makers, to ensure that the participation rights of the new generations become deep-rooted in politics and administrative practice.

The second step concerned the start of spontaneous candidacies to vote and elect the members of the local Youth Advisory Board. Fondazione L'Albero della Vita and CIDIS supported the young people and the schools in all stages of the process, ensuring utmost autonomy in the process for handling candidacies, while guaranteeing the promotion of a balanced presence of women, men and non-binary people.

Keywords

- ⇒ *Information and awareness-raising*
- ⇒ *Empowering*
- ⇒ *Capability*

2.2 Members of the Local Youth Advisory Board (LYAB)

The elections identified 4 delegates for each school, setting up 3 LYABs, one for each district, each consisting of 12 elected representatives.

The young representatives were trained through team building sessions to acquire the skills required to support the democratic participation of young people in decision-making processes in their city and in Europe.

At the end of the training, the members of the three LYABs started discussions with the districts to present the project while continuing the dialogue with the institution, triggering interlocution mechanisms with the municipal boards, as advisory bodies of the local administration in charge of conducting research, study, promoting initiatives and proposing solutions to problems concerning their sectors (Public Works, School Buildings, Sport, Security, Public Green and Culture, School, Welfare).

Keywords:

- ⇒ **Capacity**
- ⇒ **Peer-to-peer**
- ⇒ **Developing an advocacy strategy**

2.3 Identifying and Voting the Subject Areas to be included in Youth Civic Agendas

Several subject areas under the responsibility of the Districts were identified as a result of specific discussions with the boards. The areas were analysed and evaluated by the LYAB representatives, who also planned concrete actions.



Keeping the schools as the pillars of the pilot, the approximately 2,000 boys and girls who had previously elected the LYAB representatives, were asked to express their opinion by voting on the areas identified. Upon specifying and democratically defining the key areas, the LYABs set about defining the Agenda.

2.4 Defining the Youth Civic Agenda

The contents of the Agenda were defined independently by the individual LYABs, in agreement with the Districts.

The LYABs met to examine and study the District's strands of action, namely: 1. infrastructure, mobility and civil protection, 2. environment and sea, 3. municipal police and legality, 4. health and urban green areas, 5. sport and equal opportunities, 6. education and families, 7. budget, 8. city planning, 9. social policies, 10. culture, tourism and businesses, 11. youth policies and employment. Following discussions, they developed an online form to consult their fellows and ask them to select 2 of the 11 priority subject areas to work on.

After consulting more than 600 students, the data collected revealed that in all 3 districts involved, the general consensus was for LYABs to work on two specific strands: Environment and Education.

Specifically:

- **The II District's** LYAB worked hard on an inter-institutional level, prompting the drafting of MoUs between the school institutes involved and other institutional players, for the actual implementation of the initiatives set out in the Agenda. For the socio-educational, sentimental education and psychological support needs of boys and girls, the SInAPSi (*Servizi per l'Inclusione Attiva e Partecipata degli Studenti* - Services for Active and Participatory Inclusion of Students) centre of the Federico II University of Naples, which takes care of disabilities, Specific Learning Disorders (dyslexia, dysgraphia, dysorthography, dyscalculia) or other temporary difficulties of the students, was involved through the stipulation of a MoU; as regards the needs expressed in the field of environment and urban hygiene, ASIA, (*Azienda Servizi di Igiene Ambientale* - Environmental Hygiene Service Company), a company controlled and coordinated by the Municipality of Naples in charge of waste management and garbage disposal, was involved.
- **The IV District** guided the LYAB in the drafting of 3 administrative acts, representing the specific technical tool used by the Boards to submit an action to the District. The acts were then submitted to the relevant Boards, which supported the youths in understanding the public mechanisms for submitting proposals and their contents. The President of the School Board then incorporated the 3 acts into a single final document, which was presented to the District, which undertook to provide concrete responses. The District's support, which helped the representatives to become acquainted with administrative procedures and acquire appropriate tools, effectively strengthened the young people's leading role in local governance processes.
- **The VI District's** LYAB had the opportunity to meet councillors and aldermen in a plenary meeting and thus define a strategy to be implemented. After having shared the strands of action and the issues to be addressed, they were proposed to meet the Culture and Education, Mobility and Transport, and Environment Boards and work together to achieve concrete results. The issues considered most relevant were as follows: the introduction of a sex and affectivity education programme, guaranteeing a psychological desk in all school buildings, starting proper waste sorting in schools with training of administrative, technical and auxiliary staff, aligning bus timetables with



the entry and exit times of local schools, and promoting Youth Aggregation Centres. At the end of this work, a document was presented to the entire Board summarising the requests, the results achieved and those expected in relation to the Civic Agenda.

2.5 Contents of the Agenda

Consulting fellow students and studying the structure of the Districts, analysing the subject areas of intervention of each one, allowed the 3 LYABs to develop the first version of the 3 Civic Agendas through collaborative writing.

➤ **Where: II District**

The schools involved: Liceo Statale “Vittorio Emanuele II - Garibaldi”, Istituto di Istruzione Superiore “Elena di Savoia” and Istituto Tecnico Professionale “Alfonso Casanova”.

➤ **The issues addressed**

- Sex and sentimental education with the presence and intervention in schools of psychologists and sexologists
- Breaking down architectural barriers
- Psychologist at school
- Maintenance and Urban Hygiene
- Improving waste management by encouraging waste sorting

➤ **The protagonists say:**

The agenda outlined by us in the Committee of the II District focuses on the following thematic areas: social welfare, school and educational activities and urban maintenance and hygiene. Our ambition is to work to meet the needs of the most vulnerable population (minors, among the others) in the region.

We will always be ready to have our say, with the ambition of representing the voice of young people, remaining open to any kind of dialogue with citizens. We hope to succeed in this endeavour and to spread a good practice of youth participation throughout the city of Naples.

➤ **Where: IV District**

Schools involved: Liceo Statale “Piero Calamandrei”, Istituto di Istruzione Superiore “Sannino - De Cillis” e Istituto Tecnico Industriale “Marie Curie”

➤ **The issues addressed**

- Improving waste management by encouraging waste sorting
- Maintenance and Urban Hygiene
- Enhancing the availability of sports activities accessible to all young people



➤ The protagonists say:

We hope to push through our ideas as best we can, to make this Agenda become a virtuous model that can be integrated into the work programme of our District, to show how we young people can also make a difference in the area we live in

With the following Agenda, we are committed to working for the IV District to become a more inclusive place for boys and girls and an example for other Districts.

The agenda starts with the idea of implementing changes and improvements in our region, based on the relevant issues for the District, the needs of the entire population and, specifically, the most vulnerable people.

➤ Where: VI District

The schools involved: Liceo Statale 'Piero Calamandrei', Istituto di Istruzione Superiore 'Sannino - De Cillis' and Istituto Tecnico Industriale 'Marie Curie'.

➤ The issues addressed

- Environment, urban hygiene and civil protection
- Free training courses for university tests
- Public transport timetables aligned with school entry and exit times
- Training on sexuality and affectivity.

➤ The protagonists say

We propose working in tandem with local institutions to make this agenda become a virtuous model that can be integrated into the work programme of our District and make the others understand that even our age group, if properly engaged, can contribute to improving and making the area more liveable

By working in tandem with local institutions, we undertake, as delegates, to develop ideas and project proposals to address the issues emerged to improve the area we live in, submitting them to the relevant Departments for their attention.

2.6 Establishment of the cross-party board

Following the drafting of the Civic Agendas, 12 delegates were democratically elected from the 3 LYABs to become the leaders of youth participation (hereinafter YPLs). The YPLs represent a link between the local authorities and the city council; they discuss and fill each other in on the work done in each District; they interact with other administrative bodies and political levels (local, national and European).

The YPLs were trained to acquire skills to support young people's democratic participation in decision-making processes in their cities and in Europe. With Eurochild providing technical support and skills to educators, 4 workshops were organised to enable the YPLs to strengthen their soft skills for public speaking and improve rhetoric. The training was organised in thematic focus groups with the dual purpose of training and assessing the level of understanding and satisfaction with the DAY project.



The issues addressed were:

- Children's rights in Europe and Italy;
- Child protection;
- Advocacy: overview and how to develop a strategy through social media
- Hard and soft skills: developing leadership and communication skills

During the 10 months of the pilot, the YPLs interacted with the City of Naples and its Councillors according to the thematic priorities highlighted in the Civic Agendas. More specifically, the Councillor for Labour and Youth policies, Chiara Marciani, and the Councillor for Education and Family, Maura Striano, were involved.

The associated partner, the Municipality of Naples, prompted the interaction between young people in official administrative channels to positively influence the City's policy.

The YPLs also supported the staff in developing a strategy to scale-up the model on the other 7 Districts not involved in the pilot. They organised 14 meetings to disseminate the model and foster the understanding and sharing, by all the Districts of the metropolitan city of Naples, of the good practices of youth participation in the democratic processes implemented.

The YPL group was the one engaged in decision-making processes and local governance on several levels and, therefore, a group of 6 delegates was democratically elected from among its members to participate in peer-to-peer meetings to share and disseminate good participation practices with other similar experiences in Europe.

Finally, this delegation has the opportunity to meet representatives of EU institutions, public and private stakeholders in Brussels. This represents an opportunity to discuss the model and to share the strategies implemented.

3) Communication: involving delegates as a good participation practice

The communication strategy was designed conceiving delegates as leaders. Young boys and girls living in an area seemingly neglected by institutions were prompted to contribute to changing their local environments.

Accordingly, it was important to build a specific communication strategy able to take due account of the different players and targets involved while engaging young people by ensuring the conditions for a productive dialogue with policy makers at local and national level.

3.1 Strands of action

The communication and dissemination strategy was broken down into 3 strands of action:

- **Empowering young people:** the activities involving the delegates of II, IV and VI Districts were described by young people through posts and videos made together. This action aimed to improve the skills and centrality of the target group;
- **Importance of youth activism for local democracy:** decision-makers were urged about the need for a concrete implementation of youth participation rights by listening to the demands of young people. The delegates were fully prepared to share ideas and discuss in order to achieve their goals;
- **Sustainability and replicability of the participation model:** In order for the project to become a cross-district initiative, it was essential for the delegates to communicate all stages of the pilot and to share the involvement of different local players. This fostered the dissemination of the pilot's



activities. The aim is to demonstrate the sustainability and replicability of the model in other national and European contexts.

3.2 Messages

The main messages to be conveyed were:

- The possibility of ensuring the active participation of young people in the democratic life of their local area;
- The importance of the role of youth-led advocacy campaigns;
- The change that can be generated by broad-reaching and full cooperation between policy makers and young people at local, national and European level.

These messages were the core of all communication initiatives developed within the project, taking into account the need to customise and adapt them to different targets and players in order to be easily shared and communicated.

4) The impact of the action

4.1 Impact Assessment

In addition to the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) process of the project, this action also focused on the evaluation of the pilot. This represented a specific task, supervised by Eurochild as technical advisor and Quality Assurance Manager (QAM). The objective was to assess whether the involvement of young people in decision-making processes at local level was enhanced by the activities of the project, the effectiveness of the participatory mechanisms established and the effects of these mechanisms on the agenda of public authorities. The benchmark for the assessment was the application and compliance with the *9 principles for meaningful, safe and inclusive youth participation*:

1. Transparency - young people should receive as much information as possible, in order for them to be fully aware of what they are doing when they get involved;
2. Authority - young people should always have the right not to participate and to opt out of activities;
3. Respect - all participants, adults and young people, should respect others and their ideas;
4. Relevance - young people should be involved in decisions that are relevant to them;
5. Youth friendly - Everything should be designed in such a way as to allow young people to contribute;
6. Inclusiveness: all young people should be treated equally and given the opportunity to participate;
7. Training by adults - training should be provided by adult staff;
8. Safety - young people should not be exposed to situations likely to make them vulnerable;
9. Accountability - adults should keep their promises and children can report any flaws to them.





Moreover, the impact of youth participation was measured on the young people themselves as well as on decision-makers.

The pilot project was assessed by the boys and girls involved, through consultations, focus groups and the collection of data through self-assessment questionnaires.

All data collected were disaggregated by gender in order to obtain a gender-based assessment of the pilot project.

Keeping the schools as the focal point, the LYABs presented the approach adopted and the results achieved through round tables held with school leaders and school representatives; furthermore, over the course of the pilot project, students were informed through regular meetings and publication of posts and stories via social media. These activities were followed by a consultation stage to assess the effectiveness of the pilot project. 1080 students were involved.

Local policy makers were also involved on several occasions, both during the training workshops, at the end of which they were given self-assessment questionnaires, and during the scale-up phase of the model. In this phase, different entities (schools, civil society organisations and institutions) in the Districts not involved in the project were reached by the young people in order to disseminate the model and recognise its sustainability and replicability. Through 14 meetings, the delegates of the cross-party board met policy makers and asked them to sign a letter of endorsement of the model.

4.1.1 Gender matrix

The gender issue is broadly discussed when managing and implementing policies. In recent years, FADV has developed specific expertise on gender issues, transferred to its human resources involved in the project. In addition, specific training was provided in the first kick off meeting, dedicated to building a common vision on cross-cutting issues, including gender. The gender and anti-discrimination matrix and standards were developed by FADV's Gender Expert as management tools that can be used by all partners.

The communication plan also ensures the use of gender inclusive and non-discriminatory language and rules to avoid prejudice and sexism in communication and brand visibility materials. The principles of gender and non-discrimination also guided all the activities covered by the project. PMs were called upon to define criteria to ensure a gender balance in the selection of delegates as well as a balanced involvement of participants from different cultural, social, ethnic and religious backgrounds. All the official documents of the project were carefully drafted using an inclusive and non-discriminatory language.

4.2 Effects

- The **short-term effect** of the project is the empowerment and awareness of the project's main target groups. Firstly, young people learned about the right to be heard and became active players in the pilot project, leading the Agenda and the final assessment consultation and promoting the dissemination of the model. Secondly, local decision-makers were made aware of the CRC and informed on how to channel participation into decision-making processes. Thirdly, schools incorporated the youth participation model into their civic education programmes.
- The **medium-term effect** is the actual incorporation of youth participation in local decision-making processes. During the ten-month pilot project, young people, policy makers, teachers and parents experience the benefits of active citizenship: students made their voices heard, understood local government and political dynamics, and were proactively involved in transforming their districts by following the Youth Civic Agenda.



Partner associato

- The **long-term effect** is the youth participation model incorporated in the proceedings of the City of Naples, allowing the right of young people to be heard to become a staple also at the cultural level. The impact of the project is to fill an existing gap in the area of participation to be disseminated in Italy, focusing on a single city, Naples. The ambition is for Naples to become one of the first cities to have an institutionalised and youth-led mechanism for the 14–18-year-old target group.

4.3 Drivers for success

1. **The institutional sphere.** The participation of the City of Naples as an associate partner of the project is the key factor of sustainability. Sponsorship enables future adoption of the model and local scale-up. The driver for success of the initiative is the combination of implementation at a local level, awareness raising at national and EU level and political dialogue, which support the institutionalisation of the initiative. The activity at the European level contributes to the development of an enabling environment that complements the political dialogue at the national level that will be promoted in Italy and that is crucial for successful implementation and sustaining long-term participation.
2. **Youth empowerment.** The action enables young people to experience on the ground their participation in decision-making processes at local level by connecting and participating in district councils and citizens' committees. Young people become promoters of change with their peers, encouraging them to participate in the democratic life of their district, their city, their country and ultimately Europe. They are promoters of change who transfer the youth model to other contexts and support the institutionalisation of the participation model.
3. **The educational sphere.** The commitment of schools and the conclusion of a memorandum of understanding is the stepping stone to an effective involvement of students and delegates and replication and extension to other schools.

4.4 Challenges

The inclusion of young people in governance and political decision-making processes at the local level is deeply influenced by the political, socio-economic and cultural context. The presence of young people under 35 in formal political leadership positions is also rare.

Some solutions may lie in the participation of young people in voting, joining parties, joining social campaigns with global relevance, doing voluntary work and joining associations, joining civil service.

The possibility of joining projects pushing boys and girls to participate in local governance directly where that governance is exercised is a more than relevant and innovative form of youth leadership.

Although considered something innovative, this possibility is already granted and tested through the advisory body of the Youth Forum, involving the 16-34 age group, and the Children's Council, involving the 8-10 age group.

The DAY model aims to involve a complex and often forgotten age group when it comes to participatory and decision-making processes: adolescents.

The challenge is complex and involves different aspects and players:

1. Difficult participation of the target group in the activity: curricular and extra-curricular afternoon activities, as well as the complex local travel conditions, discourage participation in afternoon events such as meetings, focus groups, cultural events;
2. The understanding of the importance of a project that allows adolescents to be involved in the decision-making processes of schools: the numerous activities included in the school plans, increased



in the last period by the NRP funds allocated to schools, discourage the participation of adolescents who are already involved in so many curricular projects;

3. Policymakers with poor understanding of the benefit of active participation: the complexity of some processes and mechanisms discourages the engagement of a group of adolescents. Modifying and, in some cases, slowing down these processes and mechanisms to listen to and engage non-experts appears unrealistic.

The challenges outlined above have paved the way for the DAY project: a real model that can be replicated and made sustainable in other Italian and European contexts. Only by breaking away from the vision of the project and by embracing the ambition of building a structured, permanent and stable model of youth participation, shall we understand that this can become to all intents and purposes a tool used by policy makers to make youth become the protagonists in local decision-making processes.



November
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Convention on the Rights of the Child United Nations General Assembly

recognizes, for the first time expressly, that Children and adolescents also have civil, social, political, cultural and economic rights, which must be promoted and protected by all.



The DAY Project Democratic Activation of Youth

It seeks to promote one of the **4 principles** of the Convention on the Rights of the Child: **Article 12**.

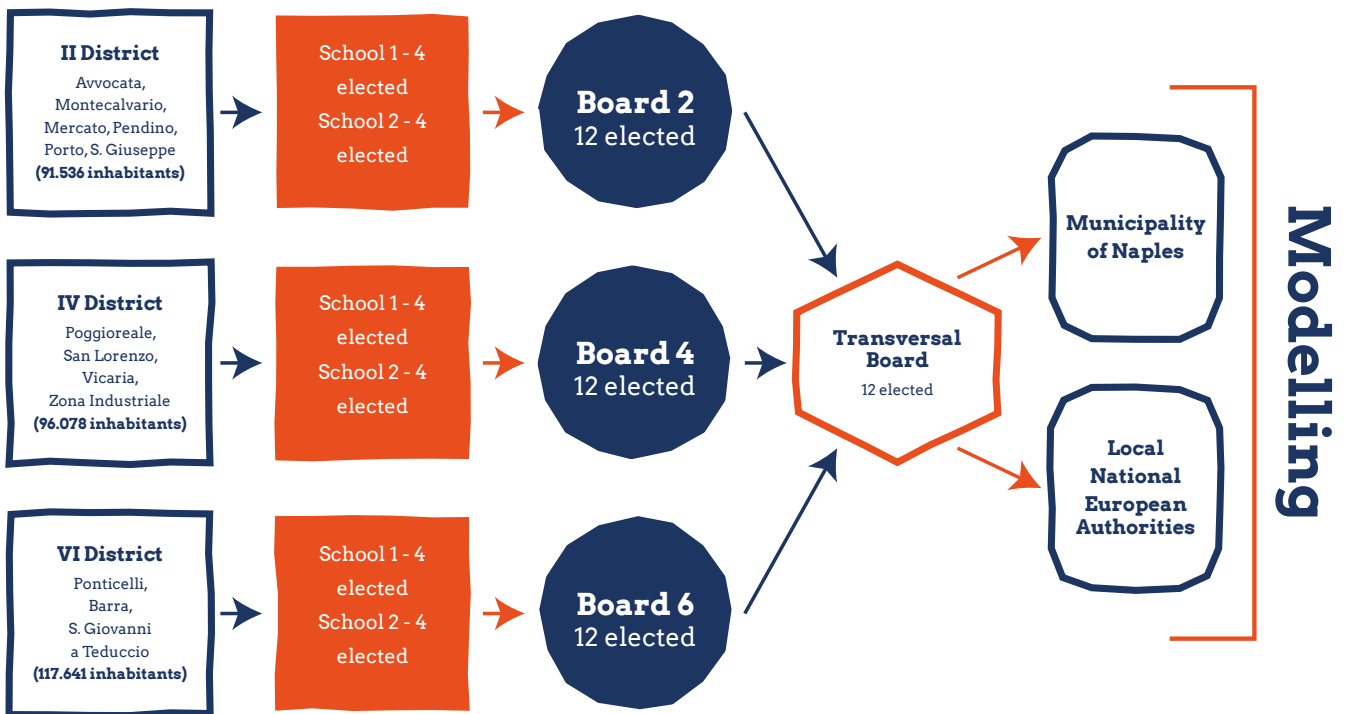
It aims to guarantee the **participation** of young people in democratic life at a local level.

Young people are considered **capable of deciding about their own lives** and therefore of **participating in decisions** that concern them.

Funded by the European Commission under the CERV Programme, the DAY Project is coordinated by Fondazione L'Albero Della Vita ETS and the partners CIDIS ETS and Eurochild, as well as the associated partner Municipality of Naples.

The Project

The partners together decided to create a tailor-made intervention in the city of Naples. In particular, they started experimenting involving **3 of the 10 districts** of the metropolitan city.



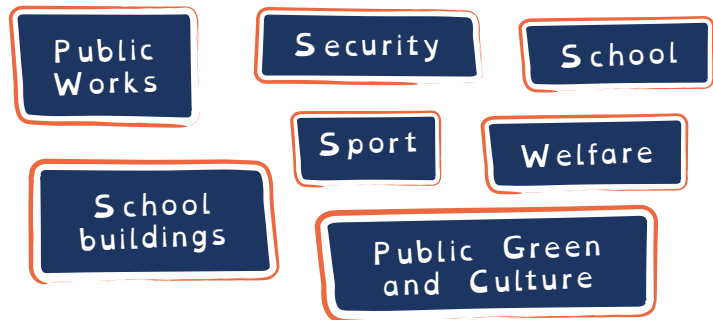
Districts are the political and administrative level closest to citizens and through which young people can exercise their citizenship rights, especially with respect to issues that affect their lives.

The project's target was represented by **1350 boys and girls** aged **between 14 and 18**, selected in **9 high schools** and vocational institutes.

The elections of the **36 delegates** took place at the institutes, involving classmates.

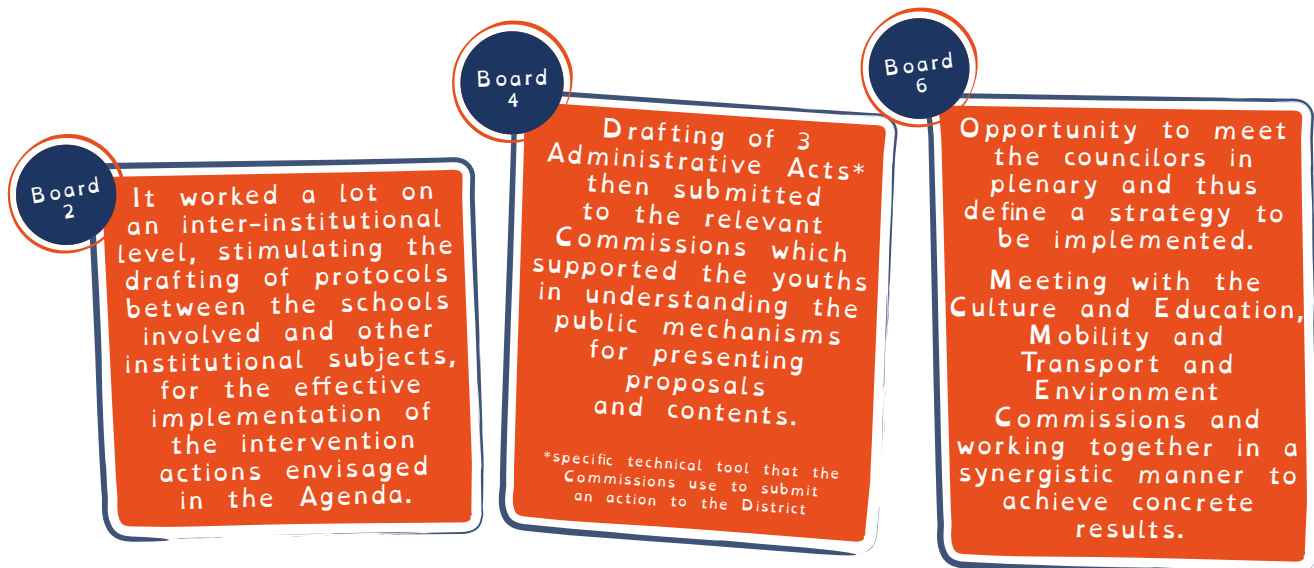
Model

The young representatives received a **training** to be able to participate in political life at a local level and in particular to be able to meet the **District Commissions** that work on different thematic areas.



The approximately **2,000 youths** who previously elected representatives were **asked to express their opinion** by selecting the two thematic areas on which the delegates would start a discussion.

The two areas chosen were **Environment and Educational and Scholastic Activities**: from here the work began with the relevant Commissions, with respect to these two thematic areas on the 3 Districts.



From the 3 boards, **12 delegates** were elected to form a transversal board which had the opportunity to discuss the agendas with the **Councilor for Youth Policies and Work**, Chiara Marciani, and the **Councilor for Education and Family**, Maura Striano.



This group compares and updates on the work carried out in each district and discusses it at municipal level.

Finally, a delegation of **6 members of the Transversal Board** made the model created known to all the other Districts of Naples, as well as at a European level, meeting members of the **Parliament** and the **European Commission** in **Brussels**.



3 Messages to deliver

The possibility of guaranteeing active participation of young people in the democratic life of their territory.

The importance of the role of youth-led advocacy campaigns.

The change that can happen thanks to cooperation between politicians and young people at local, national and European levels.

The institutional dimension. The participation of the Municipality of Naples as an associated partner of the project is the central factor of sustainability. The patronage will allow future adoption of the model and local scale up.

Youth empowerment: it allows young people to experience participation in the decision-making process at local level in the field, connecting and participating in district councils and citizen committees.

The education system dimension. The commitment of the schools and the signing of a memorandum of understanding constitutes the basis for effective involvement of the students and delegates and the replication and expansion to other schools.



3 Success factors



3 Challenges to overcome

The difficulty of institutes in following and promoting all the projects in which students are involved.

The difficulty in joining the activities of the group involved: the commitment into after school activities as well as the complexity of the territory do not facilitate participation in afternoon events such as meetings, focus groups, cultural events.

The difficulty of political actors in understanding that making young people the protagonists of decisions that concern them helps to improve the quality of interventions in the area.

The Voice of the youths

The agenda outlined by us from the Second District Committee focuses on the following thematic areas: social-welfare, scholastic and educational activities and maintenance and urban hygiene. Our intent is to direct our work towards the needs of the most vulnerable population (minors but not only) in the area.

Thanks to synergistic work with local institutions, we are committed, as delegates, to developing ideas and project proposals with respect to the issues that have emerged to be brought to the attention of the relevant Departments aimed at improving the area we live in and frequent.

We will always be ready to have our say, we want to represent the voice of young people, remaining open to any type of discussion with all citizens. We hope to succeed in this undertaking and to spread a good practice of youth participation throughout the city of Naples.

We propose synergistic work with local institutions so that this Agenda can become a virtuous model that can be integrated into the work program of our District and so that it can open others to the idea that even our age group, if correctly consulted, can be a resource for improve and make the city more livable.

We hope to carry forward our ideas as best we can, so that this Agenda can become a virtuous model, which can be integrated into the work program of our District, to demonstrate how we young people can also make a difference for the area in which we live.

With the following Agenda, we commit to work for the IV District so that it can become a more inclusive place suitable for boys and girls and a model to follow for other Districts.

The agenda starts from the idea of implementing changes and improvements in our territory, based on the areas of interest of the District, the needs of the entire population and specifically, the most vulnerable groups.