



REGIONS
AND YOUTH
FOR PLANET
AND PEOPLE



Co-funded by
the European Union

How to shift from awareness to active engagement on the 2030 Agenda

- RESEARCH REPORT -

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1. BACKGROUND

Nowadays, our globalised world relies on the direct involvement of every member of the society in building a context of justice, equality, and respect for human rights. Governments, civil society and individuals should join efforts in reaching these common desiderata. In response to this need, the *European Consensus on Development* aligns EU development policy with the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and recognizes the role of local and regional governments in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), committing to support decentralization reforms and decentralized cooperation. Accordingly, Local Authorities (LAs) are increasingly aligning their strategies and plans in view of the SDGs in close collaboration with the Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and strive to provide a more coherent vision that would cover the economic, social, environmental and cultural pillars of sustainable development.

However, the data provided in recent Eurobarometers pointed out that EU citizens do not have enough awareness about the degree of poverty in the world, the environmental emergencies or the interlinkages about Northern and Southern patterns of growth. Their wish to get actively involved in changing the current situation and in achieving the SDGs is even lower. More specifically, according to the data from the Special Eurobarometer 441, 63% of EU citizens have never heard about the SDGs. Even if over half of all respondents agree that they can play a role in tackling poverty in developing countries (53%), only 44% claim to be personally involved in helping developing countries (Special Eurobarometer 476). Therefore, it is requested to strengthen and support the partnerships for development grounded on the local dimension, among LAs, CSOs and citizens, since only an active involvement of local and regional authorities will ensure the achievement of the SDGs.

In order to identify efficient means that would allow the shift from awareness to active engagement at regional level, this research will complement the data offered in the Special Eurobarometer 441 and 476, which address these issues only at the national level, without any reference to local characteristics, and will investigate the awareness about SDGs and the personal role in tackling poverty and the personal involvement in solidarity and global justice actions at regional level.

The SDGs are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere. In this context, migration, as a key part of our society, and climate change, as global emergency, require coordinated efforts and solutions at all levels. The engagement of young citizens is crucial in addressing these issues and in promoting participation and direct involvement of all the actors of the society. They have the power to influence the wider public opinion by communicating awareness messages. They can also induce change of behaviour by addressing these issues in an innovative way thanks to the extensive use of social media, audio-video technologies, and communication devices. Moreover, young people could influence their peers, surpassing geographical, linguistic, or cultural barriers, and to convince them that there is an urgent need for their active engagement. Being recognised by the EU Consensus as agents of development and change and as essential contributors to the 2030 Agenda, they are more

likely to be positive about development aid and about the role of the individual in tackling global issues, thus asserting themselves as true Mindchangers of the world they live in.

In this context, more and more studies on youth education at European and international level emphasize the importance of young people’s involvement in non-formal environments in direct collaboration with the LAs and CSOs. But an analysis of the impact of LAs and CSOs’ initiatives to promote youth engagement, awareness, changes of behaviour, critical understanding of global phenomena such as climate change and migration outside the formal education system is still not available.

2. ORGANISATION OF THE RESEARCH

The research *How to shift from awareness to active engagement on the 2030 Agenda* is aimed at bridging the gaps mentioned above. It is focused on identifying the elements that could increase the impact of LAs’ and CSOs’ initiatives on the level of awareness and engagement of young citizens in 6 European regions: Regione Piemonte (Italy), Baden Wurttemberg Region (Germany), Wallonie-Bruxelles Federation (Belgium), La Rioja (Spain), Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes (France), and Dolj County (Romania). This report includes the results of the research carried out in each region during April-September 2021.

2.1. Regional Research Teams

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University of Turin (Italy)	Angela Fedi Mara Martini
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Regional research teams collected data and good practices, realised qualitative interviews with young Mindchangers and analysed the most significant initiatives in which young people reached the level of “active engagement”.

The research was supported by all the project partners. The regional local authorities provided documentation about their main policies related to youth, climate change, migration and sustainable development, whereas CSO partners provided the best practices implemented by the civil society in the regions and in Global South countries.

The results of the research are integrated in this *Research Report* and constitute the starting point in the elaboration of a *Practical guide for youth engagement on the 2030 Agenda*, with recommendations adapted for LAs and for CSOs (available on the project website in 6 EU languages). The two publications support the capacity building actions organised within the project and offer practical indications on planning successful youth engagement activities and programmes in the 6 regions.

The research included a gender balanced perspective. It was organised in compliance with the EU's 2016 General Data Protection Regulation (EU Reg. 2016/679). Prior to their participation, the respondents were informed that the data collected will be processed and disclosed exclusively in form, that is, without examining or describing in any way the characteristics and opinions of individual participants; the results obtained will be used only for research purposes; the data collected will be kept in a protected place and will not be disseminated in any way outside the research group. Moreover, this research got the ethical approval from the Bioethical Committee of the University of Torino (Decision no. 0438557/13.07.2021).

2.2. Objectives

2.2.1. Overall objectives

- To identify effective means of fostering the shift from awareness to active engagement of young people for LAs and CSOs;

- To strengthen the engagement of EU young citizens and the awareness of the public towards the 2030 Agenda through communication actions and capacity building of LAs and small and medium CSOs.

2.2.2. Specific objectives

1) To investigate the youths' awareness about SDGs and their role as active agents of development and change at regional level;

2) To assess the youths' actual engagement in global challenges, specifically climate change and migration;

3) To review the LAs and CSOs' strategies to reach and engage youths, on the topics of sustainable development and international cooperation, specifically on challenges such as climate change and migration at regional level;

4) To identify the challenges/barriers which emerged in shifting from awareness to action, and to analyse and compare the regional data;

5) To identify and analyse examples of good practices that supported the shift from awareness to action, including online good practices;

6) To propose a set of guidelines on how to shift from "awareness" to "active engagement".

2.3. Audience for the research

2.3.1. Direct beneficiaries

- LA and CSO representatives and consultants.

2.3.2. Indirect beneficiaries

- educators interested in non-formal educational strategies to foster active engagement,
- regional policy makers,
- young people,
- other stakeholders involved in implementing the SGDs.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology of the research was discussed and agreed upon during the research meetings. The data was analysed using quantitative or qualitative research methods. Additionally, due to the varied scientific background of the researchers, each team could decide on the tools used for the analysis and discussion of the results. The multidisciplinary nature of this activity required the coordinated work of the researchers with the LAs and CSOs in undertaking the tasks and completing the regional reports.

The key phases of gathering data and statistical analyses conducted at the regional level were the following:

a). A review of the regional policies, that included:

- the general regional background (collect statistical data at the regional level regarding the level of collaboration between the LAs and the CSOs);
- the regional main policies and programmes related to youth, climate change, migration, and sustainable development.

b). Identification and analysis of the elements that foster an active engagement, which included:

- drawing up of a questionnaire about the level of youth engagement in the regions (quantitative research, target: 100 answers/region); analysis and discussion of the results;
- identification and analysis of good practice examples from among the regional CSOs (10 examples for each region);
- interviews with young Mindchangers and analysis of the most significant initiatives that can be qualified as “active engagement” (qualitative research, target 10 interviews/region)
- recommendations for the shift from awareness to engagement.

4. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

To identify and analyse the elements that foster active engagement, the research teams drew up the following research instruments: a questionnaire on Youth Engagement in Climate Change and Migration issues, a guide for the organisation of the interviews and a template for the collection and analysis of the good practice examples.

4.1. Questionnaire

The questionnaire on Youth Engagement in Climate Change and Migration issues (YECCM) (Appendix 7) was designed based on a conceptual framework organised around three main concepts that were identified for youth engagement: affective, cognitive, and behavioural (Pancer, Rose-Krasnor & Loiselle, 2002). Based on these three concepts, 64 questions were drawn up to address the most important issues related to youth engagement.

Timeline of the quantitative research



4.1.1. Structure of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was drawn up with the following objectives:

- to investigate the youths' awareness about SDGs and their engagement as active agents of development and change at regional level, in the field of global challenges, specifically climate change and migration;
- to identify innovative ideas for actions that can trigger the active engagement of the young generation;
- to obtain an overview of the current situation at the regional level, similar to the Eurobarometer, about which it was emphasized that "it is not a tool to collect statistics, it rather provides a snapshot of public opinion perceptions at a given time". The Eurobarometer offers data with regard to youth engagement at national level; and
- to offer a snapshot of young people's attitudes, perspectives, motivations, preferences and reflections on active engagement in the 6 European regions, partners in the *Mindchangers* project.

The structure of the questionnaire consists of a short introduction and five sections, as detailed below:

Introduction: a short presentation of the project and research objectives, its target audience, the Personal data processing agreement (cf. General Data Protection Regulation) and the estimated time for filling in the entire questionnaire (approx. 30 minutes).

Section 1. Socio-demographic data (10 questions)

Section 2. Sustainable Development Goals (6 questions)

Section 3. Climate change (23 questions, 18 common, 4 questions in Scenario A and 1

question in Scenarios B&C)

Section 4. Migration (23 questions, 18 common, 4 questions in Scenario A and 1 question in Scenarios B&C)

Section 2 included questions evaluating the general awareness regarding the SDGs.

Sections 3 and 4 were divided in three scenarios, A, B and C. Scenario A addressed young people with a good level of engagement (engaged in actions more than twice). Scenario B included young people engaged in actions at least once or twice. Scenario C targeted young people who have never been engaged in actions addressing climate change or migration. Section 3 and 4 were randomly sequenced: some respondents got Section 3 first, others received Section 4, afterwards being asked if they wanted to continue with the other section.

In Section 5 respondents had to select from a list of 24 characteristics the ones that defined, in their opinion, a Mindchanger. The last question was aimed at evaluating the participants' likelihood to achieve a high level of engagement in actions addressing climate change and migration.

Three types of variables were used: nominal, ordinal, and Likert type questions, with 4 and 5-point rating scales. Most questions were close-ended and three were open ended.

4.1.2. Questionnaire administration

In order to facilitate the distribution of the questionnaire at the regional level, the regional researchers translated it into five languages and made it available online on the Lime Survey platform. Data cleaning was done by removing the answers for which the respondents spent less than 20 minutes (at least 10 minutes per section).

The recommended number of respondents at regional level was approx. 100 young people. As a result of questionnaire administration, the numbers of responses collected in each region are the following: Belgium: 99, France: 104, Germany: 95, Italy: 180, Romania: 100 and Spain: 102.

4.2. Interviews

The interviews were organised with 10 young people from every European region, selected based on their high level of engagement on issues related to climate change and/or migration. These young people were identified with the help of the regional partners of the *Mindchangers* project. The main aim was to identify the levers of engagement for the SDGs (climate change and/or migration), as well as the challenges faced by these regional "Mindchangers". The main guidelines for the organisation of the interviews were jointly drawn up by the research teams.

INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

Introduction: Presentation of the research project, of the research team, of the objective of the individual interviews (without saying too much...), guarantees in terms of anonymity. Present the general framework of the interview (duration, recording, reminders, main time frames...).

Personal trajectory since "the discovery" of the subject (*depending on the profile of the "Mindchanger": climate change / migratory phenomena*)

This is the core of the interview. The Mindchangers tell their story, the interviewers only ask for precisions, details, examples.

At least 3 temporal steps should be identified in the process:

Awareness > Following / Support > Activism

> *Make sure to explore the interactions between spaces of socialization and engagement process:*

- Family
- Close friends
- School / University
- Sports clubs / cultural groups / spare-time activities
- Associations / political parties / syndicates
- Social networks / medias

> *Make sure to explore the declared practices (actions) related to engagement.*

Ex: “Can you give me some concrete examples of your activism? How does it translate into actions?”

> *Make sure to explore the engagement levels, presenting the DEAR pyramid of engagement (last step, at the end of the interview).*

Ex: “Looking back at your own trajectory, would you identify different levels of engagement at specific times?”

When the “Mindchanger” told you all the details about his own story...

<p>➤ Local initiatives related to the subject (climate change / migratory phenomena)</p> <p>Personal knowledge of local policies / actions</p> <p>Presentation</p> <p>Comments / critics</p>	<p>➤ Sustainable development</p> <p>Personal knowledge of the SDGs</p> <p>Presentation</p> <p>Comments / critics</p>	<p>➤ Plans for the future</p> <p>Personal life sphere</p> <p>Professional life sphere (including training / graduate studies plans)</p>	<p>➤ Socio-demographic indicators</p> <p>Age</p> <p>Gender</p> <p>City</p> <p>Profession / situation</p>
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4.3. Good Practice Examples

The objectives of these good practice examples (GPEs) were, on the one hand, to investigate the point of view of project promoters, and, on the other hand, to identify elements that foster youth engagement in actions addressing climate change/migration.

A general template was provided for the collection and analysis of the GPEs. This template includes general information and a general description of the project, as well as data referring to youth engagement, including a SWOT analysis of the project from the perspective of youth engagement.

Project Title*

General information
Project ID
Topic (climate change or migration)
Region
Promoters
Other actors/collaborators involved
Target group (age, size, etc.)
Duration (from ... to...)
Funding
Level of implementation (e.g. local/regional/national/international/European)
Website
Contact
Description of the project
Summary of the project (including motivation that led to the project, previous experiences, particular needs of the target group)
Activities (including methodology)
Results/Impact
Sustainability/Follow-up
Youth engagement
Number of young people involved in the project
Stage of youth involvement in the project activities (e.g. implementation, co-creation, evaluation, monitoring, follow-up)
Level of youth engagement attained through the project (cf. pyramid of engagement)
SWOT analysis of the project (from the perspective of youth engagement)
<i>Incentives for youth engagement</i> Please include in your answer your recommendations for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How to engage the disengaged youth - How to support sustainable youth engagement

**Please only include projects*

- addressing young people (18-35 years old);
- on the topics of climate change or migration;
- from the last 5 years.

5. STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This report is structured in six chapters, one for each region involved in the project. They are alphabetically ordered, and their content is presented in full, as it was elaborated by the regional research teams. As mentioned above, the structure of each chapter follows the sequencing of the research phases. More specifically, it comprises two main parts: the review of regional policies, and the identification and analysis of the elements fostering active engagement. However, the slightly different sections of the chapters reflect both the common points, and the regional specificities, which were highlighted by the regional researchers with the aim to properly present a snapshot of youth engagement at a particular moment in the respective region.

The six chapters are preceded by an introductory section, which comprises general information about the *Mindchangers* project and about the research activity entitled “How to shift from awareness to action” carried out within this project.

The overall conclusions follow the six regional chapters and point to the main findings of the research activity.

Additionally, the report includes a set of appendices for each region, which are numbered accordingly. These appendices contain additional information on the regional policies, supplementary data and figures that resulted from the regional research. Moreover, they include the questionnaire on Youth Engagement in Climate Change and Migration issues (YECCM) used to collect the regional data.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In Belgium, the partner region is the French-speaking Community, known as Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles (we use the acronym “FWB” throughout the text). The chapter is divided into two parts: the review of regional policies (I) and the identification and analysis of the elements fostering active engagement (II).

The first part of the regional research chapter aims at presenting the analysis of the main regional policies related to youth and SDGs, especially climate change and migration, as well as discussing the modalities of collaboration between LAs and CSOs. In terms of *quantity* of policies, we may identify 4 main instruments or policies (*decrees*) that are used to foster youth engagement: the Youth Organizations Decree (“Décret organisations jeunesse”), the Youth Centres Decree (“Décret centres de jeunes”), the Youth Forum Decree (“Décret Forum des jeunes”) and the Youth International Office Decree (“Décret Bureau International Jeunesse”).

We do not separate the analysis of the regional main policies related to youth and SDGs from the presentation of the level of collaboration between the LAs and the CSOs for a key reason: these two parts are deeply interconnected. The policies related to youth and SDGs precisely regulate the collaboration between LAs and CSOs in FWB. Every year, this collaboration allows for the organization by CSOs of dozens of youth projects dedicated to climate and/or migration issues. We review some of the most significant projects below.

Part I begins with a brief introduction to Belgium’s institutional structure and civil society (1.1). We say a few words about our methodology in this first part of the research (1.2). Then, we present the two main ways LAs plays a role regarding the promotion of active engagement on SDGs among youth: they can act as a direct promoter of the SDGs (1.3) or as an indirect promoter of the SDGs by supporting CSOs, and particularly youth associations (1.4). We provide an overview of the types of activities organized by associations (1.4.2). Other associations, which are not youth associations but are supported entirely or partly by the *FWB* authorities, also coordinate projects likely to foster youth engagement (1.4.3). Furthermore, at this point, it will be important to note that more autonomous groups have emerged that also offer opportunities for youth to shift from awareness to engagement (1.5). In the final part of this review of regional policies (1.6), we formulate recommendations on how to strengthen the collaboration between LAs and CSOs to assure the shift from awareness to action.

2. REVIEW OF REGIONAL POLICIES

2.1. Belgium’s institutional structure and civil society

Belgium is a federal country divided along both territorial and linguistic/cultural lines. The federation is made up of three regions (Flanders, Wallonia, Brussels-Capital), and of three Communities (Dutch-speaking, French-speaking, German-speaking), each of them

having their own Parliament, Government, and matters for which they are competent. Communities have authority in matters related to language and culture, including education and youth. Community governments are active across territorial lines, and *Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles* (FWB) is active in Wallonia and in Brussels.

Civil society organizations play a great role in Belgian politics (Faniel et al. 2020). In terms of organization, civil society has used to be structured along ‘pillars’ – consisting in historical divisions of society and politics along ‘cleavages’, namely the Socialist, Christian-Democrat and Liberal pillars (and arguably, the Greens have recently structured as a fourth pillar in French-speaking Belgium). Many civil society organizations are connected to specific parties and/or political elites within each segment. It results in the fact that civil society organizations present a certain degree of institutionalization, and that established civil society organizations have privileged access to political authorities.

2.2. Methodology

In terms of methodology, to review regional policies intended to foster the shift from awareness to active engagement of young people on SDGs, we developed a cartography of tools mobilized by the FWB. We relied on Hood’s (1983; 2008) conceptualization of the tools of government, which identifies four kinds of basic resources a government can use to achieve its objectives: nodality, authority, treasure, and organization (the “NATO” model) (Hood, 1983). Nodality tools are based on government’s ability to gather or provide information to citizens, through its different communication channels. Authority tools consist of legal or “official” means, for example the decrees taken by the Government of FWB. Treasure tools are directly related to money: government take money from citizens or organizations (through taxes, for example) or it gives money to some actors (for example, in the form of subsidies). Lastly, organization tools rely on government’s ability to activate directly its own physical environment – human resources and equipment – to reach its goal.

2.3. FWB authorities as a direct promoter of the SDGs

The FWB acts as a promoter of SDGs in different ways. Some departments or organs of the FWB directly work towards the promotion of an active citizenship and engagement on SDGs, in addition to the Youth administrative department.

When it comes to international projects, a service worth mentioning is the Youth International Desk (*Bureau International Jeunesse*, BIJ), which is part of *Wallonie-Bruxelles International* – the shared international relations department of the Walloon Region, the Brussels-Capital Region, and the French Community Commission. The BIJ shows two different approaches in supporting young people’s international projects. In a “top-down” perspective, the BIJ can initiate specific calls for projects, but in a more “bottom-up” approach, it also receives projects build up by young people on their own initiative and decides to grant funds or not. Among other initiatives, the BIJ initiated a call for projects called “Citizens from Europe” to support activities designed to encourage young people’s solidarity and support for sustainable development at the local level, for example by helping migrants. The BIJ grants European funds (*Corps européen de solidarité*, Erasmus+/Youth in

Action program).

2.4. FWB authorities-indirect promoter of SDGs through youth associations

2.4.1. Organizational and financial support to youth associations

FWB also acts as an indirect promoter of SDGs among youth. By relying on instruments of authority and organization, the FWB promotes youth associations and provides subsidies which are conditional to the respect of the objectives set by the FWB in terms of SDGs.

The Youth Administrative Department of the FWB (*Service de la Jeunesse*) oversees implementing decrees related to youth policies. The FWB shapes and coordinates the general frame in which youth organizations exercise their activities within the French-speaking community. The FWB has the authority to set the conditions for the approval and attribution of subsidies to youth associations. The service recognizes two kinds of associations: Youth Organizations (*Organisations de jeunesse*, OJ) and Youth Centres (*Centres de jeunes*, CJ). In order to be recognized, these associations have to prove that they contribute to foster young people's participation and engagement and help them develop a "CRACS", i.e. a responsible, active, critical and united citizenship (*citoyenneté responsable active critique et solidaire*, CRACS). Recognized associations automatically receive subsidies for employment and for the operating costs but can also ask for complementary grants for specific projects.

Several Youth Organizations provide organizational and financial support to young people in developing projects related to climate change and migration. Youth Centres, the other type of youth associations the FWB recognizes, includes three types of structures: Youth Houses, Meeting and accommodation centres and Youth information centres. Youth Houses are organized around a physical structure where young people can gather to meet and sometimes build up specific projects. Since 2017, a Green Youth House provides transversal support to a series of Young Houses in the implementation of ecological initiatives and facilitates the networking between these Houses.

Besides Youth Organizations and Youth Centres, the FWB also supports the organization of the *Forum des jeunes* (Youth Forum), the representative body of Belgian French-speaking young people. Every year, the Forum designates four UN delegates specialized in a specific topic: Youth, Climate, Biodiversity and Sustainable development. These delegates represent youth's interests on these matters at national and international levels, taking part in events such as Conference of Parties (COPs) and the High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development.

Finally, given the pillarised structure of civil society in Belgium, it is important to mention that party youth organizations are among the youth organizations that are subsidized by the FWB.

2.4.2. Types of activities and projects carried out by youth associations

This section offers an overview of activities related to SDGs – particularly climate change and migration – organized by youth associations (Youth Organizations and, to a lesser extent, Youth Centres). These activities have been divided into six different types of actions.

2.4.2.1. Informational and educational activities

Some Youth Organizations active in FWB are dedicated entirely or partly to informational and educational activities related to SDGs, climate change and/or migration. For instance, *Quinoa* and *Asmae* developed an important expertise in North-South relationship, migration and the protection of the environment through “global and united citizenship education” (*éducation à la citoyenneté mondiale et solidaire*, ECMS). *Coordination Nationale d’Action pour la Paix et la Démocratie* focuses on international peace building, migration, and anti-discrimination practices, while *Déclit en Perspectives*, *Empreintes* and *Jeunes et nature* organizes educational activities on environment, by mobilizing the FWB concept of “Education related to Environment” (*Éducation relative à l’Environnement*, ErE). This category of activities mostly allows to work on youth “awareness” on issues related to climate change and migration through sensibilization, but also includes activities illustrating an “active engagement”, for instance the creation of informational material by the youth (see project 10 “Migration et climat? T’en dis quoi?” in the “10 best practice examples” included in the appendices).

2.4.2.2. Cultural exchanges at the local level

Some of the Youth Organizations supported by the FWB, such as *Défi Belgique Afrique* and *Jeunes Actifs dans de Volontariat et les Voyages Alternatifs* coordinates immersion and meeting activities between migrants and non-migrants or between young people with different racial or ethnic backgrounds, with the objective to help change people’s perception of migration. Youth Centres also coordinate activities aimed at fostering youth “active engagement” through cultural exchanges. For instance, the Youth Houses Federation (*Fédération des Maisons de Jeunes*, FMJ) runs the Métis program, which encourages intercultural interactions with asylum seekers in the context of activities in Youth Houses (see project 5 “Jeunesse nomade” in the “10 best practice examples” appendix).

2.4.2.3. International projects and mobility

Several Youth Organizations are involved in the coordination of international projects: *Défi Belgique Afrique*, *Quinoa*, *Asmae*, *Service Volontaire International*, *Service Civil International* and *Jeunes Actifs dans de Volontariat et les Voyages Alternatifs*. Within international and mobility activities supervised by these associations, projects can be divided into two parts depending on the area of action: projects in Global South countries and European projects. In Global South countries, youth organizations support young people participating in sustainable development projects. In Europe, some projects are built around the migration topic (see project 8 “Global Summer Camp: Refugees in Europe” in the “10 best practice examples” appendix).

2.4.2.4. Voluntary work in the region

Through this type of actions, young people volunteer to contribute to ecological and solidarity initiatives in their region, with the help of youth organizations, such as *Solidarité* and *Service Civil International*. The federation of associations *Plateforme francophone du volontariat* (French-speaking Volunteer Work Platform) gather these types of associations and act to facilitate and stimulate voluntary work initiatives in FWB. When it comes to climate change, the idea is to support ecological entrepreneurs in their everyday work (see projects 2 “Projets Alternatives locales” and 9 “Année citoyenne” in the “10 best practice examples” appendix).

2.4.2.5. Participation in collective mobilization actions

Another type of actions identified in our overview of youth organization’s field of action is the participation of young people to collective mobilization actions, such as demonstrations or occupations of specific places. Youth organizations *Service Civil International* and *Jeunes Organisés et Combatifs*, as well as political parties’ youth sections play a guiding role for young people wishing to undertake such initiatives. For example, at the end of 2019, young people from the youth organization *Jeunes Organisés et Combatifs* participated in the occupation of the Arlon *zone à défendre* (ZAD) (“area to defend”), the protection of a biodiversity-interest area against the establishment of an industrial project.

2.4.3. Other associations supported by FWB authorities

Other CSOs, which are not recognized as Youth Organizations or Youth Centres, but receive support from the FWB authorities, also offer opportunities for youth to show an “active engagement” on climate change and migration topics. For instance, the Belgian French-speaking section of Amnesty International (*Amnesty International – Belgique francophone*) has a youth section, *Amnesty Jeunes*. *Amnesty* is recognized as a Permanent Education Organization (*organisation d’éducation permanente*) by the FWB authorities. Their target audience is mostly adults, but they sometimes conduct projects accessible or dedicated to youth, as we can see with *Amnesty Jeunes* or the Permanent Education Organization *Centre de Coopération au Développement* (CNCD-11.11.11) (see project 3 “Act for Climate Camp” in the “10 best practice examples”). Another example of associations supported by FWB authorities, but also by other entities, is *Singa*, which coordinate socialization activities between Brussels residents and refugees or asylum seekers (see project 7 “BUDDY” in the “10 best practice examples”). The association does not target the youth in particular, but still has potential to attract young people who want to take action when it comes to migration.

The administrative departments we mentioned, as well as youth associations and other CSOs recognized and/or supported by the *FWB authorities*, form a network of several actors likely to play a role in encouraging the shift from “awareness” to “active engagement” of youth on climate change and migration (see Figure 1).

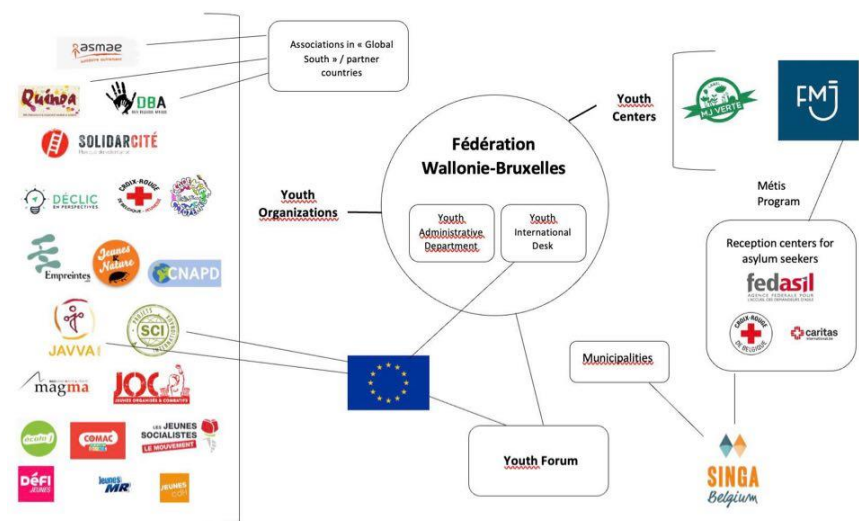


Figure 1. Youth, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Climate change and Migration in FWB

2.5. Youth and citizens' initiatives for climate & refugees

Alongside the established CSOs, organizations have emerged from citizens' initiatives. They did not benefit from public subsidies but have been quite active in the last years in mobilizing the youth on climate and/or migration topics.

In 2019, the world faced an international wave of climate protest, in the follow-up of Greta Thunberg's school strike for climate. Belgium was no exception and experienced impressive protests. Several initiatives took place, mostly led by young people. Youth for Climate (YfC) (*Jeunesse pour le climat*) was launched by two schoolgirls on Facebook (in Flanders first) and called youngsters to mobilize against the lack of responsiveness by the government on climate issues. Other organizations emerged, such as Students for Climate (especially in universities), *Génération Climat* or Act for Climate Justice.

Among the most significant citizens' initiatives on the migration topic, the *Plateforme citoyenne de soutien aux réfugiés – BXLRefugees* should be mentioned, although, by contrast to the climate protest organizations cited above, the platform did not present itself as a youth movement. The organization emerged in 2015 and was born in the *parc Maximilien*, a parc where migrants could find help from diverse NGOs, but which also serves as a transit place. One remarkable action of the Platform was to organize family hosting of refugees, i.e. some families welcomed refugees in their home. At its debut, the *Plateforme* did not benefit from public subsidies, but has now received financial support from the Brussels-Capital Region. It is interesting to note that among other common characteristics, these organizations heavily rely on digital tools, especially social media.

2.6. Recommendations to LAs and CSOs

As can be seen from the presentation of the policies related to youth and SDGs in FWB, there is already an intense collaboration between LAs and CSOs on that matter, with some CSOs being recognized (as Youth Organization, as Youth Centre, or as Permanent Education Organization) and supported by LAs for the coordination of activities aimed at assuring the shift from awareness to action. Nevertheless, LAs and CSOs could benefit from these recommendations:

- Foster partnership with non-institutionalized groups and bottom-up, spontaneous initiatives (such as *Youth for Climate*), as those can have an important mobilizing capacity.
- LAs could try to implement a regular and more systematic identification of bottom-up initiatives and projects, for instance, through social-media monitoring (identification of active groups and/or pages) and through fieldwork among involved actors (e.g., schools). LAs could work together with these actors in evaluating the projects and initiatives' capacity to raise awareness and to mobilize others. Successful projects could then be experimented and "diffused" as best practices in other contexts, in a kind of "co-creation" process.

3. ELEMENTS THAT FOSTER ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

This part of the regional research chapter offers a presentation of the elements that foster the shift from “awareness” to “active engagement” of youth on SDGs, and is divided into 5 parts: 1) a brief explanation of our methodological choices 2) the presentation of the main results of the questionnaire; 3) the presentation of good practice examples among CSOs; 4) the analysis of the interviews with young Mindchangers; and 5) the formulation of recommendations to CSOs and LAs on how to foster active engagement.

3.1. Methodology

Together with the other regional teams, a common survey was elaborated that was aimed to measure respondents’ degree of awareness of SDGs, and especially of climate change and migration issues, the frequency, and types of actions they undertake to tackle these issues and the type of actions they would be willing to undertake or join in the future. The survey was also aimed at grasping respondents’ perception of the factors and impediments of engagement, as well as their perception of the effects of engagement at the individual level.

The survey was circulated among FWB youth through social media, university platforms, cultural and educational actors at the regional and local levels. The main difficulty encountered was the timing of the survey (July-August 2021), implying that many potential respondents were on holiday. 109 responses were gathered. We nevertheless removed from the sample responses below the established time thresholds (around 20 minutes for the full questionnaire). The final sample hence included 99 responses. To analyse the data, we used the statistical analysis software SPSS.

As for the interviews, the 10 young Mindchangers – 7 women and 3 men – were contacted via email or social media during June and July 2021. Aged between 18 and 30 years old, they are mostly students or higher education graduates. Four Mindchangers live in Brussels, two live in the Province of Hainaut (one of whom also lives in the Province of Walloon Brabant), two in the Province of Liège, one in the Province of Flemish Brabant and one lives both in the Province of Namur and in Brussels. Eight interviewees are born in Belgium, two in another country (one in the European Union and one outside the EU). Five Mindchangers are primarily engaged on climate change topics, while other four are primarily active on migration topics. The last interviewee is active on both themes.

3.2. Results of the questionnaire

3.2.1. Sample

The sample includes about a hundred respondents, aged between 16 and 35 (75% are aged between 21 and 28). The sample is not (aimed to be) representative of the FWB youth. A first bias consists in the fact that the survey was filled in by respondents who were probably quite interested in the project and/or in at least one of the issues (climate and/or migration). A second bias concerns gender, as 61 respondents are women. This can result

from a greater interest in SDG issues among women, a pattern that was also revealed in the qualitative interviews. A vast majority of the respondents were born in Belgium (N=88). The others mostly came from EU countries (France, Germany, Spain, Luxembourg) and only three from non-EU countries (Burundi, Congo, Morocco). Nevertheless, around half of the respondents said that there was a 'migration story' in the family (N=49). In terms of residence, respondents currently live in Brussels (N=36), Liège (N=20) and Hainaut provinces (N=20). A majority of respondents perceive their environment to be urban (N=57) or semi-urban (N=23). A crucial bias concern in the sample concerns education and the socio-economic status of the respondents: 59 are currently students (mostly in tertiary education), the others being mostly full-time workers. The sample does not include any unemployed, only very few precarious workers.

The results should thus be taken with great caution, as the sample is not representative of the whole youth in FWB. Rather, we should consider this sample as representative of young people who are already aware of climate and migration issues, informed and interested in these issues, and with a socio-economic background that makes them more likely to be politically socialized and active.

3.2.2. On SDGs

3.2.2.1. Awareness of SDGs

Among the respondents, 29% declare that they are not aware of the SDGs, 32% declare themselves aware but not knowing exactly what they are, and 38% are aware and know about them. Hence, the respondents are relatively aware of the SDGs. By using an open question when asking them to list the "three first words" that come to their mind related to the SDGs, we can see that they associate SDGs firstly with climate and environment issues, followed by issues of solidarity, inequalities, and education.

3.2.2.2. Most and least urgent SDGs

Respondents were asked to pick three SDGs they deemed the most 'urgent' to be dealt with at different levels of governance (local, national, international), as well as those they consider *less* urgent. Figure 2 displays the number of times each SDG was selected as 'most urgent', for each level of power (and on average). Respondents clearly differentiate between the three levels of power. The three most urgent SDGs at the international level appear to be: no poverty, no hunger and climate action. At the national level, these are: quality education, climate action and no poverty. At the local level, the three most urgent SDGs are: sustainable cities and communities, responsible production and consumption, followed by climate action and no poverty at equal level. These numbers also suggest that responses vary more the more local we go, whereas there is a general agreement on the most urgent SDGs at the international level. 'Industry, Innovation, Infrastructure' appears as the least urgent, followed by 'Partnership for the goals' and 'Decent work and economic growth' – with a similar low support for 'life below water' at the local level, which can be explained by the residence of the respondents (urban, not close to the sea).

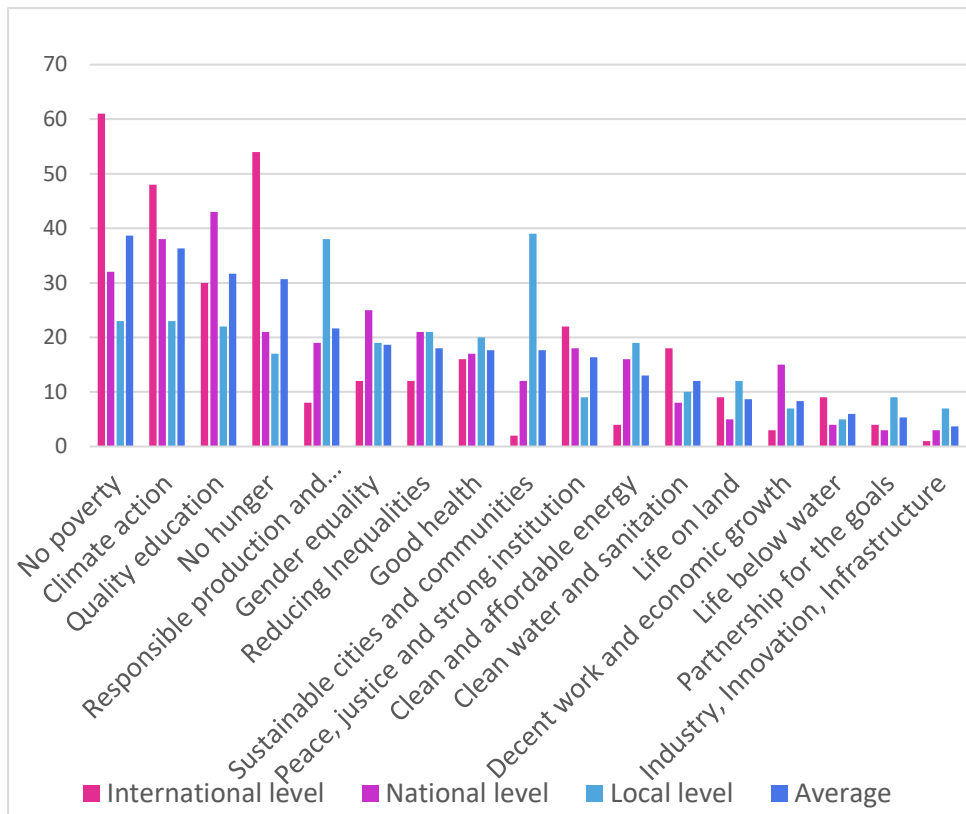


Figure 2. Three most urgent SDGs to be tackled at local, national and international level

3.2.2.3. Tackling global inequalities: a priority for governments?

Figure 3 indicates how much respondents agree or disagree with the statement that “tackling global inequalities” should be a priority for governments at different levels of power. Respondents show a high level of agreement with the idea that this issue should be tackled at the EU and national levels, while they tend to disagree a bit more with the idea that regional government should make it a priority. This somehow echoes Figure 2, where we see those socio-economic issues, such as reducing poverty and hunger, are associated to national and international levels, whereas the local level is rather seen to be important in changing consumption and production habits and making cities more sustainable.

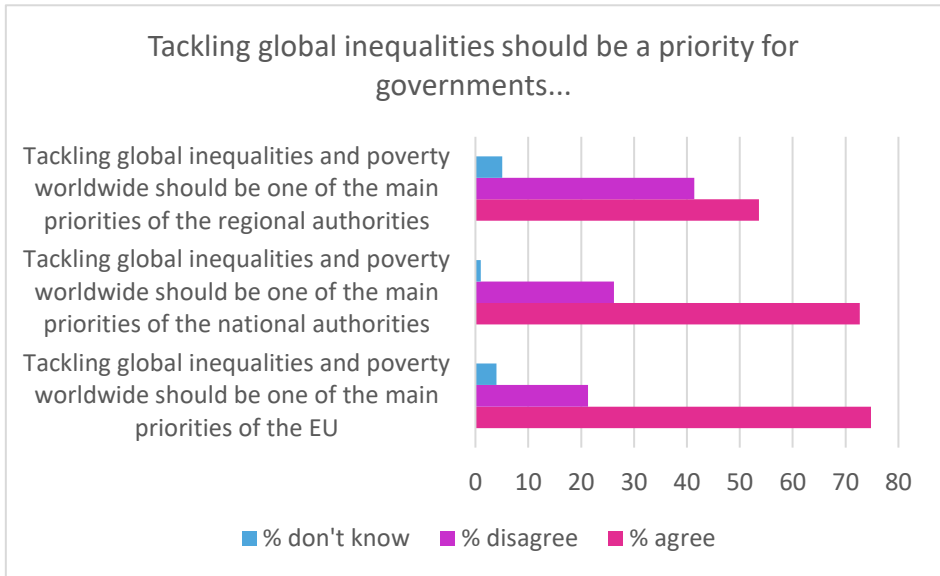


Figure 3. How much respondents agree that tackling global inequalities should be a priority of the EU, national or regional authorities (% agree - % disagree)

3.2.2.4. Actions aimed at changing global inequalities

Among actions that respondents may undertake to reduce global inequalities, direct actions such as changing consumption habits appear first, followed by supporting or contributing to digital campaigns, used by more than 50% of the respondents (see Figure 4). To the question ‘How much are you willing to change personal behaviour to reduce the impact of global issues?’, only 10% answered ‘not much’ (1% ‘not at all’), while 53% picked ‘much’ and 36% ‘very much’. Hence, overall, 88 respondents say they are willing to change personal behaviour.

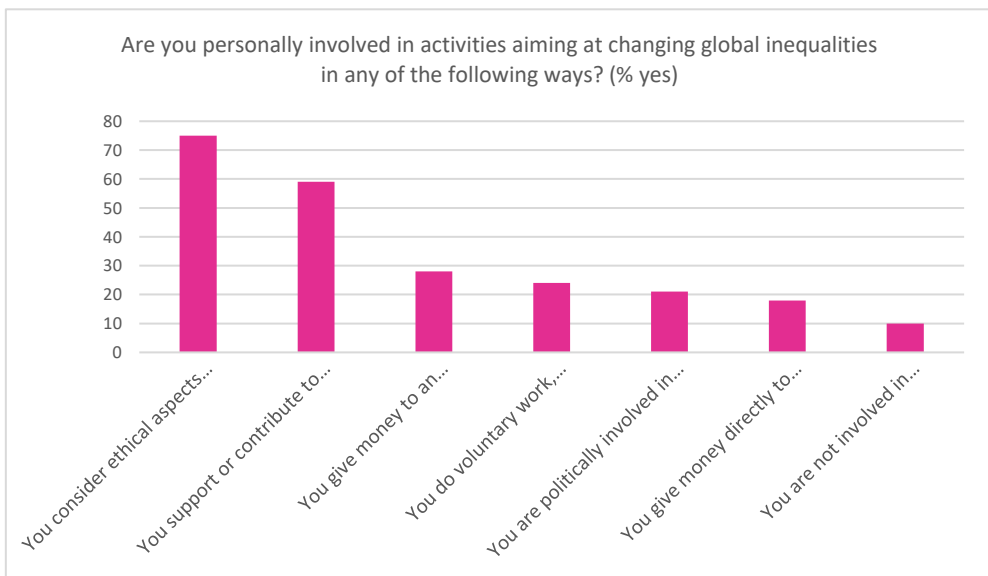


Figure 4. Type of activities in which respondents take part to change global inequalities

3.2.2.5. Climate first, migration second

Overall, respondents show a greater interest, awareness and level of engagement

towards climate change and environmental issues than towards migration. In terms of actions, 39 respondents report having participated in actions related to migration issues in the last three years, whereas 56 respondents report having participated in actions related to climate change. In terms of percentage, only when considering the valid responses (therefore excluding the 'no answer', i.e. 8 for migration, 2 for climate), 43% of respondents did undertake actions regarding migration, 58% did it on climate change. This can be explained by (1) the context, marked by a very intense flow of demonstrations in the year 2019 that created a lot of media attention and public debates; (2) the *offer*, i.e. this peculiar context provided numerous opportunities to join groups, actions and initiatives dealing with climate change; (3) the type of actions that can be undertaken – indeed, on climate issues, respondents privileged direct actions, such as changing habits, recycle etc., whereas these types of actions did not appear as activities they would join when it comes to migration issues.

3.2.2.6. Explaining engagement: determinants and constraints

According to the 'actively engaged' respondents, their engagement was mostly motivated by their values and opinions, stimulated by close social networks (family, friends, professional sphere), but also by a specific NGO or organization. Their engagement in climate action seems also related to the search of information on the matter. By contrast, political authorities, political personalities, social workers, or teachers did not play a determinant role. Hence, stimulus seems to be more internal rather than external for the respondents.

As regards the constraints preventing young people to engage, the less active respondents point the lack of activities proposed by schools and universities, especially within their locality. This is quite surprising when contrasted with the content of the qualitative interviews (see below) which point out the role of school and university projects in stimulating their engagement. Maybe the problem comes from a lack of *knowledge* of these activities, which may result in a communication problem. Respondents also cite a lack of financial and organizational support from authorities and institutions. Finally, they identify several personal constraints, mainly the lack of time, as well as the lack of *knowledge* and competence on migration issues.

3.2.2.7. Prospective questions: what are they willing to do in the future?

While 80% of the respondents found it enough or a lot attractive to engage on environmental issues, it is less the case for the migration topic (65%). When it comes to climate, the activities they are the most willing to undertake in the future are direct actions, signing a petition, regular voluntary work, and participation to conferences. For migration, these activities are signing petitions and regular voluntary work. They expect to act mostly at the local level and participate in initiatives taken by NGOs or educational institutions. They think that schools/universities and NGOs are the institutions that could have the most impact on youth engagement, as suggested in table 1.

In your opinion, how much the following institutions could have an impact on motivating the young people to get engaged on...	% much and very much	
	Environmental crisis	Migration
Educational institutions (schools, universities)	94,8%	91,2%
Local authorities	74,2%	66,0%
National authorities	60,8%	63,8%
European institutions	54,6%	58,3%
NGOs	82,5%	81,3%
Cultural or linguistic communities	62,9%	69,2%
Research centres and institutes	55,7%	44,0%
Political organizations and movements	41,2%	54,9%

Table 1. The institutions impact on young people's engagement

3.3. Good practices examples among LAs and CSOs

As we cannot cover in detail all the initiatives that helped youth to shift from awareness to active engagement, we develop the strengths and limits of two initiatives used by young people we interviewed to get actively engaged.

3.3.1. *Forum des jeunes UN Delegates Program*

The *Forum des jeunes* is the representative body of the Belgian French-speaking youth. Every year, it designates four young UN delegates, three of whom are competent for Climate, Biodiversity and Sustainable development. Delegates hold a two-year mandate – junior Delegate the first year and senior Delegate the second year – and work with a team of other young people who are member of the *Forum des jeunes*. First, they consult youth to write official advises which are the basis of their advocacy action. They also build up specific projects to foster youth discussion and inform youth on several topics, such as climate change. Finally, the Delegates participate in international events.

FWB authorities provide an annual grant to the *Forum*, as well as a logistical, administrative and infrastructure assistance. The anchorage of the *Forum* in the youth sector allows for collaboration with FWB administrative bodies – such as the *Bureau International Jeunesse* to organize the international missions of youth abroad – as well as other CSOs.

The UN Delegates program presents different advantages that makes it an interesting tool for youth to shift from awareness to active engagement. First, the program follows the “by youth, for youth rule”. Indeed, young people members of the *Forum*, supported in terms of organization and finance by the *Forum*, consult other young people from FWB on topics related to SDGs, and create a communication campaign especially aimed at mobilizing other young people on these issues. As mentioned below, a message conveyed by other young people seems to bring an incentive for other young people to “join the movement” and act, too. Besides, the *Forum* relies on an important activity on social media to convey its messages.

Moreover, the *Forum* is clearly internationally oriented, and participating in international events seems to constitute a key opportunity for youth to engage, as suggested

by the UN Delegates we interviewed:

"As I have a personal goal to make the most personal impact in my life on the people I meet, I thought this was a great opportunity. Additionally, I'm going to the COP (I.e. Conference of the Parties) and I will be able to make lots of contacts. I will also be able to see with my own eyes what is blocking the UN from taking further action today."

"I will be part of the delegation and go to the COP to bring the voice of youth. It's a very strong meeting place for activists, with many exchanges, events. For sure, the Youth Forum is an easy source to support my engagement."

The main weakness we identified in the UN Delegates program is that the UN Delegates, who occupy the role with the highest level of engagement and travel to international events, are often very educated students, who found this opportunity through their university. For instance, two out of four actual senior Delegates are PhD students. This illustrates the difficulty to reach young people outside higher education institutions and raises the importance of providing opportunities for youth in all kinds of situations.

3.3.2. Service Citoyen (Citizen Service)

The *Service Citoyen* (Citizen Service) aims to make young people aged 18 to 25 engage in a "solidary" project (80% of their time dedicated to 'mission' and 20% for 'training'). Young people engaged in a "citizen service" receive a salary allowance of 300 euros per month, and the activity is considered as a period of professional training by the regional services in charge of employment. The organization of the *Service Citoyen* is supported by several actors including the FWB authorities. Although the system does not have a legal status yet, political actors have shown an intention to develop it further. The 'solidary projects' take place in various CSOs and include projects related to access to culture and education, environment, assistance to people, education through sport, as well as assistance to people seeking asylum or refugees.

This system presents several advantages from the point of view of the shift from awareness to active engagement. Indeed, the program targets young people who are not students and do not have a job yet, so it has the potential to provide opportunities of active engagement to young people who left school and wish to occupy themselves by engaging in a solidarity project, as well as young people looking for a job. This diversity of profiles among the youth using *Service Citoyen* is highlighted by a young person we interviewed, who is working in an association helping migrants to meet other people and find an accommodation in Brussels:

"You find people who want to do something, people who have given up their studies or who need a break. For them, it makes sense. I use the citizen service because I couldn't make any progress in my job search, not even an unpaid internship. I used it to advance in my career path, and at the same time I studied things for which you must be engaged".

As suggested by this potential *Mindchanger*, the *Service Citoyen* provides an opportunity for youth to dedicate time to engagement and gain some professional experience at the same time, without having to prove to the employment services that they

are looking for a job. Besides, in terms of inclusion, the program is used by young people who distanced themselves from school, youth who come often from a more ‘precarious’ socioeconomic backgrounds. In this regard, the program is similar to the *Année citoyenne* (see project 9 “Année citoyenne” in the “10 best practice examples” appendix), a voluntary work program for youth between 16 and 25 years old, especially targeting “vulnerable” young people. Therefore, a good way to make more “vulnerable” young people able to shift from awareness to active engagement might be to rely on the expertise of CSOs specialized in working with this public and ask them to continue to include projects related to climate change and migration. This is what *Service Citoyen* succeeded to achieve. Another strength of the program is the flexibility in the choice of the “missions”:

“I saw an ad on Facebook for *Service Citoyen*, and I said to myself why not! (...) I already knew the association; I was already participating in its activities. I was the one who contacted them and asked the *Service Citoyen* if I could do it with this association. I learned a lot on how things work between the asylum actors and the refugees.”

The potential limit of the program will depend on the situation of the youth, probably their age. Indeed, for a 25-year-old who doesn’t live with a parent/tutor anymore and/or doesn’t have access to family or unemployment benefits, the 300-euro allowance may be too small.

3.4. Interviews with young Mindchangers

The youth we interviewed are involved in a diversity of actions, often several projects at the same time. When it comes to engagement on climate change, they mostly take part in the organization of environmental challenges on their campus, advocacy actions, the organization of demonstrations and clean walks, sensibilization on social media and civil disobedience actions. They often choose study programs related to sustainable development and wish to take environmental issues into consideration in their (future) professional lives. Forms of engagement related to migration are more voluntary work-oriented, with young people helping to provide medical, social, logistical and/or legal assistance to migrants/asylum seekers/refugees.

Below, we provide an analysis of the most significant initiatives these Mindchangers undertook to be “actively engaged”. We highlight some elements that came up regularly when young people described their engagement.

3.4.1. By youth, for youth

Several of the young Mindchangers participated in projects created by young people themselves. In this context, CSOs and LAs had more of an intermediary role, providing support (organizational and financial) to youth in their projects. For instance, CSOs provided their expertise to find funds – for instance by submitting an application file to the *Bureau International Jeunesse* (BIJ) to get money for a project abroad – or to find partners to develop a specific project. Moreover, when the activities were initiated by young people themselves, it was important for them to be the ones who take decisions, as suggested by one of our interviewees:

“The group organized a trip to Germany to participate in an international civil disobedience action. Without the help of the Youth Organization, this could not have been possible. The networking between the actors is important, but young people are the ones who hold the project.”

Several Mindchangers also initiated or participated in projects aimed at mobilizing other young people, creating a “multiplier effect”. It is the case of the young members of *Forum des jeunes* (Youth Forum), who specifically design (digital) communication campaign targeting youth. Two interviewees followed the same logic in their universities and created “green” challenges for the other students (for instance, a “Green Office challenges project” with several steps, such as “avoid meat one day a week” or “going to university by bike one day a week”).

Some Mindchangers themselves acknowledged that their shift from awareness to active engagement has been “activated” because they felt inspired by other young people’s action. For instance, a pupil who organized a climate demonstration in his city in Wallonia was motivated by the youth climate movement and its demonstrations in Brussels, while another joined the movement because one of her best friends was a key figure in the youth climate movement. This explains that “using” other young people’s voice to activate and support the “active engagement” of young people constitutes a key element in youth discourse on best communication practices to initiate action among youth:

“It's important to go through people who are activists. For example, if I see something on social media, like a partnership that comes out of nowhere, I never read it. However, if it's a post from an activist, I listen, because I know that if the person is talking about this, they're on board with it and so I'll be able to relate to it.”

“In my opinion, the important thing for young people is to use other young people. It might sound silly, but young people usually listen to young people more than to older people.”

3.4.2. Acting local, thinking global

Some young people emphasized their satisfaction with acting at the level of their municipalities, as close to home as possible, because it is at this level that they feel the impact of their actions is the greatest. This is particularly the case for young people active in Wallonia, who emphasized the importance of not limiting their action strictly to Brussels.

“I've always wanted to be active where I am. When you are a student in Namur, you can be very tempted to be an activist in Brussels because a lot of things are happening there, but a lot of things are happening locally. (...) Young people from a school just outside my city [in Wallonia] and in daily contact with migrants, because there is a migrant camp right there, they have things to say. Except that there is no Youth Organization in this area.”

“I thought it was really cool that there was a big climate movement taking place in Brussels, but it was still quite far from my daily life. (...) We realize that the phenomenon extends to much more things than far away people in Brussels.”

Nonetheless, acting local does not mean isolation from the rest of the world. On the

contrary, a regular topic in the interviews conducted with young people actively engaged is the importance of being aware of the experiences of people more directly affected by climate change or having a history related to migration.

“During a Mock COP organized virtually with young people from all over the world, I met activists from ‘Global South’ countries, and I was marked by the impact of climate change on the South compared to us. The realities are not the same and there is the idea that they are the ones who pay more than us. You kind of want to fix that too.”

3.4.3. An engagement with an impact

Our interviews with young people also revealed that, in order to get and/or stay actively engaged, they needed to “see” or “feel” the impact of their actions. This impact could be “more easily” felt in the case of engagement around migration than in the case of climate change. Indeed, forms of engagement undertaken by young people active on the migration topic generally allow for direct contact with migrants, refugees, or asylum seekers – in addition to direct actions in schools (thematic activities around issues of interculturality). Therefore, there remains the satisfaction of having “helped people”, as suggested by a respondent who was involved in activities related to climate change before shifting to active engagement in humanitarian aid for migrants in Brussels:

“Forms of commitment have to be as concrete as possible. What is quickly frustrating - and here I am not talking about my volunteering at the humanitarian hub because it is not frustrating at all - when you commit yourself to the climate, you quickly have the impression that it is very abstract [...] That's the difference with what I feel at the hub: every day I physically meet fifty people to whom I talk, whom I look in the eyes, I send them to the doctor. [...] The problem with the climate is that we don't have that gratification, like seeing people appeased. You don't get that return; it's not compensated by ambitious policy decisions.”

On the contrary, young people actively involved in projects related to climate change often point out the frustration of the lack of follow-up of their action at the political level.

3.4.4. The use of social media

The use of social media seems to play quite an important role in the shift from awareness to action. On the one hand, some young people we interviewed identified opportunities to get actively engaged on social media. On the other hand, part of them use social media to disseminate information and mobilize other young people. Two of them successfully participated in the organization of climate protest in their city by relying on Facebook, even though they agree that this tool was complementary to the word-of-mouth and direct mobilization in schools. Another respondent committed to climate justice underlines that her Instagram account has gain significant importance in her mobilizing power, other young people asking her questions on her initiatives and how to join or act at their own level. The need to adapt the selection of social media to the age group targeted and to use channels that encourage voluntary interaction, such as “Facebook live” and “Twitch”, was also raised during the interviews.

3.4.5. Actions in schools and in Youth associations

All the young people we interviewed agree that schools and higher education institutions, and, to a lesser extent, youth associations, constitute a privileged field to act on the shift from “awareness” to “active engagement” on SGDs. First, several of them have found opportunities or incentives to act at school. For instance, a respondent pointed out that her university professors have played a key role in her engagement, inspiring her to get actively involved in her university “green” association. One of the organizers of climate demonstrations in Wallonia explained that the initiative came from his school, who facilitated the contact with his municipality authorities to plan action.

Furthermore, all respondents call on schools or youth associations to be “greener” (climate change) or “more open-minded” (migration). Young people active on climate change state that not only should environmental education appear more prominently in education programs, but schools should also include environmental considerations in its daily management, for example by reducing meat regularly in the canteen. The same logic applies to higher education: “On campus, if you want to “go green”, you should be able to do it. Whereas right now, if you want to be green, you must do it on your own. It's not *mainstream* enough.”

Two of the interviewees participate in sensibilization projects focused on the migration topic, in primary and secondary schools. One of them, a young refugee who is also active in a student association providing legal support to asylum seekers and undocumented migrants, highlighted the impact he thinks he has on pupils when he shares his story. The other one works in a civil society organization where young pupils can visit centres for asylum seekers and argues that “the sooner we talk about it, the better”. The same necessity is raised for the Youth associations sector. For instance, a young activist who takes part in scout camps explained that there is a lack of financial and practical support to organize “waste-free” camps.

3.4.6. The impact of “active engagement” on youth’s mental health

Lastly, some young people underline that engagement can represent a form of “cost”, in the sense that it sometimes requires a lot of time and energy, and can lead to frustration and fatigue, both physical and mental:

“At one point I had... not a burnout, but I was a bit fed up with always reading things that make you feel down.”

“It's very tiring. Once, we were busy with the legal aid services in front of the Foreigners' Office and I was the only delegate managing three volunteers. Now, I am going to take a little break, so that I can concentrate on my master's thesis.”

The need to take this element into consideration seems all the more important as the passage from awareness to action is sometimes motivated by an “anxiety” about global warming and social inequalities. The ‘affective’ dimension of engagement should be taken into great consideration. While engagement often results from emotions (anger, fear, indignation, but also enthusiasm), “remaining” engaged in the long run can have negative mental and social consequences, especially when the rewards or benefits of participating are low compared to the cost.

3.5. Recommendations to LAs and CSOs

- CSOs and LAs should (continue to) show interest in projects initiated by young people themselves, by recognizing them and supporting them.
- CSOs and LAs should (continue to) organize activities aimed at fostering the exchanges, contacts between the youth and people who are directly affected by climate change or/and have a direct history of migration to share.
- CSOs and LAs should (continue to) communicate to the youth through other young people, young activists/Mindchangers, so that young people can relate more to the message that is conveyed.
- CSOs and LAs should (continue to) organize activities in which young people can “feel” the impact of their actions.
- CSOs and LAs should (continue to) use social media to promote their initiative to young people, and adapt their strategies and modes of communication (i.e. using short video clips) to the age of the young public targeted.
- CSOs and LAs should work towards the integration of Sustainable Development in a transversal way in the Education and Youth sectors.
- CSOs and LAs should (continue to) take youth’s mental health into consideration, by providing support to deal with “eco-anxiety” and/or anxiety related to social inequalities. In this respect, the creation of discussion groups where young people can share their feelings and experiences should be encouraged.
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CHAPTER 2

REGION AUVERGNE RHONE ALPES

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1. INTRODUCTION

As part of the European Mindchangers project, RESACOOP, the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Network for supporting international cooperation, and researchers from Toulouse Jean Jaurès University, UMR EFTS, carried out the regional report chapter for France.

RESACOOP has been advising and supporting organizations in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region for more than 25 years, being engaged in international cooperation and solidarity actions with countries of Africa, South America, Asia and Europe. Its objectives are to contribute on the one hand to the development and qualitative improvement of international cooperation actions carried out in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region, and on the other hand, to mobilize and involve all regional players in the framework of awareness-raising and international openness actions for the inhabitants of Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes.

The Mixed Unit for Research, Education, Training, Work, Knowledge (UMR EFTS) is aimed at working on educational issues. The researchers from UMR EFTS that are part of the Mindchangers research team are particularly interested in issues related to youth, youth policies, participation and youth engagement.

This research targets youths, civil society organizations and local authorities in the Auvergne- Rhône-Alpes region. Its objectives are:

- To analyse the forms and levels of engagement of youths in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region with regard to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals;
- To take stock of existing local initiatives and policies in terms of sensitizing young people to sustainable development objectives, particularly on issues of climate change, migratory phenomena and gender equality;
- To contribute to the European research project encompassing this regional study, coordinated by the University of Craiova (Romania);
- To develop and strengthen the skills of communities and civil society organizations which support the youths in achieving these objectives.

This report constitutes the French chapter of the Mindchangers research. The work was carried out from March 2021 to September 2021 in conjunction with RESACOOP and all the European research teams involved in the project.

We first explored the offer in terms of participation and engagement of young people in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region on issues related to climate change and migrations. The synthesis of this first exploration is presented in the first part of this chapter.

Then we present the results of a questionnaire, common to all the countries involved in the research, which was completed by 104 young French people living in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region. The answers were analysed using the IRaMuTeQ software¹. A summary of the results is presented in the second part of this chapter.

Moreover, interviews were conducted with 9 young people identified by local partners as potential Mindchangers to pinpoint the main obstacles and levers for young people's engagement. A summary of the thematic analysis of these interviews is presented in the third part.

¹ <http://www.iramuteq.org/>

Finally, the conclusions will be an opportunity to suggest avenues for reflection for civil society organizations and local authorities.

2. REVIEW OF REGIONAL POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

2.1. Context and presentation of regional offer

For France, the field of research is the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region.



This administrative region is quite large. It was created from the merger of two previous regions by a recent territorial reform, following the act for the modernization of territorial public action from 2014. It consists of 4049 cities and municipalities organized in 12 departments, 168 inter-communalities and 242 cantons.

When it comes to sustainable development and migration issues, dispositions are implemented in the region, provided by the departments, the inter-communalities, the cities and the associative sector. Considering the size and the diversity of the region being substantial, we find it impossible to be exhaustive, so we will only focus here on the three main metropolitan centres. We will however keep an eye on the policies implemented by the departmental councils and the main municipalities of the region.

It is important to note that in France, sustainable development is a political issue handled in the last several years by regions, while migration issues are often referred to the State, even though actions might be also achieved at a local level by municipalities having to face the arrival of migrants, or by associations trying to offer actions often linked with state procedures. In the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region, ecological transition is a central theme in several territories, particularly the three main metropolitan centres, where, compared to the French average, a greater number of elected officials or delegates from Europe Ecology - The Greens (EELV) can be found. It should also be noted that everywhere in this area, the issue is addressed as "ecological transition" and no longer as "sustainable development". The place and the engagement of the youth in this transition occupies the mind of the politicians and associations officials.

When it comes to migratory phenomena, the institutional offer is often an answer to problems that occur when migrants are arriving in the area. At the territorial authority's level, local policies for the integration of migrants are regulated by the State or European

procedures. Within this framework, a great number of associations are involved in assisting asylum seekers or newly arrived immigrants. It can also take the form of international solidarity and collaborative projects, usually with the help of civil society organizations with financial support from the competent authorities involved in national or European voluntary services (such as Civic Service, European Voluntary Service, International Voluntary Service).

2.2. Dispositions at the region level regarding ecological transition and migration

Large metropolitan centres in the region address ecological transition by often associating it with the issue of energy transition. Projects and actions linked with ecological transition, sometimes referred to as "environmental", are brought forward on official websites. As a matter of fact, they both tend to make environmental concerns a key political issue. When it comes to international cooperation, the integration or support of migrants, projects and actions are not as clearly highlighted by these institutions. Associations like France Volontaire or SCD are developing North-South volunteers exchange programs. For the young people involved, when they come back home, these experiences are often followed by commitments in other fields that will bring them to work on other projects. The experience of international mobility appears therefore as a strong lever for long term commitment for young volunteers.

Within the **metropolis of Lyon**² local actors highlight the fact that advocating ecological transition has been continuously addressed in the political agenda for more than 10 years. A vice president of the metropolitan council oversees issues related to "nature in urban areas, biodiversity, green infrastructure, environment, urban health and well-being". A budget of 3.6 billion euro has been voted for the period 2021-2026 to work on an "ecological and solidarity-based revival"³, around three great principles: ecological transition, solidarity and partnerships between municipalities, inhabitants, private sector actors and the research community. Some of the stated goals are the following: less travel-related pollution, more revegetation, more renewable energy, less waste and more support to innovative projects. The metropolis supports projects from associations and from municipalities, in which they commit to Agendas 21 and 2030 and to the climate energy plan. Some of these projects are more specifically directed towards the youth.⁴

Along with about 40 officially appointed associations⁵, the metropolis also initiated an educational program for sustainable development (PEDD) to educate and raise awareness about Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), and together they conduct several projects around key topics on the subject. In Lyon, the metropolis is also equipped with an Environment Centre dedicated to raising awareness and helping people getting actively committed to ecological transition.⁶

² <https://blogs.grandlyon.com/developpementdurable/>

³ <https://www.grandlyon.com/actions/2021-2026-relance-ecologique-et-solidaire.html>

⁴ Some examples: <http://www.anciela.info>, <http://www.chicdelarchi.fr>, E-graine Imagineo MJC Presqu'île Confluence

⁵ <https://blogs.grandlyon.com/developpementdurable/les-acteurs-du-territoire-sengagent/associations/>

⁶ <https://www.grandlyon.com/services/education-a-l-environnement.html>

With regards to migratory phenomena, the metropolis established between 2015 and 2018 a project named MC2CM⁷ dedicated to get a better understanding of "migration profiles" at a local level. The goal is to find solutions to migratory flows with "integration, inclusiveness and access to rights and services". Lastly, there is a House of students located in Lyon, helping a great number of student associations with their projects, and providing premises for them. Some of these associations are involved in ecological transition and in international cooperation.⁸

The **Grenoble-Alpes metropolis** (49 municipalities) is the first balancing metropolis of the region. It offers working strategies around the issues of fighting discrimination, protecting and enhancing the environment (in particular in the area of contributing to energy transition, and with the adoption of a territorial climate energy plan⁹), and raising awareness about environmental issues in schools, with the will to facilitate "a culture of participation". The metropolis encourages youth associations to get involved in these strategies, particularly through the call for projects Climat+. "Citizen involvement" is considered as a key lever for the environmental energy transition.

The city of Grenoble has a structure named "Grenoble Open City" aimed to develop missions around local, European and international cooperation for ecological transition, together with the municipal youth department. The youth is considered as a partner in public action. Awareness raising, training and accompanying projects are intended for them (i.e., training on environmental issues in connection with international solidarity projects; support for their projects, particularly in the context of calls for international youth exchange projects; and organization of festive events to make young people aware of the ecological transition, with a focus on priority neighbourhoods).

Grenoble is also involved in the European project "European Green Capital", intended to help the local youth to develop projects and to attend the Youth for Climate European summit in 2022. Climate change issues are at the heart of the concerns in this mountainous area.

Regarding migratory phenomena, the Grenoble-Alpes metropolis pictures itself as a "world citizen metropolis". It establishes a territorial reception and integration contract for refugees¹⁰, offering accompanying services to migrants for their daily routine. It is also strongly involved in actions, particularly during the week for refugees (June 20-25). The city of Grenoble offers, for example, welcoming actions for migrants, coordinated by the House of Hospitality.

The **Clermont Auvergne metropolis** (21 municipalities) is the second metropolis of the region. It established a territorial air, climate and energy plan aiming at "improving air quality" and "reducing energy expenditure", particularly in housing. It also has a biodiversity plan to protect the metropolitan fauna and flora.

There is also a clear willingness to move towards a local economic development that would be "more concerned with how it impacts ecosystems". The value of citizen

⁷ <https://www.grandlyon.com/metropole/projets-europeens/mc2cm.html>

⁸ <https://www.lyoncampus.com/s-impliquer/les-associations-de-la-maison-des-etudiants>

⁹ Plan Air Énergie Climat, <https://www.grenoblealpesmetropole.fr/463-plan-climat-air-energie.htm>

¹⁰ <https://www.grenoblealpesmetropole.fr/864-contrat-territorial-d-accueil-et-d-integration.htm>

involvement in this process is also stressed. The metropolis advocates responsible consumption and takes into consideration the environmental impact of daily consumption behaviour. A great number of awareness raising actions for sustainable development are also implemented towards the general public and in particular towards the children in schools. According to this strategy, the city of Clermont-Ferrand, for example, offers nature camps mixing French kids and foreigners (aged 12-17). The city is currently evaluating how to set youth policies based on their involvement as volunteers. There is a real willingness to help young people getting involved in public action, particularly on the issue of environmental energy transition.

Regarding migratory phenomena, the city of Clermont-Ferrand relies on a welcoming mission linking newly arrived families and associations. A mission leader working at the urban policy service of the city is taking care of the issue of migration. For example, she brought together a large number of refugees, including young people under the age of 25 and their families, and they joined forces and came up with friendly welcoming techniques. She also works on deconstructing citizens' and professionals' perceptions, and, hand in hand with the city participatory democracy service, helps unaccompanied minors to develop projects designed to be later made public. This participation work with migrants helps to highlight what they live and who they are through events (refugees forum, world refugee day). The idea is to train migrants to understand how public action is working to facilitate participation and integration.

At a slightly larger territorial scale, **departmental councils** also have strategies and projects more or less linked with the Sustainable Development Goals and directed towards citizens and most specifically the youth. For example, **the Allier department**¹¹ offers Plateforme 21¹², a project that brings together actions and data related to sustainable development in the Massif Central. **The Puy-de-Dôme department**¹³ has political strategies supporting sustainable development, targeting young audiences, based for the most part on environmental education actions in schools and in associations. The departmental council is also offering to take care of precarious people, including migrants. **The Cantal department** set up actions to preserve the land and manage spaces and time, with a program based on 7 axes¹⁴, and where the youth is again mobilized through educational actions for sustainable development in schools. As part of his security and citizenship program, the department relies on the European "Asylum, Migration and Integration"¹⁵ fund to support projects created by local associations.

The Loire department releases each year a report on the issue of sustainable development, detailing the actions taken, notably as part of Agenda 21¹⁶. Young people are at the heart of a youth action plan (for those aged between 11-16) implementing awareness

¹¹ <https://www.allier.fr/782-developpement-durable.htm>

¹² <https://www.plate-forme21.fr>

¹³ <https://www.puy-de-dome.fr/rechercher.html?q=developpement+durable&id=6&L=0>

¹⁴ <https://www.cantal.fr/programme-dactions/>

¹⁵ <https://www.immigration.interieur.gouv.fr/Info-ressources/Fonds-europeens/Les-fonds-europeens-periode-2014-2020/Le-Fonds-Asile-Migration-Integration-FAMI-et-le-Fonds-Securite-Interieure-FSI>

¹⁶ https://www.loire.fr/jcms/lw_1329875/rapport-annuel-de-developpement-durable-2020

raising actions. For the department, sustainable development is at the heart of all its concerns and the youth is associated to it as citizens. The departmental council is proposing reception measures for migrants.

The Haute-Loire department¹⁷ puts forward projects and political directions around environmental issues, and the youth is associated to them at school or through the actions of associations. **The Haute-Savoie department** develops actions towards the youth to facilitate access to sustainable development projects. **The Ardèche and Drôme departments** put forward undertaking and participation offers to the youth. Support to projects can be a link with sustainable development issues. These two departments offer support and care for unaccompanied minors, as with the **Haute-Loire and Savoie departments**. The city of Chambéry is for example working together with the CADA (reception centre for asylum seekers) and is working on reflections on migration issues under supervision of its "inclusive city" mission.

In most cases, departments have an offer regarding sustainable development issues. The youth is either a direct target of the actions taken or can take part in ongoing projects by being approached by their services. In most cases, the undertaking and participation offer is made by developing inhabitants' civic participation.

We will not list here all the associative actors committed to environmental transition, sustainable development and/or international cooperation targeting the population aged 15 to 35 across the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region. Some examples of associative projects are given in the Appendices to this chapter.

2.3. Ten good practices in the fields of sustainable development and migration

1. Awareness raising in school environment: developing projects in partnership with teachers and the community of associations to raise awareness and to stimulate a change of behaviour for the youngest;
2. Helping young people to understand institutional functioning in order to allow them to take part in political decisions;
3. Associate the youth to decisions in the field of public action and give them the opportunity to act as citizens;
4. Projects in the field of international cooperation: helping to develop exchange projects allowing young people to discover other countries and cultures;
5. Offer financial and logistical support to young people for their international projects;
6. Organize festive events in working-class neighbourhoods, offering awareness about environmental issues and about international cooperation;
7. Organize holiday camps to help young people from different countries to mix around sustainable development issues;
8. Provide premises for student associations according to their needs (schedules, booking of slots, autonomous access...);

¹⁷ <https://www.hauteloire.fr/L-implication-du-Conseil-General.html>

9. Organize meetings between young people and researchers to help them understand the issues at stake in terms of climate change;

10. Set up resource spaces easily identifiable all around the region (environment centre, house of students, initiatives centres dealing with environment, etc.).

3. ELEMENTS THAT FOSTER ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

3.1. Findings from the questionnaire

The questionnaire-based research survey was carried out in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region through several channels between July and August 2021. Our local partner, RESACOOOP, contributed significantly to this task, by forwarding it to members and partners of the public interest group. We also have relayed the information through our respective networks, mostly through social networks (Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn). The fact that it was the time of graduation didn't allow us to involve students from the secondary schools and from universities directly through their educational institutions. Therefore, the survey population is probably not representative of the whole 15–35-year-old group from the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes. We present here the most significant results. As the respondents did not always provide answers to all items, we chose not to analyse those with too few responses. Also, none of the Chi2 tests being significant at $p \leq 0.05$, we concentrated on the frequency analyses, carried out with the IRaMuTeQ software.

3.1.1. *Presentation of the sample group characteristics*

114 young people from the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region and aged between 15 and 35 responded to our online survey. 10 of those were not included because the time spent to answer the questions was under 20 minutes. On the 104 remaining surveys, 94 were fully answered. 10 answerers out of 104 didn't reply to the part dedicated to migratory phenomena.

3.1.1.1. *Gender, age and residence*

Amongst the respondents, 76% were women and 19% were men. In our opinion, this first element shows how women seem to be more concerned with the topics explored in the survey. The hypothesis that commitment to SDG's is gendered is confirmed by the interviews we conducted. Average age of participants is 26. Out of the 104 answerers, 8 are 15-19, 30 are 20-24, 36 are 25-29, and 30 are 30-35. Younger people are under-represented, probably first because of the diffusion channels of the survey. We can't assert that the younger people are less interested in the topics of the survey.

Even if the respondents are predominantly coming from urban areas (56%), we have also reached young people living in rural areas (20%), or semi-urban areas (24%). Most of the departments from the region are represented. The city of Lyon is obviously the most represented, compared to the two metropolis: Grenoble and Clermont-Ferrand.

3.1.1.2. *Status and level of qualification*

Most of the respondents are full time permanent employees (33%), 29% are students, 11% are unemployed, 10% are temporary employees and 4% are doing civic service.

The level of qualification is high, as 40% of the respondents hold a master degree, and 30% hold a bachelor degree. This means that 70% of the respondents graduated from tertiary education, knowing that 8% of them are under 20. Regarding the highest degree held in their families, there is no clear tendency to be identified, but we can observe that 11% of the participants have a family member who is a holder of a doctorate. All these different elements allow us to think that most of the respondents have important cultural assets and are not in a precarious socio-professional status.

3.1.2. About Sustainable Development Goals

A well-informed audience with an understanding of the SDG's centred on ecology

Only 17% of the respondents have never heard of the Sustainable Development Goals. 37% have heard of it but are not sure of what it is. 45% have heard of it and know what it is. This is therefore a panel of young people whose interests are consistent with the object of the survey, and certainly not representative of the 15–35-year-old age group from the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes.

The results of the free associations show an understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals centred on ecology. Terms from this category are indeed those ranked in most cases first, and those associated in most cases to SDG's (85 associations). Terms referring to "solidarity" (44 associations), political/societal or individual "responsibility" (38 associations) and to the need for "transition" (26 associations) are also frequent but ranked more in second and third. Some free associations referring to a critical or negative perception of the Sustainable Development Goals are to be found, be these answers remain secondary (13 associations).

3.1.2.1. Different priorities depending on levels

Priorities linked with SDG's are different depending on levels, but environmental issues are generally not ranked first. Issues related to inequalities and education are prioritized, especially on international and national levels. Then come the SDGs linked with responsible consumption and with health.

International level - ranking

1. Zero hunger	29%
2. No poverty	26%
3. Quality education	12%

National level - ranking

1. No poverty	21%
2. Gender equality	19%
3. Quality education	18%

Local level - ranking

1. Affordable and clean energy	13%
2. Good health and well-being	12.5%
3. Quality education	12.5%

Table 1. SDGs prioritized at different levels

At the international level, the fight for climate action only represents 8% of answers in

the ranking. All the SDGs linked with ecology only represent 13% of the answers. The fight for climate action is the most frequently cited SDG on the 3rd position at international level: 35% of the answers. At the national level, the fight for climate action only represents 3% of the answers (3 in 104). Here again, it is the most frequently cited SDG ranked 3rd at national level, with 28% of the answers (29 on 104). Answers at the local level are more disparate, as 6 SDGs represent between 10.5% and 13.5% of the answers. SDGs linked with responsible consumption and sustainable cities are more brought forward than at international and national levels. Here again, the fight for climate action tends to be ranked 3rd.

3.1.2.2. A commitment in the fight against world inequalities first through an ethical and responsible consumption

Only 6% of the respondents do not picture themselves as committed in the fight against world inequalities. For the majority, this commitment against world inequalities first means caring about ethical aspects of their consumption. This is the very first area where they can act and have a real impact. More of half of the respondents are also active on internet and show in a way or another their support or their participation in online campaigns. More traditional forms of commitment, at least in France, are less preferred. Here is, according to us, a first sign of disengagement with political parties, and this disengagement is to be found all along the survey.

You care about ethical aspects of your consumption	82%
You support or participate to online campaigns	60%
You volunteer, individually or for an organization	35%
You give money to an organization	32%
You give money to directly fund projects	18%
You are politically committed	13%
You are not committed in the reduction of world inequalities	6%

Table 2. Activities in which young people would like to get involved

3.1.3. About environmental and migratory issues

Our ample group seem to care more about environmental issues than about migratory issues. Environmental issues are seen as "very important" by 77% of the respondents, against only 32% for migratory issues. Such a difference can also be perceived in the free associations, since 60 respondents in 94 did not fill in those related to migrations. Regarding the environmental crisis, free associations highlight the urgency and concern felt with these issues: the topic "danger and urgency" show 58 mentions, which represents about a third of the answers. By comparison, the topic "climate change" appears more in first rank of free association, but only add up to 26 evocations, which represents a sixth of the answers.

A high level of information about the environmental crisis and weaker about migratory issues 80% of the young people involved in the survey feel like their level of information regarding the environmental crisis is "high enough", or even "very high", while only 31% feel that way regarding migrations. 85% of them follow the news about the environmental crisis "on a regular basis", while only 31% when it comes to migrations. It is to be noted that digital

formats and social networks occupy a prominent place as privileged channels of information for the 15-35. Print media are the least used.

1. Social networks (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, etc.)	3.1
2. Digital newspapers and magazines	2.8
3. Specialized websites, blogs or applications	2.7
4. Family, friends or co-workers	2.6
5. Radio and television	2.4
6. Official local/national websites	2.2
7. School/teachers	1.9
8. Printed newspapers or magazines	1.9
9. Events, promotional campaign leaflets or flyers	1.8

Table 3. Channels of information ranked by average score of the frequency of use (from 1 to 4)

3.1.3.1. Young people being predominantly already committed in the fight against environmental crisis

Only 34.5% of the young people involved in the survey admit that they have never been involved in actions connected with the environmental crisis. This figure is slightly more significant for women (38%), but there is no verified statistical correlation. 93% of the answerers claim to be attracted by the idea of being involved in the future in actions connected with the fight against environmental crisis. With regards to migratory crisis, only 32.5% of them have already been involved in, in most cases, punctual actions. However, 56% of them claim to be ready to be committed to this cause in the future. There is no significant difference here between men and women. When asked what kind of actions they would be ready to be committed in, the results are noticeably the same for the 2 studied topics:

<i>"In the future, what is the probability for you to get involved in the following activities?" (from 1 to 4):</i>	ENV	MIG
* European voluntary service/civic service (6 months to 1 year)	1.4	1.4
* Punctual volunteer activities	2.9	2.4
* Regular volunteer activities	2.3	1.7
* School project	1.6	1.5
* Out of school project (youth organizations, sports clubs...)	1.7	1.6
* Personal project (by yourself or with family members/friends)	2.6	1.6
* Donations	2.4	2
* Demonstrations, sit-ins or protest actions	2.5	2
* Petitions (signing them or sharing them)	3.1	2.7
* Debates, discussion groups	2.4	2
* Training (1 week to 1 month)	2	1.6
* Post-secondary education (1 year to 3 years)	1.5	1.4
* Change of individual behaviour	3.7	2
* Join a NGO	2	1.8
* Join a political organization	1.4	1.4

Table 4. The probability for young people to get involved in the following activities (Mean value, from 1 to 4)

There are reasons to believe that the age and status of the respondents are to be considered here. Most of them having stable jobs, the perspective of getting involved in a European Voluntary Service, a civic service, in post-secondary education or in school projects connected with our two topics is logically not an option. These results confirm the disconnection of the 15-35 from the "traditional" ways of getting committed (political parties, NGO's, regular volunteering). Commitment proves to be a more individual and punctual process, as well as less formal.

3.1.3.2. Observations on local, national and global policies: young people feeling like they are not taken seriously enough in the decision-making process

52% of the surveyed population have a rather little understanding of the local policies regarding environment. This figure goes up to 58.5% when it comes to national policies and up to 68% at the international level. 70% of the surveyed youth have a rather little understanding of the migratory policies, both at local and national levels. The level of knowledge slightly increases at an international level (65%). There is therefore a lack of readability of political action, as the surveyed young people are rather informed, and already committed to some SDGs. The level of knowledge of environmental policies and measures is particularly low considering how much the surveyed population is interested in these topics.

When we ask them how far they would be ready to potentially get committed in the future, the young people are more likely to picture themselves involved at a local level, rather than at a national or international level. 75% claim to be ready to get committed at a local level on environmental issues, 51% at a national level and 38% at an international level. The propensity to get committed is much lower when it comes to migratory issues, since only 36% claim to be ready to get committed at a local level, 17% at a national level and 20% at an international level. It is important to point out that 80% of the surveyed youth feel like they are "not enough" or "not at all" taken seriously in the local decision-making process, both for environmental crisis or migratory policies.

3.1.3.3. Levers and barriers to participation

With the respondents stating that they have already been involved in actions, the five first levers to participation are the same for the two topics investigated, and they are the only ones to have a significant influence for more than half of the surveyed young people. Levers highlighted in yellow have a more significant influence on one of the two topics.

<i>"In which way your participation to activities linked with challenges of environmental crisis was simulated by:" (response rate between 3 and 4 = significant influence)</i>	ENV	MIG
1. Personal values:	100 %	91 %
2. Information about subjects linked to environmental crisis:	86 %	61,5 %

3. Own past activities:	57 %	64,5 %
4. Professional activity:	65 %	50 %
5. Associations/NGO's:	63 %	50 %
6. Friends:	53 %	44 %
7. Co-workers:	40 %	44 %
8. Family:	33 %	38 %
9. Teachers:	25 %	23,5 %
10. Youth workers:	16,5 %	32 %
11. Social media influencers:	31 %	3 %
12. Political figure:	13,5 %	14,5 %
13. Local authority:	9 %	17,5 %

Our results show that internal levers are predominant since personal values, own past activities and professional activity are ranked in the 5 first levers to participation. The two most important external levers are specialized information and civil society actors involved in the respective fields. We might think that websites publishing specialized information allow awareness when civil society actors allow active participation as part of their actions, projects, and campaigns. We find here again a disconnection from local authorities and political figures, the two less influential levers.

With respondents claiming to have never been involved in actions addressing the two topics, the three most important barriers to participation are identical for both topics. They are the lack of organized activities in schools and higher education institutions (for 69% of the respondents on the environmental issue and 70% on the migration issue), the lack of organizational or financial support from authorities or institutions (for 58% of the respondents on the environmental issue and 56% on the migration issue) and the lack of organized activities in the place of residence (for 47% of the respondents on the environmental issue and 63% on the migration issue). Feelings of incompetence also appears to be a significant barrier on the migration issue (for 53% of the answers). Paradoxically, the main levers are personal, but the main barriers are external. Young people aged 15-35 from this region probably need activities to be organized at the local level so they can get involved in them and initiate a first active commitment. They also need that local authorities support their projects, both on an operational and financial level.

3.2. Findings from the Mindchangers interviews

Nine young people identified by local actors as committed to Sustainable Development Goals have been interviewed to supplement the inputs from the survey, and to identify the main obstacles and levers to commitment for the 15–35-year-old age group regarding environmental and migration issues. The thematic analysis reveals 8 key topics on how young Mindchangers got committed. Those topics might help professionals in the field to question their strategies as how they raise awareness and set up mobilizations for the youth.

3.2.1. Family as a first space for awareness

Close family members are agents of socialization who may have an important role when it comes to developing awareness on climate change issues and on how much it is necessary

to change our habits and include the perspective of sustainable development. This first lever for commitment is to be found in most of young Mindchangers accounts:

"I'm living in an environment where everybody is aware, I have always felt concerned, my family is caring, my sister is an ecologist. I'm more or less a vegetarian... This first made me realize that I wanted to be more involved, that I wanted to put much more meaning into my actions. I was already aware of the importance of eating local food, reducing our consumption and our use of transportation, and of our everyday gestures...".

When young people have a family committed in public action or in the associative sector, they take part very early in actions. Growing up, in most cases, their commitment becomes more asserted:

"My mother was an elected official in my city. I was going to the city council with her, and I attended the counting of votes. It wasn't a commitment, but I was interested in politics. She also volunteers for an association and welcomed two Syrian families. She opened a collective organic and local grocery. So, yes, I'm aware of all these issues in my family."

Therefore, committed families can make involvement easier.

3.2.2. Secondary education as a second space for awareness

The Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region put forward an important offer around climate change issues, often carried by educational or professional training institutions, as testified by the following interview excerpts:

"In high school, we met Mrs. Baré our history and geography teacher, who was very committed and who was giving talks with Delphine Astier. She started to tell us about food. She had this project of reducing food waste at our school self-service restaurant."

"I learned about the sustainable development goals in school during geography class. It was great because some students in the school were actually not getting this kind of teaching, and it was really meaningful. Even those not interested in getting committed, at least they know. They have heard about this thing."

When young people are made aware of ecological and solidarity-based transition in a school environment, one of the problems with their commitment is that their awareness is forced on them: it is not freely consented. Therefore, it is logical that only a minority of them, those who are already aware of these questions, will respond and interact with the teachers, as Judith points out:

"They were 14-year-old teens, they actually didn't want to be here! (laughs) [...] The only young girl that got interested in what I was saying was a girl who was already quite committed, who was a vegetarian at the age 14 and [...] who was asking me a lot of questions about this issue when I was talking about this organization [...] that was doing a lot of actions about animal welfare. She was interested in that."

However, even if this first attempt to awareness doesn't seem to have an effect at this specific time for most of the young people involved, it might still be a source for reaction, surprise, and questions for them. A first examination about their own lifestyle might be the starting point for more or less dormant questioning that will, for some, turn into long-term changes.

The influence of teachers or educators from the associative sector can be found in the words of the young people. The process of awareness-raising done as part of education to sustainable development makes it easier for young people to take part in long-term projects, and, sometimes, in long-term commitment. In the following interview excerpt, it is interesting to note that the spaces for acculturation and learning shift the focus away from the school environment:

"From that point, I thought I was interested in these questions, it was interesting. I didn't know much about it, so I learned at school, from books, social networks and from people around me. There are so many ways to learn. And from that point, I got committed, I thought there was so many things to do."

In the school environment, the possibility made to young people to represent the other students in front of the school authorities is perceived by them as a first space for commitment:

"I was also committed in high school. I was a delegate at the student life council, a delegate at the managing board, and I was a member of the health and citizenship education committee. Later, I made myself known a little bit. Adults started to know who I was and I was able to voice my ideas. Adults started to come to me and ask what I was thinking of their projects."

This recognition of young people's skills by adults is important because it helps them to understand the institutional functioning, to act and to be taken seriously. At the end of the day, adults acting this way help young people to get involved and committed, and they acknowledge their status as social actors.

3.2.3. The central role of the associative sector in the history of commitment

Other educative spaces are going to play a role in the involvement and the commitment of young people: associations. The next excerpt highlights the importance of an associative offer near the place you live to help develop active commitment:

"Marseille was kind of a social desert, it was sad. When I arrived in Lyon, it was great, because there is a big associative network, very active, with many actions and commitments everywhere... And so, I was able to meet a lot of people thanks to this network."

The commitment of young people appears to be deeply connected with meeting and socialization spaces between people interested by the same topics and sharing the same cause to defend. Such spaces help young people to build up a friends' network that will be the basis for the development of active commitment:

"Getting involved with the *Plein la vue* collective opened the doors for all the other associations I met at the AlternatiBar, a militant space where many political groups are around, and that you can meet easily when you go get a beer there... That's the place where I got in touch with Lyon Climat, Alternativa, and then there was this movement named *Marche pour le climat* where I was deeply involved."

For young people, having a space where to go, discover, meet, and share with others is therefore something helping them to get involved and committed. These encounters might bring them to sustainable development issues.

3.2.4. Different barriers to commitment, both in formal educational spaces and in militant and popular spaces

If some educational actors can be the source of participation and commitment for young people, the institutions in which they work can turn into constraints as well:

"Then, it was complicated because the head teacher was not really committed to this. He didn't really want to. We were trying to push things a little bit, we were trying to do all what we could to get there, but when things are slowed down on an administrative level, there's not much we can do. We are just high school students, it's complicated [...] There is a terrible inertia. It's impossible to put a project together, it was taking way too much time. We were already not taken very seriously at the high school. We were not organized as an association because the head teacher didn't want us to be."

These barriers might be a source of disengagement then. But associations and militant spaces can produce barriers and disengagement too, or can be obstacles for commitment, as Brice points out:

"So, in this specific engagement, I tried to be as militant as the people I was around. I tried to take part in a general meeting to organize a march for the climate. And like I said: I tried. I was unable to voice my opinion because I felt intimidated and felt that everyone else was so clearly determined ... They were all very cold, determined, very organized, very acute, and there was no room for someone who was trying to hold on things."

Political and institutional recognition of participation and commitment of young people is necessary to satisfy the conditions. In the absence of political decisions, young people are confronted with the impossibility to develop successful actions. This is something that they are perfectly aware of and something that they are vocal about when questioned. They have ideas and desires, but they need to be backed by political decisions. Otherwise, they are aware that there isn't much room for actions and commitment. Similarly, spaces for commitment must be welcoming. Young people are vocal about their need for support to understand the political and institutional functioning. Finally, their words are a clear indication that they're not going to act in any situation and at any cost. If they get involved, it's because it's their choice. If they get committed, it's because they found a meaning in their actions. But to achieve this and to be able to plan participation and commitment, several conditions need to be met, like having time, being stabilized in personal itineraries, and not having to deal with a precarious daily reality.

3.2.5. International mobilities as a trigger to commitment

Experiences of international departures, of involvement in solidarity projects linked with environment, offer to young people the possibility to understand how important ecological and solidarity-based transition is, through a first active commitment. For Judith, her first international trip as a volunteer was with the scouting movement, around the end of high school:

"I went to Bulgaria, during one month and a half, we conducted animation activities in an orphan kids centre [...] The scouts, it's really due to the fact that I am eco-friendly I think."

This first experience gave her a taste for international mobility: some years later, she made the decision to take a year off her course of study as an engineer to go to South America and volunteer for a project to construct an ecological village at the heart of the Amazonian Forest. In Marie's history of commitment, it was during an internship trip in a country of the southern hemisphere that she became aware of the international societal and environmental challenges. She is deeply marked by what she saw and experienced during this mobility, and this led her to question her lifestyle and to start being committed to fight world inequalities:

"We had the option to do many internships overseas, and during my 3rd year, I had the opportunity to do a humanitarian mission in Ecuador for an association that was involved in academic support for slum children. It meant stepping out of my comfort zone in a significant way, and well... I questioned a lot of things with this trip, I think. In particular a rejection of many aspects of the western way of life, things that you don't get to see when you live there, but that you get to see when you step out of the bubble... (Like what for example?) Well, the whole consumer society. When I returned from Ecuador, I didn't want to go to shopping malls anymore [...] I've seen inequalities. That's the reason why I've decided to get committed with SDG."

3.2.6. Commitment to ecological and solidarity-based transition: women more concerned?

The different studies conducted on how gender might impact commitment do not agree. Some shows that gender has no effect. Others point out the issue of a differentiated engagement. In responses given in interviews, women appear to be more concerned about climate change and migration issues. In that respect, Brice explains that he always felt more comfortable talking about ecology and vegetarianism with women. Becoming a vegetarian in a very male-dominated social environment was a very hard experience for him. He starts to step away from other men, who, on their side, isolate him from the group:

"That very commitment was solitary. Excluded, you don't eat meat... [...] 90% of men in my science class... There was something a bit like meat, meat product, testosterone, hunting, toxic masculinity... [...] It was easier to talk about this with women, who listen more, were more caring and understanding than my male fellow students."

If we observe young people in their daily lives and ask them what makes their

commitment easier, women explain that they got committed because they have a project, a goal, something to fight for. They are able to get committed by themselves or join a group of unknown young people. Men got committed, in most cases, collectively and take into consideration the benefits of their commitment: "I don't really know why women are more committed than men. You see, in politics, men are still more represented than women".

Therefore, the gender issue needs to be considered when it comes to young people's commitment, as it might reveal different visions of its convenience and its purpose.

3.2.7. Commitment as a process transforming the dynamics inside groups of friends

Beyond the gender issue, the excerpt from Brice's interview also highlight how commitment can sometimes isolate, create tensions inside a social group, put distance between friends or fellow students. Youth is a time of experimenting, putting to test the rules and codes defined during the first stages of the socialization process. Being part of a peer group is crucial in the process of the construction of identify. This is where young people are going to be able to build up a social reality allowing them to understand their place in society. When they get committed, if their peers reject their vision of society, it may result in isolation, reconfiguration of the social group or disengagement to not be excluded (young people giving up with their own ideas to conform to those of the group they want to be part in). In most of the interviews we conducted, taking distance from former friends, and recreating a peer group based on ideological affinity is privileged, not necessarily in a conscious way. Marie tells us how she parted ways from her friends from the engineering school once her studies were completed:

"I had all those questions and a strong desire to discover sustainable development... Even with my friends, we were trying to be careful with what we were consuming, packaging... But it was only with a few of them, it was a part of me that was kind of aside, you see... Those were friends from the engineering school, and they were coming from farmers families... They weren't sharing that same aspiration that I was starting to develop... towards ecology and this kind of things... [...] And then, well, I moved to Lyon! I found great friends amongst the Kapseurs and I now live with them. So, I think this surrounding was also very important... (So, what is your current social network in Lyon?) Well, part of it is the KAPS, and then my friends from the civic service. We are a really great group of friends, and well, in terms of values, I feel so much closer to them than from my friends from the engineering school..."

3.2.8. The perspective of a professional project compatible with commitment

Works about commitment show how some use actions to integrate networks that will be useful for their future career. For a long time in France, militants were following a commitment path going from the associative sector to political organizations, and then leading to responsibilities, either in public action (elected politician, politician leader, trade union leader, federation of associations leader) or in large businesses. This is still how some are picturing involvement and commitment. For others, finding a job being so difficult, it is a way to find a professional path and maybe a job. However, commitment for ecological and solidarity-based transition is never purely instrumental. It is the will to conciliate personal values and professional project that bring young Mindchangers to consider a job consistent

with an environmental and anti-globalization ethic:

"For all the engineer jobs, we had a great network with school, and I liked none of them... What am I going to do? Agriculture, agronomy? I had already done all these things during my internships, but something was lacking... I don't know... I was unable to find this strong commitment for a world, for fair and lasting evolution. For me, these were a little bit basic... And for me, this dimension was lacking I think."

With others, like Judith, this commitment is going as far as implying a deep questioning of her relationship with work:

"I'd rather not work at all than work for a company without the same values as mine. For now, I've been experimenting with the RSA (income support) and I'm fine with it... I don't need much money to live, so I'd rather stay in this precarious situation than working for a company without the same values as mine. A lot of people don't understand this, why I do live with 500 € per month when I have an engineering degree in my pocket... I personally don't care (laugh). So, yeah, it is all about a simple life, working in places I like, and having free time for myself... Like I said, I don't need much money, so I think that since I'm not making a lot I also should have the right to have time to make things I like apart."

The requirements of training programs can also be an obstacle to commitment. Young people with too much work during their training courses have no more time for other things. In the same way, young people who need to work to pay for their studies don't have time to get involved or committed with anything else other than their training courses and daily lives. Finally, young people tell us how much sometimes they feel overwhelmed by the magnitude of international issues, and how much this leads to discouragement and disengagement in the medium to long term, just like Brice points out: "The more I listen to the news, the more I get depressed. It really takes away all your desire to act. There are too many inequalities to be fixed, it can't be done by just one single person, you see. This seems insurmountable."

4. CONCLUSIONS

Commitment cannot be decreed, it is built. Too often, those in charge of public action formalize injunctions to participate in the direction of young people, without ever questioning their own commitments. The risk then is to transform the participation and engagement of young people into an instrument to justify public action.

This work shows, however, that questions of sustainable development and migration are of interest to young people. For young people to become agents of change in terms of sustainable development and migration, it seems necessary today to hear what they have to say to us. If local authorities and civil society organizations wish to reach out and engage young people about sustainable development and international cooperation, they must take into account new orientations.

This study, which confirms a certain amount of knowledge and also makes it possible

to perceive some changes, allows us to propose useful guidelines on the issues of youth participation and engagement.

- **Support** children and young people in discovering what participation and commitment are through actions at school, in associations or within municipal organizations.

- **Inform and educate** children and young people on issues related to sustainable development and migration at school, during training, during leisure activities, during stays.

- **Develop** the conditions for participation and commitment by ensuring that young people are in good financial condition on a daily basis and that their training course leaves them time. Finally, make sure that participation and commitment is not to be reserved for a privileged social class.

- **Think** of a political and economic support of the actions of participation and engagement.

- **Allow** young people to access a chosen place of citizenship that they can build and develop, rejecting the representation of a youth whose voice does not have the same weight as that of adults.

The interviews we have conducted with young Mindchangers highlight that there is a kind of tension between the ideal commitment that we would like to embody and the constraints of the spaces of socialization in which we operate. Certain forms of commitment are difficult to accept and achieve in certain social spaces in which we're already involved as members: becoming a vegetarian/vegan in a family of hunters or breeders; becoming an alter-globalist when you work in a multinational corporation, etc.

The negotiation that follows the socializing experience can take two trajectories:

1. I refuse to moderate my ideal of commitment, at the risk of isolating myself from the group and also being side-lined from the group (active and passive distancing).

2. I negotiate with myself a form of commitment acceptable to the other members of the group, which allows me to keep my place and to exercise a certain minority influence which strengthens my power to act.

Trajectory 1 can lead young people to close the doors of several spaces of socialization in which they were initially engaged, by favouring more tenuous and more restricted social relations within militant spaces. We can then speak of a form of radicalisation of engagement. Trajectory 2 can lead young people to stray too far from their ideal of engagement, which can be accompanied by low self-esteem and some form of disengagement. I am aware that I should do more or better to be in line with my ideals and my values, but I do not do it for social comfort.

In conclusion, the process of engagement is at play throughout the life course. It's not linear. Its dynamics are in constant interaction with the experiences and spaces of socialization which mark out the individual course.

CHAPTER 3

BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG

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1. REGIONAL POLICIES IN BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG

The federal state of Baden-Württemberg is widely known for its early ambitiousness on the topic of sustainability. After an initial event in March 2007, the region and its Ministerium für Umwelt, Klima und Energiewirtschaft Baden-Württemberg (Ministry of the Environment, Climate Protection and the Energy Sector Baden-Württemberg) (hereafter UM BW) started a broad process of dialogue with different political and civic actors about the state's position and action on sustainability, leading to the development of the "Sustainability Strategy Baden-Württemberg" (UM BW, 2020). The strategy aims for anchoring the sustainability concept in politics, economy, and society by defining it as a central criterion for political decision making. To enable a transparent monitoring of the state's sustainability pathway, the strategy was supplemented with appropriate sustainability indicators. Following the early reports from 2014 and 2016, the latest report from 2019 comprises 53 (objective) sustainability indicators covering three superordinate topics: (1) ecological sustainability, (2) participation and good life, (3) framework conditions and intermediary factors (LUBW, 2019). In the context of climate change and the state's climate mitigation act – Baden-Württemberg targets are greenhouse gas emission reduction for 2050 by 90% compared to 1990 levels (U. BW, 2021) –, some indicators provide information on the emission reduction pathway. Furthermore, the challenge of migration and the living conditions of people with migrant background living in Baden-Württemberg is picked up in the indicator report as well. Having a migrant background is linked to a higher probability of quitting school and a lower likelihood to achieve a tertiary educational attainment (LUBW, 2019). Thus, the risk of experiencing poverty is elevated as well.

The report's set of objective indicators is supplemented by six subjective indicators reflecting the public's individual perspectives and perceptions of ecological, social, and economic living conditions and challenges. With the United Nations' resolution on the 2030 Agenda and the associated Sustainable Development Goals (hereafter SDGs) in 2015 (U. BW, 2021), Baden-Württemberg linked its sustainability indicators to the SDGs.

Since the subject of sustainability requires collaborative action in order to address the topic's broadness and variety, the state's "Sustainability Strategy" considers three central target groups: the economy, the communities, and the youth. The concept of sustainability is directly linked to intra- and intergenerational justice. Quoting the United Nations' Brundtland Report, sustainable development is defined as a "[...] development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (United Nations, SDGs) Future generations have not yet been born and cannot talk for themselves. By considering this under-representation in the world's present debate on sustainable development, it is especially important to support the voice of the group with starting conditions similar to those from future generations: the present youth.

Young people can play an important role as initiators in today's sustainability decisions while getting prepared for their responsibility as decision-makers in the future. Accordingly, right at the beginning of the UM BW's process of resolving the "Sustainability Strategy", the Ministry organised a youth workshop in 2008, leading to the formation of the youth portal

“Wir ernten was wir säen” (“We harvest what we seed”)¹ as the cornerstone for the youth initiative (Brundtland, 1987). The website functions as a central information platform for activities, events, and cooperations concerning the sustainable development in Baden-Württemberg. While working closely together with civil society organizations (hereafter CSOs), scientific, and educational institutions (e.g. schools and universities), the UM BW uses the chances of collaborative actions and lists a number of initiatives around the topic of sustainability (WEWWS) .

The youth initiative and its platform aim to provide support for young and already engaged people with ideas on how to make the world and Baden-Württemberg more sustainable while inspiring and motivating the less engaged youth for the topic of sustainable development (UM BW, 2020).

By offering a variety of events, the youth initiative invites all the young people in Baden-Württemberg to participate in the federal state’s path to a more sustainable future. To give an example, the youth initiative organizes an annual youth congress since 2013. Each congress has a guiding sustainability question for discussion, e.g. the role of digitization for sustainable development or the need for a post-growth economy. With expert support through CSOs, politicians, scientists, and economists, the participating youth develops initial stages for solving the present and future challenges. Moreover, networking plays an important role in strengthening youth movements. The youth initiative from Baden-Württemberg frequently participates in larger events, e.g. in the nationwide youth conference “youcoN” which is organized by the CSO “youpaN”.

Furthermore, to better introduce the youth’s interests and perspective in the regional policies, the youth initiative constituted a youth council in 2012 (UM BW, 2020). For an elected period of three years, one member of the council represents the youth’s ideas and concerns in the sustainability council of the state government and participates in the dialogue with political, scientific, economic, and civic representatives.

Another important aspect regarding the youth policies in Baden-Württemberg is mentioned in the state’s municipal code. With its revision process in 2015 and according to § 41a of the municipal code for Baden-Württemberg (WEWWS, „Initiativen”), communities are obligated by law to enable and establish participation procedures for the youth. Young people can request the establishment of a youth representation in their municipality by collecting a predefined minimum number of signatures of young people living in the community, depending on the total number of inhabitants. According to the most current data set from the “Dachverband der Jugendgemeinderäte Baden-Württemberg e.V.”, Baden-Württemberg counts 79 youth representations in total, with eight being established after the municipal code’s revision in 2015 or later (GemO, 2015).

In total, the federal state Baden-Württemberg is ambitiously making efforts to enable and increase the engagement of young people in regional policy making. With the “Sustainability Strategy”, Baden-Württemberg has recognized the importance of young people’s perspective on sustainable development for a successful sustainability transformation from early on. The strategy considers the youth as a central target group, pays attention to them by giving them a voice and offers the option to have a say in regional

¹ See website: <https://www.wir-ernten-was-wir-saeen.de/> (WEWWS)

policy decisions by closely working together with CSOs and other organisations/institutions. Since civic engagement gives the opportunity to enrich municipalities by diverse and sustainable services for societal welfare and avail and strengthens the sense of community, the “Sustainability Strategy” even keeps the objective indicator “Rate of Engagement” (LUBW, 2019).

According to the data, civic engagement among Baden-Württemberg’s population is comparatively high with slightly below 50% of all people being already engaged in voluntary work across all documented age groups². Further 30% are willing to show voluntary engagement in the future.

However, these data do not provide information on the areas of commitment. Thus, the following analysis, which investigates young people’s awareness and their engagement as active agents of development and change with focus on global challenges, explicitly on climate change and migration issues, may serve as a specification and supplement to the “Rate of Engagement” indicator.

However, independent of the exact rate of engagement among young people in Baden-Württemberg, a close collaboration between local authorities (hereafter LAs) and CSOs may be advantageous – but has not been applied as a common strategy yet. Representing an anti-stance is in the nature of CSOs. Those types of organizations are mostly established because of civil dissatisfaction with certain political conditions and decisions. CSOs naturally focus on dissociating themselves from political institutions to be perceived as independent actors. Simultaneously, LAs consider CSOs as competitors for public perception and participation. However, to incentivise the public, especially the youth, for volunteerism, CSOs as well as LAs need to set their competitive stance aside. In fact, both parties should strive for complementary collaboration with mutual appreciation and respect.

1.1 Recommendations

1.1.1. Pool respective strengths of LAs and CSOs

CSOs, as politically independent groups, do not have to adapt their (political) requests to basic coherences. Being established as a reaction to certain political conditions and decisions, CSOs reflect society’s point of view on current issues. Projects engaging and addressing the youth are popular. Thus, even though many CSOs have a manageable size, they are visible in public debates, represent the youth’s perspective, and function as inspirational actors for political changes.

In contrast, LAs are less flexible regarding their content-based position with a strong dependence on presently ruling parties on local and regional levels. Their position compromises several political positions. However, as being part of the political system, LAs function as an important connecting point between the (national and federal) state and civic society. Consequently, LAs possess system knowledge concerting the political complexity with levers for societal change. Thereby, funding is easily accessible compared to non-governmental organizations with high dependence on voluntary donations.

² Four age groups (and their rate of engagement): age 14-29 (49.2%) / age 30-49 (49.7%) / age 50-64 (50.0%) / age 65+ (43.1%).

Having a differentiated understanding of both actor's roles forms the basis for successful and complementary collaboration. Especially two supplementing factors provide a significant case: CSOs know the people – LAs have the money.

1.1.2. Make usage of CSOs as thematic and organizational trendsetters

CSOs do have experience in motivating young people to volunteer. They enable immediate self-efficacy experiences and allow project- and event-related participation with no need for long-term obligation. By successfully demonstrating low participation thresholds with short-term projects and campaigns, CSOs may function as inspirational examples for LAs to alter their requirements for participation. Thus, to increase the collaboration between CSOs and LAs, both parties should reveal their strategies and experiences on how to attract volunteers.

1.1.3. Organize networking events frequently

As mentioned above, both LAs and CSOs have individual experience and strengths regarding how to motivate the young to volunteer. By pooling and exchanging available resources for raising awareness for different issues among young people, both parties may be able to get rid of competitive stances. With networking events, the focus can be set on finding open and better solutions for incentivising youth engagement and may also be used for interchanging relevant matters. To successfully induce changes, community pressure and political transmission must be combined – two factors which are perfectly covered by the experience and power of CSOs and LAs.

However, it is important to foster bidirectional exchange. Effective and long-term collaboration is only possible with having no party covering the unidirectional role of service providers.

1.1.4. Initiate try-out events

The benefits of close collaboration between LAs and CSOs can theoretically be evaluated. However, theory does not make practical try-outs redundant. Temporary, project-related coalitions with a defined political target and the intention to raise awareness, to organize approval, and to channel community pressure into local politics may exemplify the power and advantages of complementary collaboration.

2. ELEMENTS THAT FOSTER ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

The project “Mindchangers” was accompanied by a regional analysis, comprising three parts: (1) a questionnaire about the level of youth engagement, (2) good practice examples (hereafter GPEs) for youth engagement, and (3) qualitative interviews with already engaged young people, i.e. young “Mindchangers”.

2.1. Questionnaire

Note: Due to a limit on words, the following description only contains the most important information. Further details can be found in the appendices.

The survey aimed to investigate young people's awareness about the SDGs and their civic engagement to two global issues: climate change and migration. For the region Baden-

Württemberg, 95 young people (age 16-35) answered the questionnaire.

The data have been analysed by following the methods of descriptive statistics. With figures, tables, and parameters, the responses have been prepared for further interpretation. For some questions, the respondents have been divided into multiple groups in accordance with certain parameters in order to enable feature-related comparisons. Regarding tests for correlations between different variables, the research team decided against this step since the total number of responses (n=95) is quite low and not representative for the group of young people living in Baden-Württemberg. Thus, correlations might alter the information value of the analysis by giving the impression of correlating variables, which might be in fact insignificant and misleading due to the sample group's small size.

2.1.1. Section: SDGs

Being asked about the SDGs, 51.6% of the participants have heard about and do know the SDGs. Further 25.3% respondents have heard about them, but do not have further knowledge. Almost one quarter of the respondents (23.2%) have never heard about the SDGs before.

The participants have been asked to think of the first three words associated with the SDGs. The associations are presented in the following word cloud (figure 1). Climate change seems to be closely related to the SDGs. One fifth (20.2%) of the 282 words are directly (e.g. climate change, CO₂, climate mitigation) or indirectly (e.g. mobility, end of fossil fuels) linked to climate change.



Figure 1. Word cloud to the SDGs (n=95 with three words per respondent)

The participants have also been asked to identify the three most pressing and three least pressing SDGs on international, national, and regional level (table 1).

Most pressing SDGs			
	international level	national level	regional level
1	SDG 2 “zero hunger” (53.7%)	SDG 13 “climate action” (44.2%)	SDG 11 “sustainable cities and communities” (55.8%)
2	SDG 13 “climate action” (50.5%)	SDG 7 “affordable and clean energy” (34.7%) SDG 10 “reduce inequalities” (34.7%)	SDG 7 “affordable and clean energy” (31.6%)
3	SDG 1 “no poverty” (37.9%)		SDG 12 “responsible consumption and production” (30.5%)
Least pressing SDGs			
	international level	national level	regional level
1	SDG 8 “decent work and economic growth” (50.5%)	SDG 2 “zero hunger” (41.1%)	SDG 2 “zero hunger” (46.3%)
2	SDG 9 “industry, innovation and infrastructure” (46.3%)	SDG 8 “decent work and economic growth” (32.6%) SDG 14 “life below water” (32.6%)	SDG 14 “life below water” (32.6%)
3	SDG 11 “sustainable cities and communities” (38.9%)		SDG 6 “clean water and sanitation” (29.5%) SDG 8 “decent work and economic growth” (29.5%)

Table 1. Most pressing and least pressing SDGs on different levels (n=95 with three answers per respondent)

Generally, young people in Baden-Württemberg perceive the European Union to have a high responsibility in tackling global inequalities and poverty in the world. 85.3% totally agree on this matter while only 46.3% totally agree that it should a main priority of national authorities. The rate is even lower for regional authorities, with only 36.8% in total agreement.

When asked about the respondents’ personal involvement in tackling inequalities, ethical consumption plays a major role (figure 2). 80.0% consider ethical aspects in their consumption behaviour. Furthermore, around every second young person in Baden-Württemberg is giving donations (51.6%) and/or supporting digital campaigns (49.5%) to change global inequalities.

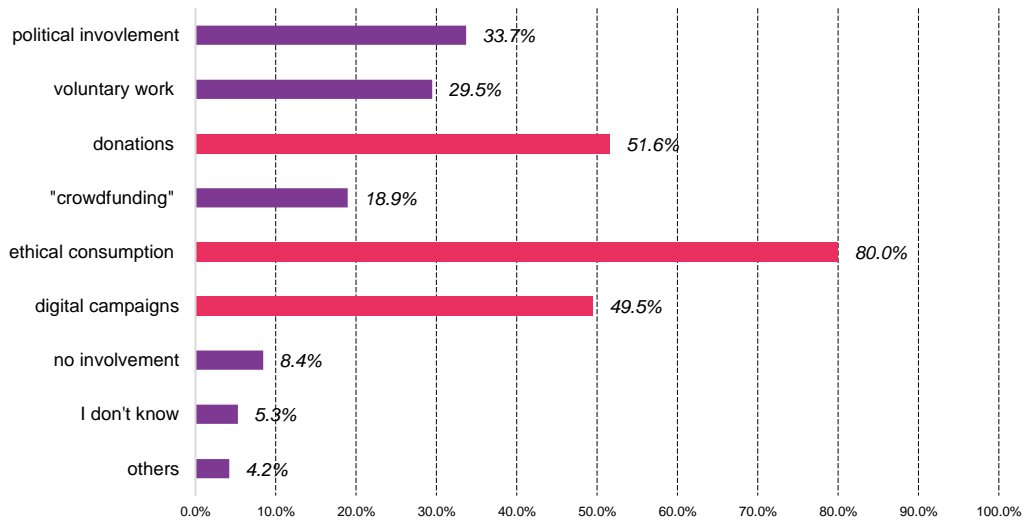


Figure 2. Individual involvement (n=95), multiple answers possible (Q 2.5)

Finally, 85.3% are willing to change their personal behaviour to reduce the impact of global issues. Thus, most young people in Baden-Württemberg are already engaged in tackling global issues in any manner and are willing to do even more.

2.1.2. Section: Climate change

Climate change is a (very) important issue among young people in Baden-Württemberg and they are (very) concerned (figure 3). Simultaneously, 89.9% feel (very) much informed about climate change and 91.1% keep up with the news on the topic often or always.

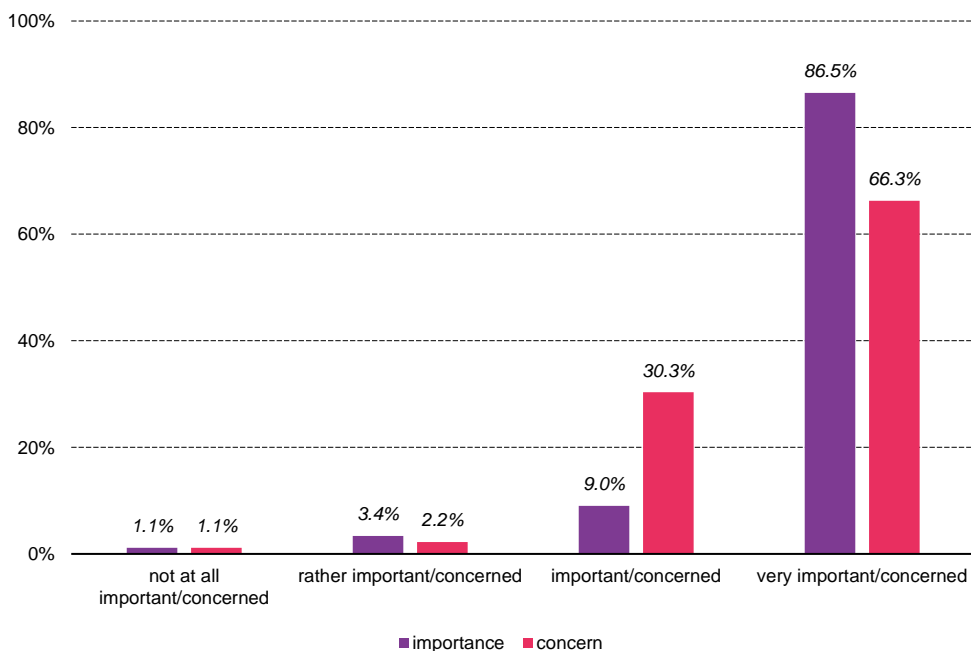


Figure 3. Perceived importance and concern regarding climate change (n=89) (Q 3.1)

important role as well.

Comparing the impacts of CSOs and LAs, CSOs seem to have a much stronger impact on young people to get engaged (group A: CSOs $\emptyset=2.82$, LAs $\emptyset=1.68$; group B: CSOs $\emptyset=2.04$, LAs $\emptyset=1.37$, cf. Q3.A.2).

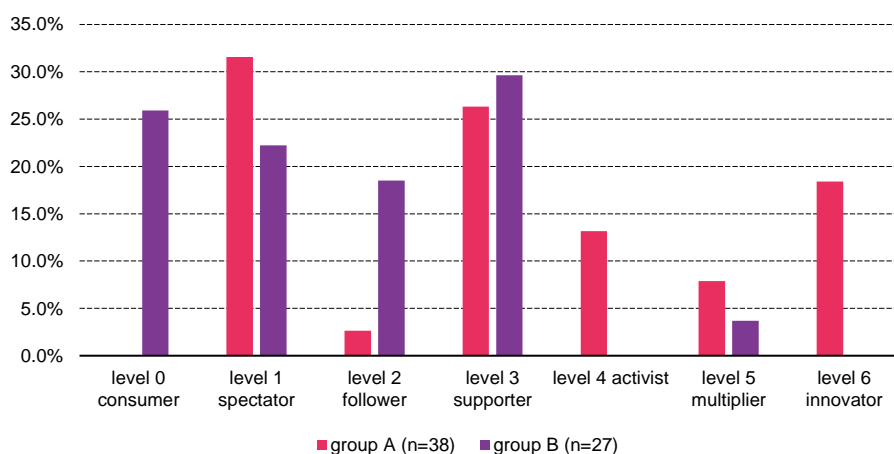


Figure 6. Level of engagement among group A/B in the field of climate change (n=38/27).

The youth’s level of engagement varies between group A and group B. Being more frequently involved in actions addressing climate change is related to a higher level of engagement (figure 6).

The benefits from volunteerism are dependent on the frequency of involvement and the level of engagement (table 2). The frequency is not decisive for the type of benefits a young person may receive by being engaged. For both group A with infrequent involvement and group B, the respondents have indicated “critical thinking” and “open-mindedness/tolerance” as the two most important gains. With higher levels of engagement, the respondents put a higher weight on other benefits like networking (“enlarging your personal network”) and “self-esteem/self-confidence”. Consequently, it is not primarily important how often somebody is engaged but rather how close the person is involved and what type of tasks and responsibilities somebody assumes. Active engagement plays an important role for the type of benefit a young person may capitalise on volunteerism.

most important benefits/gains from engagement (group A)		
	passive engagement (level 0-3)	active engagement (level 4-6)
1	critical thinking ($\emptyset=3.26$)	critical thinking ($\emptyset=3.47$) enlarging your personal network ($\emptyset=3.47$)
2	open-mindedness/tolerance ($\emptyset=2.91$)	self-esteem/self-confidence ($\emptyset=3.20$) sense of responsibility/organization & planning skills ($\emptyset=3.20$)
3	communication skills ($\emptyset=2.74$)	

most important benefits/gains from engagement (group B) ⁴	
1	critical thinking ($\emptyset=2.89$)
2	open-mindedness/tolerance ($\emptyset=2.59$)
3	sense of responsibilities/organization & planning skills ($\emptyset=2.44$)

Table 2. Highest ranked benefits/gains from engagement in actions addressing climate change in group A (n=38) and group B (n=27) cf. Q.3.A.3

Both group B and group C have been asked about discouraging factors for participating in actions addressing climate change (table 3). While the respondents in group B have listed lack of time, as well as lack of activities in their locality as important factors, group C clearly demonstrates a lack of knowledge about implemented projects and related organizers preventing youth engagement.

Most discouraging factors for participation		
	group B	group C
1	I don't have enough time ($\emptyset=2.78$)	I don't know about any project I could participate in ($\emptyset=3.17$)
2	No one asked me to participate ($\emptyset=2.37$)	No one asked me to participate ($\emptyset=3.08$)
3	There are not enough activities organized in my locality ($\emptyset=2.11$)	I don't know any competent local authority on the matter ($\emptyset=2.92$)

Table 3. Highest ranked discouraging factors for participating in actions addressing climate change in group B (n=27) and group C (n=24) cf. Q.3.C.1

Being asked about different types of engagement and the youth's likelihood to participate in the future in different actions, all three groups ranked "direct action" the highest, followed by signing "(digital) petitions" (table 4). However, the third-highest type of action varies between group A and group B/C. While those with less frequent or no involvement in the past would prefer passive involvement in the future (e.g. "giving donations"), those with more frequent involvement would rather be actively involved by taking part in "demonstrations" or "punctual voluntary actions".

future participation			
	group A	group B	group C
1	direct action ($\emptyset=3.82$)	direct action ($\emptyset=3.59$)	direct action ($\emptyset=3.21$)
2	(digital) petitions ($\emptyset=3.68$)	(digital) petitions ($\emptyset=2.96$)	(digital) petitions ($\emptyset=2.17$)
3	demonstrations ($\emptyset=3.53$)	donations ($\emptyset=2.89$)	donations ($\emptyset=2.13$)

⁴ A distinction between lower and higher levels of engagement was not possible for group B since only one respondent has indicated a higher level of engagement.

	punctual voluntary actions ($\phi=3.53$)		
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Table 4. Likelihood to participate in different types of activities addressing climate change for group A (n=38), group B (n=27) and group C (n=24) cf. Q.3.9

Young people’s awareness of projects addressing climate change is connected to past involvement (figure 7). Their willingness to participate in projects is independent on the level (local/national/international) with a strong preference for projects organized by CSOs. 79.8% of young people do not feel heard enough/at all in the decision-making concerning climate change. However, 89.9% are convinced that youth engagement is important to address the issue and 73.0% believe that the youth have the power to contribute to local policies addressing climate change. Educational institution ($\phi=3.62$), community groups ($\phi=3.36$), and CSOs ($\phi=3.18$) are perceived as actors with high potential to motivate young people to get engaged.

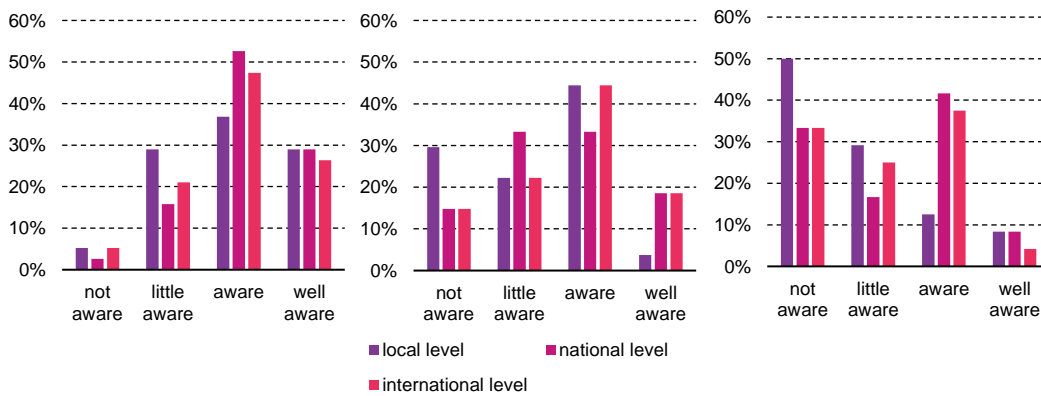


Figure 7. Awareness for measures/projects addressing climate change in group A (left), group B (middle), and group C (right) (n=78), cf. Q.3.10

2.1.3. Section: Migration

Similar to the section on climate change, the respondents have been asked about their perceived level of importance and concern regarding migration (figure 8). The youth does not seem to perceive the issue of migration as threatening as climate change.

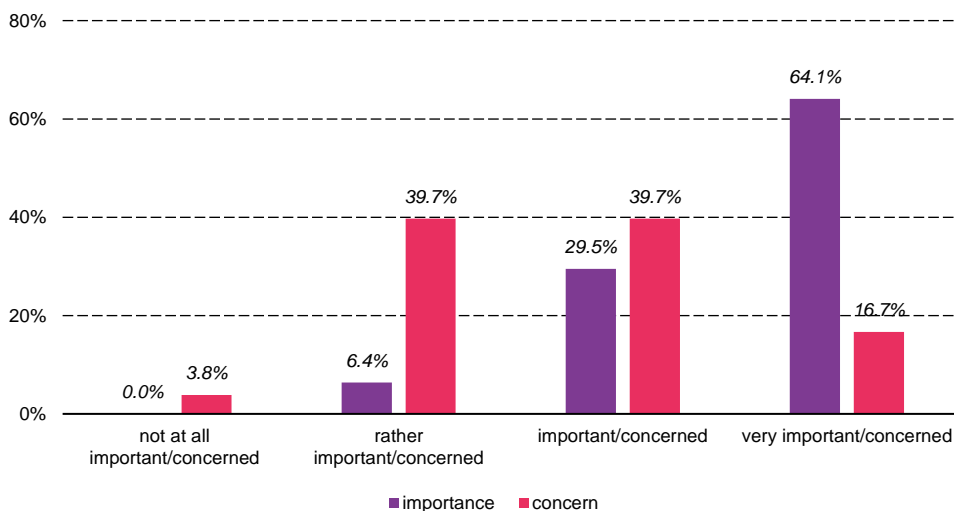


Figure 8. Perceived importance and concern regarding migration (n=78), cf. Q.4.1

Accordingly, only 60.2% feel (very) much informed about migration and 69.3% keep up with the news on the topic often or always. Both numbers are lower compared to the issue of climate change, whereby the mutual dependency is unclear. Are young people less informed on the issue of migration because their level of concern is comparatively low – or are they less concerned because of insufficient knowledge and awareness? The participants have been asked to think of the first three words associated with the issue of migration (figure 9).



Figure 9. Word cloud to the issue of migration (n=78 with three words per respondent)⁵

Similar to the section on climate change, modern media (i.e. digital newspapers/magazines $\emptyset=2.7$, radio/television $\emptyset=2.7$, and social networks $\emptyset=2.4$, cf. Q.4.6) are ranked as the mostly used media for receiving information on migration.

Regarding the youth’s personal engagement, the majority has indicated some sort of involvement in actions addressing migration as well (figure 10). However, group A is

⁵ Negatively connoted associations (e.g. war, flight, misery, and fear) dominate young people’s thoughts on migration. They seem to perceive migration mostly as a forced and inevitable consequence of inhumane and dangerous living conditions in the migrants’ home country.

significantly smaller – fewer young people have frequently been engaged in activities – and in contrast, a larger fraction has never been involved in the last three years.

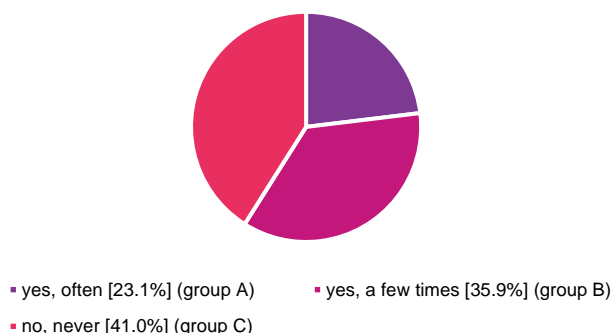


Figure 10. Personal frequency of involvement in actions addressing migration (n=78)⁶

Personal values and beliefs and information on matters related to migration (very) much stimulate individual participation for both group A (94.4%) and B (92.9%). As already indicated in the section on climate change, CSOs have a greater impact on young people to participate in actions in the field of migration in both group A and B as well (group A: CSOs $\emptyset=2.89$, LAs $\emptyset=1.61$; group B: CSOs $\emptyset=2.11$, LAs $\emptyset=1.50$, cf. Q.4.A.2).

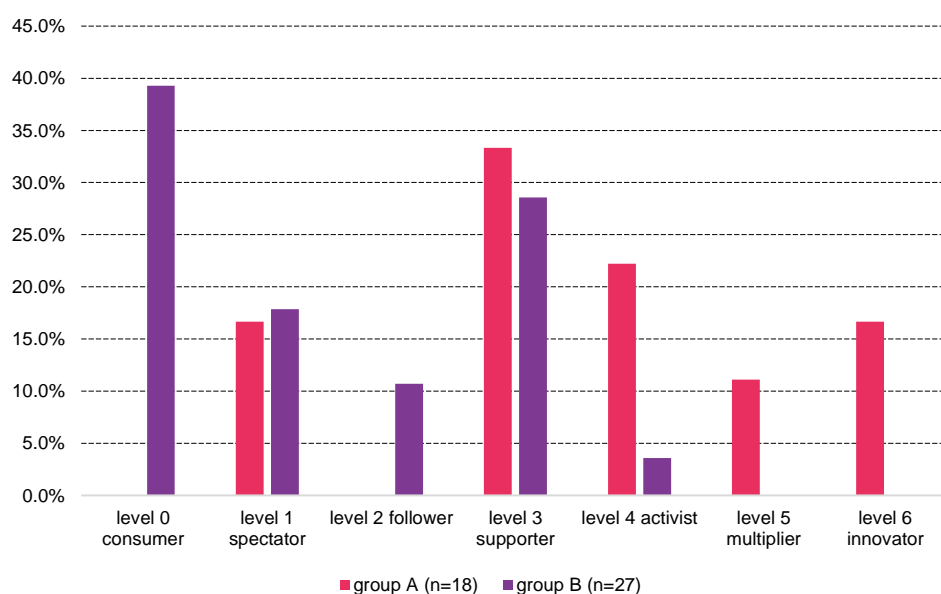


Figure 11. Level of engagement among group A/B in the field of migration (n=18/27).

Regarding the respondents’ level of engagement, young people with more frequent involvement (group A) attain higher levels again, but only 50.0% actively participates (figure 11).

Volunteerism in the field of migration offers several benefits for young people. “Critical

⁶ Group A subsumes young people with more frequent involvement in actions addressing climate change in the last three years (at several occasions). Group B contains those with infrequent involvement (once or twice in the last three years) and group C includes those who have never been involved in the last three years.

thinking” as well as “open-mindedness/tolerance” have been chosen as two important gains (table 5).

most important benefits/gains from engagement (group A)		
	passive engagement (level 0-3)	active engagement (level 4-6)
1	open-mindedness/tolerance ($\emptyset=3.11$)	communication skills ($\emptyset=3.44$) open-mindedness/tolerance ($\emptyset=3.44$)
2	critical thinking ($\emptyset=3.00$)	critical thinking ($\emptyset=3.22$) enlarging your personal network ($\emptyset=3.22$)
3	self-control/self-expression ($\emptyset=2.56$)	

most important benefits/gains from engagement (group B)	
1	open-mindedness ($\emptyset=3.18$)
2	critical thinking ($\emptyset=2.93$)
3	communication skills ($\emptyset=2.46$)

Table 5. Highest ranked benefits/gains from engagement in actions addressing migration in group A (n=18) and group B (n=27), cf. Q.4.A.3

Regarding discouraging factors for participating in actions addressing migration (table 6), the results are again similar to the results of the section on climate change. Time requirement is the most important factor for the infrequently involved young people. However, group C demonstrates again that a large fraction of young people is not involved because of insufficient knowledge about competent authorities as well as related projects.

most discouraging factors for participation		
	group B	group C
1	I don't have enough time ($\emptyset=3.04$)	I don't know any competent local authority on the matter ($\emptyset=2.91$)
2	No one asked me to participate ($\emptyset=2.57$)	I don't know any project I could participate in ($\emptyset=2.84$) No one asked me to participate ($\emptyset=2.84$)
3	I don't feel competent enough ($\emptyset=2.32$)	

Table 6. Highest ranked discouraging factors for participating in actions addressing migration in group B (n=28) and group C (n=32)

Being asked about different types of engagement and the youth's likelihood to

participate in the future, all three groups ranked “(digital) petitions” the highest. “Punctual voluntary actions” as active involvement is ranked quite high among all three groups as well with second rank for group B and third rank for group A and C. Giving “donations” is preferred by (in)frequently and passively engaged young people (group B and C), whereby respondents in group A are interested in “conferences/workshops” and “debates/discussion groups”.

Future participation			
	group A	group B	group C
1	(digital) petitions (\bar{x} =3.67)	(digital) petitions (\bar{x} =3.32)	(digital) petitions (\bar{x} =2.31)
2	demonstrations (\bar{x} =3.39)	punctual voluntary actions (\bar{x} =2,79)	donations (\bar{x} =2.13)
3	punctual voluntary actions (\bar{x} =3.22) conferences, workshops (\bar{x} =3.22) debates, discussion groups (\bar{x} =3.22)	donations (\bar{x} =2.75)	punctual voluntary actions (\bar{x} =1.88)

Table 7. Likelihood to participate in different types of activities addressing migration for group A (n=18), group B (n=28) and group C (n=32), cf. Q.4.9

Young people’s awareness of projects addressing migration is connected to past involvement as well (figure 11). Projects organized by CSOs are preferred, but local authorities are close by. 71.8% of young people do not feel heard enough/at all in the decision-making concerning migration. However, 79.5% are convinced that youth engagement is important to address the issue and 60.0% - slightly less compared to the issue of climate change – believe that the youth have the power to contribute to local policies addressing migration. Educational institution (\bar{x} =3.50), community groups (\bar{x} =3.31), and CSOs (\bar{x} =3.18) are perceived as actors with high potential to motivate young people to get engaged (cf. Q.4.16).

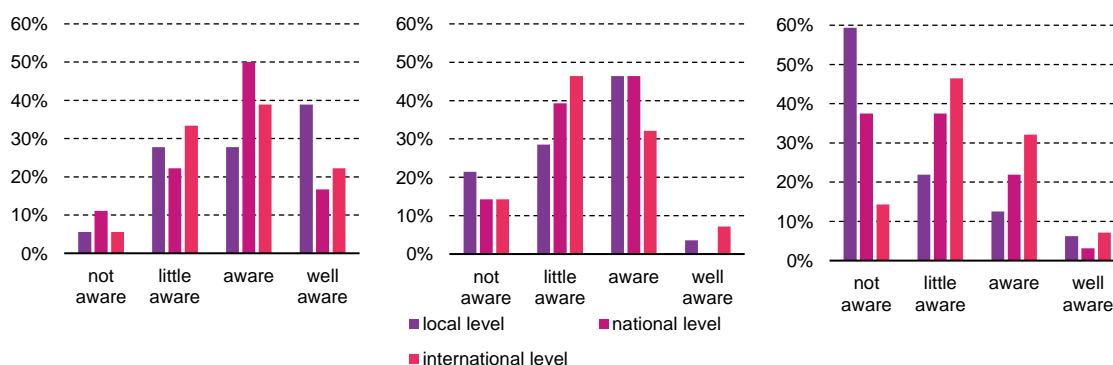


Figure 12. Awareness for measures/projects addressing migration in group A (left), group B (middle), and group C (right) (n=78), cf. Q.4.10

2.1.4. Section: Mindchangers

The characteristics of a “Mindchanger”, evaluated by the youth, are presented in table 8 below.

Characteristics of a “Mindchanger”		
	minimum	maximum
1	active on social media ($\emptyset=3.31$)	interested in global issues ($\emptyset=4.67$)
2	extraverted ($\emptyset=3.34$)	open to accept multiple perspectives ($\emptyset=4.56$)

Table 8: Characteristics of a “Mindchanger”, cf. Q.5.1

Finally, being asked about the likelihood to become a “Mindchanger”, 34.8% of the respondents have chosen “likely” or “very likely” (figure 12).

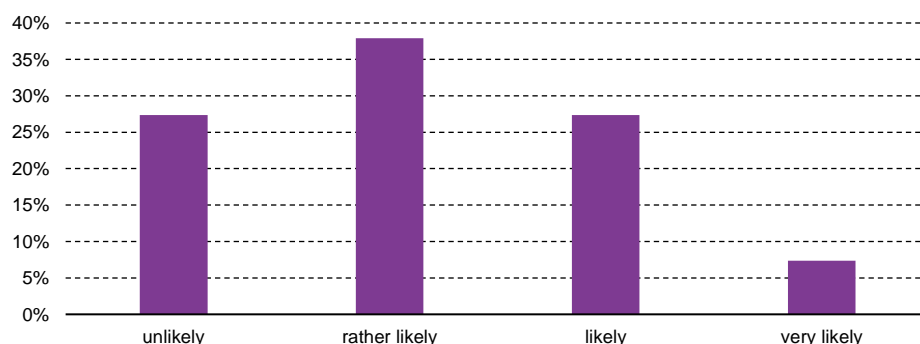


Figure 13. Likelihood to become a "Mindchanger" (n=95), cf. Q.5.2

2.2. Good Practice Examples for youth engagement

Detailed analysis of 10 GPEs on the topic of climate change and/or migration are listed in the appendices. Thus, this chapter only summarises the projects’ key aspects. As already mentioned in the regional policy analysis, the federal state of Baden-Württemberg is quite ambitiously making effort in the field of sustainability. However, Germany has some mechanisms and funding programmes in place being advantageous for Baden-Württemberg as well.

The “National Climate Initiative” plays an important role for pilot projects in the field of civic engagement and climate change. To give an example, the project “Klasse Klima” is part of the funding programme and aims at qualifying young people to become multipliers for younger pupils on the topic of climate change. They acquire content-related, as well as didactical knowledge to be able to develop and implement workshops in schools. As having proven its success, the project is already in its second funding phase with the aim to prolong the initiative for another period. More than 10.000 young people have been involved so far. The project exemplifies how different levels of engagement can be offered leading to low barriers for participation. While some take action as multipliers with big responsibilities,

others participate passively as spectators.

The “JUMA Baden-Württemberg” initiative is another exemplary project on migration. With the aim to increase the participation of young people with Muslim backgrounds, the enables different training courses for the young participants, e.g. workshops with focus on rhetoric or lobbying work. JUMA successfully transformed from a funded initiative in 2010 to an officially registered youth organization in 2019. By enabling the youth to implement their own project ideas, participants are free to decide about their type (actively or passively) and frequency of involvement.

2.3. Qualitative Interviews – Recommendations for youth engagement

For this section, young and already engaged people in Baden-Württemberg – young “Mindchangers” – have been interviewed to understand their development of engagement. The interviews aimed to identify important levers for youth engagement and advantages from being engaged which should be used by CSOs and LAs to incentivise youth engagement.

The “Mindchangers” engagement history partly shows similarities, but – as always – there is no standard past with certain occurrences leading to voluntary participation. Some interviewees’ engagement has started early in life and those have often been influenced by their parents, being volunteers themselves or encouraging individual action. However, one interviewee has started to get engaged in primary school without receiving such inspiration in at home. Intrinsic motivation seems to be able to impact young people at any age. Some other interviewees have been inspired to volunteer through projects in educational environments, e.g. school or university.

The social environment, especially family and friends, play an important role in getting engaged. Almost all interviewees either had a supporting parental home or a group of friends with shared values and interests. However, for some “Mindchangers” their engagement was initiated by CSOs, e.g. at information events. Being asked about certain factors causing them to stay engaged, eight out of ten interviewees mentioned the organizations or initiatives themselves; volunteerism is closely related to both giving and taking.

Benefits from engagement are diverse. Additional knowledge and soft skills (e.g. critical thinking, communication, organization) as well as networking are mentioned by many interviewees. Practical experience plays an important role and has even helped some respondents to get a certain job. Volunteerism can be somebody’s unique selling point. However, less tangible benefits are valued as well. Almost all interviewees consider their engagement as a way to mitigate their concerns (as demonstrated in the questionnaire results) and inner restlessness regarding global issues like climate change and migration. Self-efficacy enables optimism.

Regarding downsides, four relevant aspects have been mentioned by the “Mindchangers”. Time-consuming, stressful, unpaid, and continuously rising demands. While the first three are self-explanatory, the last drawback describes the issue of volunteers getting assigned more and more responsibilities with little chances to refuse. This risk of oversteering is high. One interviewee has already experienced a burnout, despite her young age.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1. Advertise engagement options appropriately.

Results from the questionnaire have shown that many young people are not aware of competent local authorities or projects taking place in their region. A large fraction misses an invitation to participate. As many have indicated to use modern media, e.g. social media, to get information on climate change and migration, those kind of channels should be used to advertise youth projects. Being asked about ideas to foster youth engagement, one interviewee mentioned the lack of some sort of platform to pool ideas and experiences. “Good ideas and possibilities to act should be spread as an orientation. This way, you don’t have to start from scratch with your ideas, but you can learn from other people’s experiences. [...] If you want to initiative something similar in your own city, the existing structures can be helpful for orientation and really motivating at the same time.”

3.2. Actively communicate the personal benefits.

Volunteerism is related to a variety of benefits – not only for the community, but for the volunteers as well. By openly communicating those benefits, more participation could be achieved.

3.3. Low-threshold and self-efficacy are key.

As said by one interviewee: “Engagement must not require immediate activism by everybody, but should allow passive participation and accept a “just-being-there” attitude as well.” Enable and advertise flexibility, openness, and self-efficacy. As shown in the data, young people agree about youth engagement playing in important role in addressing global issues. They mostly consider themselves in a powerful position to contribute to local policy-making, but the majority does not feel heard enough. “There needs to be a positive approach and a focus on individual self-efficacy, which means that everyone can do something and that it makes a difference when each individual gets involved.” Voluntary work must not be bonded to fixed tasks, but should be centred around the engaged themselves. Volunteerism must not be a means to an end.

3.4. Match content and environment.

Providing knowledge is not sufficient to close the gap between awareness and engagement. Sustainability as an option to address global issues must not only be taught, but must be exemplified in the people’s surroundings. As all young people go to school, this environment plays an important role for incentivizing civic engagement by linking knowledge to action.

3.5. Decouple volunteerism and privileges?

“Civic engagement is a matter of privileges. Volunteerism is time-consuming. Young people, who lack financial support from their family, are required to earn their own money and, therefore, have less time for voluntary work. To foster youth engagement, we have to question whether it is necessary and right to keep volunteerism unpaid.” Changing the whole concept of volunteerism by eliminating unfair conditions for participation may significantly increase the number and variety of young engaged people while just being fair, especially in context of numerous (personal) benefits resulting from civic engagement.

The recommendations above are just some central aspects to shift from awareness to engagement. Further ideas provided by the young “Mindchangers” can be found in the appendices.

All in all, raising awareness for global challenges like climate change and migration is not the main challenge as already available data (e.g. BMU, 2020) and the questionnaire’s result have shown that the youth in Germany and Baden-Württemberg are already informed and have recognized the crisis’ extent. As one interviewee summarized: “I’m not sure why civic engagement is quite low, even though many people are aware about global issues like climate change and migration. They might either be unaware about the potential of volunteerism, or they do not perceive themselves able to take individual action. Both may just be a result of lack of experience.” Tackling this lack of experience is the main challenge in order to increase civic engagement among young people.

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CHAPTER 4

PIEDMONT

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1. REVIEW OF REGIONAL POLICIES¹

Piedmont is Italy's second largest region and the fifth richest measured by GDP. It is in the north-western part of the country and its capital is Turin.

In order to give more and more voice to the new generations, encouraging them to get active in society and to face the labour market with the adequate tools and knowledge, Regione Piemonte² promotes dedicated projects and activities, such as Centres for aggregation and the website Piemonte Giovani (<https://www.piemontegiovani.it/>).

The topics from the “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” are at the basis of all cooperation and education activities to global citizenship of the Regione Piemonte. In the last few years, European and national projects, focused on climate change and migration issues, have been carried out.

1.1. Climate change

Following the 2030 Agenda and the National Strategy for Sustainable Development, Regione Piemonte has identified its own path towards the objectives of sustainable development, translated into the guidelines of the Regional Strategy for Sustainable Development.

On June 1, 2021, the first Regional Strategy for Sustainable Development (SRSvS) document was presented. The Regional Strategy for Sustainable Development (SRSvS) is the operational tool used by Regione Piemonte to achieve the sustainability goals of the 2030 Agenda and the National Strategy.

Among the strategic areas identified in the SRSvS, “MAS 2- Facilitate energy transition, adaptation and mitigation of the effects of climate change” is particularly relevant.

The Region, aware that climate change represents a central challenge for sustainable development, has approved in November 2020 a Guideline Document, "Towards the Regional Strategy on Climate Change" (SRCC), to address the regional administrative and political action aimed to counteract climate change and cope with the consequences, minimizing the negative effects and, when possible, exploiting the opportunities.

1.2. Migration

Regione Piemonte has been engaged for several years in the coordination of migration policies throughout the territory, with the aim of building a structured system of hosting and integration.

Regione Piemonte's initiatives in favour of foreign people and their families living in the

¹ We would like to thank the following people for their valuable contribution: Prof Stefania Ravazzi (Department of Political Science, University of Turin), Luca Nicholas Bonanno (student, Department of Political Science, University of Turin), Giorgio Garelli (Regione Piemonte), Claudia Re (Regione Piemonte), Giulia Randazzo (COP - Consortium of Piedmontese NGOs).

² Piedmont Local Government Authority

territory are framed by Regional Law n. 64 of 1989. The aims of this law are to promote integration and equal opportunities, to safeguard linguistic and cultural identity and connections with the countries of origin.

In order to promote respect for legality and the integration of people of foreign origin, the Region coordinates, promotes and organizes, also in collaboration with local authorities and associations of migrants, regional interventions aimed at: offering civic-linguistic trainings, strengthening the capacity of services to respond adequately to needs, preventing school delay and drop-out, promoting the active participation of foreign people by encouraging the development of associations and the performance of voluntary work, preventing the phenomenon of serious exploitation of seasonal labour.

The projects are mainly implemented through European and national resources from the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (FAMI).

The “Petrarca 6 Project - Regional plan for civic and linguistic training of third-country nationals” has been promoted in recent years under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (Fami) 2014-2020, continuing and expanding the interventions carried out by Petrarca 5. The initiative aims to promote the dissemination of civic and linguistic training opportunities for third-country nationals in the territory, strengthen the territorial governance system, and encourage the active participation of bodies and organisations working for the linguistic and social integration of foreigners.

The INTERREG - Italy-Switzerland 2014-2020 programme promoted the Minplus project, for territorial governance of the reception of asylum seekers, which aims to develop a model of multilevel territorial governance that includes and manages regulatory, financial and organisational aspects concerning the care and support of asylum seekers, with a particular focus on unaccompanied foreign minors, on both sides of the border.

1.3. Strategies

1.3.1. *Climate change*

Climate change represents a central challenge for sustainable development. The Regional Strategy on Climate Change (SRCC) represents the main action to be taken in order to implement the Environmental Action Strategy for Sustainable Development at the local level. Indeed, also in our region, the study of climate change at the local scale and the mitigation and adaptation policies has begun to occur. Signing the Under2 Memorandum of Understanding, in 2015, Regione Piemonte has committed to a reduction of its emissions from 80% to 95% by 2050.

The SRCC has two main aims: mitigation (contributing to the containment of global temperature increase within 1.5 °C) and adaptation (building a resilient territory).

Cross-cutting objectives are based on: knowledge; governance; coherence of (political, social, economic) actions; creating new educational and occupational opportunities; awareness; research; mitigation of the effects of climate change on the quality of life of the population, in particular of vulnerable groups; implementation of efficient technical and administrative instruments; safeguard of the natural capital and of its ecosystem functions; and development of adequate analyses of impact.

A participatory methodology will be preferred. Among the adopted instruments are

emissions budget, government procurement policy, as well as networking and collaboration with educational actors.

1.3.2. Migration

Regione Piemonte is committed to coordinating immigration policies throughout the territory, with the aim of building a structured system of integration and reception.

Two important pathways are:

a. **Against human trafficking:** the commitment of the Regione Piemonte to fight this serious crime and help the victims. The Region has been engaged in anti-trafficking policies for over a decade, in order to coordinate the actions of public institutions and anti-trafficking organizations at the regional level. The project "Piemonte in rete contro la tratta [Piemonte networking against human trade]", launched in 2008, was developed in successive editions until 2016.

The new regional projects combine, in a multi-fund perspective, the following national and European programs: National Action Plan against trafficking and serious exploitation, European Social Fund, European Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (Fami). A regional steering committee against trafficking and exploitation of human beings was established in December 2016 in order to strengthen institutional and public-private sector cooperation.

b. With the humanitarian corridors, third-country or stateless persons being in need of international protection are transferred to an EU Member State directly from the country from which they are seeking asylum. In addition to security, the humanitarian corridors aim at integration.

Moreover, Regione Piemonte has been involved in realizing international cooperation activities (<http://www.piemontecooperazioneinternazionale.it>). The legislative framework is based on a specific Regional Law (n. 67/1995) and three-year directives are regularly issued (<https://www.regione.piemonte.it/web/temi/diritti-politiche-sociali/cooperazione-internazionale/cooperazione-internazionale-della-regione-piemonte>; <http://arianna.consiglioregionale.piemonte.it/base/coord/c1995067.html>).

International development cooperation is a form of collaboration between different territories aimed at encouraging the sustainable growth of all peoples, particularly in areas considered weak, guaranteeing respect for human dignity. It is a means of establishing, improving and consolidating relations between different countries and territorial communities. Regione Piemonte has long been involved in this field with numerous activities and in particular with programmes aimed at supporting decentralised cooperation and territorial partnerships promoted by its local authorities.

Topics from 2030 Agenda are fundamental in the cooperation and educational activities implemented by Regione Piemonte and oriented to global citizenship, and, as a result, in the last years some European and national projects have been realized. Some examples are present in the second part of this report about good practice examples.

2. ELEMENTS THAT FOSTER ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

2.1. Questionnaire about the level of youth engagement: presentation and discussion of results, conclusions

2.1.1. Sample

The questionnaire was filled in by 180 young people: 160 filled in both section 3 (Climate Change) and 4 (Migration).

They were mostly female (77.1%). The main part was born between 1990 and 1994 (33.2%), and 29.4%, between 1995 and 1999. Respondents live mainly in urban (large city) area (58.9%) and two thirds of them (73.9%) spent most of their life in this context. Great part of the sample was born in Italy (94.4%) and a large part of the respondents (73.3%) declared that there have no recent migration stories in their family. Among the respondents, a great number were university students (N=53), several were unemployed (N=29), some were employed full-time permanently (N=28) or temporary (N=28). Considering their level of education, the highest received was for the most part Bachelor's degree (36.1%), while the highest degree/level of education received in their family was mainly high school graduate, diploma or the equivalent (35%) or Bachelor's degree (33.3%).

2.1.2. Methodology

Data were analysed by means of the statistical package SPSS for Windows v.27. After preliminary matrix cleaning, descriptive analyses were performed. More precisely for single choice or multiple choices questionnaire, frequencies and percentages for each answer were calculated, for questions with Likert type response rate, medium values and standard deviations were calculated. For the open questions "What are the first 3 words that come to your mind with Sustainable Development Goals/Climate change/Migration?" the answers transcribed with small differences or the synonymous were considered the same, and their frequencies were then evaluated. Similarly, for the other opened questions, by means of content analysis, the similar answers were grouped and their frequencies were calculated

Moreover, to highlight specifically the female involvement, descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages or medium values and standard deviations) were calculated for the separate sample of female respondents. Analysis of variance was performed to check if differences were statistically significant.

2.1.3. Results³

Participants mostly described themselves as open-minded (M 4.46; range 1 the lowest – 5 the highest) and responsible (M 4.38). The characteristic that they less attributed to themselves is *active on social media* (M 2.86).

Respondents seemed overall aware of the SDGs. The main part of respondents (57.2%) declared to know what they are and the words that mostly came to their mind in association with "Sustainable Development Goals" were Environment (N=35), Sustainability (N=23) and Equity/Equality (N=14).

³ Here only the main points are reported. For a detailed presentation of results, please see the report from the questionnaire in the corresponding appendices.

The SDGs perceived as the most urgent were:

- at international level: Climate action (16.3%)
- at national level: Decent work and economic growth (14.4%)
- at local level: Sustainable cities and communities (16.3%).

In any case, participants expressed high level of agreement with the statement that tackling global inequalities and poverty worldwide should be one of the main priorities of the EU (M 3.41, range 1 totally disagree – 4 totally agree), of the national authorities (M 3.31) and of the regional authorities (M 2.79). Considering their personal involvement, participants affirmed to be mainly involved in considering ethical aspects in their consumption activities (31.8%) and in voluntary work, individually or for an organisation (21.1%). They were then highly willing to change their personal behaviour to reduce the impact of global issues (M 3.27, range 1 not at all – 4 very much).

Focusing on the sections regarding specifically Climate change and Migration, respondents declared that they consider both highly important (M 3.84 and M 3.58 respectively, range 1 not at all – 4 very much), but that they felt slightly more concerned about Climate change issues (M 3.58) rather than about migration (M 3.21).

The word that most come to their mind regarding climate change was heat/global warming (N=18) and with regard to migration, Poverty (N=15).

They declared to have been involved more in actions addressing climate change (69% of respondents to this section being involved often or a few times) than in action addressing migration (with 58.6% of respondents to this section being involved often or a few times).

Participants who had been involved a few times in actions addressing climate change participated in several activities addressing climate change in the last 3 years, mainly in direct actions (32.2%) and petitions (30%). Similarly, participants who had been involved a few times in actions addressing migration were involved in punctual voluntary actions (22.2%), petitions (20.3%), conferences, workshops (18.2%) and school projects (17.9%).

Participation in activities related both to climate change and migration has been mainly stimulated by their personal values / beliefs.

On the other hand, for the respondents who declared to have never been involved in actions addressing climate change and migration, the reasons that mainly discouraged their participation, selected from a given list, were the perception of not having enough support (organizational or financial) from the authorities or institutions (M 3.11 and M 3.47 respectively; 1 totally disagree – 4 totally agree).

The respondents, however, declared to be highly attracted by the idea of participating in actions addressing climate change in the future (M 3.41, range 1 not at all – 4 a lot) and almost attracted by idea of participating in actions addressing migration in the future (M 3.22).

To address the issue of climate change, they affirmed to be likely to participate mainly in direct actions, such as change their own habits, recycle, reducing consumption, etc.) (M 3.64, range 1 unlikely – 4 very likely). To address the issue of migration, they affirmed to be likely to participate mainly in punctual voluntary actions (M 3.04).

They were quite likely to get engaged in projects addressing climate change and addressing migration, mostly at local level (M 3.09 and M 2.96 respectively; range 1 unlikely – 4 very likely).

Moreover, they thought that the institution that could have an impact on motivating young people to get engaged on climate change and on migration issues were the educational institutions (schools, universities) (M 3.74 and M 3.60 respectively; range 1 not at all – 4 very much).

Considering the characteristics that should apply to a Mindchanger, respondents indicated primarily open-minded (M 4.62) and interested in global issues (M 4.59).

To conclude, respondents affirmed that it is quite likely that they will become Mindchangers (M 2.67; range 1 unlikely - 4 very likely).

Moreover, considering the female participants, the percentage of those declaring to know what the SDGs are is almost the same with the entire sample group (56.9% women vs. 57.2% of the whole sample). Actual involvement in the several activities aimed at reducing inequalities is similar to the whole sample. Female participants declared a slightly higher willingness to change their behaviour (M 3.31 vs. M 3.27 of the whole sample) and slightly higher likeliness to become Mindchangers (M 2.71 vs. 2.67 of the whole sample). None of these differences is statistically significant.

2.1.4. Conclusion

In light of the questionnaire results, some points of reflection can be highlighted:

- Respondents showed quite *high awareness and concern* for the two topics, even if probably young people who decided to fill in the questionnaire were all (at least partially) engaged;

- The topic of *climate change* seems to have solicited slightly *more involvement and more active participation*: it could be also due to the recent “Fridays for future” campaign;

- Respondents seemed more interested in participation in *short-term and concrete activities* as petitions, conferences and direct actions, possibly with visible results;

- Even if these two topics are global issues, respondents were more likely to participate in *local action*;

- Respondents thought that to motivate young people to get engaged on climate change and on migration issues, the most effective institution were the *educational ones* (schools, universities);

- Respondents were *ideally interested in becoming Mindchangers* and the characteristic chosen to describe a Mindchanger are quite similar with the characteristics with which they describe themselves;

- Female respondents declared slightly less likeliness to become Mindchangers, but their level of actual involvement seemed not lower than the male respondents.

2.2. Good practice examples among the CSOs/NGOs

With the collaboration of regional partners of the “Mindchangers” project, a total of 18 good practices⁴ were identified, focused on the topics of Climate Change and Migration performed in Piedmont, during the last 5 years.

In order to analyse the identified good practices, data and information were sought by looking at project notes sent by the promoter, by consulting the official websites of the

⁴ Please see the official websites in the Bibliography.

projects and briefly interviewing some project leaders or some participants.

Most of them (11 projects) were focused on migration topic, 6 on climate change, and one on both topics. As several projects were realized in school contexts, most of them (10) were targeted at 15–19-year-old young people, 8 to 20-25 year-old, 5 to 26-35 year-old; out of these projects, five⁵ involved young people of different target ages. The duration of the projects varied from one month to several years, but the most part (12) lasted from 12 to 18 months and were funded through European funding (9 of them). Several projects (8) had an international level of implementation, involving some country partners, but a certain amount of practices had regional (5) or local (7) implementation.

The number of involved young people varied from a few dozens to several hundred. The level of engagement was higher for a reduced number of young people who had an active role in the projects: in several projects a few young people were previously involved and then contributed to involve other young people (e. g. peer education practices, development of games or events to be proposed to other young citizens). Most of the practices were top down and involved young people in their implementation (16 practices), but some of them involved young citizens at the stage of co-creation (10 practices) of the project activities or, in some cases, in the initial development of the practice itself.

For the aim of involving young people and fostering their engagement on the topics of migration and climate change, a SWOT analysis of the identified good practices was performed.

Several **strengths** of the practices were highlighted. Among them:

- the use of the peer education technique that sustains involvement using the “same language” as that of the project “recipients” and allows discussion in a protected, non-judgmental situation;
- the use of non-formal educational approach, of new technologies and/or of multiple languages (photos, pictures, storytelling) that are more impactful for young people;
- the mix of formal/traditional training and not-formal/creative activities that would create the possibility to acquire knowledge and to feel directly involved, applying their knowledge and skills;
- the use of dynamic and involving activities, such as games, storytelling, theatre, creative workshops, flash mobs;
- offering opportunities for exchanges with people from different cultures/countries;
- proposing impactful stimulus, such as documentaries, direct testimonies of people from different realities or who have had significant experiences at first hand (migration; experience of climate change in everyday life)
- directly involving the young people in the realization of the products of the project;
- creating a synergy between the project activities and the context (e.g. realize a dissemination campaign involving the students of a design school): it can make participants feel like "co-protagonists".

Some **weaknesses** were also identified in the exemplified practices. The most critical

⁵ Some of the analysed good practices, indeed, can be classified in more than one group (e.g. some practices involved young people both at the stage of implementation and of co-creation): the total amount of practices in the different categories is higher than 18

were:

- not sufficient budget for complex projects;
- the risk of always reaching the same groups of already involved young people;
- the difficulty of maintaining the relationship with the participants after the end of the project;
- the absence of a follow up activity to monitor the impact over time;
- the use, in some cases, of language that is not fully adequate or too abstract for some targets (e.g. Jordanian cultural approach of a documentary not fully friendly for young Italian people; language of conferences too far from practical application);
- groups of participants made of people from many different groups, too difficult to keep together.

The effectiveness of the practices in involving young people was sustained also by some

opportunities:

- the support offered by local authorities to the project and to the development of the projected activities;
- the experience in the topic or in the involvement of young people and the good reputation of the promoters and of the other partners;
- the possibility of using social network, really attractive for young people, especially during the pandemic closures, in order to share projects outcomes;
- the attention to the topic of climate change already high in the last years (before the pandemic);
- the presence in the territorial area of several young people sensitive to social issues and to migration topic in particular.

On the opposite, major **threats** to the analysed practices were:

- for the most part, the pandemic restrictions that stopped or sensibly reduced the projected activities: in some case they were transformed in on-line proposal, in some other case they were simply stopped;
- the concurrent activities and associations who involved young people, reducing young people's availability to participate;
- the difficulty of monitoring the impact after the end of the project.

2.3. Interviews with young Mindchangers

In order to find out what encourages young people to be engaged and remain active on the topic of migration and climate change, 11 young people, who participated actively to projects on these topics were interviewed (narrative interviews) in July 2021.

Most of them were female, and only one male was interviewed. Seven were between 20 and 25 years old, four between 30 and 35 years old. Five of them lived in a big or medium city, whereas 6 lived in smaller cities in Piedmont. All were born in Italy, only one had Moroccan father. Three were students, three were doing civil service, and five were workers in associations or institutions involved in SDG topics. Most of them, however, did the civil service or an experience of international cooperation. The activities of seven of them were focused mainly on migration topics, four activated mainly in climate change, being nonetheless interested (and sometimes participated in activities) also in the other topic.

From their testimonies, commitment (or at least interest) in different issues emerged in several cases: active engagement on a specific issue is often an expression of sensitivity and attention to different global issues. Considering the “Pyramid of engagement”, their level of Engagement varied from 4, for the young interviewees who actively contributed to the implementation of projects, to 6, in the case of four of them, who contributed to the development of new projects on these topics.

Beyond the personal stories and experiences of each young interviewee, some common elements that prompted participation and/or sustained engagement on the topics of climate change and migration over time can be highlighted.

The interviewees identified the origin, the **initial drive (trigger)** to be engaged, in their personal interest and “natural” sensitivity for the specific topic or, in general, for global and community issues. This personal interest:

- in five cases, was born very early (“*I have always felt the desire to engage*”), under the influence of their families or other educators (a teacher, a coordinator at the oratory or scout group): “*Certainly my parents. They taught me by example the importance of welcoming others. When I was a child, every year we hosted a Belarusian girl (Chernobyl project). This ‘sister at a distance’ made me understand that there are many people who do not have the same opportunities. This child did not know what the shower was, which she called, ‘rain room’*” [Interviewee 7].

- in two other cases, it was activated by difficult personal experiences (e.g. being discriminated because of their origin, negative events that involved their families: “*This made me develop positive anger, so as not to let yourself down*” [Interviewee 4]

- “*I was born in Italy and my mother is Italian, but I am Moroccan on my father's side: my name and my appearance attract discriminating looks or comments, maybe of benevolent discrimination, but still discrimination. And this makes me feel uncomfortable, makes me want to change things*” [Interviewee 10]

- in two cases, then, the choice to be involved was the answer to a personal crisis, the need to “*find my place in the world*”)

- for three⁶ of them, a specific experience in civil service or in a specific project allowed them to become aware of their desire to do something useful for the others, something ethical: “*The civil service experience made me discover the third sector and helped me to understand what I want to deal with*” [Interviewee 4]

In several cases, these different triggers intertwined with each other to build the personal history of the young person’s participation.

The **motivation** for the engagement was expressed by the interviewees as:

- feeling useful: “*It's hard to say for sure [what drives me], but I want to feel useful, to have the feeling of doing something concrete for this world*” [Interviewee 2]

- doing something ethical: “*The experience in Burkina Faso helped me to understand that I didn't want to be a co-operator, but I wanted to live with other parameters, to do something ethical*” [Interviewee 11]

- doing something concrete for others, to carry out the commitments taken, even if

⁶ Some interviewees described a combination of initial triggers, so the total amount of different trigger is higher than

they require effort: *“What moves me is to do something concrete for others, to carry out the commitments I have made, even when they are a bit tiring, because they make me grow”* [Interviewee 7]

- feeling like being “part of something”, being active for the change of their territory: *“I feel that I want to be active for the change of my territory. I had left, I distanced myself, but then I realized that I have a strong connection with my territory, and I want to engage to improve it...”* [Interviewee 4]

- exchanging with other cultures, with authentic openness, in an attempt to offer opportunities to those who have just a few and with the aim to make people from other cultures to feel more welcome and at ease: *“I tried to empathize with these people who want to make a life for themselves, and I thought they might be a little lost... I wanted to help them settle in”* [Interviewee 9]

- contrasting a culture that for no reason gives less voice to “different” people: *“I would like to see a change in this culture that pays less attention to a voice just because it comes from a different body”* [Interviewee 10]

- trying to sensitize young people to central topics, such as migration and other social issues, because this means educating future adult people: *“You need to raise awareness among younger kids, you need to educate future adults, establish a good foundation”* [Interviewee 8].

What seemed to **sustain motivation** to engage on topics of migration and climate change **over time** was:

- seeing tangible – although small - results of their commitment;
- feeling that they can play a useful role, feeling recognized for the contribution they are making;
- feeling good in the group, being able to have a positive exchange and comparison;
- having the opportunity to exchange experiences, reflections and intentions of commitment on other important issues and with people from other cultures;
- having a reference figure who knows how to keep the group together and launch new stimuli;
- having the opportunity to pass on this commitment and these values to other young people, to future generations.

Reflecting on the aspects that initially trigger the motivation to engage and then sustain it over time, **some points** seemed central for several interviewees:

- the importance of combining what happens to them, their personal identity and projects with what happens in the world (to the Planet or in the meeting with other cultures);
- the importance of school, formal and non-formal education to introduce and to sustain young people’s engagement;
- the crucial role of relational dimension with other people (both adult and young) as role models and as “fellow travellers”;
- the feeling of belonging (to a group, to an important project), on the one hand, and being able to express themselves, to make their voice heard, on the other hand;
- the importance of feeling effective, to reach a concrete result, to be useful.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the evidences resulted from the analysis of the good practises and of the narrative interviews with young people, some **measures** were highlighted, which can be valuable in supporting the involvement of young people:

In particular, *to engage the disengaged young people*, it seemed effective:

- to adopt a *non-formal approach* and offer new and diversified proposals, to attract curiosity and not to be boring;
- to involve in the proposal *other young people*, slightly older than them, it works better since there is no "generational gap" that creates distance;
- not to be bound necessarily to an association, with fixed rules: these forms of participation allow participation without being perceived as too binding or stringent;
- to offer a *positive example* and positive and consistent reference figures;
- to make evident a *recognizable value* to the proposed content: it must be something that is identified as important by the young people to whom it is proposed;
- to always offer *different perspectives* (e.g. storytelling by people from different countries; Peter's maps) on the topic;
- to offer the opportunity to *exchange experiences* with young people from different cultures;
- to insist on *key messages*;
- to try to focus on points *already of interest* for young people (e.g. climate change - Fridays for Future), so that they could more easily be an active part of the process;
- to propose activities in *structured contexts* (schools or associations, youth groups), which makes it possible to have groups of young people who already know each other and have their own consolidated functioning dynamics;
- to be *clear* in the presentation of the *objectives* of the action proposed: if the objectives are not clear and clearly spelled out, this creates disorientation and demotivation;
- [mainly for 15-19 target group] to make the centrality of their contribution evident, offer forms of *recognition and visibility* (e.g. a ferry on the bench, an event where they can show their contribution), because they need confirmation and recognition;
- to use *social network* that are really impactful for young people - bring people together and propose practical application, not talk about issues in a theoretical and abstract way;
- to really *involve* young people in the *development of the project* (including choosing aims and target): make young people feel that they are listened to, that their opinion has value and it is taken into account;
- to stop and consider young people who are unmotivated and unwilling, in order to commit themselves, and also try to understand what *resources* they have;
- to use *tangible benefit* (such as training credits) for the first "connection", but then it only works if the young people themselves are interested in the topic and/or involvement;
- to offer even *small incentives* for participation, for the time and effort spent on the project: these are forms of valorisation and economic aid for young people who perhaps cannot afford to commit themselves to demanding projects without remuneration (a

minimum of personal gain can help to keep high the motivation to commit to a project);

- to activate *critical thinking toward media messages*, helping young people to 'think for themselves': this can help them take an informed stance.

→ It can be the most difficult part, because it depends a lot on whether there is already an inclination, an interest in the topic. In any case, it is important to *widen the range of recipients* of the proposals as much as possible, which multiplies the possibilities of intercepting interested young people.

To support sustainable youth engagement, moreover, it seemed useful:

- To make young people *feel useful, able to realize some concrete and effective actions*, allowing them to see some concrete results, a real impact, even if small: If results are not seen, motivation is lost;
- To involve them in the *development of a new idea* for the existing activities and projects;
- To make young people feel that they '*belong* to something';
- To try not to use only the criterion of the output to be achieved, but also to activate a *critical reflection* on some key issues that can then be transformed into concrete actions in everyday life;
- To try to get across the idea that even a *small contribution* is useful and can contribute to bigger changes;
- To *renew stimuli and proposals* periodically, otherwise it is easy for people to look elsewhere for new stimuli and then other competing commitments will prevail;
- To avoid projects that are too long in duration, because, in the long term, the desire to commit may fade away;
- To seek alignment between the proposal and the young people's own *sensitivities/interests/values*: if they do not feel aligned, they move away;
- To *not force* together people who are already involved in different associations or activities;
- To have an *informal context of exchange and discussions*;
- To create a *group* of young people (who can motivate each other) and do their utmost to make the group work well; to make the environment positive, welcoming and attractive: "if you feel good in the group, in the environment, you'll stay".
- To have a *positive reference figure* who is also capable of proposing new stimuli and feeding motivation, keeping the group together.

In any case, it is important to distinguish between the target groups:

a. *young people who are already very committed*, on various fronts, can also be very involved, without difficulty, because they already have good motivation → The risk may be that they are "saturated" and must give up certain commitments/activities.

b. *young people who are not active*, who are not particularly sensitive to the subject, but who may be stimulated by new proposals (e.g. "guerrilla communication", flash mobs) → The risk is that, once the novelty has worn off or they are attracted by other proposals, they may get lost.

Overall, to solicit the involvement of those who are not yet committed and also to keep the young people already committed it seems important:

- to use a *young-friendly language*;

- to propose *activities involving other young people*;
- to offer a protected context to discuss, *avoiding judgmental gaze*;
- to give young people the *perception that they are listened to carefully and sustained*;
- not to ignore that young people are often quite *aware* of the topic;
- to involve them in *groups* to make them powerful, not alone against the entire world;
- to propose topics that young people recognize as *urgent/important*;
- to propose something *concrete/real/tangible*, not too far or abstract;
- to give *recognition* for the contribution, making them feel useful.

Moreover, it is important to keep in mind effective solutions to carry on the *distance activities* (as during the pandemic) to engage the disengaged.

4. CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, we can identify some 'challenges' for projects and actions in support of youth engagement on the topics of climate change and migration, or possibly on several SDGs:

A. Two lines of action: 1. (for disengaged young people) to sustain the passage *from the event* (the occasional participation in some attracting activities) *to the project* (the participation in more continuous, repeated activities); 2. (for already engaged young people) to sustain the passage from the project (specific and with a defined duration) *to the way of life* (engagement lasting a lifetime and/or changing of habits and behaviour in everyday life).

B. The development of a *"global" (or at least wider) sense of community*, of belonging beyond the boundaries of the group of project participants; the development, perhaps, of a sense of responsibility towards the Planet and (all) those who inhabit it.

C. Trying to act on a *multilevel perspective*: involving young people cannot mean to leave out adults (parents and teachers, educators of various kinds, etc.), organizations, and institutions.

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REGIONAL POLICIES

3 strategies

Regional Strategy for Sustainable Development (SRSvS):

<https://www.regione.piemonte.it/web/temi/strategia-sviluppo-sostenibile#>

Regional Strategy on Climate Change (SRCC) - La Strategia regionale sul Cambiamento Climatico | Regione Piemonte

Under2 Memorandum of Understanding

[http://www.regione.piemonte.it/cgi-](http://www.regione.piemonte.it/cgi-bin/ufstampa/comunicati/dettaglio_agenzia.cgi?id=17931)

[bin/ufstampa/comunicati/dettaglio_agenzia.cgi?id=17931](http://www.regione.piemonte.it/cgi-bin/ufstampa/comunicati/dettaglio_agenzia.cgi?id=17931)

2 Laws

Regional Law n. 64 of 1989:

<http://arianna.consiglioregionale.piemonte.it/base/leggi/l1989064.html>

Regional Law (n. 67/1995)

<http://arianna.consiglioregionale.piemonte.it/base/coord/c1995067.html>

4 Projects

Petrarca 6 Project - Regional plan for civic and linguistic training of third-country nationals

<https://www.europeanresearchinstitute.eu/petrarca-6/>

Minplus project

<https://www.minplusproject.eu/>

The project "Piemonte in rete contro la tratta [Piemonte networking against human trade]",

Piemonte International Cooperation

<http://www.piemontecooperazioneinternazionale.it>

Official websites of the 18 analysed good practises:

1. CountHER Narratives: reframing the narrative by giving voice to migrant women:
<https://serenoregis.org/?s=countHER+narrative>

2. Climate Re-Action: nuove energie per cambiare [*Climate Re-Action: new energies to change*]: (20+) Climate Re-action - nuove energie per cambiare | Facebook

3. Escape4Change - Metti in Circolo il cambiamento [Put the change in circulation]:
<https://escape4change.com>

4. Start the Change; specifically the activity “MigrAzioni”/ MigrA(C)tions: <https://www.startthechange.eu/>
5. The power of passport: www.thepowerofpassport.org
6. Storie Interrotte [Broken Stories]: www.storieinterrotte.it
7. Selfie Portrait. Immaginari migrant [Selfie Portrait. Migrant imagery]: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PhB-8O0GKxA&t=64s>
8. When the sun goes down: <http://www.culturaesviluppo.it/afraidofdestiny>
9. SCUOLA DI ITALIANO PER STRANIERI [ITALIAN LANGUAGE SCHOOL FOR FOREIGNERS] + A TAVOLA CON IL MONDO [AT TABLE WITH THE WORLD]: A tavola col mondo (busca.cn.it)
10. Acqua e territorio di fronte al cambiamento climatico. Attività di formazione per gli amministratori [Water and territory in the face of climate change. Training activities for administrators]: <http://www.cittametropolitana.torino.it/cms/ambiente/risorseidriche/progetti-ridriche/formazione-divulgazione/bando-under-35>
11. Bangladesh and Piedmont: together towards SDGs: <https://www.ashargan.org/447-2/>
12. COLTIVARE INCLUSIONE: interventi integrati per l’assistenza di rifugiati e migranti braccianti agricoli nel Saluzzese [CULTIVATING INCLUSION: integrated interventions to assist refugees and migrant farm labourers in the Saluzzo are]: <https://lvia.it/portfolio-articoli/coltivare-inclusione-interventi-integrati-per-lassistenza-di-rifugiati-e-migranti-braccianti-agricoli-nel-saluzzese/>
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16. Progetto europeo Actecim Erasmus+ [European Project Actecim Erasmus+]: <http://www.piemontecooperazioneinternazionale.it/2018/02/24/progetto-actecim/>
17. ForEverest: i cambiamenti climatici dagli occhi dei giovani [ForEverest: climate change through the eyes of young people]: https://www.docentisenzafrontiere.org/progetti/nepal_foreverest-from-nepal-to-italy/
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CHAPTER 5

DOLJ COUNTY

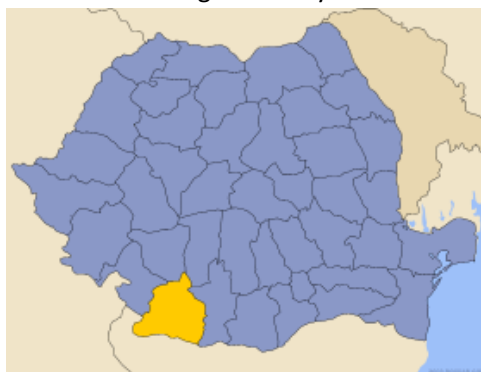
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1. REVIEW OF REGIONAL POLICIES

1.1. Presentation of Dolj County

Dolj County is located in the South-West of Romania, in the central-southern area of the Development Region South-West Oltenia and it is the 7th largest county in the country.

Its administration consists of 3 municipalities (Craiova, Calafat and Băilești), 4 towns, 104 communes and 380 villages. Craiova is the largest city and the county capital city. Together with several localities and neighbouring territorial administrative units, it forms the Craiova Metropolitan Area, which occupies an area of 1510.25 km², equivalent to approximately 20.4% of the total area of Dolj County, bringing together 56% of the county's population.



Among the priorities in Dolj County regarding climate action, some of the most important are as follows:

- clean water;
- clean air in urban areas;
- waste management integrated system;
- extend forest areas (in Dolj 11% forests out of 30% necessary for a stable climate) and fight deforestation (the southern part of the county is known as Oltenia's Sahara due to the sandy arid area close to the Danube).

1.2. Climate Change and Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) in Dolj County

After 1990, the environmental policy has become an important component of the overall policy in Romania. Its evolution, despite the periods of inconsistencies or incoherence, has followed the coordinates elaborated by the EU and, nowadays, it can be asserted that, at least from a legislative point of view, it is in line with the EU policy and close to achieving its objectives. Starting from 1991 onwards, the Ministry of Environment (now the Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests) is directly responsible for the initiation of national environmental strategies and the creation of the framework for their implementation (i.e. "*National Environmental Protection Strategy*" elaborated in 1992 and updated in 1996 and 2002, and the "*National Waste Management Strategy*", 2002)¹. Moreover, Romania has taken more recent steps towards improving its national policies and strategies on climate action and sustainable development. In 2013, the Romanian

¹ A review of climate change legislation in Romania for the period 1990-2015 is available here: <https://www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/ROMANIA.pdf>. All the references in this chapter were consulted during April-August 201.

Government promoted the *National Strategy on Climate Change* (2016) and the *National Action Plan on Climate Change* (2016-2020), which provide the support, vision and benchmarks for future concrete actions.

As a member of the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU), Romania has adopted the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, thus elaborating Romania's 2030 *Sustainable Development Strategy*. This citizen-centred strategy defines the national framework for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and provides a roadmap for achieving the 17 SDGs, focusing on “innovation, optimism, resilience, and the belief that the role of the state is to serve the needs of each citizen in a fair, efficient, and balanced manner, all within a clean environment”².

All these national strategies and policies are implemented in Dolj County by the local units of the National Environmental Guard (Dolj Environmental Guard), the Dolj Agency for Environmental Protection and the Dolj County Council, under the subordination of the Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests and the Romanian Government (i.e. *Local Action Plan for Environment in Dolj*³). These local units signal the local needs and facilitate and monitor the implementation of the above-mentioned strategies and policies at local level.

Despite all policies and strategies available at national level, the proper implementation of their provisions is only of recent date and there is still a stringent need to act in addressing environmental issues. According to the Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI), Romania now ranks 38th, falling from the medium- into the low-performing countries⁴.

In order to implement concrete actions addressing climate change, in Dolj County there are local initiatives promoted by Craiova City Hall, through its Environmental Administration and Monitoring Compartment (a subdivision of the Department for the Administration and Monitoring of Public Utility Services, part of the Directorate for Public Services), in collaboration with Dolj County Council and other local institutions, as well as with public and private companies, financed through national, local or European Union funds. There are several funding programmes for climate change in Romania, among which POS Environment, Life+, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), SEE Financial Mechanism, the Pro Inno-Europe and the Framework Programme for Competitivity and Innovation (CIP) with its Eco-Innovation component, as well as the PHARE programme, with three components: Phare National; Phare CBC (Cross Border Cooperation), and Phare CES (Economic and Social Cohesion).

The City of Craiova is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and clean environment for its citizens. Craiova was the first city in Romania to join the EBRD's “Green City Programme”, which aims to support cities in addressing environmental challenges through

² Available online at: <<http://dezvoltaredurabila.gov.ro/web/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Romanias-Sustainable-Development-Strategy-2030.pdf>>

³ Available online at:

http://www.anpm.ro/documents/19431/50328917/Varianta+finala+PLAM+2020.pdf/e3ea7db4-7afd-4089-8a56-9e3459420306_ Decision of the Dolj County Council available at:

<https://www.cjdoj.ro/portal/siteweb/MO/an%202020/Proiecte%20hotarari%202020/sedinta%2028.05/21.pdf>

⁴ <https://ccpi.org/country/rou/>

development of Green City Action Plans, Sustainable Infrastructure Investment and Capacity building. As a result, in January 2021 was published the first volume of the *Green City Action Plan for Craiova* (volume 1, January 2021)⁵, which underlines the fact that Craiova has to systematically analyse and prioritise environmental challenges in the city. It proposes a list of 13 strategic goals for Craiova to be achieved in the next 10-15 years and suggests a list of 29 actions that have to be performed in order to achieve these goals. The same document puts forward both policy measures and bankable investments that the city can make to improve its environmental performance.

Another step forward towards sustainable development and climate action is *the Integrated Waste Management System in Dolj County*, approved in 2019 and implemented starting with 2021, thus creating the necessary infrastructure for selective waste collection and recycling.

1.3. Policies and Programmes Addressing Migration

Romania is a country experiencing both emigration and immigration.

Emigration. During 2015-2016, Romania was considered a country of negative net migration rate and the source of the fifth largest diaspora worldwide (OECD Report, 2019; Moreno, Zilibotti, 2021). As of 2016, 17% of Romania's population was living abroad, making it the country with the highest emigration rate among neighbouring countries and among countries of origin for migrants to the OECD area (OECD Report, 2019). Romania has seen a remarkable increase of over 200% in its emigrant population from 2000 to 2016, coinciding with Romania's accession to the EU in 2007 (OECD Report, 2019). More specifically, recent statistical data show, for example, that while Germany had in 2020 the highest net migration figures in Europe at over 543 thousand people, Romania had the lowest, with a negative net-migration figure of almost 74 thousand⁶ (net migration rate⁷: -3.78 migrants/thousand population⁸).

In the last 30 years, the efforts of the Romanian Government have been addressing two main issues: strengthening the relations of the Romanian diaspora with their country of origin and reintegrating the returnees (i.e. the migrants that return in their home country for a shorter or a longer period of time).

As pointed out in the OECD report for 2015-2016 (OECD 2019), the Romanian **diaspora** policies present the following three key priorities:⁹ 1. improving the proper use of the skills

⁵ The list of stakeholders involved in the development of the Green City Action Plan for Craiova includes: 18 NGOs, 4 public utility companies, 3 regional governance bodies, 5 major industrial organisations and 10 academic institutions)

⁶ Net migration in selected European countries in 2020 is available at:

<<https://www.statista.com/statistics/686124/net-migration-selected-european-countries/>>

⁷ The net migration rate is the number of immigrants minus the number of emigrants over a period, divided by the person-years lived by the population of the receiving country over that period. It is expressed as net number of migrants per 1,000 population.

⁸ Net migration rate for Romania in 2020:

<https://knoema.com/atlas/Romania/topics/Demographics/Population/Net-migration-rate>

⁹ <https://www.romaniajournal.ro/society-people/half-of-romanian-immigrants-with-higher-education-are-over->

possessed by Romanian emigrants in OECD countries to mitigate the high level of over-qualification, foster their social and economic integration, and increase their potential contribution to Romania's economy through remittances and skill transfer; 2. helping return migrants to find or create better opportunities in Romania, either by improving the matching between their skills and the needs of Romanian firms, or by supporting them in the development of their businesses; and 3. fostering stronger ties with the children of Romanian emigrants born in OECD countries, so that they can contribute to both their country of residence and to Romania, and maintain the possibility of living in Romania, either temporarily or permanently.

Issues related to the Romanian diaspora are addressed by the Romanian Government through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Romanians Abroad¹⁰, subordinated directly to the Prime-Minister Office. The main activity of the Department of Romanians Abroad is to implement Law 299/2007 regarding the support of all Romanians abroad and also the provisions of Law 321/2006. All its policies and strategies are aimed at the preservation and development of the Romanian identity abroad, strengthening the Romanian associations abroad, supporting the integration process and protecting the rights of all Romanians abroad (i.e. National Strategy for Romanians Abroad 2017–2020¹¹).

Concerning the **returned migrants**, the Romanian authorities addressed them in a manner that later was poorly sustained. Once the economic crisis hit Romania, the return migration became a marginal issue for decision-makers. However, more recently, the Romanian Government has launched, under various EU funding schemes, several programmes supporting investment opportunities for returning Romanians. One of these programmes is the *Diaspora Start-Up*, launched in 2016, that targets Romanian communities across the world and encourages return by providing training, coaching, and access to such financing opportunities as grants (up to 40.000 EUR) for starting a business. With a financial allocation of almost 30 million Euro, under this program, 1026 start-ups were established by returned Romanians, with 2463 newly created jobs (MFE, 2019)¹².

The main negative effect of emigration is the constant decrease of the Romanian population in the last 20 years. Another negative effect is on the emotional and social life of children separated from their parents, who go to work abroad.

Many initiatives and actions have been sustained at the regional level by the local authorities and civil society organisations (NGOs, schools, community organisations a.o.) through projects and programmes covering employment issues, social protection of families affected by emigration or the integration of returnees. Namely, the Dolj County Council, through the budget allocated to the General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection Dolj, supports the activity of the *Centre for Counselling and Support for Parents and Children*, and its information, counselling, guidance, support and parental education programmes. The need to create other centres in Dolj County and to develop such services is justified by the fact that the number of children in our county who remain without

qualified-for-their-jobs-oecd-report-reads/

¹⁰ <http://dprp.gov.ro/web/legistatie/>

¹¹ Available here: <http://www.mprp.gov.ro/web/strategia-privind-relatia-cu-romanii-de-pretutindeni-2/>

¹² https://ejes.uaic.ro/articles/EJES2020_1102_MAT.pdf

parental care is constantly increasing (due to the increasing emigration level, children left behind are considered a category at risk), according to the statistical data existing at the level of the Dolj County Council. Given that the effects of this phenomenon have a strong impact on the children, helping and protecting these children involve a complex approach, with accurate interventions, which can be offered in such centres. All these were addressed in the *Strategy for Developing the Social Services in Craiova 2019-2024*¹³, resulting from a close coordination of the efforts of all institutions involved in the child rights protection and promotion, and the rights of vulnerable adults (LAs and CSO representatives). At the local level, the General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection Dolj is both a direct and an indirect promoter, initiating projects targeted at social protection and well-being of children, and providing the local NGOs or other CSOs with additional funds for their activity.

Furthermore, the local NGOs are striving to provide services complementary to those provided by central and local authorities to facilitate integration, on the one hand, and assistance for the families affected by emigration, on the other hand. In Dolj, such an example is the „St. Basil” Social Centre for vulnerable persons, administered by Vasiliada Association, in partnership with Craiova Local Council, the Archbishopric of Craiova, and the Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection Dolj.

Immigration. Romania is also a country that welcomes migrants. Official statistics regarding the presence of foreigners in the country show no major fluctuations in recent years, but a steady increase in the number of third-country nationals was observed from 2013 to 2019, the most significant increase being the number of migrant workers¹⁴. On the other hand, given the geographical positioning of the country, Romania is at the confluence of the migration routes, being affected by flows of temporary illegal migrants coming mostly from East Asia or North African countries and used as a transit space for illegal immigration to the more developed countries in Western Europe.

At national level, Romania implements a specific migration policy, harmonised with the European provisions and adapted to the country's needs, taking into account its impact on the other EU Member States, while ensuring a fair treatment and effective integration of the migrants. On 2 September 2021¹⁵, the Government of Romania enacted a new *National Strategy on Immigration for 2021-2024*¹⁶, replacing the previous strategy which ended in 2018¹⁷. Due to the lack of a policy document during this time, the coordination between

¹³ <https://www.primariacraiova.ro/pozearticole/userfiles/files/01/21279.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/governance/romania>

¹⁵ <http://www.forintegration.eu/pl/romania-a-new-national-strategy-on-immigration-finally-adopted>

¹⁶ DECISION no. 884 of August 19th, 2021, for the approval of the National Strategy on immigration for the period 2021-2024, of the Action Plan for the period 2021-2022 for the implementation of the National Strategy on immigration for the period 2021-2024, as well as for the modification of the Government Decision no. 572/2008 on the establishment of the Coordination Group for the implementation of the National Strategy on Immigration.

¹⁷ Although the Romanian Ministry of Domestic Affairs has proposed a National Strategy on Immigration for 2020-2023, which was intended to replace the former Strategy on Immigration for 2019-2022, hotly debated by the public and ultimately never enacted, this strategy was very similar to its predecessor and was raising the same objections from NGOs working in the migration field, who say that the policies within it will be detrimental to an individual's prospects for integration into the Romanian society. Consequently, it was never enacted.

various public institutions was defective, impacting mostly the integration component. The poor coordination and the lack of implication from certain public authorities were among the structural faults underlined by the NIEM (National Integration Evaluation Mechanism) reports in Romania¹⁸. The main objectives of this strategy are: 1. Efficient management of the immigration phenomenon; 2. Strengthening the national asylum system and ensuring compliance with European and international standards; 3. Strengthening the response capacity of the Romanian state in the face of an influx of immigrants at the border of the national territory and 4. Sustained capabilities needed to implement policies in the field of migration, asylum, and integration of foreigners. Another important secondary objective is to strengthen the capacity of local authorities in ensuring sustainable assistance to resettled persons and in adapting services institutions with responsibilities in taking over and integrating people in need of international protection. Nevertheless, the most commonly voiced objection is that the strategy focuses too much on border control and illegal migration, overlooking important aspects of integration such as: strengthening protection/integration support for children; supporting measures for employment; or prevention of exploitation of migrants in the workplace.

Issues related to immigration are addressed by the Romanian Ministry of Domestic Affairs through the General Inspectorate for Immigration¹⁹ at the national level, and by the regional Office of Immigration at the local level.

1.4. Policies and Actions on Youth Engagement

At national level, young people and their actions are supported and encouraged by laws and strategies, such as the *Youth Law*: Law no. 350/2006²⁰ or the *National Youth Policy Strategy 2015-2020*²¹ adopted by the Romanian government in 2015. These policies and strategies aim at supporting youth to participate in the economic, social, cultural, and political life, ensuring equal opportunities to education, employment and decent life conditions to all youth, including vulnerable youth groups. They also regulate the legal framework for the collaboration between LAs and CSOs. However, there are very few action plans that enact them and the interventions targeting youth, planned by different institutions, are isolated and take place in only some regions of Romania. Moreover, these policies are not always correlated with the actual needs and expectations of the young people, as argued by the *Romanian Youth Forum* in 2015 (<http://forumul-tinerilor.ro/cntr2015/>)

(<http://e-consultare.gov.ro/w/proiectul-hotararii-guvernului-pentru-aprobarea-strategiei-nationale-privind-imigratia-pentru-perioada-2020-2023-a-planului-de-actiune-pe-perioada-2020-2021-pentru-implementarea-strategiei-nationale/>).

¹⁸ <http://www.forintegration.eu/pl/romania-a-new-national-strategy-on-immigration-finally-adopted>

¹⁹ <http://igi.mai.gov.ro/en/content/strategies>

²⁰ No other important revisions took place since the adoption of the law in 2006. In December 2020, the Youth Law was under revision, while in the Romanian Parliament a debate on a new Youth Law started in 2018 but is still ongoing.

²¹ <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/romania/13-national-youth-strategy>

Local youth strategy in Dolj²²

In Dolj County, the youth sector is strengthened and recognised as an important area in the development of the local community. The local authorities encourage the exploitation of the maximum potential of all young people and constantly seek to improve the quality of their life. In July 2020, the City Hall of Craiova approved the *Local Youth Strategy for 2020-2025*, which creates a bridge for the connection between the community and the young people, committing them to work together and to adopt and develop knowledge. This strategy brings forward the local approach regarding the engagement of young people in the life of their community. It starts from the needs identified by the youth and continues with the necessary actions to respond to these needs. This strategy provides a reference point for better engaging stakeholders and outlines the potential of collaborative partnerships between young people, local authorities and the local community to their benefit.

Moreover, in order to enhance the communication with the young people from Dolj County, the Craiova City Hall created in 2019 a *Counselling Committee for Youth Problems*, consisting of representatives of 22 local NGOs engaged in youth actions. This committee joins efforts with LAs to support the candidacy of Craiova to the Romanian Youth Capital Competition in 2023.

Youth actions

Several initiatives have taken shape in addressing **climate change** issues in Dolj County. As a result, many local NGOs have successfully implemented actions aimed at lowering the impact of climate change. For instance, the Association for Education in South-West Oltenia (EDUCOL), in partnership with the University of Craiova (Department of Physics), the Regional Meteorological Centre and seven high-schools in Craiova, promoted the project entitled *Clear Air Craiova*, sponsored by OMV Petrom in 2021, an educational project, based on volunteer work, whose objectives are to develop an independent network of sensors and weather stations to determine the quality of the air breathed by the inhabitants of Craiova.

There were also projects financed with non-reimbursable funds that LAs, CSOs and educational institutions could benefit from, such as for example the Operational Programme Human Capital (POCU), which represents an important source of investment in employment, education, fight against poverty and support for social services through the European Social Fund. POCU establishes “investment priorities, specific objectives and actions undertaken by Romania in the field of Human Resources by helping Romanians, including youngsters to find a job and improve their education and skills, as well as reducing poverty and social exclusion, supporting better social services and labour market institutions”.²³

Other actions were organised within international projects financed by the European Commission in programmes such as Erasmus+, which enabled NGOs and educational institutions to mobilise a large number of young people, either as beneficiaries of or as participants in actions directed towards climate change.

²² <https://primariacraiova.ro/ro/2020-2/iulie-2020-strategia-locala-pentru-tineret-a-municipiului-craiova-pentru-perioada-2020-2025.html>

²³ More information on POCU is available online at: <<https://www.pwc.ro/en/services/tax-services/people-and-organisation/pocu.html>>

As regards the projects targeting **migration** that engage young people, we could not identify any specific regional project, except for those that propose social protection measures developed and promoted by local NGOs or local branches of national NGOs. For instance, the Save Children Association has implemented the programme called *Protection and Education for Children with Parents who went to work abroad* starting with 2009, and, since then, more than 250 children have benefited from services offered by the Dolj Branch. Within the day care centre created within this project, the children benefit from school, social and psychological support services during the period of separation from parents (absence of parents, overcoming the feeling of guilt, improving self-esteem) and for improving life skills (developing communication and socialization skills, maintaining communication with parents). Also, the beneficiaries and their families were provided with school supplies, recreational, cultural and social activities, and support for law enforcement. By organizing awareness campaigns, county and regional debates, over 8000 people were informed about the existing legislative framework and the concrete steps through which the delegation of parental authority can be obtained.

1.5. Conclusion

- There are regional strategies and action plans correlated with the national and European policies, and there are also administrative units within the LAs that are in charge of enacting plans and measures with regard to climate change and migration issues;
- Although there is a slight idea of autonomy, the policies developed by the LAs are linked and given by the national policies;
- There is low cooperation between the public sector, the private sector and local authorities in support of promoting projects;
- There are still many steps to be taken with regard to initiating, organising and implementing these actions.
- There are studies and local action plans with well-established objectives and priorities resulted from the collaboration between LAs and CSOs, but this collaboration should be continued and strengthened by putting these actions into practice;
- The Craiova Local Council financially supports representatives of local CSOs with which they have already signed partnership agreements;
- At the CSOs level, they are only now starting to organize themselves in networks; it is impossible to identify an NGOs network at the level of Dolj County, but there is collaboration in elaborating the local strategies and policies;
- There is the need to create an NGO consortium/network and/or developing the existent partnerships among NGOs, for a more effective collaboration and initiation of joint programmes;
- NGOs have limited resources to increase the impact of the programmes they organize in the community and limited access to the existing infrastructure in the administration of the city.

2. ELEMENTS THAT FOSTER ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

2.1. Analysis of the Questionnaire

For the questionnaire to be administered at the regional level, the Romanian regional researchers translated it into Romanian and made it available online on Lime Survey platform. Despite the limited help of the regional LAs and CSOs in accessing the young people engaged at regional level, 115 anonymous responses were received, out of which 100 answers were kept after data cleaning. Data cleaning was done in accordance with the decision reached by the regional researchers that only the answers that exceeded 20 minutes were to be taken into consideration (at least 10 minutes per section).

This section of the Dolj regional research report presents selective data obtained from administering the questionnaire to young people from Dolj County, with regard to their level of awareness on SDGs, climate change and migration, as well as to their active participation in addressing these global issues.

2.1.1. Socio-demographic data

In Dolj County, the questionnaire-based survey took place between June and August 2021, when a total of 100 young people, aged 16-35, completed the online questionnaire in its Romanian version. The average age of the respondents is 24. There are 14 respondents aged 15-19, 58 are 20-24 years old, whereas 28 respondents are aged over 25.

Regarding the gender distribution, 71 out of 100 are female, and 29 male respondents. The number of engaged females is 51, calculated by taking into account the number of female participants entering Scenarios A and B. This shows that almost 70% of the total female respondents have somehow been engaged in actions addressing climate change or migration in the last three years.

Two thirds of all Romanian respondents currently live in an urban area (71%) and 6% in semi-urban, whereas the rest live in rural areas (23%). Almost all respondents were born in Romania (96%), 2 in Moldavia and 2 in Serbia, and all currently live in Dolj County.

The percentage of those who declared to have experienced migration stories in their families and those who didn't is quite similar, with 53% and 46%, respectively. Only 1 preferred not to answer.

Out of all respondents, more than half are graduates of higher education, with 33 BA graduates, 20 with MA studies and 4 PhD holders. The rest of the respondents are either still enrolled in high-school (10 respondents) or have already obtained their Baccalaureate diploma (32 respondents).

2.1.2. Awareness about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In Section 2 of the questionnaire, the respondents had to answer questions about their level of awareness about the SDGs and about the regional circumstances, capacities and levels of responsibility with regard to the implementation of SDGs.

The first question of this sections asked the respondents whether they have heard or know something about the SDGs. Out of the total number, almost half declared that they have never heard about SDG (45 participants), whereas 35 heard, but knew nothing and only 20 declared that they know what SDGs are. This indicates a rather low level of

awareness with regard to SDGs.

When they were asked to associate SDGs with the first three words that come to their minds, the respondents' options centred around words such as 'development', 'health', 'climate change', 'education', 'equality' or 'future'. The results were analysed and ranked using AntConc and a word cloud was generated, as illustrated in Fig. 1 below. The two-word combinations included 'educație de calitate' (quality education), 'eradicarea foametei' (zero hunger), 'eradicarea sărăciei' (no poverty), 'educație pentru sănătate' (health education) or 'schimbări climatice' (climate changes) as the most frequent occurrences.

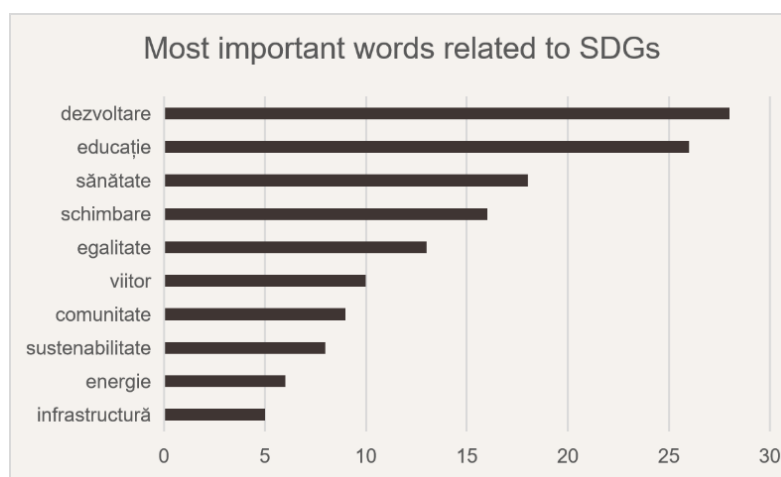


Fig. 1 Most frequent words that come to the participants' minds when thinking of "Sustainable Development Goals" (Word frequency list with AntConc and WordCloud)

The next question of this section asked the respondents to select the three most pressing and least pressing SDGs at the international, national and regional levels (Fig. 2, left). Thus, at the international level, the Romanian respondents consider that the most urgent issues are "No poverty" (SDG01), "Zero hunger" (SDG02), and "Good health and well-being" (SDG3). "No poverty" (SDG01) was also selected as the most pressing at national level, alongside "Quality education" (SDG4) and "Good health and well-being" (SDG3). What is

interesting is that at regional level, SDG1 “No poverty” is also ranked first, followed by “Quality education” (SDG3) and “Decent work and economic growth” (SDG8). The selection no poverty at all the three levels by the Romanian respondents may be justified by the economic national context.

On the other hand, respondents agree that two of the least urgent SDGs (Fig. 2, right) at international level are "Industry, innovation and infrastructure" (SDG09), “Gender equality” (SDG5) and "Affordable and clean energy" (SDG7). At the national level, “Gender equality” (SDG5), “Quality education” (SDG4) and "Zero hunger" (SDG02), whereas at the local level, respondents consider “Gender equality” (SDG5), "Affordable and clean energy" (SDG7) and "Life below water" (SDG14) as the least urgent SDGs.

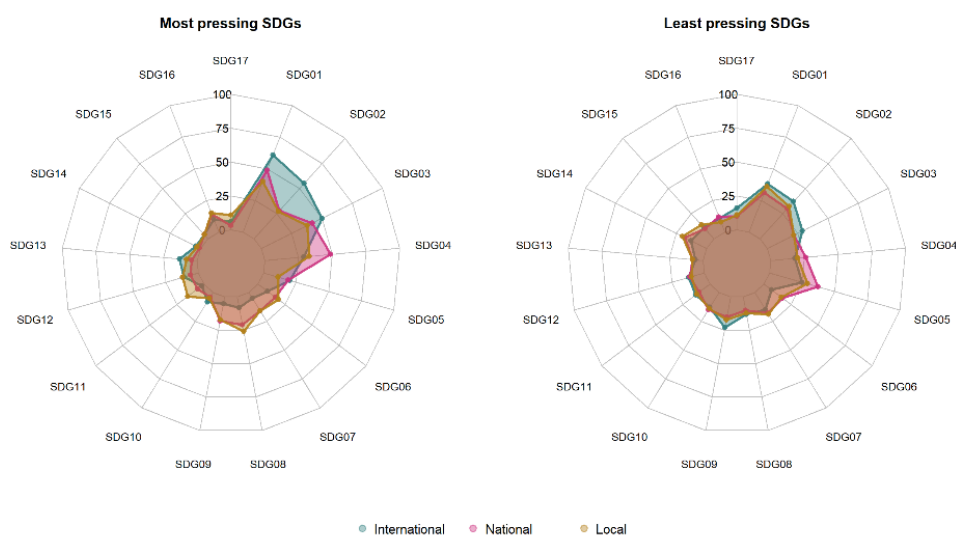


Fig. 2 Most (left) and least (right) pressing SDGs at international, national, and local level (%)

Moreover, the young participants that took part in the survey were also asked whether they agree or disagree about whose responsibility it is to tackle global inequalities: the EU, the national or the local authorities. Their answers were ranked as illustrated in Figure 3 below. Overall, there is a strong consensus that global inequalities should be a main priority of the EU authorities (Mean value of 3.69), followed by national authorities (Mean 3.00) and regional authorities (Mean 2.99).

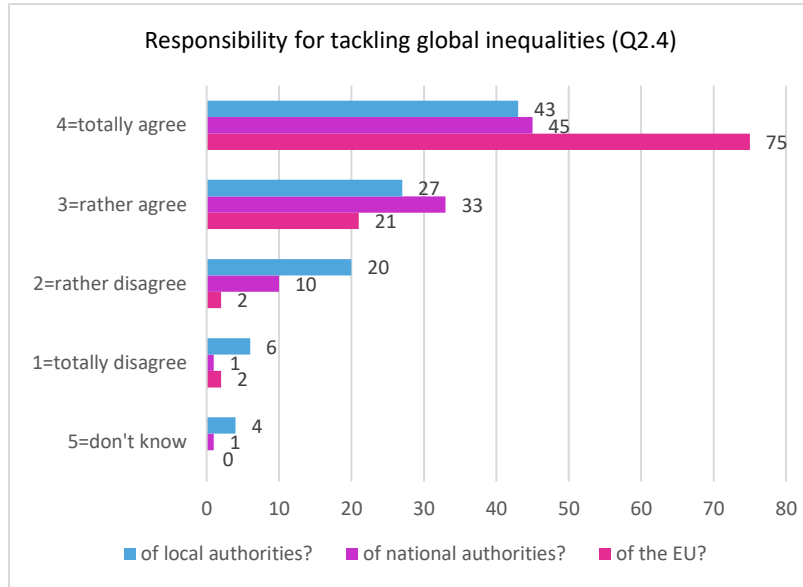


Fig. 3. Responsibility for tackling global inequalities (question 2.4, %)

The activities aimed at changing global inequalities that the participants declared to have participated in are illustrated in Fig. 4 below. For more than half of the respondents (61%), the commitment against world inequalities first means caring about ethical aspects of their consumption. This is the very first area where young people can actually act and have a real impact. Almost 40% of the respondents are also active on the internet and show their support or their participation in online campaigns. Volunteer work, individual or for an organization (27% of respondents) is also among the activities in which young people from Dolj County take part. The least frequent activity is political involvement, which might be explained by the general mistrust in political power and political figures. On the other hand, the percentage of young people not engaged in activities is rather high, reaching almost 20%. This means that 1 out of 5 respondents is not personally involved in any activities aimed at changing global inequalities.

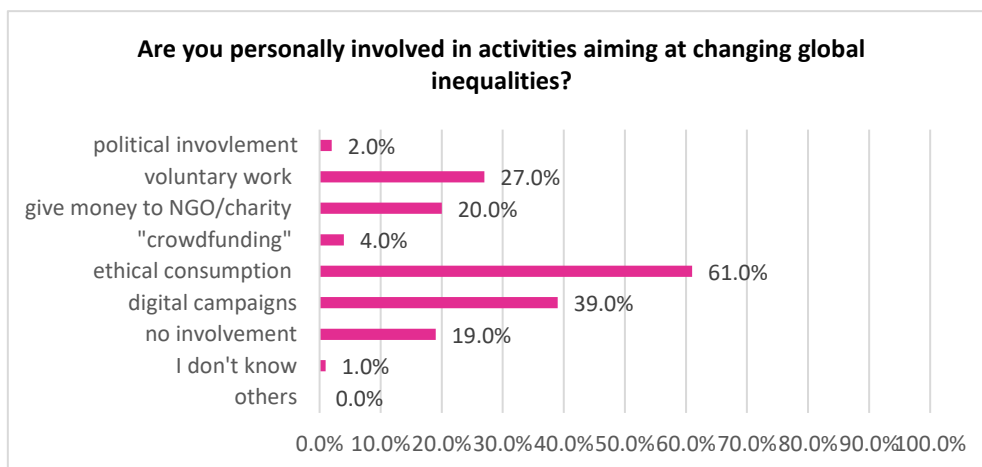


Fig. 4. Answers to Question 2.5 (multiple answers possible)

Finally, almost all respondents (92%) reported a high and very high willingness to change their own personal behaviour to reduce the impact of global issues. Thus, the conclusion that can be drawn is that young people have a positive attitude towards being actively involved in reducing the impact of global issues.

2.1.3. Climate change and migration

Section 3 and 4 of the questionnaire consist of questions aimed at finding out the respondents' general and personal perceptions about climate change and migration, as well as their engagement in actions addressing these issues. Out of the total number of respondents, 96 filled in the section on climate change and 93, the section on migration.

Almost all respondents consider both climate change and migration as important or very important issues. Climate change is seen as an important issue by 74% of the young people, whereas migration by only 42%. However, there is less overall concern about climate change and migration, with 32% of the participants feeling very concerned about climate change and only 5% about migration. Thus, the level of personal concern is very low, though young people from Dolj consider both topics to be generally important.

Respondents were asked to provide the first three words that come to their minds when they think of climate change or migration (questions 3.3. and 4.3). The results are presented based on the first three ranked words (including the words with equal number of distribution). Thus, the words for climate change were pollution, deforestation and global warming, and for migration: jobs, living standard and poverty.

Moreover, participants feel rather informed and up to date on news related to climate change (half of the respondents admitted to being much informed and only 8% very much informed), and even less so in relation to migration (only 2% declared that they are very much informed). Their preferred channels of information include social media, specialized websites, blogs and apps, and official local/national websites, because, being in a continuous state of transition, the people feel the need to be informed about the ongoing legislative provisions. It is also interesting to notice that information does not mainly come from educational institutions or educational actors (i.e., from school/teachers). The least preferred channels of information are events, campaigns brochures and leaflets.

Regarding the young people's perception of their capability to induce change, we analyse data referring to their perception of the role they hold in decision making at local level, to their power to contribute to local policies addressing the two issues discussed so far, and the importance of their engagement in climate change and migration actions. More than half of the participants (56%) do think their voice is not enough heard in decision making at local level for climate change, and 1 in 4 participants does not feel heard at all. The values for migration are even higher, with almost 80% of the young people participating in the survey not feeling heard enough or not being heard at all. Despite these values, young people still consider that they have the power to contribute to the local policies on climate change and migration (87% for climate change and 72% for migration answered yes to questions 3.15 and 4.15 in the questionnaire) and think that their engagement is important and very important in addressing climate change and migration issues (over 80% for climate change, and almost 70% for migration).

The level of engagement that respondents perceive at local level is similar for climate change and for migration (Figure 5), but when asked about their past involvement in actions

related to climate change or migration in the last years, the results were strikingly different, with 20% declaring to have been often involved (Scenario A) and 52% involved a few times (Scenario B) in actions addressing climate change, whereas only 3% were often involved and 23% involved a few times in actions addressing migration (1 in 3 was not involved in any action addressing the issue of migration - Scenario C).

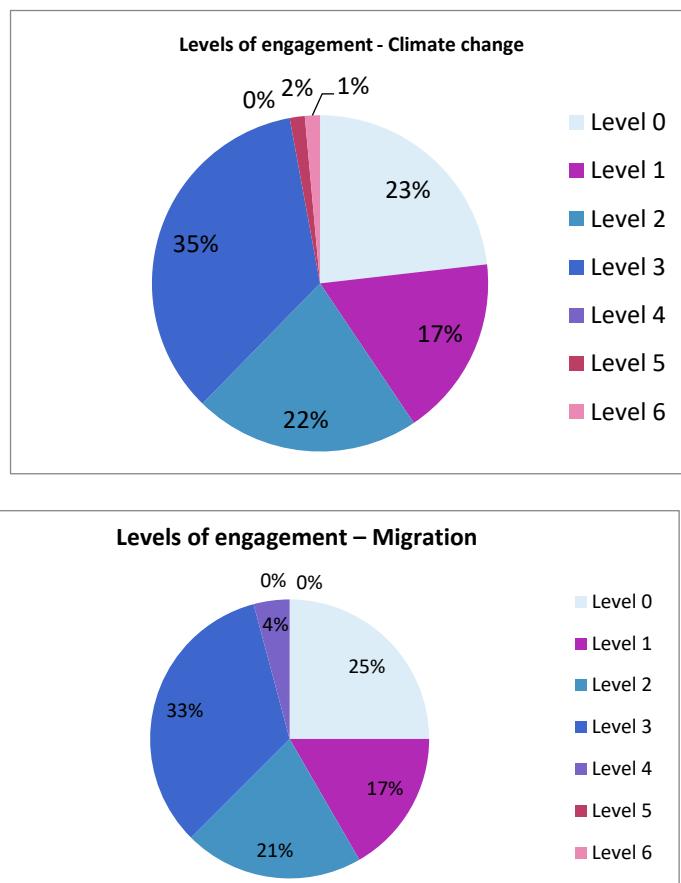


Fig. 5 Self-assessed level of engagement for climate change and migration (answers to

The participants in Scenarios A and B also had to mention the preferred activities. Their first three ranked options are shown in the table below:

CLIMATE CHANGE	MIGRATION
Punctual voluntary actions 46,4%	Debates, discussion groups 50,0%
Petitions (sign & share) 43,5%	Conferences, workshops 33,3%
School project 40,6%	Punctual voluntary actions 29,2%
Direct action 40,6%	

Table 1. Most frequent activities addressing climate change/migration the young people have participated at in the last 3 years

Punctual voluntary actions are among the most common type of activities in both climate change (46.6%) and migration (29.2%), while direct action (i.e. changing one's habits, recycling, consuming less, etc.), petitions (sign and share) and school projects have quite

similar values for climate change. In the case of migration, conferences, workshops, debates and discussion groups are the preferred activities, an indicator of the need to be more informed about migration issues, a topic hardly ever approached at the regional level.

The engagement of the respondents is mostly motivated by internal levers, like personal values/beliefs and opinions or their interests in finding out information related to climate change/migration. Local NGOs or even teachers are also important motivating factors for the Romanian young people. The less influential levers are political figures. Moreover, respondents agree that the institutions that could have an impact on motivating young people to get engaged with both climate change and migration are, in this order, educational institutions (schools, universities...), non-governmental organisations, and European or international institutions. Political organisations and movements represent the least motivating factors.

On the other hand, the main reasons of discouragement for those young people who have never participated in any actions (and thus enter Scenario C) are the absence of sufficient activities organised at school/university or in their locality, or the absence of a trigger that could have stimulated them to participate.

As for their future participation, in the case of climate change, more than 80% of young people felt that the idea of participating is attractive and very attractive for them. The values corresponding to their answers for migration indicate that they only felt rather attracted (yet not very much) by the idea of participating in actions addressing migration in the future, with almost half of the respondents declaring that this idea is 'not enough' attractive for them. It should also be pointed out that there is a clear positive correlation between their participation in actions on climate change or migration and the likelihood of participants to become Mindchangers.

2.1.4. Main characteristics of a Mindchanger

In the last section of the questionnaire, the participants were asked to rate from 1 (lowest score) to 5 (the highest) a list of 24 characteristics that characterise a *Mindchanger*. In Figure 6 below, the two graphs indicate on the one hand the participants' answers to question 1.9 (rating their own characteristics), and, on the other hand, their answers to question 5.1 in which they rate the characteristics that they think a Mindchanger is likely to have.

As can be seen in Figure 6, the characteristics with the highest value in the case of Mindchangers are: *open minded* (mean 4.58), *sociable* (mean 4.54), *responsible* (mean 4.54) and *promoter of change* (mean 4.48). The characteristics with the lowest mean values are surprisingly characteristics that may seem crucial for a young mindchanger: *well-informed on local and international issues*, *leadership skilled*, *able to solve complex problems*, *digitally skilled* and *extroverted*. Despite the lower ranking, the mean values of these characteristics do not fall below 4.

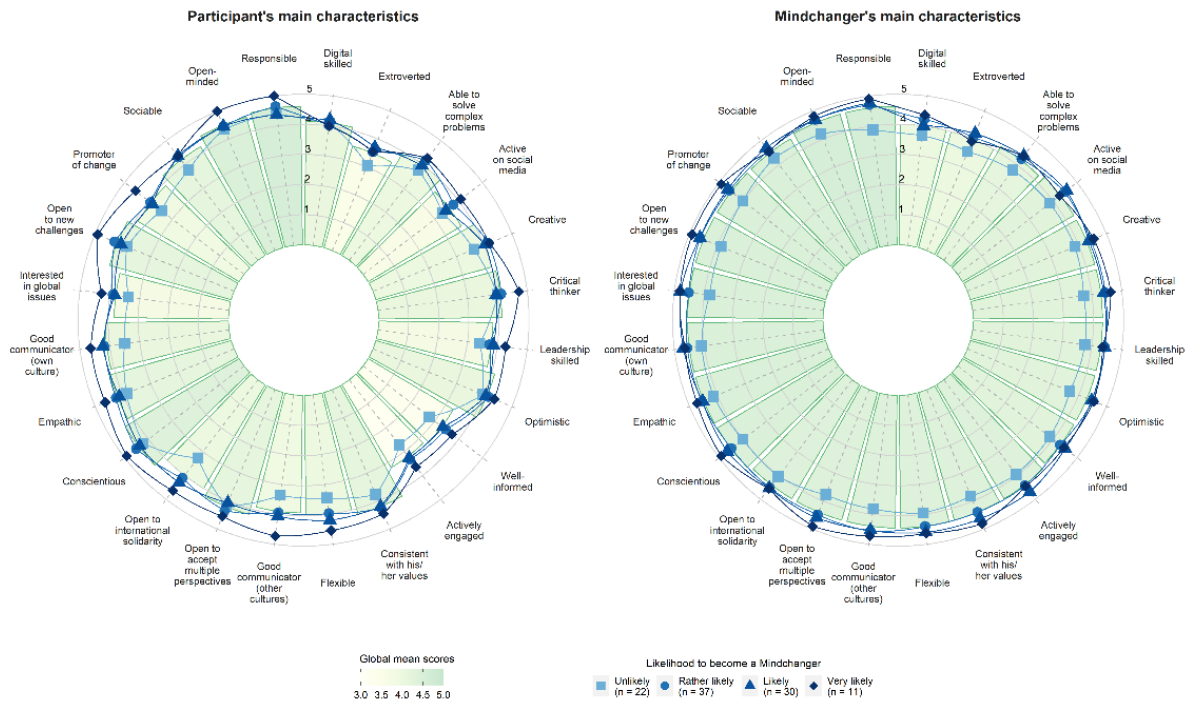


Fig. 6. Participants' characteristics (left) and main characteristics that a *Mindchanger* should have (right) correlated with the likelihood to become a Mindchanger

Regarding the answers given to question 1.9, in which the respondents were asked to describe themselves with the same 24 characteristics (Figure 6, left), the graph shows that the scores are lower than those given to a *Mindchanger*. In general, respondents describe themselves as *responsible*, *conscientious*, *open-minded*, *open to new challenges* or *open to accept multiple perspectives*. A surprisingly low ranking is attributed to *actively engaged* and *well-informed*, results which are in accordance with the overall conclusion of the survey: the Romanian participants demonstrate a low participation level, mainly caused by lack of information and promotion of activities they can get engaged in.

The last question of the survey invited the participants to indicate how likely they are to become Mindchangers. The results showed that 1 in 5 participants is unlikely to become a Mindchanger, whereas only 1 in 10 is convinced that he/she will be a future Mindchanger. The vast majority of almost 70% are rather likely or likely to become Mindchangers.

It should be noted that although the young participants demonstrated throughout the survey a sufficient level of awareness with regard to the importance of the SDGs and are ready to make changes in their personal behaviour to support them, they are not equally convinced that they can become Mindchangers. This could be explained by thinking that they may consider this role to be overwhelming or they may not fully understand it.

2.2. Analysis of the interviews

To organise the interviews, we selected 10 young people from Dolj County with a high level of engagement in extracurricular volunteer-based activities and projects. The 10 young

Mindchangers – 6 women and 4 men – were contacted via email or social media during June-August 2021. Aged between 18 and 27 years old, they are mostly students or higher education graduates (BA or MA studies), some of them being previously or currently involved in the board of youth associations at the local and district level, but with extensive experience of working in international teams. One of the participants is, for instance, an activist at international level, with an MA degree in gender studies and interest in non-discrimination, slavery and inclusion. A summary of the profiles of the people interviewed is presented in the table in the Appendices.

The interviews were organised both in person and online and ranged in length from 60 to 120 minutes. Each interview was either audio or video recorded, transcribed and translated into English, so as to facilitate subsequent data analysis. The final corpus consists of ten texts, each having between 2500-6500 words.

The results of the analysis²⁴ indicated that *education* was a predominant topic in the young participants’ speeches, in which they frequently used words related it (school, teachers, subjects, ‘educational system’, ‘teacher assessment’, ‘school principals’, training courses, etc.). As a result, the presentation is organised around this topic, including the elements that gravitate around education and its three forms: formal, informal and non-formal. Additionally, within each of these primary categories, subcategories were developed that further delineated the elements pointed out by the participants, which were subsequently illustrated in the form of a concept map, as presented below.

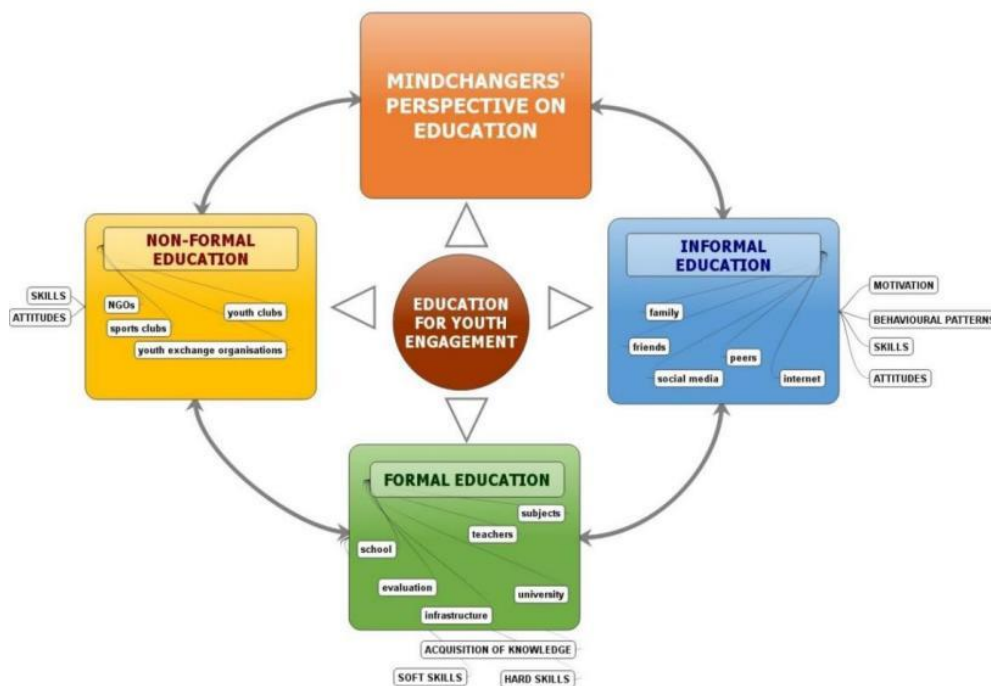


Fig. 7. Education for youth engagement from the participants’ perspective

²⁴ The results were analysed in more detail in Tilea, M, Reşceanu, A., Reşceanu, I. (2021). “Mind-changing perspectives on education: A content analysis of young people’s storytelling-based interviews”. In *Analele Universităţii “Ovidius” Constanţa. Seria Filologie* Vol. XXXII, 2/2021, pp. 394-411.

This map shows that young people are aware not only of the major role of education in training the active citizens of today's world, but also of the relationship that exists between its three subcategories: formal, informal, non-formal.

2.2.1. Informal education

In the participants' opinion, family is an important source of encouragement and support, and, for some of them, the parents (one or both) or grandparents are seen as role models, whose behaviour they try to imitate. They first attracted them in doing volunteering activities and strongly encouraged them to continue. For Monica, her parents have always been there for her and taught her to be empathic and to help others whenever she can, and her mother is her "model, since she is always so helpful, she is far better than I am. I want to be like her". In Emi's case, his grandmother was the driving force behind all his actions and was always very supportive with his endeavours. He also acknowledged the support of his friends and his colleagues who encouraged him a lot. Similarly, Andrei mentioned the important role his parents played in involving him in their activity (both professional and philanthropic) and in motivating him to start and manage his own initiatives. He is also the one who brought up the constant encouragement he received from his social media followers and 'friends', which he found both inspirational and gratifying.

However, family is also seen as a barrier, because parents are considered to be tributary to the old mentality, as Maria D. pointed out. In her opinion, they do not do "everything they can to raise educated and responsible children and thus teenagers still depend on their parents even when they are supposed to be independent". She goes on saying that "in Romania, the sense of responsibility is not cultivated so much for us. There's still that conception that parents have to be there to help you, you're not very independent. This responsibility needs to be cultivated more and young people should be more aware of the obligations they have".

An explanation is the fact that parents preserve fears that they accumulated in the past and transmit them to their children and thus limit their independence and freedom of action. As Maria D. puts it "we have been blocked in the old mentality for quite a long time and parents who educate their children today still have fears. [...] My colleagues, when faced with the opportunity to get involved, to do something new, they find all kinds of obstacles, they have fears, they carry with them the fears of their parents. That seems strange to me. I've always encouraged them. I would always tell them to try".

A negative effect of this parental attitude is the low level of self-esteem transmitted to their children, supported by a strong fear of failure. For instance, Maria D. states that: "Some colleagues saw volunteering as a waste of time. Others were very curious, they wanted to do something, but they did not have the support of the family. The support of parents is very important. They didn't believe in them enough. Self-esteem is very important, we do not believe that we can achieve something, it hinders us very much, even if we have potential, if we are well prepared. This fear of failure or that something might happen to us can hold us back or prevent us from discovering wonderful things".

Friends are also an important catalytic factor in promoting engagement, be it about the activities where friends are involved, or the activities where one can make friends. Games and other fun activities could be combined with volunteering and shared among friends. As Tiberiu reckons: "Young people are attracted by fresher, more immersive actions, like

computer games, for example, that can be used to attract young people to volunteering projects. One solution is to teach them that they can combine these activities with the idea of going out with friends. Let's tell them that it's not a chore to volunteer, but it could be just an outing with friends to work in different projects. You end up being not surrounded by colleagues but surrounded by friends. You've solved the problem of lacking time and you become a volunteer in a group of friends! You also have fun and you do some good for the community”.

2.2.2. Formal education

All young people interviewed pointed to the important role of educational institutions and educators in training the younger generations not only to be adequately skilled, but also to be able to overcome difficulties, barriers, stereotypes and biases, to fight social anxiety and prejudice and to build confidence in their role and power in a world that has become more globalized than ever.

School was identified by all interviewed participants as a positive influence on motivating them to get engaged. For example, some of the participants spoke about the advantage of starting to get involved in extracurricular activities as early as possible. Both Monica and Maria B. agree that these activities had a positive response from children because they saw them as adventures, which allowed them to learn by playing and to strengthen their relationship with the other children. When describing her initial experience with extracurricular activities at school for the benefit of the community, Monica pointed out that “We, being children at the time, it all seemed like an adventure to us, not like work at all”. Her colleague and friend, Maria B added: “It all started for me in secondary school, when our head teacher tried to involve all of us in as many activities as possible. Being children, so very young, she did tell us directly: Look, children, we have this project. She did not asked us: Do you want to do this and that? [...] Do you want to get involved? She just took us to the activities and we all liked it, because we were together, we did something together, we were with the rest of our colleagues, so we were not with someone unknown and we played a lot. It was like play for all of us. We learned by playing. We did not realise it at the time”.

For Emi C., his ‘adventure’ started during high-school when he joined his school club, a group consisting of 10-15 high-school students, coordinated by a teacher, who got involved in activities targeting the development of the high-school community, activities that took place within the school premises. He stressed the importance of doing something useful within the school, but outside regular school classes. Moreover, in Emi’s case, teachers were of great support and an encouraging factor: “My teachers encouraged and supported me, they inspired me to do something outside the formal educational system. I, just like many of my colleagues, have potential, but we had to be pushed from behind”.

On the other hand, some participants also spoke of cases in which some teachers were a deterrent element, because they neither understand, nor support their engagement in extracurricular activities or in their volunteer work, telling them that these activities were a waste of time or even punishing them for skipping classes to go to such activities. Bianca M, an activist for the rights of students and former president of the Students’ Council at local level, described her experience of being involved in giving her colleagues a voice with regard to the school setting for which she was faced with reluctance and disinterest, mostly from

teachers, and she even received ‘threats’ when advocating the students’ obligation to formally assess the activity of their teachers. Although the teachers’ assessment is stipulated in the Law of Education 1/2011, its implementation is still of recent date in Romanian schools, since it started only in 2021. This reflects, in our opinion, the need to continue building a coherent and solid background for the development of an educational culture in Romania and for an education that is also sustainable. Nowadays, understanding sustainability on a conceptual level across fields of study is considered an essential requirement for students, especially in higher education.

Access to education itself can be a barrier for youth engagement, especially since Romania is still struggling to provide equal access to education for all children, a problem worsened by the recent pandemic. Maria D. emphasizes, for example, a problem that the Romanian educational system still has, namely the lack of equal opportunities for all learners. This does not mean that it is impossible for them to succeed, but, as she says when referring to Roma children, they have to make a greater effort to reach their goals and their internal motivation plays a major role in their personal and professional development: “The access of Roma children is limited, without the support of the authorities and without any financial support. [...] I am no more special than other children from vulnerable groups, but I have had more opportunities and privileges. Unfortunately, not all children have them. Everyone should have these opportunities guaranteed, especially access to studies. I had all these chances, because I also looked for them. A lot of young people think they come to you like that, no, I was looking a lot, I have always looked for new things. And behind my success, there is a lot of work”.

Moreover, educational inequalities also arise from central/peripheral or urban/rural dichotomies. As Maria D. remarks: “Now more and more young people are getting involved. I see on Facebook that many young people get involved. But we've seen that more in cities, in more equipped schools, with infrastructure, so the context matters a lot. We cannot say that the opportunities in the cities are the same as in the rural areas or in the Roma communities, where they do not even have a school”.

This view is shared by Monica, who speaks about the opportunities she had as a student of one of the top high-schools in her home-town: “I found out about different projects at school. I was favoured that I was in this high-school, it was always the first place visited by the representatives of NGOs”. However, she was also faced with the barriers raised by the principals of various educational institutions when she promoted the activities of youth clubs and organisations: “There were a lot of principals who didn't allow us to talk to the students, to promote our activities, we could only put up a poster”.

2.2.3. Non-formal education

For our participants, non-formal activities were of utmost importance for complementing their formal education. In Romania, however, there is still a lot of talk about implementing elements of non-formal education into the formal school curriculum, because on paper we are aligned with the European guidelines, but in practice we still have to go a long way. As they recount in their stories, these activities help them discover new things and develop new skills: public speaking, socialising, oral presentation, organisation skills, problem-solving or communication skills. Emi, for instance, admits that his participation in summer schools and training courses helped him “overcome obstacles and frustrations, and

become interested in personal development, thus being able to exit the comfort zone”.

Participants found these activities useful, because they learned how to overcome difficulties or how to become interested in personal development. More importantly, five of the interviewees talked about their gained experience on how to educate others, thus moving to a higher level of engagement as trainers of future Mindchangers: “I love training the others, making them discover themselves. I feel that my actions have an impact” (Andrei).

The young people also referred to other contexts for the organisation of non-formal activities and insisted on the positive effects of their participation in youth camps, youth clubs or NGOs projects. For Monica, her first experience in joining a youth club was “something super, super important to me and I evolved a lot and met a lot of people”. Even the parties organised within these clubs are considered not only as places for interaction, but also as places for learning. Monica said that the evening parties after the meetings turned into “social gatherings where we talked to everyone, we got to know each other better, to interact, just like a continuation of the workshops or conferences we attended”. On the other hand, both Teodora and Vlad remembered that they regularly participated in camps organised by the Romanian Scouts’ Association. These camps were equally fun, informative and instructive for them, because they discovered new things, found out interesting information about nature and accumulated as much information as possible. They learned “a lot about nature” (Teodora), how to protect it and how to protect themselves, how to overcome unforeseen situations, how to deal with problems, how to prevent accidents or how to “survive in the wilderness” (Vlad). These camps also gave them the possibility “to take part in meetings with experts from our country, about environmental protection, about forestry” (Vlad).

Non-formal education could also contribute to changing mentalities. Maria B. complains about people’s reluctance when it comes to organising and participating in protests, about their unwillingness to do something about the problems of their community. In her opinion this passivity could be overcome if the example, courage, initiative, imagination, confidence of young people were followed: “If we go out into the streets, I don't think anyone would hear or listen to us and then the young people would say that all is just a nuisance since nothing happens anyway, that is, it is not up to us, clearly we cannot do anything. I mean, we have this mentality that we can't do anything at first, in other words we don't even try, because we know for sure that we cannot solve a problem, and thus do nothing about it. [...] We should change this mentality and say ‘why not try?’. In the end, it is in our favour to try to get what we want as students or as citizens. To do small things, to organize ourselves, go out in the streets, post everywhere on social media. But we don't. Eventually, all we do is talk to a friend and say to him: ‘Oh, I'm not comfortable with this’ and do nothing about it. That’s it”.

Likewise, Tiberiu points out that “young people are the engine of the society” and consequently, it is important and quite urgent to give them a voice in addressing current issues: “Young people must always have a voice [...]. What moves a society forward are the youth, because adults are already formed. Young people are flexible, and they can bring the change in others, and that's how the course of society changes”.

2.2.4. Conclusion

- Education is a priority and has an important role in developing skills, knowledge and attitudes, but there is also the need for an interplay of informal, formal and non-formal activities aimed at making young people more aware and more willing to be engaged.
- Education has a universal value, as well as regional and national characteristics, which indicate that it should be adapted to the changing needs of the future generations.
- All educational actors should strive to ensure that young people acquire the adequate skills to successfully engage in solving stringent issues of the world they live in.
- There is a need to identify innovative approaches that would transform learning into an effective educational experience for the new generations of our global society.
- Educators should give a voice to the young generation and listen to their stories.
- Educators should act in synergy with all the other actors of the educational process and should be aware of the impact they could have as both stimuli, and barriers for young people's actions.
- As suggested by the young people themselves, an increased level of responsibility would lead to a better short or long-term feedback to formal, informal or non-formal educators' actions.

2.3. Good Practices Examples

This section includes the analysis of the good practice examples (GPEs) referring to actions initiated by local NGOs aimed at involving youth in addressing climate change or migration issues. Considering the difficult times caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, which limited field visits and contact, the regional researchers had difficulty in collecting the recommended number of good practice sheets per region (the research teams agreed on 10 recommended good practice sheets/region). Additionally, without the support of a regional partner from among the CSOs or LAs, the limitation mentioned above could not be overcome. Therefore, the presentation herein makes reference to five good practice examples collected from NGOs in Dolj County.

The objectives of these GPEs were, on the one hand, to investigate the point of view of project promoters, and, on the other hand, to identify elements that foster youth engagement in actions addressing climate change/migration. The template includes general information about the project, a general description of the project and data referring to youth engagement, including a SWOT analysis of the project from the perspective of youth engagement.

2.3.1. Overview of the projects

Firstly, one of the most impactful projects organised in collaboration with 21 partners from three European regions, including local NGO representatives in Dolj County, schools and the University of Craiova, was *Acteurs du territoire pour une éducation à la citoyenneté mondiale* (ACTECIM). This international project targeted teachers, facilitators, professionals who lead or wish to lead actions related to ECSI with the aim to strengthen their skills and those of their partners to support students on their way to becoming global citizens. From Dolj, 75 students and 8 teachers from Voltaire High School Craiova were directly involved in the project in the co-creation phase, evaluation of results and self-evaluation, and also in

the follow-up stage.

Secondly, Andrei Association organised several small-scaled initiatives engaging young people in addressing climate change issues by means of using ICT. The target groups were secondary school and high-school pupils, participating in coding activities addressing different issues related to climate change. The actions organised included presentation of introductory and documentary notions on climate change, the planet's ecosystem, etc.; carrying out 3D modelling activities in TinkerCad (marine animals and plants, thematic food chains), ranking the best created objects from each of the schools involved and printing them. In order to attract and sensitize more young people, who are not attracted to the subject of climate change, various materials were created and posted or sent, materials which showed negative and irreversible effects of these changes.

Last but not least, we also included an example about the activities of "St. Basil" Centre. This centre is a social settlement that offers, in residential regime, a complex of social services provided according to the legislation in force, thus increasing the chances of social inclusion of those hosted within it. It is an example of successful collaboration between local NGOs and LAs. In 2006, the three partner institutions (Vasiliada Association, Craiova Local Municipal Council, Craiova Archdiocese – Metropolitanate of Oltenia) initiated a partnership for the development of a specialized service of local interest for homeless people and obtained the necessary funds for the establishment of the service within the National Interest Program "Fighting social exclusion of the homeless by creating emergency social centres". Other institutions in Craiova understood the necessity of the service and became partners, for example Phoenix Polyclinic, Police Station no. 6, County Emergency Hospital, and the Department of Population Records. Moreover, every year, students from the Faculty of Social Assistance in Craiova carry out internships at the centre. For example, in 2020, five students from the Faculty of Social Assistance in Craiova conducted the internships at "St. Basil" Centre.

2.3.2. SWOT Analysis

Based on the good practice examples, we drew up a synthetic SWOT analysis which includes the main Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats extracted from the GPEs.

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competent human resources involved in the project; • Good collaboration with environmental specialists; • Very good collaboration between researchers, teachers, students and NGOs; • Gained experience in projects at European level; • Multidisciplinary expertise, at European level, in several areas covered by the projects; • Cooperation activities with the private sector; • Partnerships established with companies and local authorities/administration; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the interest in climate change issues; • Raising awareness among young people; • Good potential for cooperation between institutions at different levels; • Good opportunity to carry out future projects in online format involving national and international participants through the use of communication platforms; • Quality of multimedia resources available; • Developing partnerships focused on environmental education; • Developed cooperation between local

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships at national and European level with academic institutions; Online format of projects allows the participation of numerous students; Engaging young people in extracurricular activities. 	<p>authorities and NGOs.</p>
WEAKNESSES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little interest in small-scale funding programmes for project applications; Lack of sufficient funding; Lack of a clear, uniform vision on project topic/objectives, at institutional level. Limited ICT resources and poor Internet connection/access; Little understanding of the project goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of interest of local actors in financing/supporting initiatives for the development of such projects at local level. Difficulty in obtaining immediate feedback from the participants; Lack of follow-up activities; Lack of interest of young people; Insufficient funding and interest for follow-up activities.

2.3.3. Conclusion

After the analysis of the GPEs, the conclusions drawn point to the need to:

- Increase the dialogue between LAs and CSOs;
- Implement strategies and distribution of funding irrespective of political affiliations;
 - Create an NGO consortium/network and/or developing the existent partnerships among NGOs, for a more effective collaboration and initiation of joint programmes;
 - Develop platforms for informing young people about concrete actions which they can participate in;
 - Put in practice the local action plans with well-established objectives and priorities resulted from the collaboration between LAs, CSOs and educational institutions, and continue and strengthen the collaboration between these actors;
 - Provide support for CSOs from LAs for the increase of the impact of projects organised at local level;
 - Reduce bureaucracy for the access to the existing infrastructure of the administration of the city;
 - A stronger emphasis of LAs on international cooperation;
 - Increase the role of young people at regional level.

2.4. Recommendations

- To develop an infrastructure for communication and collaboration between LAs, CSOs and educational actors and strengthen the links between them;
 - To create opportunities for all with equal access to information, education, funding etc.
 - To create a dynamic and competitive environment for volunteering, by creating networks and partnerships between local actors;

- To offer updated information on local initiatives, actions and projects and on how young people can get engaged;
- To separate politics from administration in order to allow political disengagement;
- To ensure sufficient funding for actions and projects, especially at local level;
- To prevent excessive/complicated bureaucracy that could discourage the initiation of youth actions;
- To acknowledge the prioritised role of education in developing skills, knowledge and attitudes;
- To adjust education, irrespective of its attributes of formality or informality, to the changing needs of the future generations;
- To ensure that all educational actors make effort so that young people acquire the adequate skills and successfully engage in solving stringent issues of the world they live in;
- Educational actors should act in synergy with all the other actors of the educational process and also be responsible in their actions, considering the impact they could have as both stimuli, and barriers for young people's actions;
- To give young people a voice that matters: actively involve young people, youth organisations and other activity organisers for youth in the development, implementation and evaluation of policies that affect young people at local level;
- To provide incentives to encourage involvement, to attract and keep young people engaged;
- To increase satisfaction and encourage organisational long-term engagement.

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CHAPTER 6

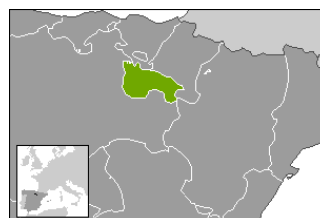
LA RIOJA

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1. REVIEW OF REGIONAL POLICIES

1.1. Presentation of La Rioja

La Rioja is one of the seventeen autonomous communities of Spain. With an area of 5,045 km, representing 0.99% of the Spanish territory, it is the smallest single-province community in Spain. The resident population of La Rioja was 319,224 inhabitants on 1 January 2021, 0.67% of the Spanish population.



The region has a noticeable physical, political and human north-south division. Most of the services, leisure centres, commerce and industry are located in the northern half.

La Rioja ranks eighth in the whole country in terms of GDP per capita with 28,200 €. Its economy is oriented towards agriculture (6.69% of GDP) and industry (25.84% of GDP).

Economic sector	Absolute data (thousands of euros)		Percentage	
	La Rioja	Spain	La Rioja	Spain
Agriculture	568,594	32,550,000	7.07	2.88
Industry	2,097,289	182,296,000	26.08	16.15
Construction	496,930	72,608,000	6.18	6.43
Services	4,879,631	841,556,000	60.67	74.54
Total	8,042,444	1,129,010,000	100.00	100.00

Table 1. Gross Domestic Product by geographical area and economic sector
Source: La Rioja Labour Market Report 2021 based on the Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE)²⁵ data. Spanish regional accounts

According to data from the Labour Force Survey, the unemployment rate in La Rioja is 10.36%, below the Spanish average (16.13%). The number of unemployed registered in 2020 amounted to 19,228, with 58.49% women, 16 points higher than the percentage of men.

The region is distributed administratively in 174 municipalities. More than 70% (133) have less than 500 inhabitants, where 6.1% of the total population lives (Table 2).

²⁵ Spanish Statistical Office

	La Rioja				Spain			
	Num. of municip.	% Population	% Non-nationals	Average age	Num. of municip.	% Population	% Non-nationals	Average age
TOTAL	174	100.0	12.6	44.8	8,131	100.0	11.4	43.8
< 101 inh.	64	1.0	4.0	56.6	1,380	0.2	4.4	57.6
101 – 500 inh.	69	5.1	8.2	52.3	2,615	1.4	6.0	52.6
501-1,000 inh.	11	2.3	14.9	48.7	1,007	1.5	7.4	49.3
1,001-2,000 inh.	9	3.5	10.7	46.7	869	2.6	7.3	47.8
2,001-5,000 inh.	12	11.3	18.0	43.9	949	6.3	8.8	45.1
5,000-10,000 inh.	4	10.2	11.7	43.1	552	8.2	9.1	43.5
10,001-20,000 inh.	3	11.8	13.8	42.7	345	10.3	10.5	43.1
20,001-50,000 inh.	1	7.7	16.1	43.1	265	16.5	12.2	42.4
50,001-100,000 inh.	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	86	13.0	13.1	42.4
> 100,000 inh.	1	47.2	11.4	44.7	63	39.9	12.3	44.1

Table 2. Percentage of municipalities according to population size in Spain and La Rioja

Source: Statistics Institute of the Government of La Rioja. Preview of the municipal census of inhabitants. 1 January 2021. Provisional data 20 April 2021.

The population is mainly concentrated in the capital, Logroño (47.2% of the population, 151,113 people), and in municipalities with more than 5,000 inhabitants (29.7%). Young people between 18 and 35 years of age follow the same trend: only 3.5% of them live in municipalities with less than 500 inhabitants (Figure 1).

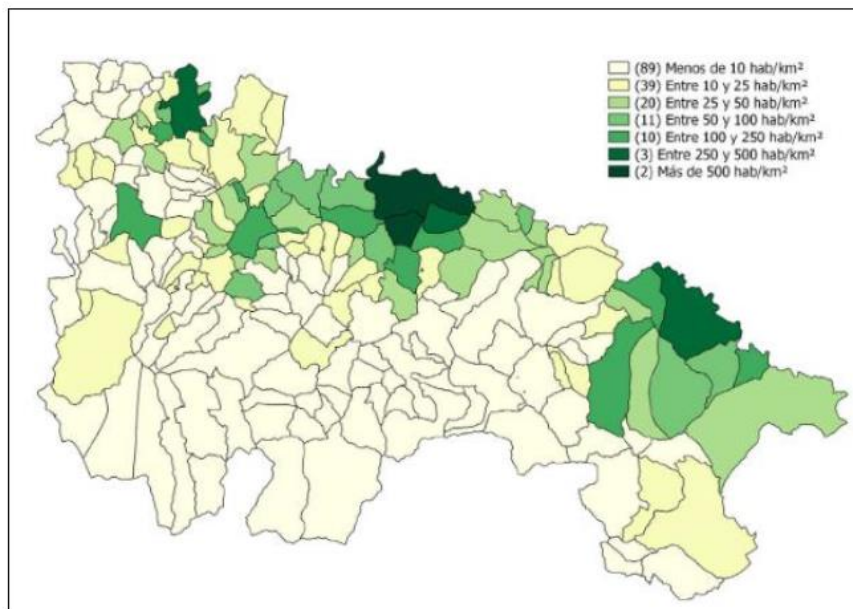


Figure 1. Population density of La Rioja on 1 January 2018.

Source: Territorial distribution. Department of Statistics, Government of La Rioja

The population pyramid (Figure 2) shows demographic ageing. The COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on the excess of mortality observed in 2020.

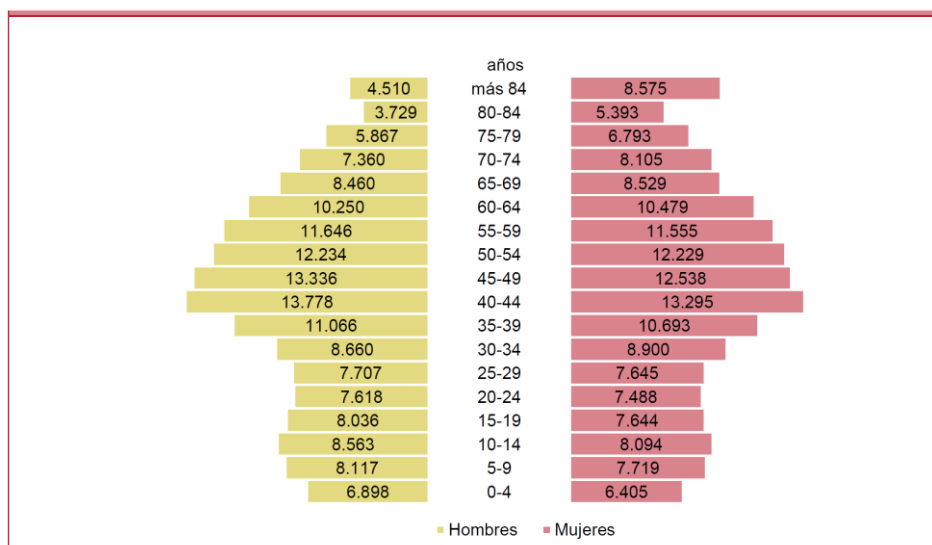


Figure 2. Demographic pyramid in La Rioja and Spain. Differences by sex and age (January 2020)

Source: Labour Market Report of the Province of La Rioja. 2021. Prepared by the SEPE Occupations Observatory using data from the INE. Municipal Register at 1 January 2020.

The migratory balance is positive. According to INE data as of 1 January 2021, the percentage of foreign population in La Rioja was 12.65%. The main nationalities of origin in 2021 for La Rioja are Romania (27.8%), Morocco (20.9%) and Colombia (7.8%). The highest percentages of foreign population correspond to municipalities with 2,001 to 5,000 inhabitants (18%) and those with 20,001 to 50,000 inhabitants (16.1%).

Population of the municipality	Number of municipalities	Foreign residents
Less than 100	61	131
101 a 200	38	369
201 a 500	35	924
501 a 1,000	12	1,274
1,001 a 2,000	7	1,027
2,001 a 5,000	12	5,174
5,001 a 10,000	4	3,721
10,001 a 20,000	3	5,123
20,001 a 30,000	1	3,873
More than 30,000	1	17,395
TOTAL	174	40,210

Table 3. Foreign residents in La Rioja by size of municipality (January 2020)

Source: Department of Statistics, Government of La Rioja

1.2. Legal Framework

The Spanish Constitution (SC) of 1978 provides youth policies in its 3rd chapter, which is devoted to the guiding principles of social and economic policy. Article 48 states that "*The public authorities shall promote the conditions for the free and effective participation of young people in political, social, economic and cultural development*". In the same chapter, it also recognizes the right to enjoy an environment suitable for the development of the person, as well as the duty to preserve it.²⁶

The Spanish State is organized territorially into municipalities, provinces and Autonomous Communities. All these entities enjoy autonomy for the management of their respective interests (art. 137 SC). The Statutes are the basic institutional rules of each Autonomous Community. This decentralized political model entails the following system of distribution of powers:

- *Exclusive competences* of the State on which only the State can dictate norms, as is the case with nationality, immigration, emigration, foreigners, and the right to asylum (art. 149.1 SC).

- *Competences shared* between the State and the Autonomous Communities. In these cases, the State is responsible for the basic regulations – which implies the existence of a common regulation for the whole territory – and the Autonomous Communities are responsible for the normative development and execution: education is a clear example of this.

- *Concurrent competences*: both the State, and the Autonomous Communities have the possibility to concur with identical powers in the regulation of a matter. This would be a case applicable to youth policy and the management of environmental protection (art. 148.9 SC), where there is a concurrence of objectives and in which the competences attributable to the Autonomous Communities are not incompatible with the mission of the State.

The Autonomous Communities enjoy financial autonomy for the development and execution of their competences (art. 156 SC).

By virtue of this distribution of powers, the Organic Law 3/1982 of 9 June 1982 *on the Statute of Autonomy of La Rioja* confers on the Autonomous Community of La Rioja:

- exclusive competence for "Community development" (art. 8.1.31), which includes youth policy²⁷ and the promotion and integration of emigrants. This last area is closely linked to the area of social assistance and services, also assumed by the Statute with exclusive competence (art. 8.1.30).

²⁶ Article 45: "1. Everyone has the right to enjoy an environment adequate for the development of the person, as well as the duty to preserve it. 2. The public authorities shall ensure the rational use of all-natural resources in order to protect and improve the quality of life and to defend and restore the environment, relying on the indispensable collective solidarity. 3. For those who violate the provisions of the preceding paragraph, under the terms established by law, criminal or, where appropriate, administrative penalties shall be established, as well as the obligation to repair the damage caused."

²⁷ See Opinion of the Advisory Council of La Rioja 11/1999.

- legislative development and implementation with regard to the protection of environment and landscape: protected natural areas and protection of ecosystems (art. 9) and education in all its extension, levels and grades, modalities and specialities (art. 10).

In development of the statutory provisions, the Autonomous Community of La Rioja has approved the following local legal regulations related to the subjects of interest. Appendix 6.2 contains the articles of the different regulations related to the objectives of the project.

a) *Law 7/2005, of 30 June, on Youth in La Rioja.*

b) *Law 6/2017, of 8 May, on Environmental Protection of the Autonomous Community of La Rioja*

c) *Order 4/2017, of 1 June, of the Regional Ministry of Social Policies, Family, Equality and Justice, by which the Sectorial Council of Immigration of La Rioja is created.*

There is no specific law, or any other legal regulations related to sustainable development. At present, the regional authorities are working on a "Strategy for Sustainable Development in La Rioja"²⁸. A more detailed description of these regulations is provided in Appendix 6.2.

1.3. Governing Bodies and Administrative Structure

The regional government has endowed some ministries with competencies in these areas and has created specific departments and/or sections for these areas within its structure, as can be seen in Figure 3.

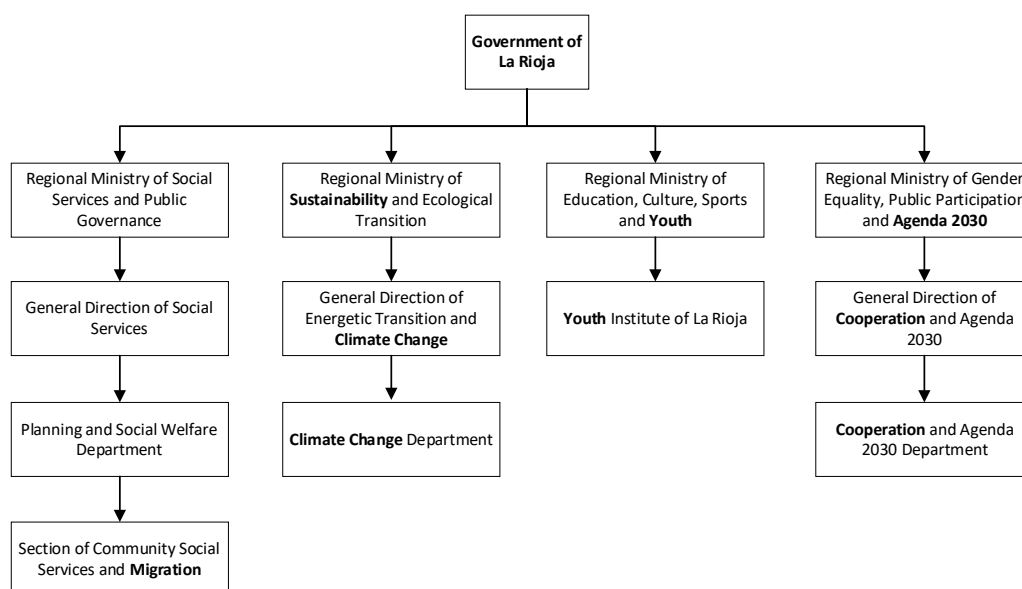


Figure 3. Structure of the Government of La Rioja

²⁸ Information available at: <<https://www.larioja.org/medio-ambiente/es/desarrollo-sostenible/estrategia-desarrollo-sostenible/bases>>

1.4. Policies, Programmes and Actors

A first approximation to the public policies and programmes linked to the objectives of the project is obtained through the information available on the website and the analysis of the budget of the Government of La Rioja. This report expressly refers to those policies related to Youth, whether they are cross-cutting policies of the Government of La Rioja that affect more than one department or specific policies, which are directly managed by the Regional Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth.

a) Cross-cutting policies

- 2030 Agenda for the population of La Rioja: Objective 2. Youth Emancipation²⁹
- Emancipation Pact

b) Youth Policy

Youth policies are the responsibility of the Regional Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth. This Regional Ministry is made up of a General Technical Secretariat and seven General Directorates, in addition to the Youth Institute of La Rioja (IRJ) and the Educational Inspection Service. It also has a collegiate body, the Youth Council of La Rioja, specifically for the objectives of the project.

➤ **Youth Institute of La Rioja** is an autonomous body, attached to the Regional Ministry.

In La Rioja there are different organisations oriented towards the themes of this Action. Here are three of them, whose function is to coordinate the action of the entities in the sector: a) Youth Council of La Rioja; b) Coordinator of Development NGOs of Autonomous Community of La Rioja (CONGDCAR); c) Volunteers Federation of La Rioja.

Information on cross-cutting youth policies, programmes and organisations can be found in Appendix 6.4.

Finally, Table 4 shows the data of the budget of the Autonomous Community linked to the Youth Institute of La Rioja (0.17% of the total budget). Table 5 shows the breakdown by chapter.

	Euros	%
Total	1,569,828,124	100
Education and Culture Section	317,664,056	20.23
Youth Institute of La Rioja	2,752,315	0.17

Table 4. CAR Budget, 2020

Source: Prepared by the authors, based on the CAR General Budgets for the 2020 financial year

²⁹ Available at: <<https://www.larioja.org/agenda-poblacion/es>>

Concept	Euros	%
Chap. 1. Staff costs	593,324	21.56
Chap. 2 Expenditure on current goods and services	966,016	35.10
Chap. 4 Current transfers	1,024,756	37.23
Chap. 6. Actual investments	113,219	4.11
Chap. 7. Capital transfers	55,000	2.00
Total	2,752,315	100

Table 5. Breakdown of the Youth programme budget, 2020

Source: Prepared by the authors, based on the CAR General Budgets for the 2020 financial year

The main item of expenditure is centred on chapter 4 relating to current transfers. Within this item, most of the budget is concentrated in transfers to non-profit institutions and associations.

1.5. Final Recommendations

- Greater practical implementation of the legal frameworks with greater involvement of stakeholders, in particular youth and other civil society groups;
- Greater decentralisation of programmes and activities linked to this Action's objectives in all areas of the territory, with special attention to rural areas with low population intensity.
- Greater coordination and networking between the different public and private actors to ensure that there are no duplications and/or gaps in the development of programmes and activities related to the objectives of this Action.

2. ELEMENTS THAT FOSTER ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

2.1. Analysis of the Questionnaire

2.1.1. Socio-demographic data

This survey was carried out in La Rioja (Spain) between 28 June and 6 September 2021. In total, 102 young people aged 15-35 years from different socio-demographic profiles completed the online questionnaire in its Spanish version.

Nearly half of the respondents (47.1%) were women aged 20-24, 16.7% were women aged 30-35, and 13.7% were men aged 25-29. Less than one in ten respondents (< 7%) belong to other age and sex groups.

More than six in ten respondents (63.7%) currently live in an urban area with more than 20,000 inhabitants, almost one fourth (23.5%) of them live in an area with less than 5,000 inhabitants, and 12.7% live in a semi-urban area (5,000 - 20,000 inhabitants). 79.5% have spent most of their lives in the same environment.

Although most respondents were born in Spain (94%), the percentage of participants

reporting the existence of some kind of recent migration in their families is equal to that of participants without recent family migration (42.2%).

More than half of respondents (54.9%) have a bachelor's degree and 17.6% have a master's degree. Currently, 37.3% of participants are in temporary employment, 22.5% are students, 16.6% are permanently employed, 9.8% are unemployed, and 5.9% are self-employed.

Nearly six in ten respondents say they are likely (41.2%) or very likely (18.6%) to become *Mindchangers*. At the other extreme, less than 10% (9.8%) consider it unlikely for them to be *Mindchangers*. There is no clear relationship between the socio-demographic profile of respondents and the likelihood to become a *Mindchanger* (Appendix 6.5).

2.1.2. Insights into the main characteristics that apply to a *Mindchanger*

Respondents were asked to assess the importance of a list of 24 characteristics that apply to a *Mindchanger*, based on which they considered most important (Figure 4, right). Responses were given on a Likert-type scale, from 1 (lowest score) to 5 (the highest). Although there is quite a good agreement in the scores given to the different characteristics, those who are unlikely to become *Mindchangers* tend to give lower scores than the rest of the respondents.

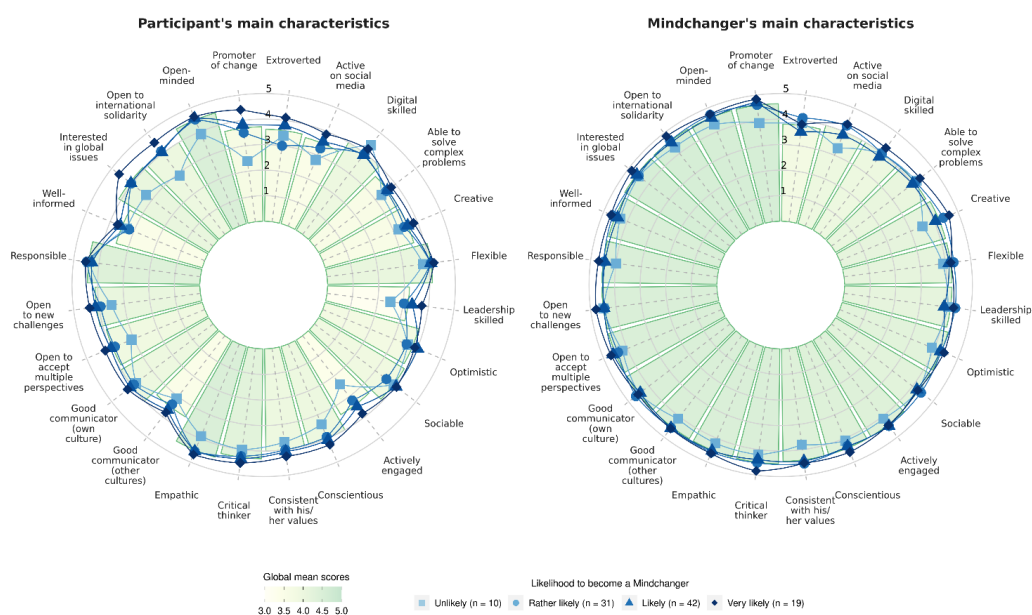


Figure 4. Respondents' characteristics (left) and main characteristics that a *Mindchanger* should have sorted from the lowest to the highest mean score (right).

Seven in ten participants rate the following characteristics with the highest value (5): "Promoter of change", "Open to international solidarity", "Open-minded" and "Interested in global issues". In fact, these characteristics have the highest average value (4.6 out of 5). Only "Extroverted" is rated with an average value below 4 (20% of the respondents rate it with the highest value).

Respondents were also asked to describe themselves with the same 24 characteristics (Figure 4, left). Scores are lower than those given to a *Mindchanger*. Again, participants who are unlikely to become *Mindchangers* tend to give lower scores. In this case, the differences

between unlikely *Mindchangers* and other participants are greater than in the previous question. In addition, those who report a very high likelihood to become *Mindchangers* describe themselves, with an average score above 4.5 out of 5 points, as "Open-minded", "Interested in global issues" and "Open to international solidarity". Likewise, "Promoter of change" scores high (mean value equal to 4.4 out of 5). It is also worth noting that "Promoter of change", "Open to international solidarity" and "Interested in global issues" have the largest differences between respondents who are very likely to become *Mindchangers* and those who are not.

2.1.3. *Climate change and migration*

Respondents consider both climate change and migration to be important or very important issues, although there is less overall concern about migration than climate change (Appendix 6.6). Overall, participants feel well informed and fairly up to date on news related to climate change, but somewhat less so in relation to migration. Despite this, in general, respondents are not aware of the existence of different measures/projects on climate change or migration. What is striking is that the lack of awareness is higher in their immediate environment (local level). A certain positive correlation is observed between the scores given and the likelihood to become a *Mindchanger*.

Regarding the most used channels for information on climate change and migration, in both cases social media is predominant, followed by specialized websites, blogs and apps. Also, in both cases, printed newspapers/magazines, events and brochures, as well as school/teachers are the least used channels.

The level of engagement that respondents perceive in their immediate environment is higher for climate change than for migration. Similarly, their own level of engagement over the past three years is higher for climate change than for migration. Furthermore, such engagement increases with the likelihood of participants to see themselves as future *Mindchangers*. However, when asked about their past involvement in actions related to climate change or migration, those who are likely (not very likely) to become *Mindchangers* stand out with a higher level of involvement.

While 73.5% of respondents reported having participated occasionally or often in actions related to climate change, the percentage drops to 60.8% when it comes to actions related to migration:

- **Petitions (sign and share)** are the **most common** type of **activity** in relation to both climate change (72.2%) and migration (69.5%). While **direct action** - changing one's habits, recycling, consuming less, etc. - (66.7%) is the second most popular type of activity when it comes to climate change, whereas for migration it is **debates, discussion groups** (50.8%). In both cases, the third and fourth place of most popular activities are occupied by **conferences and workshops** (56.9% in climate change and 47.6% in migration), and **punctual voluntary actions** (51.4% in climate change and 37.3% in migration).

- The biggest **driver of participation** is **personal values and beliefs**. Following it, at a greater distance in the case of migration, are **information on matters related to the issue** (climate change/migration), **own professional projects** and **own past activities**, as well as **specific organisations or NGOs**. Respondents have not found stimulation for their participation in different actions from "sport coaches", "local authorities", "political figures",

"social/youth workers" and "social media influencers". In between are "family", "friends", "colleagues" and "teachers".

- Overall, the low score for the option "no benefit" shows that most participants consider that they have gained something from their active participation. In both cases (climate change and migration), the **main gain** was **open-mindedness and tolerance**, followed by **critical thinking**. The lowest scores correspond to "formal recognition" (certificate, diploma, credits, etc.).

- The **highest level of engagement** among respondents corresponds to **supporting projects and taking small actions** (e.g. signing petitions, attending meetings, disseminating information) (34.7% in climate change and 20.3% in migration) and **following news and occasionally participating in events** (19.4% in climate change and 32.2% in migration).

Among non-participants in actions related to either climate change (26.5%) or migration (39.2%), as well as among those who have only participated occasionally (once or twice in the last three years) – 32.6% in the case of climate change and 41.2% in the case of migration – the **main reasons for discouragement** have been the **lack of sufficient support (organisational or financial) from authorities or institutions**, the **absence of sufficient organised activities at school/university/locality**, **lack of time**, or the belief that **they are not competent enough**.

As for the **future**, there is a clear **positive correlation between the idea of participating in actions on climate change or migration and the likelihood of participants to become *Mindchangers***. Regarding **specific participation activities**, although **direct action** is the most likely in the case of climate change, in both cases, again, **petitions (sign and share)**, **punctual voluntary actions, conferences and workshops**, as well as **debates and discussion groups** appear. On the other hand, despite the respondents' low awareness of the existence of different measures/projects at the local level, **the projects at the local level** are the most likely to involve respondents and, more specifically, **projects initiated by a local civil society organisations** (Appendix 6.6).

On the other hand, while **respondents do not feel sufficiently heard in the decision-making** on climate change and migration and feel that **young people do not have the power to contribute to local policies** on climate change or migration, **youth engagement in addressing both migration and, especially, the climate crisis is important**. In this sense, the most skeptical are those who do not see themselves as future *Mindchangers*.

Finally, respondents agree that **the institutions that could have an impact on motivating young people to get engaged** with both climate change and migration are, in this order, **educational institutions** (schools, universities...), **community groups, non-governmental organisations**, and European or international institutions. National and local authorities, as well as research centres and institutes, and political organisations and movements fall slightly behind.

2.2. Good Practices Examples

In this section we present the analysis carried out on **ten actions with young people** on migration, environment and 2030 Agenda of different organisations in the Autonomous Community of La Rioja that were selected and considered as examples of "**good practices**"

to shift from awareness to active engagement (see Appendix 6.8).

In this case, the organisations that contributed with their "good practices" are of a different nature. On the one hand, units or centres which are dependent on the Government of La Rioja (Education Innovation Centre of La Rioja, Statistics Institute of the Government of La Rioja) have participated. On the other hand, the collaboration comes from non-governmental organisations or social entities that develop different projects, and educational and training programmes with young people in La Rioja (Pioneros Foundation, Coordinator of Development NGOs of Autonomous Community of La Rioja – CONGDICAR, Neo Sapiens), as well as from the University of La Rioja.

2.2.1. SWOT Analysis

From the perspective of ensuring the shift from "awareness" to "active engagement", we present a **SWOT analysis** which includes the main **Strengths**, **Weaknesses**, **Opportunities** and **Threats** that have been identified as most relevant in the examples of good practices collected in the study.

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective integration of the SDGs into the curriculum; • The capacity, competence and leadership of teachers and other socio-educational agents; • Teaching methodologies focused on the activity of the young participants; • Learning from experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking; • Social capital; • Positive impact of ICT and social networks; • Perceived usefulness; • Multiplier effect of the projects; • The COVID-19 pandemic for awareness raising; • ICTs as a tool for interaction.
WEAKNESSES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of participatory culture; • Individual interest; • Lack of concreteness of the target audience; • Generic action on the SDGs; • Lack of basic or general skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of outreach and recruitment mechanisms; • Lack of a systematic policy of initial and continued training; • Decontextualization of the activities; • Isolated activities and not projects; • Low funding; • Lack of social support; • Political uncertainty.

2.2.2. Conclusion

According to the most highlighted aspects of the analysis, we point out the most important conclusions on how to facilitate the engagement and active participation of young people.

From an internal perspective, when looking into the weaknesses and strengths highlighted, it is possible to think that the lack of **participatory culture** of youth in the context investigated in La Rioja could be corrected in part through the use of **more active teaching methodologies based on the experience** of young participants in the different training programmes (e.g. learning based on community service, projects, problems, challenges or workshops), all of them linked to the SDGs and the effects of climate change

and migratory flows. In this case, it is possible to reinforce such an attitude through the **effective integration of the SDGs in the official curriculum of the Education System**, as well as in other **non-formal education** spaces. It is conceivable that all of this can contribute to forming citizens who are more committed, understanding and motivated by the responsibility to improve our well-being and to protect our planet.

On the other hand, the culture of participation and the development of an active engagement of young people with the SDGs implies, to a large extent, the **acquisition of basic competences** (e.g. teamwork, problem solving, critical thinking, responsibility and ethical commitment) that strengthen the **collective interest against individual interest**, the possibility of exchanging points of view, taking different perspectives, expressing ideas, experiences, as well as working collaboratively. In this sense, the **capacity, competence and leadership of teachers** and other socio-educational agents are essential.

Finally, if we want to ensure a certain level of effectiveness and positive impact of training programmes for the engagement and active participation of our young people, during the design phase there is the need for basic knowledge of how they are, how they feel, how they think and how they learn. The **lack of concreteness of the target audience** in training programmes or projects can be solved with a previous analysis of the target profile: for example, previous knowledge, learning approaches, interests, motivations, expectations related to **specific objectives** that are to be addressed.

From an external perspective, and considering the threats and opportunities reflected in this analysis, the transition from awareness to active engagement of our young people implies, to a large extent, **a systematic and continuous policy of initial training and professional development of agents or Mindchangers entities** promoting change. In the same framework, it seems necessary that a **more important and decisive support, both economically and socially**, exist from other key referents in the investigated context, overcoming the states of insecurity or **uncertainty generated by political changes** in relation to the problem under study.

In this same line of analysis, improving the active participation of young people implies thinking and **developing a system of communication, approach and recruitment of young people** adjusted to the needs and interests that are generated in a social context in permanent change. The positive potential of **emerging technological resources**, in general, and **social networks**, in particular, seem to be the appropriate scenarios to design the architecture of participation that requires the change from awareness to active engagement.

Closely related to the potential of ICTs and the opportunities they offer for the formation of **social capital** (possibilities that open up for different social entities and institutions to cooperate and share resources in matters of common interest), **networking** would facilitate the creation and extension of knowledge, experiences and good practices developed to address the effects of climate change and migratory movements.

2.3. Discourse Analysis of Young Mindchangers

Six women and four men between the ages of 16 and 29 that show a committed behaviour towards social and environmental aspects were interviewed. All of them show trajectories of participation in social organizations or solidarity initiatives. Some are active

in more than one organisation. The social and environmental commitment is also present in the educational and/or work activity. Three of them are doing a doctorate in environmental issues; two of them are teachers in primary education, where they promote the implementation of programmes related to social and environmental aspects. A summary of the profiles of the people interviewed is presented in Appendix 6.9.

2.3.1. Life processes from awareness to activism

In the discourses of the people interviewed, it is possible to identify the process experienced from awareness to activism as a progressive process of *realization*, passing, in the first stages, from being an unconscious action linked to family values or the surrounding culture, to becoming a decisive action of personal commitment to the environment and society.

This awareness is motivated by experiences linked to the educational sphere, especially in relation to climate change. The people interviewed allude to contact with the subject through a talk or subject that awakens their interest and encourages them to be more active.

Greater involvement or activism through social organisations or volunteering initiatives requires a higher level of commitment. The discourses show that some people turn to this type of activism as a consequence of a decision that allows them to channel their social or environmental concerns (*Extinction Rebellion; Pioneers*). In other cases, activism arises from a long-standing participatory process that has been present throughout a person's life since childhood. In any case, the existence of social or environmental organizations and initiatives that channel this type of concerns can be pointed out as a relevant factor.

Contact with referents seems to be a key element in encouraging participation. In fact, one of the interviewees highlights in her discourse the lack of participation, given that she had no relationship with the most active people in her environment. However, according to her, she feels more willing to participate in initiatives with people with whom she has a previous relationship.

In this discourse there is an implicit element that should be considered, at least as a hypothesis, which occurs particularly in small-sized environments, as is the case of certain municipalities in La Rioja with semi-urban centres of less than 5,000 inhabitants. In this type of environment, previous relationships may function in an *atavistic way*. Thus, participation or involvement in certain social or ecological causes will be conditioned by who the person or group promoting them is and what previous relationship exists. In these cases, adherence to the cause would not be so much related to the rationale of the issue as to the image and/or prestige of the promoter.

2.3.2. Interactions between spaces for socialization and participation

The people interviewed allude to the influence of the agents of socialization – mainly the family and teachers – in the transmission of values related to social and environmental aspects. This role is fundamental in the first stage of awareness. As people adopt an attitude consistent with their convictions and their level of involvement increases, they may encounter critical responses, especially from the family environment, either for devoting more time to social objectives than to personal ones or for adopting certain habits, such as, for example, becoming a vegan.

Several people also point out how their awareness affects their personal relationships, as it leads them to differentiate their group of childhood friends from the new friendships

that have arisen from social or environmental involvement.

Likewise, several people allude to conflict-avoidance behaviour when they anticipate that their opinions, attitudes or practices may be negatively sanctioned. In one of the interviewees, this situation even leads to giving up activism and channelling their concerns towards individual activities (tending a private vegetable garden) rather than collective and/or protest activities.

Alongside face-to-face interaction, it is also worth considering the interaction derived from social networks. These appear in the discourse, pointing out more to the aspects of "information pollution" than to those of "information transmitters". In general terms, they are critical of the disinformation that exists on social networks and the lack of dissemination of scientific reports that have provided evidence of the devastating effects of climate change.

In addition to social networks, the discourse alludes to the media, which the young Mindchangers criticize for the lack of impartiality of information. Several participants alluded to the need to resort to diverse sources in order to know the reality.

2.3.3. From conscientious person to conscientious person

The people interviewed report different practices or habits acquired in their daily lives since the early stages of their lives. These types of practices are manifested in small actions, such as not throwing paper on the ground, recycling, sorting different types of waste, etc.

These internalized practices are presented as examples of primary awareness. Subsequently, as people come into contact with new information – especially that related to climate change – it leads to practices of greater social and political commitment and involvement. In several cases, this increased awareness even leads them to change their eating habits and become vegans.

The process experienced by the people interviewed is not ascending-linear, but rather can be described as saw-toothed. Thus, in their accounts they show moments of motivation and conviction, followed by moments of passivity, inhibition or withdrawal.

Perhaps the aspect that can make the difference could be group participation. In this sense, having involved reference people with whom to develop awareness-raising actions guarantees the sustainability over time of the committed and determined action for social and environmental values.

However, those who show individual trajectories without effective participation in groups, present discourses of disillusionment and disenchantment.

The speeches also contain comments critical of what they call *eco-liberals*, whose extremist attitude provokes criticism even from those who consider themselves convinced environmentalists. This means that, instead of adding new followers to the cause, it slows down involvement or participation.

2.3.4. Levels of participation

As noted above, life trajectories show ups and downs in terms of engagement and participation. Nevertheless, the people interviewed allude to different experiences of participation. Only one of the stories shows a lack of active participation; it could be considered at the level of being sympathetic to the environmental cause and receptive to inclusive discourses regarding migratory movements or other social causes, without deciding to channel their concern through active participation.

The rest of the people interviewed show experiences of participation in one or more

organizations. In one case, this experience is located in the past, with a very active role in environmental movements of denunciation and awareness. However, this activism is in the background at the present time, either due to the change of environment for reasons of studies, to which is added the lack of a more vindictive environmental movement in the current environment, or due to the wear and tear that activism can entail. In any case, these elements can serve to identify relevant aspects and to understand the reasons for the different levels of involvement.

Several people interviewed allude to a high level of participation in various organizations and of different natures. And finally, the three youngest people lead their own participation initiative from which they articulate their objectives for social change. However, in this case, the catalytic role of a youth organization promoting socio-educational projects aligned with the SDGs should be noted.

2.3.5. “Glocal” initiatives

In the discourse of the people interviewed, reference is made to different initiatives in which they participate where the double global and local (“glocal”) dimension is present to a large extent. Several people have been involved in international movements, both ecological and social. In some cases, the activity consists in disseminating in the local environment the aspects that these global phenomena have on the local environment. And finally, several practices focus on the local environment.

Most of the discourse revolves around environmental issues. Social issues at a general level or specific to migration have a residual presence in the discourses. This is a striking fact, especially when three people are of foreign origin and have migration-related life experiences.

2.3.6. Sustainable development

This topic appears recurrently in the discourse, linked to the SDGs and different initiatives related to them. However, it seems to be approached more from the dissemination of the 2030 Agenda rather than from sustainable development practices per se.

Three interviewees are working on their doctoral theses on topics related to sustainable development in different disciplines. This research focuses on very specific aspects of sustainability and not on strategies for sustainable development in general.

2.3.7. Future plans

The people interviewed, although all are young, are at different stages of the life cycle. Some are in pre-university education, others are finishing their studies, with a doctorate; others are entering the labour market. Therefore, they diverge in terms of future plans and priorities. However, they all express an interest in continuing their engagement in social and environmental issues and show a proactive attitude and behaviour in line with their life trajectory.

2.4. Final Recommendations

- Develop a systematic and determined policy line for the training and support of young *Mindchangers*;

- Use information systems adapted to the characteristics of the youth population, which manage to motivate them through social networks and their sources of information;
- Adapt training programmes – formal, informal and non-formal – to the learning characteristics and ways of accessing knowledge of the new generations, making the message accessible in order to awaken their interest and motivation;
- Establish a personal career and professional competence of socially and ecologically committed people;
- Create systems of public and social recognition of young *Mindchangers* that give visibility and value to their contribution to society;
- Design training programmes for trainers and referents for the young population so that they would be capable of transmitting messages in a way that is accessible to the communication and participation styles of the new generations. This training should also include the use of social networks as a communication channel updated to youth behaviours.
- Development of an evaluation system for the recognition and validation of soft skills in formal, informal and non-formal learning;
- Promote the realization of stable projects, in the medium and long term, which would allow the structuring of a network of *Mindchangers* in the territory;
- Generate spaces for young *Mindchangers* to meet and exchange experiences, to help them to work collaboratively on shared projects and to provide mutual support in complex moments derived from their social commitment;
- Encourage the creation and development of spaces for participation adapted to the characteristics and styles of participation of the new generations.

CONCLUSIONS

The SDGs should be “global in nature and universally applicable to all countries while taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities”. The research organised within the *Mindchangers* project started from this premise and outlined, on the one hand, the common points of view of young people from six European regions with regard to youth engagement and, on the other hand, the specificities at the level of each region. These specificities which derived from the analysis of the research results were presented in the six chapters that are part of this report in accordance with the main phases of the research, namely the review of the regional policies and the identification and analysis of the elements that foster an active engagement.

Overall, each region highlighted the point of view of young people on the SDGs and on the role they play in reaching these goals. Moreover, a useful set of recommendations was formulated for each region to support LAs and CSOs in their endeavour to engage the youth in actions addressing climate change and migration.

Firstly, to sum up, regarding the regional policies on youth engagement, it is difficult to highlight several common features for all regions, because each report chapter is differently constructed due to the differences in the organisation of the regional structures from an administrative and political point of view, as well as to the economic and social differences.

Despite the differences, common features can be identified:

- The 2030 Agenda, European and national policies, national strategies and regional strategies exist in each region (as operational tools);
- The national policies are correlated with the European policies, and the regional implementation is related to specific regional strategies that take into account the regional specificities;
- For all regions, there was some difficulty in establishing statistical data (more precisely in determining the number of regional policies);
- There are common needs:
 - strengthening the collaboration between national and local authorities, and the regional CSOs;
 - stimulating and fostering international cooperation;
 - fostering young people’s involvement in policy making.

Secondly, the Questionnaire on Youth Engagement in Climate Change and Migration issues (YECCM) showed that young people have a good level of awareness and that they are willing to get engaged in supporting the implementation of the SDGs, in particular addressing climate change and migration.

Some of the answers may have been influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic which might have induced changes in the way young people perceive their present or future activities. For instance, the preference for petitions or online forms of engagement may have been the result of those circumstances.

Although the way young people see their future might have been affected by the pandemic, there are general characteristics which are valid regardless of the context. For instance, the preference for digitalisation – at information, action or communication levels – is not only one of the main characteristics of the target groups, but also of the young generation in general.

The main conclusions that resulted from the analysis of the questionnaire results can be summarised as follows:

- Young people consider migration issues less important than climate change and also feel less concerned about them. They also consider that migration issues should be dealt with mostly at international or national level. This may indicate that it would be good to increase the level of information not only regarding the importance of the issue, but also with regard to the fact that individual and local actions matter.

- Many young people have not reached a high level of engagement and are not yet prepared to become agents of change.

- The responses referring to barriers of engagement indicated the fact that young people need to be directly approached and invited to take part in precise actions.

- Young people need to be well informed about what they can do, to know about the activities in which they can get involved and initiate a first active commitment. There is still the need to continue and intensify the information not only about the importance of climate change or migration issues, but also about the projects or activities to which they can contribute.

- Young people need to be convinced and motivated to get directly involved in actions related to climate change and migration. They are willing to change their behaviour to reduce the impact of global issues, but they need support in order to understand that their voices matter and to discover what they can do. Proper persuasion techniques (e.g. social proof, opinion leaders) may be identified in each region, with the support of communication experts. Young people with a high level of engagement may act as ambassadors of active engagement. Moreover, since CSOs have the highest level of trust based on the results of the questionnaire, CSOs could also be agents of persuasion.

- Young people also need the operational and financial support of local authorities, especially when they are the ones who initiate projects or activities.

- Young people consider political figures as the least influential lever for their engagement.

- Even if climate change and migration are global issues, the respondents were more likely to participate in local action.

- Personal benefits could be better highlighted (certificates, development of skills etc).

- Personal beliefs and values, considered to be the main stimuli for engagement by the majority of the respondents, can be shaped and developed through education.

Strengthening of partnerships between CSOs, LAs and educational actors and institutions should be continued.

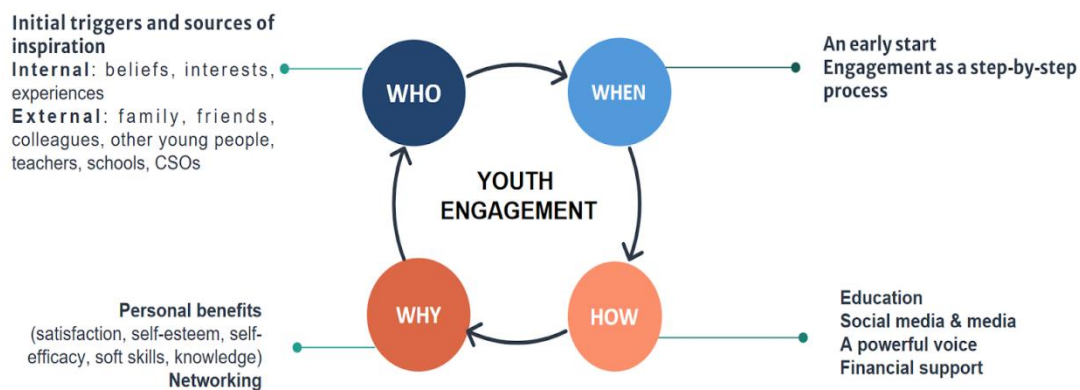
Moreover, the analysis of the young people's responses to the YECCM questionnaire led to the drawing up of a portrait of the Mindchanger, who has the following main characteristics:

- Open-minded
- Promoter of change
- Open to international solidarity
- Interested in global issues

Personality traits (e.g. empathic, optimistic, extrovert) are not as important as features that can be educated. Communication skills are also considered to be important when it comes to active engagement. Leadership skills, creativity or the ability to solve complex problems are not considered to be important for a Mindchanger, which may indicate the fact that young people do not associate a Mindchanger with level 6 of engagement (*innovator* cf. the Pyramid of Engagement), implicitly with sustainable engagement. Nonetheless, although having young people reach the highest level of engagement should be a primary goal of LAs and CSOs, any form of engagement is to be encouraged and supported, since the participation of youth in civic activities is essential for achieving the SDGs and since they are willing to contribute to shaping the world they live in.

The thematic analysis of the interviews revealed several key topics regarding young Mindchangers' engagement. These are synthesised in the concept map below. They allowed us to identify the elements which stimulate or hinder youth engagement. Additionally, they could be of use to the professionals in the field of youth action to question their strategies on how to bridge the gap between awareness and engagement.

Concept map



Regarding the initial triggers and sources of inspiration, the analysis of the results showed that they are of two types:

- Internal: Personal beliefs, interests, and ambitions; past and present experiences; and previous contact with a subject, person, or situation that awakens their interest and encourages them to be more active.
- External: family; friends; colleagues; other young people; group of peers; teachers; trainers, youth workers.

In particular, close family members have an important role when it comes to developing awareness on climate change issues and on how much it is necessary to change our habits and include the perspective of sustainable development. Their role is fundamental especially in the first stage of awareness. However, they could also be quite

critical with the young people. When young people adopt an attitude consistent with their convictions or when their level of involvement increases, they are often criticised either for devoting more time to social objectives than to personal ones or for adopting certain habits, such as, for example, becoming a vegan.

The interviews also revealed that young people see engagement as a step-by-step process, with an early start. Indeed, many of the interviewed young people admitted that their engagement started early in their lives and acknowledged that activism arises from a long-standing participatory process that has been present throughout a person's life since childhood.

It is important that youth workers keep in mind that different practices or habits are progressively acquired. These types of practices are manifested in small actions, such as not throwing paper on the ground, recycling, sorting different types of waste, etc.

The participants in the interviews pointed out that only by sensitizing very young people on central themes, such as migration and other social issues, could one ensure the education of the future adults.

Young people identified four means which they consider important in supporting their engagement:

1. Education

- The foundation for engagement can be laid in schools, as training centres.
- Schools are both sources of information and means of spreading information.
- Raising awareness campaigns can be organised in schools.
- The process of awareness-raising done as part of education for sustainable development makes it easier for young people to take part in long-term projects, and, sometimes, in long-term commitment.
- It is interesting to note that the spaces for acculturation and learning shift the focus away from the school environment.
- Some respondents call on schools or youth associations to be “greener” (climate change) or “more open-minded” (migration).
- Young people active on climate change state that not only should environmental education appear more prominently in educational programs, but schools should include environmental considerations in their daily management, for example by reducing meat regularly in the canteen. The same logic applies to higher education.

2. Social media

- It should be used more for sensitizing people about global issues or for presenting good practice examples.
- It plays quite important roles in the shift from awareness to action.
- It helps young people to identify opportunities to get actively engaged on social media.
- Young people use social media to disseminate information, mobilize other young people, sign petitions or organise protests.
- Some Belgian young people spoke about the need to adapt the selection of social media to the targeted age group and to use channels that encourage voluntary interaction, such as “Facebook live” and “Twitch”.

- However, there is the need to complement social media actions with word-of-mouth and direct mobilization in schools.
- Social media can also be a source of disinformation and needs to be complemented with other sources of information.

3. *A powerful voice*

Since this research highlighted the idea that young people are not satisfied with the level of inclusion in decision making at the local level and since young people are the 'engine of the society', it is important and quite urgent to give them a voice in addressing current issues.

4. *Financial support*

Young people need to find financial support for their actions, so local authorities or civil society organisations should help them procure the funds needed to implement their planned activities, keeping in mind that they rightly ask to be trusted, to set their own agenda, to feel listened to, to be taken seriously and to have time to implement activities without pressure.

The interviewees also put forward a series of personal benefits that can motivate their engagement: satisfaction, self-esteem, self-efficacy, a certain feeling of optimism, acquisition of additional knowledge and soft skills (e.g. critical thinking, communication, organization, team work), networking, practical experience (it can help them get a certain job), or the respect earned from the adults. Almost all interviewees consider their engagement as a way to mitigate their inner restlessness regarding global issues, like climate change and migration. This also represents an important trigger point.

Other stimuli mentioned by the interviewees are the following:

- Visible and concrete results of their commitment;
- Recognition of their actions (importance and impact);
- Social well-being (positive exchange and comparison);
- Mutual learning and exchanges of reflections and practices on other important issues;
- Communication with people from other cultures;
- A reference figure who knows how to keep the group together and launch new stimuli;
- The role they can play in shaping future generations of engaged young people.

Regarding the barriers that might hinder their active participation, they mainly mentioned:

- Lack of time;
- Lack of financial support or of infrastructure (places to meet);
- Lack of trust in their own power;
- Physical or mental burn-out;
- Lack of appreciation or discouragement from teachers, administrators (can lead to low self-esteem and some form of disengagement).
- Lack of follow-up of their actions, especially at political level.

In the absence of political decisions, young people are confronted with the impossibility to develop successful actions. This is something that they are perfectly aware

of and something that they are vocal about when questioned. They have ideas and desires, but they need to be backed by political decisions.

Last but not least, the SWOT analysis of the good practice examples provided by the regions put forward a set of common strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities, as illustrated in the figure below.



All in all, this research led to the conclusion that youth engagement refers to the direct or indirect participation of young people in a variety of actions addressing issues of local or global interest. Engagement is a step-by-step process that allows for the manifestations of interests, beliefs, and convictions, and that becomes a pattern of thought, experience and action - in other words, a way of living.

As put forward by young people themselves, engagement presupposes a good level of awareness, but also a certain profile defined by a set of specific personal traits and competences that can be developed through various forms of education. Young people must change themselves, in order to be able to change others and the world they live in, therefore engagement should be both attitudinal and behavioural. Another important trigger for engagement is the existence of a social context which motivates and encourages young people to act at both social and private level. Thus, engagement becomes part of who they are, since it induces a sort of permanent behaviour, not limited to social action, but extended to their personal lives.

An engaged young person must be able to motivate other young people to get engaged, and act as a multiplier to mobilise them collectively. Moreover, young people make the difference between mere participation and active engagement. Actively engaged

young people are those for whom engagement acquires an ideological value, acting as a set of ideas that govern their lives and the lives of others, within the society they live in.

The research “How to shift from awareness to active engagement” served for the drawing up of a Practical Guide on Youth Engagement on the 2030 Agenda, available on the website of the project (<https://www.mindchangers.eu/>). It represents a snapshot of the regional situation regarding youth active engagement in actions addressing the two focus areas of the project: climate change and migration.

The research instruments can be used for the evaluation of the level of awareness and engagement of young people, as well as for the investigation of their points of view in other regions or at other moments. The recommendations included in the research report (as regional recommendations, part of each regional chapter) and those formulated in the Practical Guide are meant to support LAs and CSOs in developing successful projects involving the youth at local level, but not only. Only by a strong collaboration between these two local actors, in synergy with other social, political and educational entities, can the level of active engagement be improved and stimulated, and can young people become agents of change in their communities.