Guideline for Strengthening Local Youth Council Cooperation and Joint Initiatives with Youth Stakeholders

Table of Contents

1. Why this Guideline? *5*

2. Legal and Institutional Framework for Local Youth Participation: From European to National Level *6*

2.1. Connecting Local Youth Action with European Developments **6**

2.1.1 European Youth Strategy 6

2.1.2 Council of Europe Principles 7

2.1.3 Alignment with the National Youth Strategy 2022–2029 7

2.2 National Legal and Institutional Framework **8**

2.2.1 Local Youth Councils (LYCs): Role and Mandate 8

2.2.2 Municipal-Level Cooperation Mechanisms 9

3. Core Principles for Effective Cooperation *10*

4. Mapping the Local Youth Ecosystem: Key Youth Stakeholders *12*

5. Models and Methods for Collaborative Youth Engagement and Joint Initiatives *14*

5.1 Models and Mechanisms for Collaboration **14**

6. Step-by-Step Guide to Planning Joint Initiatives *21*

7. Communication and Visibility *25*

8. Managing Risks and Resolving Conflicts *28*

8.1. Risk Mitigation in Project Implementation **28**

8.2. Conflict Resolution **29**

9. Monitoring, Evaluation and Sustainability *30*

9.1. Monitoring **30**

9.2. Evaluation **31**

9.3. Sustainability **32**

9.4. Indicators of Cooperation Quality **33**

References *34*

ANNEXES *37*

Annex 1 ..... **37**

Annex 2 ..... **38**

Annex 3 ..... **41**

Annex 4 ..... **44**

Annex 5 ..... **48**

List of Abbreviations

AKPA	National Agency for Employment and Skills
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EU	European Union
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
LYC	Local Youth Council
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training
NYA	National Youth Agency
NYC	National Youth Council
NYS	National Youth Strategy
PCM	Project Cycle Management
RYCO	Regional Youth Cooperation Office
YRO	Youth Representative Organisation
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

1. Why this Guideline?

Local Youth Councils (LYCs) are the main structured mechanism through which young people can engage in municipal decision-making in Albania. They can also help municipalities reach young people from different backgrounds. Their influence on local policy, however, depends largely on how well they cooperate with the wider youth ecosystem, including youth organisations, student councils, youth centres, non-formal youth groups and local authorities.

This guideline provides practical steps to strengthen that cooperation and help LYCs design and deliver joint initiatives that are inclusive, sustainable and aligned with national and European youth policy. It also points users to existing platforms, methods and resources for working with and for young people.

Purpose of the Guideline

The guideline is designed to help LYCs move from formal existence to meaningful, practical cooperation. It aims to:

- provide LYCs with a clear and practical framework, principles, checklists, indicators and tools to translate their legal mandate under Law No. 75/2019 "On Youth" into effective cooperation, consultation and co-design with youth stakeholders and local authorities;
- support consistency across municipalities, so that the quality of youth cooperation and engagement does not depend solely on the commitment of one individual or mayor; and
- strengthen the capacity of LYCs to draw on European experience and good practice and align local cooperation initiatives with national youth policies and priorities.

Target Users

The guideline provides information and tools for LYCs and other actors in Albania's youth ecosystem, including:

- **Local Youth Councils (LYCs):** elected or appointed youth members and co-chairs, including mayors, who can use the guideline to structure meetings, joint initiatives and outreach to the wider youth population.
- **Youth stakeholders:** youth organisations, student councils, youth centres and non-formal youth groups, which can use the guideline to engage with LYCs and local authorities as partners rather than one-off consultees.
- **Local authorities:** municipal councils, mayors' offices and youth officers, which can use the guideline to establish supportive institutional arrangements, budget lines, staff time and decision-making procedures that make cooperation with young people sustainable rather than ad hoc.

The guideline draws on national and European youth policies and on resources developed by international organisations for youth work. It supports the implementation of the National Youth Strategy (NYS) 2022–2029 and aligns with key European frameworks, including the European Youth Goals and Council of Europe principles discussed in the following chapters.

2. Legal and Institutional Framework for Local Youth Participation: From European to National Level

This chapter explains the legal and policy basis for LYCs and why they exist. It starts with the European frameworks relevant to Albania and then turns to Albania's laws on youth and local government. This background helps LYCs understand the policy framework in which they operate and how they can use it in practice.

2.1. Connecting Local Youth Action with European Developments

Local youth policy in Albania connects to three main reference points: the EU Youth Strategy, the Council of Europe's long-standing work on youth participation, and Albania's National Youth Strategy, which applies these principles in the national context. Together, they provide a wider policy anchor for LYC work at the municipal level.

2.1.1 European Youth Strategy

The EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027 is a key reference for youth policy in Europe. The Council of the European Union adopted it in November 2018 to strengthen young people's role in democratic life. It aims to support young people's full participation in society, their social and civic engagement, and their access to the resources and opportunities they need (Council of the European Union, 2018; European Youth Portal, 2024).

The Strategy is built around three ideas: Engage, Connect and Empower. It sets out eleven European Youth Goals (European Commission, n.d.). For this guideline, the central message is that youth participation should take place at every level, including locally, with meaningful support for young people and youth organisations to shape the policies that affect them.

Albania's own National Youth Strategy (NYS) 2022–2029 builds directly on these eleven goals. Six of them connect most closely to what LYCs do when they cooperate well with youth stakeholders:

- **Goal 2 – Equality of All Genders:** no young person should face discrimination because of their gender.
- **Goal 3 – Inclusive Societies:** every young person is included, whatever their background.
- **Goal 4 – Quality Information, Youth Work and Constructive Dialogue:** LYCs and their partners talk to each other honestly and clearly, in both directions.

- **Goal 6 – Moving Rural Youth Forward:** young people in rural areas get a fair chance too.
- **Goal 9 – Space and Participation for All:** young people have safe spaces and real chances to take part in local decisions.
- **Goal 11 – Youth Organisations and European Programmes:** every young person can access youth organisations and European programmes, building a society based on shared European values.
- **Other goals –** The remaining five goals — reaching young people (1), mental health (5), employment (7), learning (8) and a sustainable environment (10) — still matter. They can shape the content of a specific joint initiative, like an employment- or environment-focused project, even when they are not the direct focus of the cooperation methods this Guideline covers.

Stronger cooperation between an LYC and youth stakeholders is therefore more than a local improvement. It contributes to Albania's national youth commitments and, through them, to the shared vision of the European Youth Strategy.

2.1.2 Council of Europe Principles

The Council of Europe's principles, policy work and research on youth participation provide another important European framework and have informed this guideline.

Co-management is one of the methods largely promoted by the Council of Europe in the realm of youth participation. Young people are not simply asked for an opinion after a decision has been made; they help make the decision as equal partners. They help shape priorities, design initiatives and review results from start to finish. At local level, this means creating structures in which LYCs and municipal authorities work together on equal terms, rather than structures in which the municipality consults young people and then decides alone.

This principle received renewed support on 12 March 2026, when the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted a Recommendation to member States on the European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life (Council of Europe, 2026), which updates the Revised Charter of 2003 (Council of Europe, 2003). The Charter calls on local and regional authorities to create an enabling environment in which young people can take part meaningfully in decisions that affect them. Its principles are reflected throughout this guideline.

2.1.3 Alignment with the National Youth Strategy 2022–2029

In Albania, the National Youth Strategy (NYS) 2022–2029 is the main policy document that puts the Law on Youth into practice. Its vision is that young women and men become active partners in building Albania's future. The Strategy sets specific goals to close participation gaps and strengthen young people's engagement in their communities.

This guideline directly supports the goal of enabling young people to participate actively in society and speak for themselves through coordinated, evidence-based and properly funded cross-sectoral policy. In practice, it helps LYCs cooperate with youth stakeholders and supports the transfer of effective local practices, such as youth participation in budgeting, across municipalities.

Taken together, Sections 2.1.1 to 2.1.3 show that this guideline rests on both European and national policy. Strengthening LYC cooperation with youth stakeholders is therefore part of Albania's own youth policy commitments, not simply a practice borrowed from elsewhere.

2.2 National Legal and Institutional Framework

Having considered the European and national policy context, this section turns to Albanian legislation and what it says about the mandate and operation of LYCs.

Albania's Constitution does not treat "youth" as its own legal category. Article 54 protects children, young people, pregnant women and new mothers together, as part of the state's broader duty to protect vulnerable groups. The real legal foundation for youth policy comes from a dedicated law.

Law No. 75/2019 "On Youth", as amended by Law No. 24/2025, defines "youth" as persons aged 15 to 29 (Article 3). It also establishes the institutions, funding, and key concepts on which youth policy operates at the national and local levels. These concepts are explained further in Chapter 4.

Several sector-specific laws also complement the Law on Youth. Given the scope and purpose of this guideline, they are not discussed in detail here.

2.2.1 Local Youth Councils (LYCs): Role and Mandate

At the municipal level, the LYC is the main body that advises local government on youth policy, serving as the local counterpart to the National Youth Council. Article 10 of the Law on Youth, as amended by Law No. 24/2025, gives it five main functions: advising the municipality on youth policy and plans; monitoring their implementation; proposing local youth initiatives; maintaining regular contact with the National Youth Council; and, since the 2025 amendment, providing an opinion on other local policies and issues affecting young people when the municipality asks for it. This last function allows the LYC to contribute beyond youth-specific policy when the municipality seeks its views. The LYC is an advisory body of the municipality. It does not have legal personality of its own, and its advice and proposals are not binding on the municipality: they take effect only when the municipality, and where required the Municipal Council, approves them. This matters whenever the LYC signs agreements or works under a co-management arrangement (see Chapter 5).

Law No. 24/2025 not only expanded the issues on which an LYC may advise; it also changed how LYCs are structured and led. Four changes are particularly important:

- **Size linked to the municipality:** the number of LYC members is equal to one-third of the membership of the municipal council, so larger municipalities have larger LYCs (Article 10(2)).
- **Higher youth representation:** at least two-thirds of LYC members must be young people, compared with half previously (Article 10(2)).
- **Co-chairing:** the mayor no longer chairs the LYC alone. A youth member also serves as co-chair, giving young people a formal leadership role (Article 10(2)).
- **Funding:** the law identifies two sources of funding for LYC activities—the municipality and the National Youth Agency—giving LYCs a clearer legal basis for accessing resources (Article 10(2/1)).

Together, these changes strengthen the size, youth leadership and resource base of LYCs. Article references are to Law No. 75/2019 "On Youth", as amended by Law No. 24/2025.

2.2.2 Municipal-Level Cooperation Mechanisms

Beyond the LYC itself, several mechanisms connect municipalities with the youth sector. Many are still relatively new and continue to develop in practice:

- **Municipal Council decisions:** local youth plans and LYC rules become legally binding only after formal approval by the Municipal Council (Law No. 139/2015 "On Local Self-Governance").
- **Local youth strategies and action plans:** the law requires municipalities to establish LYCs and local plans, while dedicated local youth strategies are often developed with support from donors and civil society organisations rather than through a specific legal obligation.
- **Participatory budgeting:** municipalities are required to run participatory budgeting processes. Young people can use these, like other citizens, to help shape local spending, although their participation remains limited in practice (Lula, 2023).
- **Local consultation platforms:** the national "Local Consultation" platform (konsultimivendor.al) allows citizens, including young people, to submit views on local issues (Lula, 2023).
- **Youth focal points and municipal coordination:** municipalities are expected to assign a staff member to coordinate youth-related work, although this responsibility is often combined with other duties (Ministry of State for Youth and Children, 2022).
- **LYC–NYC coordination:** LYCs are legally required to maintain contact with the National Youth Council, creating a link between local and national youth participation.

These mechanisms do not replace the role of the LYC. Instead, they give LYCs several entry points into municipal decision-making and policy processes.

Quick checklist

- ☐ We know that our LYC is an advisory body of the municipality and that final decisions rest with the Municipal Council.
- ☐ Our LYC meets the rules in Article 10: size linked to the municipal council, at least two-thirds young members, and co-chairing by the mayor and a youth member.
- ☐ The Municipal Council has adopted the rules on how LYC members are selected and how their expenses are compensated.
- ☐ The LYC has a funding source in the municipal budget and has asked the National Youth Agency about support.
- ☐ We know who the municipal youth focal point is and how to reach them.

3. Core Principles for Effective Cooperation

Effective cooperation follows a set of principles drawn from research and good practice (European Economic and Social Committee, 2024; DYPALL Network, 2023), regardless of whether the process is initiated by an LYC, a youth organisation or the municipality. Each principle should be reflected in every joint initiative involving an LYC.

Meaningful Participation: Young people should have a genuine opportunity to shape decisions, not simply be informed or consulted after decisions have already been made. A meeting in which an LYC is told about a completed plan is not meaningful participation. Young people should be treated as partners in local democracy, and their knowledge should be valued alongside that of officials and experts. This reflects the Council of Europe's co-management approach. Hart's Ladder of Participation (Hart, 1992) offers a useful test. It separates manipulation, decoration, and tokenism from genuine participation, and the higher rungs, where young people initiate projects or share decisions with adults, are the standard this guideline aims for.

Inclusivity and Representation: An LYC should reflect the diversity of the municipality's youth population, not only its most active members. This requires active outreach to young people who are harder to engage, including those in rural areas, young people with disabilities, and those who are less organised or less confident about taking part. Representation is not only about who is in the room, but whether the room reflects the wider community. Inclusive local youth councils are also a central quality concern of the DYPALL Network (2023).

Shared Ownership and Responsibility: Cooperation works best when everyone involved—young people, the LYC, the municipality and other partners—knows what they are responsible for. Clear, shared roles reduce gaps and help partnerships last beyond individual people or activities.

Transparency and Accountability: Young people and other stakeholders should know how decisions are made, not only what is decided. The LYC and its partners should be open about their roles, results, and how youth input influenced decisions. If a proposal from a consultation is not used, explain why. Clear feedback supports trust.

Youth-Led, Multi-Stakeholder Cooperation: Young people should help set priorities and shape the initiatives that affect them. This is what makes an initiative youth-led rather than merely youth-consulted. At the same time, LYCs cannot deliver alone. Municipalities, youth organisations and other institutions provide expertise, resources and support that help turn youth-led ideas into action.

Continuity and Sustainability: Cooperation should not depend on one enthusiastic LYC member. Stable structures, agreed processes, records and resources help initiatives continue when membership or staff change. This is what turns a one-off activity into a lasting practice.

Evidence-Based and Needs-Responsive Action: Initiatives should respond to the needs of young people in the community, based on evidence, consultation, feedback and local data. What works in one municipality may not work in another.

Resourced Cooperation: Joint initiatives need an agreed budget, staff time or in-kind resources before they begin. Initiatives based only on goodwill are more likely to stall during implementation.

Safeguarding and Data Protection: The Law on Youth defines young people as those aged 15 to 29, so some LYC members and participants in joint initiatives are minors (under 18). Every joint initiative should protect them and respect everyone's privacy. This means obtaining the consent of parents or guardians for minors where required; collecting and storing personal data only as needed and in line with applicable data-protection legislation; asking for consent before photographing, filming or publishing images or stories of young people, including on social media; and planning activities so that they are safe, accessible and respectful, with a named person responsible for safeguarding concerns. Partners should agree these rules at the start and reflect them in the MoU (Annex 4).

These nine principles provide a standard for assessing every cooperation model in this guideline. A method that appears efficient but ignores transparency or inclusivity is not effective; it simply shifts the problem elsewhere.

Quick checklist

- ☐ Young people helped shape the idea and the decisions, not only attended.
- ☐ Participants reflect the diversity of local youth; we reached beyond our usual members.
- ☐ Roles, decisions and results are documented and shared with partners and participants.
- ☐ Budget, staff time or in-kind support was agreed before we started.
- ☐ Consent and safeguarding arrangements are in place, including for minors.
- ☐ Records are kept so the work can continue when membership or staff change.

4. Mapping the Local Youth Ecosystem: Key Youth Stakeholders

This chapter maps the youth ecosystem with which an LYC can work in Albania. It first presents stakeholder groups defined in the Law on Youth, followed by other actors that are not specifically named in the law but are relevant in practice. Together, they help LYCs identify partners and include a wider range of voices.

Stakeholders defined by law

- **Youth organisations:** registered non-profits whose main purpose is to represent and advance young people's interests. At least 70% of their members (or two-thirds of the board, for board-governed groups) must be young people themselves. The Law on Youth treats them as key actors in youth policy.
- **Organisations for youth:** non-profit entities whose principal field of activity lies elsewhere but which also work to safeguard and advance youth interests and have a track record of implementing youth-focused programmes.
- **National Youth Council (NYC):** the 18-member advisory body to the ministry responsible for youth, co-chaired by the minister and one of its youth members. At least two-thirds of its members are young people, and it is intended to represent marginalised groups, young people with special needs, diaspora youth and both genders. For an LYC, the NYC provides a link between local youth priorities and national policy discussions.
- **Youth Representative Organisation (YRO):** a representative body, recognised under the Law on Youth, that brings youth organisations together and can speak for them at national level. The law sets specific requirements for how it is formed and recognised.
- **Youth centres:** physical spaces where young people meet, learn and organise activities. The amended Law on Youth defines their role in providing infrastructure, information, mentoring, training and non-formal education. A youth centre can be public (run by the municipality), joint (municipality plus one or more youth organisations, under a cooperation agreement), or non-public (privately run).
- **Non-formal youth groups:** groups of young people who share a goal but are not registered as a formal organisation, often around a local issue, interest or campaign. The 2025 amendments to the Law on Youth formally recognised these groups and their role in the community.
- **Youth workers:** people who work directly with young people to support their personal and social development, whether paid or voluntary and whether based in a public institution, youth organisation or youth centre.

Other stakeholders worth mapping

- **Student councils:** elected student bodies at university level. Universities set their own rules for these under Law No. 80/2015 "On Higher Education," and they give an LYC access to student perspectives on education, employment, skills and local services.
- **School Councils:** pupil governments at school level. They exist in practice, although Law No. 69/2012 "On Pre-University Education" does not regulate them directly. They provide one of the few direct channels to secondary-school students for consultations, campaigns and joint initiatives.
- **Parliament of Pupils of Albania:** a national platform for pupil representation that can connect local school-level participation with wider national discussions.
- **Youth Networks**: regional, national or thematic networks that connect organisations and young people around a shared interest. They help with information-sharing, mobilisation and cooperation beyond a single municipality.
- **Community Schools (Shkolla Qendër Komunitare):** schools that connect with families and the wider community and provide useful spaces for youth activities and outreach. They can help an LYC reach pupils, parents, teachers and other community actors.
- **Libraries and Cultural Spaces:** public libraries, cultural centres and museums can provide accessible spaces for information, learning and youth-led activities.
- **Employment Offices:** regional and local employment structures run by AKPA that are relevant when an LYC works on youth employment, NEETs, career guidance or the transition from education to work.
- **Youth Structures of Embassies and International Organisations:** youth councils, advisory boards and ambassador networks linked to embassies and international organisations. They can offer opportunities for exchange, training and project cooperation and are worth mapping as potential partners, although they are not structures created by Albanian law.
- **Roma and Egyptian Youth Organisations and Groups:** organisations and groups led by or working with young Roma and Egyptian people, who may face particular barriers to taking part in local life. Mapping them explicitly helps an LYC reach young people it might otherwise miss.
- **Organisations of Persons with Disabilities:** organisations that represent or work with young people with disabilities. They can advise on accessibility and help include young people with disabilities in joint initiatives.
- **Private Sector:** businesses, employers and employers' associations can offer internships, mentoring, sponsorship or in-kind support, especially for initiatives on employment and skills.
- **Other Local Stakeholders:** depending on local needs, the mapping can also include municipal departments, social services, health institutions, sports and cultural organisations and local media—any actor that shapes young people's opportunities.

- **Youth Representative on the RYCO Governing Board:** in Albania, the RYCO Youth Representative is a young person who sits on RYCO's Governing Board alongside Western Balkan ministers responsible for youth. The representative serves a three-year term and is selected through a transparent process involving youth civil society.

A stakeholder map is useful only if an LYC knows how to work with the actors it identifies. The next chapter presents different models of cooperation, from formal agreements to shared online tools.

Quick checklist

☐ We have listed existing partners, potential partners and missing voices (Annex 2).

☐ The map includes Roma and Egyptian youth organisations, organisations of persons with disabilities, non-formal groups and the private sector where relevant.

☐ Each stakeholder has a named contact person in the LYC.

☐ We review the map at least once a year, for example after membership renewal.

5. Models and Methods for Collaborative Youth Engagement and Joint Initiatives

This chapter is a practical toolbox. It presents six types of cooperation that an LYC can use with youth stakeholders and explains how each works in practice.

5.1 Models and Mechanisms for Collaboration

5.1.1 Formal Mechanisms

A formal mechanism is documented, with clear membership and a defined mandate. It can continue when the people involved change because it does not depend on individual goodwill.

Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs)

What it is

A written agreement between the LYC and a partner that sets out what each side will do, for how long, and with what resources. The LYC is an advisory body of the municipality and has no legal personality of its own, so an MoU involving the LYC is signed by the municipality (through the mayor as co-chair of the LYC) or the responsible directorate for youth. The partner organisation signs in its own name, and the LYC's youth co-chair and members can be named as the responsible contacts.

How it can be implemented

- agree on the objective and scope before drafting;
- draft terms covering roles, resources, duration and an exit clause;

- agree on the text in the LYC, then have it signed by the municipality (through the mayor as co-chair) or approved by Municipal Council decision, and signed by the partner organisation; and
- review at a fixed interval rather than leaving it open-ended.

How it supports LYC–youth stakeholder cooperation

It gives the partnership predictability and creates a record that remains useful when staff or LYC members change.

Joint Working Groups

What it is

A team that brings together LYC members, stakeholder representatives, and municipal staff to design or oversee a specific initiative, either for a set period or on an ongoing basis.

How it can be implemented

- define the initiative and required expertise before forming the group;
- agree on a mandate, meeting frequency, and end point (or renewal date); and
- assign a facilitator responsible for keeping the group on track.

How it supports LYC–youth stakeholder cooperation

It is a flexible formal method: a group can be created for one project and dissolved afterwards, or retained for a recurring issue such as budget planning.

Institutional Participation Structures (Youth Parliaments, Forums)

What it is

Beyond the LYC itself, the Council of Europe's Charter on youth participation recommends permanent structures such as youth parliaments or forums. These may include elected or appointed representatives who reflect the diversity of the community, take responsibility for projects and submit proposals to local authorities.

How it can be implemented

- give the structure a clear and lasting remit (for example, youth policy in the municipality) so that it is permanent rather than created for a single event; for issue-specific work, use a joint working group instead;
- ensure membership reflects the community's diversity and interest groups, not only the most active youth organisations; and
- provide a recognised physical space and support for developing, monitoring and evaluating youth projects.

How it supports LYC–youth stakeholder cooperation

It gives youth stakeholders a standing place where proposals are prepared and passed to the municipality, and a space to develop, monitor and evaluate youth projects. It complements the LYC rather than replacing it.

Co-management

What it is

A method in which young people and local authority representatives make decisions together as equal partners, rather than authorities deciding after consulting young people. It is the model used in the Council of Europe's youth governance and also informed the 2025 amendments to the Law on Youth that changed how LYCs are led. The same approach can be applied to the design and delivery of specific initiatives and projects. In Albania, this operates within the limits of the law: the LYC remains an advisory body and final decisions on municipal matters rest with the Municipal Council. Co-management is therefore best applied to the design and delivery of joint initiatives and to decisions the municipality has formally agreed to share, such as the selection of projects under a youth grant scheme, and not to decisions the law reserves for the Municipal Council.

How it can be implemented

- define which decisions (e.g. the selection of projects under a specific budget line or programme) will be taken jointly, with an equal say for each side within what the Municipal Council has approved;
- set clear rules for how disagreements between the youth and authority sides are resolved; and
- review the arrangement periodically to confirm both sides still consider it equal in practice, not only on paper.

How it supports LYC–youth stakeholder cooperation

It is a clear test of power-sharing: decision-making authority is held jointly rather than exercised by one side after consultation.

5.1.2 Non-formal Collaboration

Non-formal collaboration is flexible and non-binding, based on relationships and trust rather than a written agreement. It is usually quick to establish and can be an accessible way for new or non-formal youth groups to become involved.

<u>Campaign Partnerships</u>

What it is

The LYC and one or more youth stakeholders jointly run an awareness, outreach or advocacy campaign.

How it can be implemented

- identify a shared theme that benefits both partners;
- agree informally on contributions (outreach, design, budget);
- keep a clear, agreed split of responsibilities;
- keep brief internal notes afterwards for institutional memory.

How it supports LYC–youth stakeholder cooperation

Builds visibility and trust quickly and can become a first step towards a more formal mechanism.

Co-hosted Events

What it is

The LYC and a partner jointly organise a one-off or recurring activity, such as a youth forum, open day or training.

How it can be implemented

- agree a date and shared objective;
- split organisational tasks (venue, outreach, facilitation);
- record who attended and what follow-up was promised.

How it supports LYC–youth stakeholder cooperation

A practical way for an LYC to reach young people beyond its own membership, particularly in smaller or rural municipalities.

Peer-to-Peer Education and Outreach

What it is

Young people teach or inform other young people about issues such as health, civic rights or local opportunities. The Council of Europe identifies peer-to-peer approaches as a common form of youth participation in practice.

How it can be implemented

- identify LYC members or stakeholder youth willing to act as peer educators;
- provide them with basic training or talking points; and
- connect peer outreach to a specific LYC initiative, rather than leaving it freestanding.

How it supports LYC–youth stakeholder cooperation

Extends the LYC's reach through relationships young people already trust, rather than through official channels alone.

5.1.3 Digital Platforms for Shared Planning and Dialogue

Online tools and spaces that keep cooperation active between meetings and provide a shared record that partners can revisit.

Shared Planning Tools

What it is

Online documents, boards or calendars accessible to the LYC and its partners for co-drafting agendas and tracking joint initiatives between meetings.

How it can be implemented

- choose accessible, low-cost tools partners can actually use;
- integrate the tool into the existing meeting cycle rather than running it as a parallel channel.

How it supports LYC–youth stakeholder cooperation

Reduces reliance on the LYC chair or secretariat as the sole coordination point.

Dialogue and Consultation Platforms

What it is

Online spaces, such as portals, forms, or group channels, through which youth stakeholders and young people can contribute views at different times.

How it can be implemented

- set clear norms for who monitors the platform and expected response times; and
- close the loop by reporting back on how contributions were used.

How it supports LYC–youth stakeholder cooperation

Widens participation beyond those able to attend scheduled meetings.

Youth Information and ICT Services

What it is

Local youth information or counselling services and the digital tools a municipality uses as part of its youth participation work.

How it can be implemented

- map what youth information already exists locally (a youth centre, a municipal information desk) before creating a new channel;
- set basic quality standards for accuracy and update frequency;
- actively address access gaps (no internet, no digital skills) rather than assuming universal access.

How it supports LYC–youth stakeholder cooperation

Helps ensure cooperation is not limited to young people who are already online and informed, while keeping youth stakeholders aware of local opportunities and gaps.

5.1.4 Financial and Resource-Based Cooperation

Cooperation based on shared resources, not only planning or discussion. This model shows whether institutions are willing to share resources and decision-making as well as ideas.

Youth Participatory Budgeting

What it is

The municipality does consultation targeting only its youth population and their needs.

How it can be implemented

- secure a defined budget line from the municipality before launching the process;
- publish an open call for budget proposals or options; and
- run a transparent voting or selection process and report on results.

How it supports LYC–youth stakeholder cooperation

Turns an advisory relationship into a visible decision that young people helped make.

Youth Grants

What it is

Youth-led micro-grant panels that allocate municipal or donor funds to youth-proposed initiatives.

How it can be implemented

- agree selection criteria jointly, with a youth-majority panel;
- publish an open call so participation is not limited to the LYC's own network; and
- require simple, proportional reporting from funded initiatives.

How it supports LYC–youth stakeholder cooperation

Gives young people a direct role in grant-making, rather than only advising others on how funds should be spent.

Co-funding and In-kind Resource-sharing Agreements

What it is

A stakeholder contributes space, staff time or equipment in exchange for municipal funding or support for an activity.

How it can be implemented

- value the in-kind contribution explicitly, so it is recognised alongside cash funding; and
- set out in writing what each side provides and for how long.

How it supports LYC–youth stakeholder cooperation

Allows smaller stakeholders without cash budgets to participate as equal partners by contributing other resources.

5.1.5 Capacity-Building Cooperation

Joint training, mentoring or short exchanges aimed at building the skills needed for other cooperation models rather than delivering one specific initiative.

Joint Training

What it is

Short, practical sessions in which municipal staff and LYC members learn from each other, for example about the municipal budget cycle, youth outreach or digital engagement methods.

How it can be implemented

- identify gaps jointly, from both sides, rather than assuming only young people need training;
- schedule sessions close to LYC membership renewal;
- identify who can provide the trainings.

How it supports LYC–youth stakeholder cooperation

Reduces knowledge gaps between young representatives and institutional actors.

Mentoring and Member/Staff Exchange

What it is

Pairing experienced and newer LYC members, or LYC members and municipal staff, through light, ongoing mentoring rather than one-off training.

How it can be implemented

- pair outgoing and incoming LYC members ahead of each renewal; and
- keep the arrangement light – regular short check-ins, not a formal curriculum.

How it supports LYC–youth stakeholder cooperation

Preserves institutional knowledge during membership turnover in ways that one-off training alone cannot.

5.1.6 Research and Monitoring Cooperation

Joint or youth-led studies, needs assessments and evaluations that strengthen the evidence base for the other cooperation models.

Joint Needs Assessments and Local Research

What it is

The LYC and a municipal or stakeholder partner jointly define a research question—for example, barriers to youth employment or use of a local youth space—and design a simple methodology.

How it can be implemented

- keep the methodology proportionate (a short survey or a few focus groups, not a large study);
- present findings jointly to the specific directorate as a basis for a specific intervention.

How it supports LYC–youth stakeholder cooperation

Gives young people a credible, evidence-based role in decision-making beyond simply expressing an opinion.

Youth-led Monitoring and Evaluation

What it is

Young people lead the evaluation of an existing youth-focused service, space or policy rather than being only the beneficiaries being evaluated.

How it can be implemented

- agree on the theme and working plan;
- agree in advance what will be done with the findings;
- pair youth evaluators with light methodological support where needed.

How it supports LYC–youth stakeholder cooperation

Creates a bridge to other cooperation models, as findings may lead directly to a working group, advisory discussion or budgeting proposal.

Together, these six types cover the main dimensions of cooperation: structure, delivery, shared resources, skills and evidence. An LYC does not need to use every method with every partner. Methods should be selected and combined according to the maturity of the relationship and the needs of the initiative.

Quick checklist

- ☐ We chose the cooperation model(s) that fit the partner and the initiative.
- ☐ Any agreement is signed by the right party (the municipality or by Municipal Council decision) and respects the advisory status of the LYC.
- ☐ Each partner has a named contact person and an agreed contribution of time or resources.
- ☐ Digital tools can be used by all partners, including those with limited internet access.
- ☐ We have a date to review or renew the cooperation.

6. Step-by-Step Guide to Planning Joint Initiatives

Whichever model from Section 5 is used, the success of a joint initiative often depends more on how it is managed than on how good the idea sounds. The project cycle offers a simple way to organise that work.

This chapter walks through the cycle step by step. Adapt it to your context, capacity and resources. It is a starting point, not a rulebook.

A project cycle treats an initiative as a loop rather than a one-off task: lessons from one initiative feed into the design of the next. This follows the logic of the European Commission's Project Cycle Management (PCM) approach, widely used in EU- and donor-funded projects (European Commission, 2004), draws on the Council of Europe's T-Kit 3 on project management (Imre & Schweitzer, 2026), and is consistent with the process groups used in general project-management practice (Project Management Institute, n.d.). The four phases below adapt that cycle for LYC cooperation. Monitoring is not a separate phase after implementation: it runs alongside it, as Figure 1 shows. The cycle can be applied by LYCs with different levels of experience.

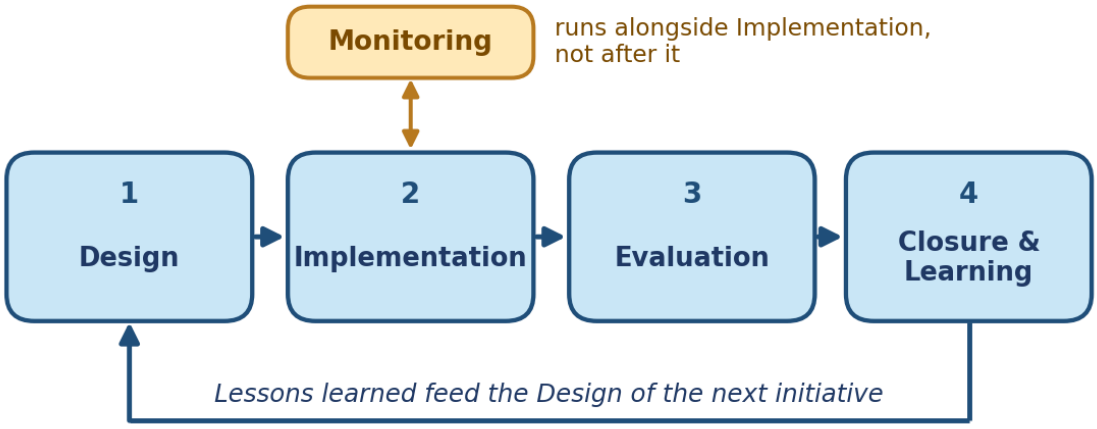


Figure 1. The project cycle for LYC joint initiatives (Monitoring runs alongside Implementation).

Source/adaptation note: This structure is adapted for LYCs from the European Commission's Project Cycle Management Guidelines (2004) and the Council of Europe's T-Kit 3: Project Management (2026). Use the Annex 1 Project Template to record the outputs of each phase.

1. Design

What it means

Design turns a need or opportunity affecting young people into a concrete, shared plan: what will be done, for whom, why, and with what expected result. It is the foundation of the whole cycle. Gaps at this stage—such as an unclear objective or a partner who was not consulted—often reappear later and are harder to correct.

Key Elements of the Design Phase:

Objective: the specific change the initiative is intended to produce, stated clearly enough to assess whether it has been achieved. For example, "Improve youth employment" is too broad; "30 young people complete a CV and interview-skills workshop by June" is specific and measurable.

Timeline: the overall schedule for the initiative, from Design to Closure. It is one shared calendar covering the start date, milestones, and end date. Agreeing it during Design and checking it during Monitoring helps prevent delays and unclear endings.

Budget and Resources: an overview of what the initiative will cost and what it needs beyond money, such as a venue, staff or volunteer time, digital tools and printed materials. These resources should be confirmed, not assumed, before Implementation begins.

Roles and Responsibilities: a clear statement of who is responsible for each part of the initiative and who has final decision-making authority when partners disagree. Responsibilities should be

assigned by name rather than left to general expectations that “the LYC” or “the partners” will manage them.

Deliverables: the concrete outputs the initiative will produce, such as a workshop, a published report, or a proposal submitted to the Municipal Council.

How to implement it

- run a short needs assessment, a brief survey, a focus group, or an informal consultation, with the young people the initiative is meant to reach, rather than assuming what they need;
- write one clear objective (what should change) and two or three measurable expected results (how you will know it changed);
- identify the partners needed and what each will contribute, such as time, space, budget or expertise;
- set the initiative’s overall timeline: start date, key milestones and end date;
- confirm the budget and other resources, agree who is responsible for what, and record the objective, partners, timeline, budget and responsibilities in one simple plan using the Annex 1 Project Template.

2. Implementation and Monitoring

What it means

Implementation is the delivery phase. The activities agreed during Design take place: sessions are held, materials are produced, resources are used, and partners stay coordinated. The plan should guide delivery while allowing reasonable adjustments to changing conditions. Monitoring takes place at the same time, not afterwards: it tracks progress against the Design plan throughout delivery so that problems are caught while they can still be corrected.

How to implement it

- confirm the detailed activity schedule against the timeline agreed at Design (dates, venues, who does what) and share it with every partner before starting;
- assign one named person as the responsible owner for each activity or task, so accountability is never ambiguous;
- set up simple, low-effort coordination touchpoints between partners (a shared chat group, a weekly two-line update); and
- keep a running record of what was delivered – dates, attendance, spending – as it happens, not reconstructed afterwards.

Monitoring (alongside implementation)

Monitoring is the continuous tracking of progress while the initiative is under way, including activities and spending against the Design plan. It happens at the same time as implementation, not after it. Done well, it identifies problems early enough for corrective action.

- keep a simple tracking sheet comparing planned versus actual dates, activities and spending, checked against the timeline set at Design;

- hold brief check-in meetings with partners at fixed, regular intervals, focused only on what has changed since the last check-in; and
- record any deviation from the plan together with the agreed corrective action, so the reasoning is not lost.

3. Evaluation

What it means

Evaluation asks whether the results set during Design were achieved and why or why not. It takes place after activities are completed and differs from monitoring, which tracks progress during delivery.

How to implement it

- compare the actual outcomes directly against the objective and expected results written down at Design;
- check whether the initiative stayed within its agreed timeline and budget, and note where and why it did not;
- collect feedback from participants and partners through a short survey[1] or debrief, including what did not work, not only what did; and
- write a brief evaluation summary; one page is usually enough and is more likely to be read than a lengthy report.

4. Closure & Learning

What it means

Closure formally ends the initiative and captures what was learned. It turns one project into a starting point for the next and completes the cycle back to Design.

How to implement it

- hold a short joint debrief with partners specifically to discuss lessons learned, separate from the evaluation of results;
- write these lessons down, even briefly, rather than leaving them as informal impressions held by whoever was involved;
- decide together whether to repeat, scale up, or formalise the cooperation further (for example, moving from an informal campaign partnership into a standing working group); and
- file the outline, timeline, records and evaluation where future LYC members can find them, so the initiative is not lost at the next membership renewal.

Quick checklist

☐ Design: one clear objective, timeline, budget, roles and deliverables are written in the Annex 1 template.

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[1] Templates are provided in Annex 3

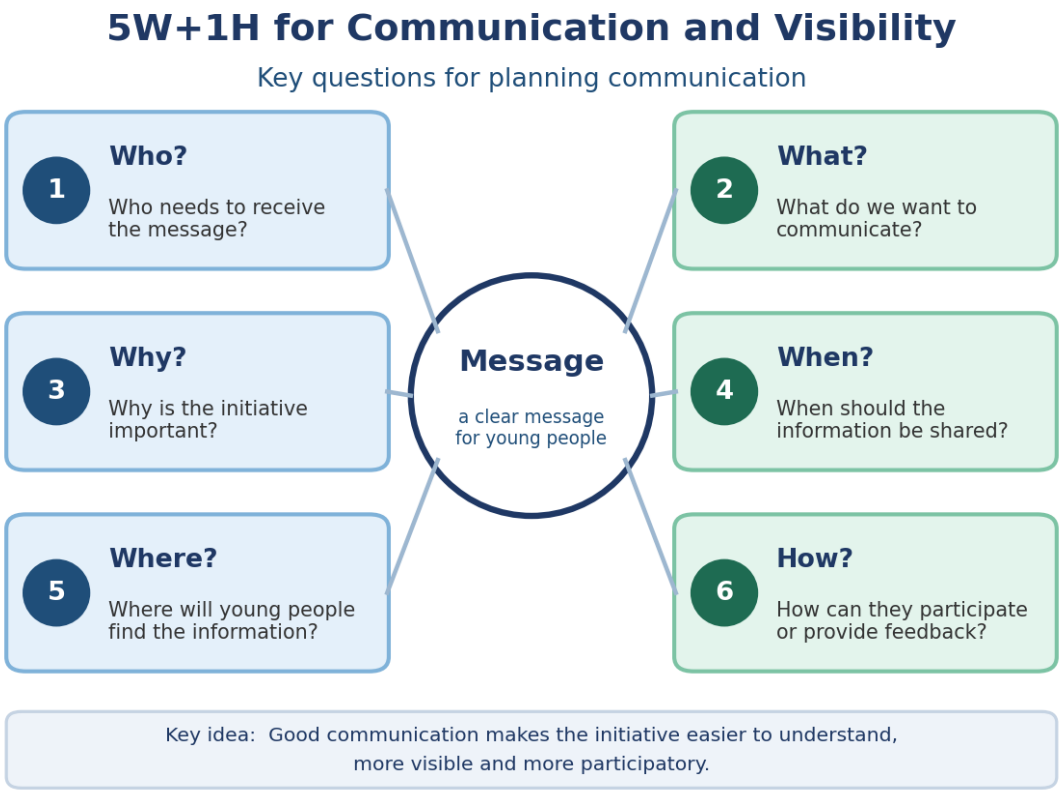
- ☐ Implementation and Monitoring: each activity has a named owner, and progress is tracked at regular intervals.
- ☐ Evaluation: results are compared with the objective, using the Annex 3 templates.
- ☐ Closure & Learning: lessons are written down and filed, and a decision on next steps has been taken.

7. Communication and Visibility

Communication is essential to any initiative, regardless of its scale or who leads it. Good communication helps people understand the purpose of an initiative, how they can take part and what role they play. It can also help build wider support over time.

A useful communication tool is the 5W+1H checklist: five questions that begin with W (Who, What, Why, When, Where) and one that begins with H (How). It offers a simple way to plan any communication or advocacy activity.

Who? Who needs to receive the message?
What? What do we want to communicate?
Why? Why is the initiative important?
When? When should the information be shared?
Where? Where will young people find the information?
How? How can they participate or provide feedback?



Outreach Channels

Do not rely only on young people who are already active in youth organisations, councils or other formal structures. Use different channels and local partners to reach those with fewer opportunities to participate, including young people in rural areas, NEETs, young people with disabilities and others facing social or economic barriers.

Inclusive outreach uses clear, simple and accessible language and does not rely only on formal youth organisations to share information. It also works through trusted local actors who already have contact with less-visible groups and uses formats that are easy to understand and access, including in rural or remote areas. Where appropriate, participation should be possible both online and in person, with more than one way for young people to provide feedback.

In practice, outreach can use schools and educational institutions, youth centres, community spaces and local organisations. Social media and online platforms can extend that reach, while employment and vocational education services are useful when an initiative relates to work or training. Direct outreach through youth workers, trusted local actors and other professionals may reach young people who are missed by other channels.

Before publishing or sharing information, check that the message is clear and consistent, the audience is well defined, and all partners are represented accurately. The chosen channels should

also reach young people who are less visible or harder to include. It should be clear how people can take part and what happens next.

Visibility and Co-branding

Agree at the start how each partner will be visible. Show the names and logos of all partners fairly and consistently, and acknowledge the municipality and any funder that supports the initiative. Where an initiative is funded by a donor, follow the donor's visibility requirements, such as required acknowledgements or logos; the donor or the municipality can say what applies. Do not use another partner's name or logo without its agreement.

Coordination and Communication Roles

For joint initiatives, partners should agree in advance:

- who prepares communication materials;
- who approves messages before they are published;
- which partner publishes through which channels;
- how partner names and visual identities are shown; and
- who responds to questions, comments or media requests.

Practical Tool 1: Simple Communication Plan

Message and purpose	Audience	Channel	Prepared by	Approved by	Published by	When
Call for participants in a youth forum	Young people aged 15–29, including rural youth	Schools, youth centre, social media	Youth Organisation A	LYC co-chairs	LYC and Youth Organisation A	Three weeks before the event
Summary of what happened with young people's input	Forum participants and the municipality	Same channels as the call	LYC secretariat	LYC co-chairs	LYC	Within one month after the event

Developed for this guideline: The rows are illustrative; each LYC should complete its own plan for each initiative.

Consent and Data Protection

When communication includes photographs, videos, personal stories or other personal information about young people, appropriate consent and data-protection requirements should be respected. Particular care should be taken when communicating about minors (under 18) or about young people in vulnerable situations: obtain the consent of parents or guardians where required, explain how the material will be used, and respect a person's wish to withdraw it. See also the principle on safeguarding and data protection in Chapter 3.

Closing the Feedback Circle

Young people who take part in feedback activities should be able to see what happened with their contribution. After a consultation, survey or meeting, share a short summary of what was said,

what will be done, and what will not be done and why, using the same channels that were used to collect the feedback.

Quick checklist

☐ We completed the 5W+1H questions and the communication plan (Practical Tool 1).

☐ Roles for preparing, approving and publishing messages are agreed.

☐ Partner and funder names and logos are shown correctly and with permission.

☐ We obtained consent before using photos, videos or stories (from parents or guardians for minors).

☐ We told participants what happened with their feedback.

8. Managing Risks and Resolving Conflicts

8.1. Risk Mitigation in Project Implementation

Risk mitigation means planning ahead to reduce the likelihood or impact of problems. The aim is not to predict every possible difficulty, but to identify significant risks early and agree on how to prevent or address them.

The Council of Europe's 2026 T-Kit 3 provides examples of project risks and mitigation measures. For example, it identifies insufficient participation as a possible risk and suggests early stakeholder liaison, use of partner networks, targeted outreach and waiting lists as preventive measures. It also recommends adapting recruitment periods or rescheduling activities when necessary.

A simple two-step method can be used for risk mitigation:

Step 1. Ask: "What could prevent us from succeeding?"

During the planning meeting, ask every partner:

What could prevent this initiative from achieving its objectives?

Record the answers and prioritise the most relevant risks.

Practical Tool 2: LYC Risk Register

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Prevention	Responsible	Response
Low youth participation	Medium	High	Early outreach, peer ambassadors	Outreach lead	Extend recruitment
Partner misses deadline	Medium	Medium	Clear responsibilities	Coordinator	Reallocate task
Unequal contribution	Medium	High	Written commitments	Coordinator	Review workload
Communicatio n conflict	Medium	Medium	Communicatio n protocol	Communicatio n lead	Facilitated meeting

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Prevention	Responsible	Response
Funding delay	Low/Medium	High	Contingency planning	Finance lead	Adjust activities
Safeguarding or data-protection incident involving a minor	Low/Medium	High	Consent forms; named safeguarding contact; photo and video consent	Safeguarding contact	Stop the activity; inform parents or guardians and the responsible authority

Source/adaptation note: The structure is adapted for LYCs from the risk-management approach and examples in T-Kit 3: Project Management. The specific risks and examples in this table were developed for this guideline.

Step 2. Clarify Responsibilities to Prevent Risk

Many partnership problems arise from different interpretations of responsibilities.

For each major task, specify:

Who does it? By when? With what resources? Who approves it?

Example

> **Task:** Recruit 50 young participants
> **Responsible:** Youth Organisation A
> **Support:** LYC + schools
> **Deadline:** 15 October
> **Target:** 50 registrations, including young people from under-represented groups.

This turns a vague commitment such as "Partner A will support recruitment" into a clear and measurable responsibility.

Developed for this guideline: This example is illustrative and follows the project-planning and task-management principles in T-Kit 3.

8.2. Conflict Resolution

Disagreements are a normal part of working with people, organisations or institutions that have different mandates, resources and priorities. The aim is to handle them constructively so that they do not undermine the joint initiative. Effective cooperation does not require partners to agree on everything; it requires agreed ways to communicate, decide and work through disagreements.

Key Principle for Conflict Resolution: Address the issue, not the person. Clarify the facts, understand the interests, agree on a practical solution, and document the decision.

Drawing on the Council of Europe's T-Kit 12: Youth Transforming Conflict and other available resources, the following six-step protocol can be used to work through a conflict:

1. Clarify the issue
What happened? What facts are agreed?

2. Hear each perspective
What does each partner say happened?

3. Identify needs and interests
What does each partner need to move forward?

4. Generate solutions
What are at least three possible solutions?

5. Agree on actions
Who will do what and by when?

6. Follow up
Has the solution worked?

Closing reminder: Remember why you started and what really matters.

Quick checklist

- ☐ Risks were discussed with all partners at the planning stage, including political risk and safeguarding.
- ☐ Each risk has a person responsible and a risk mitigation measure.
- ☐ For each major task, we agreed who does it, by when, with what resources, and who approves it.
- ☐ We agreed how to handle disagreements before they arise.

9. Monitoring, Evaluation and Sustainability

Monitoring, evaluation and sustainability are important for any initiative, whether it is a project, activity or policy. Monitoring tracks progress while work is under way. Evaluation examines how well the initiative worked and where gaps remained between what was planned and what was achieved. Sustainability looks at what continues after the initiative ends.

Together, these three elements help LYCs and their partners learn from implementation, improve future cooperation, and maintain useful practices over time.

9.1. Monitoring

Monitoring is the regular tracking of an initiative while it is being implemented. It helps the LYC and its partners check whether activities are taking place as planned, whether resources are being used as agreed, and whether progress is moving towards the expected results.

Good monitoring should be simple, regular and proportionate to the scale of the initiative. It should provide enough information to identify problems early and support timely adjustments without creating unnecessary reporting.

In practice, monitoring can focus on a small set of key questions:

- **Activities:** Are the planned activities taking place as scheduled?
- **Participation:** Are the intended young people being reached and taking part?
- **Progress:** Are the expected results beginning to emerge?
- **Resources:** Are time, budget and other resources being used as planned?
- **Responsibilities:** Are partners carrying out the tasks they agreed to?
- **Challenges:** What problems or delays have emerged, and what corrective action is needed?

Monitoring information can be collected through simple tools such as attendance records, activity tracking sheets, short partner updates, budget checks, and brief feedback from participants.

Monitoring should not only record what happened. It should also support action. When progress differs from the plan, the LYC and its partners should agree what needs to change, who is responsible, and by when.

The monitoring process should feed directly into evaluation. Records collected during implementation provide evidence for assessing results at the end of the initiative.

9.2. Evaluation

Good evaluation follows a few key principles: anonymity and confidentiality, simple language, objectivity, and follow-up on what is learned. Two templates are provided in Annex 3.

Principles and cooperation models become meaningful only when their results are tracked over time. This section uses the SALTO-YOUTH "4 Ws of Evaluation" as a simple framework for deciding what to assess in a joint initiative.

The 4 Ws of Evaluation (SALTO-YOUTH)

SALTO-YOUTH's "4 Ws of Evaluation" — Why, What, Who and When — provide a simple structure that any LYC can use, regardless of the scale of the initiative.

Why?

Evaluation shows whether an initiative achieved the change it set out to make. It also helps justify the resources used and informs the design of future initiatives.

What?

- **Aims and objectives:** the initiative's long-term purpose and the measurable steps used to reach it. These should ideally be set at the start so that there is a clear basis for evaluation.
- **Learning outcomes:** what participants learned, which methods worked, and what should change in future initiatives.
- **Practicalities and resources:** whether logistics, venue and resources were adequate and well used.
- **Teamwork and partnership:** what worked well among the LYC and its partners, and what each side contributed to delivery.

Who?

Different audiences need different information from an evaluation, including the LYC, youth stakeholders, the municipality and the wider youth population. The evaluation should provide credible and useful information for each, not only for the organisers.

When?

Evaluation should run through the full life cycle of an initiative and match the phases in Chapter 6: pre-activity evaluation during planning, when aims and objectives are agreed; ongoing evaluation during implementation, allowing adaptation; end-of-activity evaluation of immediate outcomes and practical arrangements; and follow-up evaluation at a later stage to assess longer-term impact and continuity.

The framework can be adjusted to the initiative. Two ready-to-use templates are provided in Annex 3: a Participant Satisfaction Form and an Activity Evaluation Form.

9.3. Sustainability

Sustainability concerns what remains after a single initiative ends: whether cooperation continues or the LYC must start again from zero. This reflects the Continuity and Sustainability principle in Section 3, which calls for stable structures and resources rather than dependence on one person or one-off funding. An initiative that relies entirely on a single committed member or grant is unlikely to be sustainable once that person or funding is no longer available.

A practical way to support sustainability is the handover process built into the project cycle in Section 6. During Closure and Learning, the LYC records lessons and files key documents where future members can find them. This is especially important when LYC membership changes, as it preserves institutional memory and allows the next group to continue rather than rebuild the same relationships and knowledge from scratch.

Sustainability also means knowing when to formalise cooperation. A campaign partnership or co-hosted event (Section 5.1.2) may need a more formal basis once it proves useful. Moving to a Memorandum of Understanding or a standing joint working group (Section 5.1.1) can help the

cooperation survive changes in staff, LYC membership or municipal leadership. Not every initiative needs this step, but repeated initiatives often benefit from it.

Financial sustainability means that cooperation does not depend on one-off project funding. LYCs can work with the municipality to include a budget line for youth activities and for the LYC in the municipality's Medium-Term Budget Programme, and make use of the funding that the Law on Youth foresees for LYC activities from the National Youth Agency alongside the municipal contribution (Article 10(2/1)). Raising this request early in the annual budget cycle, supported by evidence from monitoring and evaluation, gives it a better chance of being included.

9.4. Indicators of Cooperation Quality

The following indicators help an LYC and its partners judge the quality of their cooperation over time. Each LYC should choose the indicators that fit its context, record a starting point and set its own targets.

Indicator	How to measure	Possible source of information
Joint initiatives	Number of joint initiatives completed in a year with at least one youth stakeholder	Annex 1 plans; LYC records
Proposals adopted	Share of LYC proposals and opinions adopted or acted on by the municipality	LYC records; Municipal Council minutes
Participant diversity	Share of participants from under-represented groups (for example rural youth, young people with disabilities, Roma and Egyptian youth, NEETs, women and men), compared with the local youth population	Registration data collected with consent
Feedback given	Share of consultations or initiatives after which participants were told how their input was used	Communication plan; LYC records
Written agreements	Number of partnerships with a written agreement (MoU or terms of reference) and number renewed	LYC and municipal files
Timeliness and budget	Share of initiatives delivered on time and within the agreed budget	Tracking sheet; evaluation summary
Financial sustainability	Share of LYC activity funded from a municipal budget line or National Youth Agency funds	Municipal budget; National Youth Agency records
Participant satisfaction	Average rating in the Annex 3 forms	Annex 3 forms

Developed for this guideline: These indicators are suggestions based on the cooperation models and principles in this guideline.

Quick checklist

- ☐ Monitoring questions were agreed at the start and are tracked at regular intervals.
- ☐ Evaluation was planned from the beginning and the Annex 3 forms are ready.
- ☐ We chose indicators from Section 9.4 and recorded a starting point.
- ☐ Lessons are filed and handed over at the next membership renewal.
- ☐ We prepared a budget request for the next year (Medium-Term Budget Programme and National Youth Agency).

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ANNEXES

Annex 1

Project Template

1. **Title (Keep the title short and make clear what the proposed activities are. Use no more than one sentence.)**
2. **Background (Briefly explain the problem the initiative will address and why action is needed. Use no more than one paragraph.)**
3. **Objective (State clearly and briefly what the intervention should achieve. Include no more than two objectives.)**
4. **Activities (Describe the main steps needed to achieve the objectives. Keep them clear and specific.)**
5. **Estimated Cost (List the expected costs, such as venue, transport, accommodation, facilitation or technical inputs. Work contributed to the project is considered voluntary.)**
6. **Timeline** *(State the start date, key milestones, and end date.)*
7. **Roles and responsibilities** *(Say who is responsible for each activity, who has final decision-making authority, and who approves communication.)*
8. **Names of partners** *(Who is involved?)*
9. **Locations** *(Where do the suggested activities take place?)*
10. **Communication and consent** *(Describe how the initiative will be communicated and how consent will be obtained, especially for minors.)*

Annex 2

Practical Stakeholder Mapping

After identifying stakeholders, the LYC can create a simple map showing who they are, which young people they reach, what they do, what they can contribute, and how cooperation could work.

The LYC should then identify:

- **existing partners** it already works with;
- **potential partners** it could involve in future initiatives; and
- **missing voices**: young people or groups that are not sufficiently represented or reached.

The example below applies the mapping tool to the stakeholders described in Chapter 4. It uses a simple power–interest grid: power (High or Low) is the stakeholder's ability to influence LYC cooperation, for example through decisions, funding, or legal approval, and interest (High or Low) is how far its own priorities overlap with LYC cooperation. The grid suggests how to engage each stakeholder (see the definitions below the table). The example is presented in landscape format for readability. The ratings are illustrative only; each LYC should complete its own assessment for its municipality.

Stakeholder	Relation to LYC Cooperation	Power	Interest	Engagement approach	Typically engaged through	Role in initiative	Owner	Date
National Youth Institutions								
National Youth Agency (NYA)	Co-finances LYC activity alongside the municipality and supports national standards for local youth policy.	High	High	Manage closely	NYA / Municipality			
National Youth Council (NYC)	National counterpart with which LYCs are legally required to cooperate and exchange information; links local priorities to national policy discussions.	Low	High	Keep informed	LYC secretariat			
Ministry responsible for Youth	Sets national youth policy direction and oversees the National Youth Strategy with which this guideline aligns.	High	High	Manage closely	NYA / Municipality			
Municipal / Local Government								
Mayor and Municipal Council	Co-chairs the LYC (mayor) and must formally approve local youth plans, strategies and LYC operating rules for them to carry legal force.	High	High	Manage closely	LYC (co-chair)			
Municipal Youth Focal Point	Coordinates youth-related work within the municipal administration, often alongside other duties.	Low	High	Keep informed	LYC secretariat			
Municipal or Joint Youth Centre	Provides physical space, infrastructure and non-formal education support for youth activities.	Low	High	Keep informed	LYC / Municipality			
Youth Organisations and Non-formal Groups								
Registered Youth Organisations	Youth-led CSOs recognised under the Law on Youth; deliver programmes and represent youth interests.	High	High	Manage closely	LYC			
Organisations for Youth	Non-profits whose main work lies elsewhere but that run youth-focused programmes.	Low	High	Keep informed	LYC			
Non-formal Youth Groups	Unregistered groups organised around one local issue, interest or campaign.	Low	High	Keep informed	LYC			
Roma and Egyptian Youth Organisations	Organisations and groups led by or working with young Roma and Egyptian people; help the LYC reach young people who may face particular barriers to taking part.	Low	High	Keep informed	LYC / Municipality			
Organisations of Persons with Disabilities	Represent or work with young people with disabilities; advise on accessibility and inclusion in joint initiatives.	Low	High	Keep informed	LYC / Municipality			
Education-Sector Stakeholders								
Student Councils (university level)	Elected student bodies giving access to student perspectives on education, employment and local services.	Low	High	Keep informed	LYC			
School Councils (secondary level)	Pupil governments – one of the few direct channels to secondary-school-age youth.	Low	Low	Monitor	LYC			
Parliament of Pupils of Albania	National platform for pupil representation; connects local school-level participation to wider networks.	Low	Low	Monitor	LYC / NYA			
Wider Youth Ecosystem								
Youth Networks (regional/national/thematic)	Connect organisations and young people around a shared interest; support information-sharing and cooperation beyond the municipality.	Low	High	Keep informed	LYC			
Community Schools	Connect the school with families and the wider community; useful spaces for outreach.	Low	Low	Monitor	LYC			

Stakeholder	Relation to LYC Cooperation	Power	Interest	Engagement approach	Typically engaged through	Role in initiative	Owner	Date
Libraries and Cultural Spaces	Public libraries, cultural centres and museums offering accessible spaces for youth-led activities.	Low	Low	Monitor	LYC			
Employment, Social Services and Private Sector								
Regional/Local Employment Office (AKPA)	Relevant when the LYC works on youth employment, NEETs, career guidance or the transition from education to work.	High	Low	Keep satisfied	LYC / Municipality			
Businesses and Employers' Associations	Can offer internships, mentoring, sponsorship or in-kind support, especially for initiatives on employment and skills.	Low	Low	Monitor	LYC / Municipality			
International, Regional and Donor Stakeholders								
RYCO Youth Representative	Represents Albanian youth on RYCO's Governing Board alongside Western Balkan ministers responsible for youth.	Low	High	Keep informed	NYA			
Embassies and International Organisations (youth structures)	Youth councils, advisory boards and ambassador networks offering exchange, training and project cooperation.	Low	Low	Monitor	LYC / Municipality			
EU and Donor-funded Youth Programmes	International development and donor partners funding youth participation and civil society initiatives locally.	High	High	Manage closely	Municipality / LYC			

Definitions: Power = the stakeholder's ability to influence LYC cooperation, for example through decisions, funding or approval (High/Low). Interest = how far the stakeholder's own priorities overlap with LYC cooperation (High/Low). Engagement approach follows the grid: high power and high interest – manage closely; high power and low interest – keep satisfied; low power and high interest – keep informed; low power and low interest – monitor. The ratings are illustrative. Each LYC should assess its own stakeholders and may add a column for possible concerns, disagreements or opposition, which a first assessment often overlooks.

Annex 3

Evaluation Templates

Template 1: Participant Satisfaction Form

Age (optional): _____ Gender (optional): _____ ☐ Prefer not to say

Use this form after a training or other activity and adapt the questions to the activity. The form is anonymous and participants do not have to answer every question. Please rate each statement from 1 to 5 by ticking (✓) the appropriate box.

1 = Minimum rating 2 = Low 3 = Satisfactory 4 = Good 5 = Maximum rating

No.	Evaluation Question	1	2	3	4	5
1	How do you rate the structure and agenda of the training?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2	How relevant and interesting was the information provided?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3	How do you rate the trainer's ability to explain the topics clearly?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4	How do you rate the methodology used?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5	How do you rate the balance between theory and practice?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6	How useful were the group activities?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7	How useful do you expect this training to be for young people?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8	How do you rate the level of participation and cooperation?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9	How do you rate the organisation of the training?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10	Overall, how useful was this training for you?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments / Suggestions

Purpose of the form: to collect feedback and suggestions that can improve future training activities.

Template 2: Activity Evaluation Form

Initiative: _____ Date: _____ Partners: _____

To be completed jointly by the LYC and its partners after the activity, using the objective and expected results written in the Annex 1 plan. Please rate each statement from 1 to 5 by ticking (✓) the appropriate box.

1 = Minimum rating 2 = Low 3 = Satisfactory 4 = Good 5 = Maximum rating

No.	Evaluation Question	1	2	3	4	5
1	The objective of the initiative was clearly defined and shared by all partners.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2	The expected results were achieved.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3	The initiative was delivered within the agreed timeline.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4	The initiative was delivered within the agreed budget and resources.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5	Roles and responsibilities were clear and respected by all partners.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6	Communication among partners worked well.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7	The initiative reached the intended young people, including those from under-represented groups.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8	Young people took part in planning and decisions, not only in activities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9	Consent and safeguarding arrangements, including for minors, were followed.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10	Participants were told how their feedback was used.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Open questions

What worked well? _____

What did not work, and why? _____

What should be done differently next time?

_____

Should the cooperation continue, change or end? (repeat / scale up / formalise / close)

_____

Purpose of the form: to help the LYC and its partners assess the results of a joint initiative and decide what to repeat, change or end.

Annex 4

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING TEMPLATE

Guidance for users: *The LYC is an advisory body of the municipality and has no legal personality of its own. For an MoU involving the LYC, the municipality signs (through the mayor as co-chair of the LYC) or the Municipal Council decides; the partner signs in its own name. Replace the text in square brackets and delete what does not apply.*

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN

[MUNICIPALITY] (acting on behalf of its Local Youth Council)

AND

[NAME OF PARTNER]

I. INTRODUCTION

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), dated __/__/__, is made between [MUNICIPALITY] ("the Municipality"), with offices at _____, represented by _____, Mayor and co-chair of the Local Youth Council of [MUNICIPALITY] ("the LYC"), acting [on the basis of Municipal Council Decision No. ___ of __/__/__];

and

[NAME OF PARTNER] ("PARTNER"), a [youth organisation/organisation for youth/student council/youth centre / non-formal youth group represented by its coordinator] with offices at _____, represented by _____; collectively referred to as "the Partners".

II. PREAMBLES

WHEREAS, the objective of this MoU is to support collaboration and participation between the Municipality, acting through its Local Youth Council, and the Partner in _____;

WHEREAS, the LYC is an advisory body of the Municipality without legal personality of its own, and the Municipality signs this MoU on its behalf;

WHEREAS, the missions of the Partners are complementary;

THEREFORE, the Partners wish to work together in accordance with the following clauses:

III. GOAL

This MoU formalises a partnership between the Municipality (acting through its LYC) and the Partner for the purpose of _____.

It sets out the terms and conditions of the partnership and the roles and responsibilities of each party in carrying out the agreed activities.

IV. AREAS OF COLLABORATION & AGREED RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTIES

_____

_____

V. PRINCIPAL CONTACTS

The principal contacts for the organisations are:

[MUNICIPALITY / LYC]:
[NAME OF PRINCIPAL CONTACT]:
[TITLE]:
[ADDRESS]:
[TELEPHONE]:

[PARTNER]:

[NAME OF PRINCIPAL CONTACT]:
[TITLE]:
[ADDRESS]:
[TELEPHONE]:

The respective Partners may change their principal contacts by written notice.

VI. USE OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

The parties agree that any intellectual property jointly developed through activities covered by this agreement may be used by either party for non-profit, non-commercial purposes without further consent or accounting to the other party.

All other intellectual property used in implementing this agreement remains the property of the party that provided it. Either party may use that property for purposes covered by the agreement. Consent from the owner is required before it is used for purposes outside the agreement.

VII. EFFECTIVE DATES AND AMENDMENTS

This MoU takes effect when signed by both Parties and remains in force until __/__/____ (or for ____ months from that date), unless terminated earlier. Neither Party may assign or transfer all or part of this MoU without the prior written consent of the other Party.

The MoU may be renewed by mutual written agreement. Its provisions may be amended or waived only by mutual written agreement of both Parties.

Either Party may terminate this MoU, and any related work plan and budget, at any time and for any reason by giving (X) days' prior written notice to the other Party. A Party may terminate this MoU immediately by written notice if the other Party fails to perform any of its obligations under this MoU and does not remedy the failure within (X) days of being notified of it.

The individuals signing this MoU on behalf of their respective entities confirm that they are authorised to do so.

VIII. DATA PROTECTION AND PROTECTION OF MINORS

The Partners will process personal data only for the purposes of this MoU and in accordance with applicable data-protection legislation. The Partners will obtain the consent of parents or guardians where required for participants who are minors (under 18) and will ensure that activities carried out under this MoU are safe and appropriate for participants' age. Photographs, video recordings and personal stories of participants will be used and published only with their consent (and, for minors, the consent of a parent or guardian), and consent may be withdrawn. Each Partner will name a person responsible for safeguarding concerns: [NAME AND CONTACT].

IX. COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

The Partners will agree in advance who prepares, approves and publishes communication about joint activities and which channels will be used. The names and logos of the Partners, and of any funder, will be shown fairly and consistently, and no Partner will use another Partner's name or logo without its agreement. Funder visibility requirements, where applicable, will be followed.

X. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

If a dispute arises between the Partners in relation to this Agreement, they will first seek to resolve it through informal discussion. If the dispute cannot be resolved informally within (X) consecutive calendar days, the Partners will seek to resolve it through mediation, provided they can agree on a mediator.

ENTIRETY

This Agreement, including all Annexes, represents the complete understanding between the Partners. Any amendment must be signed by both Partners.

FOR THE MUNICIPALITY FOR THE PARTNER

Date: __/__/20__ Date: __/__/20__

Annex 5

REAL-LIFE CASE STUDIES

This Annex presents three cooperation examples from which LYCs can learn: two from Albania and one European comparator.

Case Study 1 – Kavajë, Albania

Bashkia Kavajë runs a standing public call inviting civil society organisations and young people to submit project proposals for LYC activities. Rather than a one-off invitation, this creates a recurring municipal funding mechanism through which young people and local CSOs can shape and deliver their own initiatives.

The municipality provides the funding line, public call process and formal backing through the LYC. Applicant CSOs and youth groups contribute ideas, delivery capacity and direct contact with young people whom the LYC may not reach on its own.

The scheme has funded a range of youth-led projects through recurring calls.

The lesson for other LYCs is that cooperation becomes more durable when it is built into a recurring municipal process rather than depending on someone to organise it each year. A standing call is a practical example of the Formal Mechanisms model in Section 5.1.1.

Case Study 2 – Shkodra, Albania

In Shkodra, LYC representatives and YWCA, an implementing partner working on youth issues, participate together in a Local Partnership Network based at the Atelie youth centre. Their shared priority is to reach young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) with information and support under the Youth Guarantee scheme. This is a group that can be difficult for either partner to reach alone.

The LYC brings institutional standing and a direct link to the municipality. YWCA brings outreach experience and established relationships with NEET young people through its programmes.

The lesson is that an LYC does not need to conduct outreach to hard-to-reach groups alone. Working with a stakeholder that already has access and trust can be more effective than building the same relationships from scratch. This illustrates the Shared Ownership and Responsibility principle in Section 3.

Case Study 3 – Council of Europe's Co-Management System

The Council of Europe has operated a co-management system in its youth sector since 1972. It brings together the Advisory Council on Youth, made up of 30 representatives of youth non-governmental organisations and networks, and the European Steering Committee for Youth, made up of representatives of the governments of the states party to the European Cultural

Convention. Together they form the Joint Council on Youth. The system aims to ensure that European youth policy reflects young people's experience through shared decision-making rather than consultation alone (Council of Europe, n.d.).

Its defining feature is that youth organisations and governments have an equal say in decisions and policy-making. By the time the system received the 2019 Future Policy Bronze Award, presented by the World Future Council with the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations Development Programme, it had awarded more than 10,000 grants to youth organisations across Europe with a cumulative value of more than €130 million, and more than 70,000 youth leaders and activists had taken part in study sessions at the Council's European Youth Centres (World Future Council, 2019).

An Albanian LYC cannot reproduce this model at the same scale, but the underlying principle still applies: cooperation is stronger when partners help shape decisions rather than simply observe them. This reflects the Shared Ownership and Responsibility principle in Section 3 and can be supported through tools such as a Memorandum of Understanding or a standing joint working group (Section 5.1.1).