

IncludeYOU

Policy Dialogue & Networking with Stakeholders

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www.includeyou.eu

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INTRODUCTION

Youth participation becomes meaningful when young people engage directly with policymakers and stakeholders. Policy dialogue ensures youth voices are heard, while networking builds bridges between NGOs, councils, and EU institutions. This module explores:

1. How young people can engage in policy dialogue.
2. Building networks across different levels.
3. Co-creating policies through structured dialogue.

WHY POLICY DIALOGUE MATTERS

- Ensures policies reflect the needs and realities of youth.
- Strengthens democracy by giving young people a voice.
- Builds trust between institutions and citizens.
- Encourages accountability and transparency in governance.



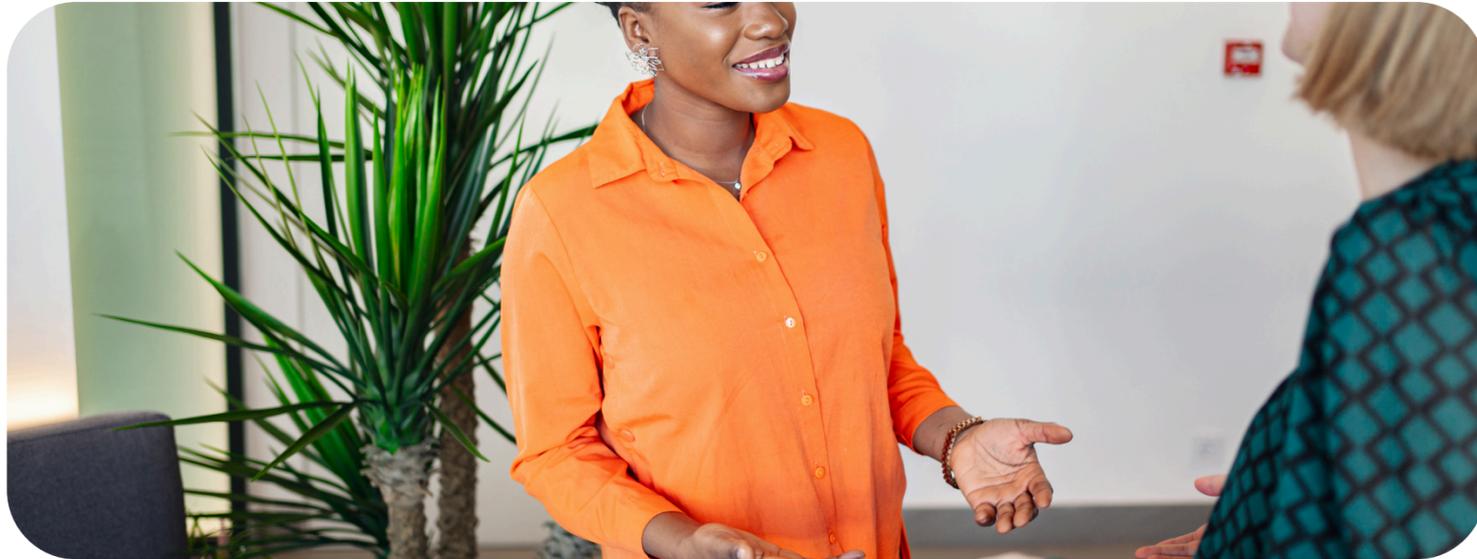
STAKEHOLDERS IN YOUTH POLICY

Youth engagement involves cooperation with:

- Local councils & municipalities (youth councils, local strategies).
- National governments (youth ministries, parliaments).
- EU institutions (European Commission, Parliament, Council).
- Civil society & NGOs.

All stakeholders share responsibility for empowering youth voices.





HOW YOUNG PEOPLE CAN ENGAGE POLICYMAKERS

Youth can influence decision-making by:

- Participating in public consultations and hearings.
- Joining youth councils at local or national level.
- Becoming members of student or NGO delegations.
- Organizing campaigns and petitions that reach policymakers.

YOUTH COUNCILS AS A BRIDGE

Youth councils create structured opportunities for dialogue:

- Represent local or regional youth.
- Advise governments on youth policy.
- Act as a training ground for future leaders.

They transform young people from passive observers into active shapers of policy.





THE ROLE OF NGOS

NGOs provide platforms and skills for youth to engage:

- Train youth in advocacy and negotiation.
- Facilitate meetings between youth and decision-makers.
- Ensure inclusion of marginalized groups in policy debates.

NGOs amplify youth voices at every level of governance.

NETWORKING WITH LOCAL COUNCILS

Local councils are often the first level where young people can influence policy. Opportunities include:

- Municipal youth forums.
- Community development projects co-designed with young people.
- Local participatory budgeting, where youth decide on funding allocations.



NETWORKING AT NATIONAL LEVEL

At national level, youth can:

- Take part in youth parliaments or advisory boards.
- Engage with ministries of education, employment, or youth.
- Participate in national consultations on youth strategies.

This ensures national policies reflect youth priorities.





NETWORKING WITH EU INSTITUTIONS

EU-level networking includes:

- European Youth Forum, representing millions of young people.
- EU Youth Dialogue, connecting youth with EU presidencies.
- Opportunities to influence the European Parliament and Commission through consultations and hearings.



THE EU YOUTH DIALOGUE

The EU Youth Dialogue is the main process for structured youth participation at EU level.

- Organized in cycles linked to EU Youth Goals.
- Includes consultations, youth conferences, and dialogues with policymakers.
- Ensures that youth voices shape EU Council recommendations.



CO-CREATION OF POLICIES

Co-creation means that youth are not only consulted but also actively involved in designing solutions. It requires:

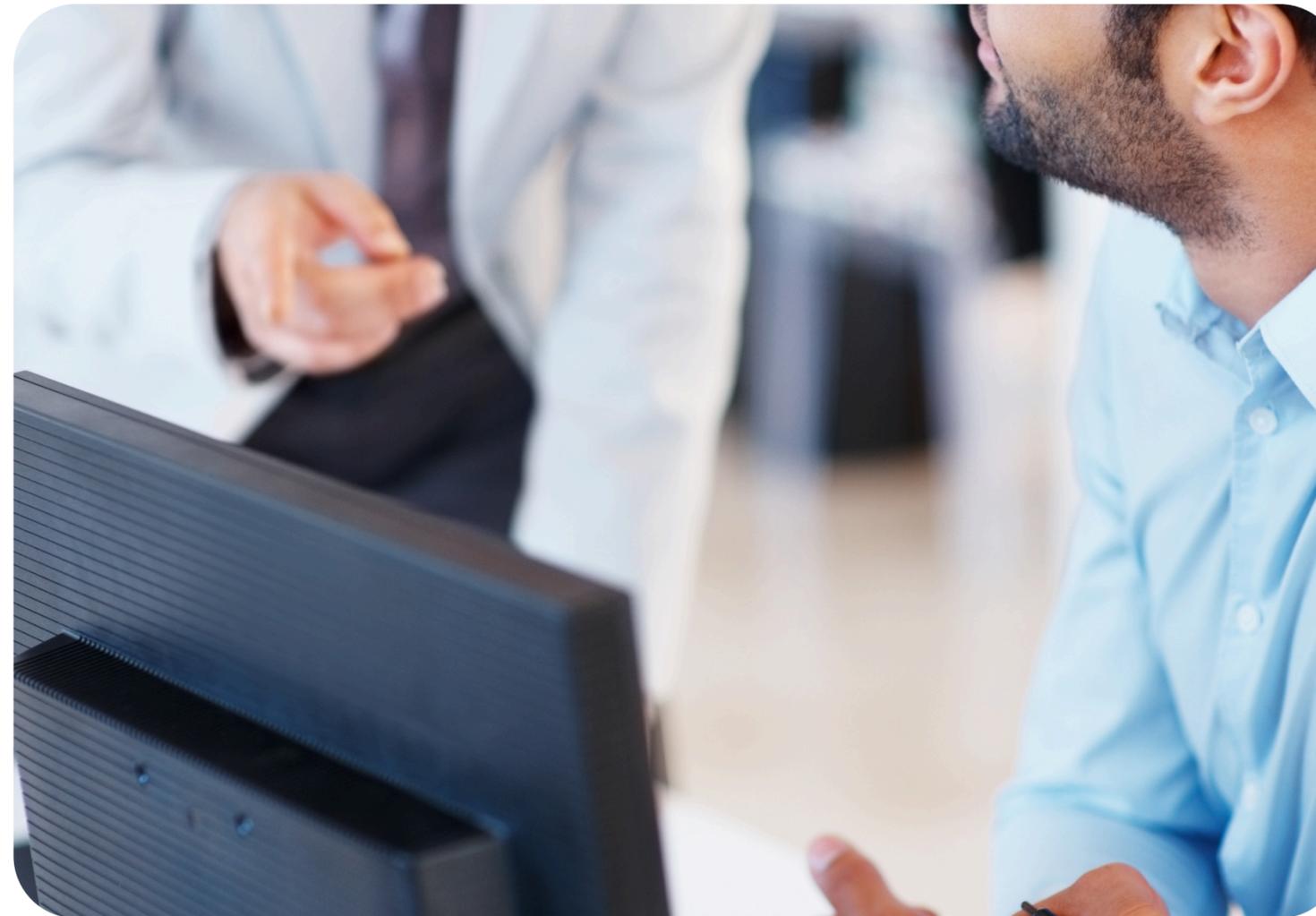
- Equal partnership between youth and policymakers.
- Transparent processes where ideas are taken seriously.
- Recognition of youth expertise as citizens and stakeholders.



STRUCTURED DIALOGUE IN PRACTICE

Steps for effective structured dialogue:

1. Consultation: Gather youth perspectives.
2. Dialogue: Exchange between youth and decision-makers.
3. Recommendations: Jointly drafted proposals.
4. Implementation: Policies shaped by dialogue outcomes.
5. Feedback: Inform youth about results to build trust.



DEBATE AS A TOOL

Debates empower young people to:

- Develop critical arguments.
- Defend their positions to policymakers.
- Learn negotiation and compromise.

Debate culture helps create balanced, evidence-based policy recommendations.



DIGITAL POLICY DIALOGUE

Digital tools expand opportunities for youth to engage:

- Online consultations and e-petitions.
- Virtual town hall meetings with politicians.
- Social media campaigns tagging policymakers.

Digital dialogue increases accessibility and participation.

CHALLENGES IN POLICY DIALOGUE

- Risk of tokenism (youth invited but not heard).
- Unequal access to dialogue spaces.
- Lack of resources for youth organizations.
- Limited follow-up on youth recommendations.



OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Solutions include:

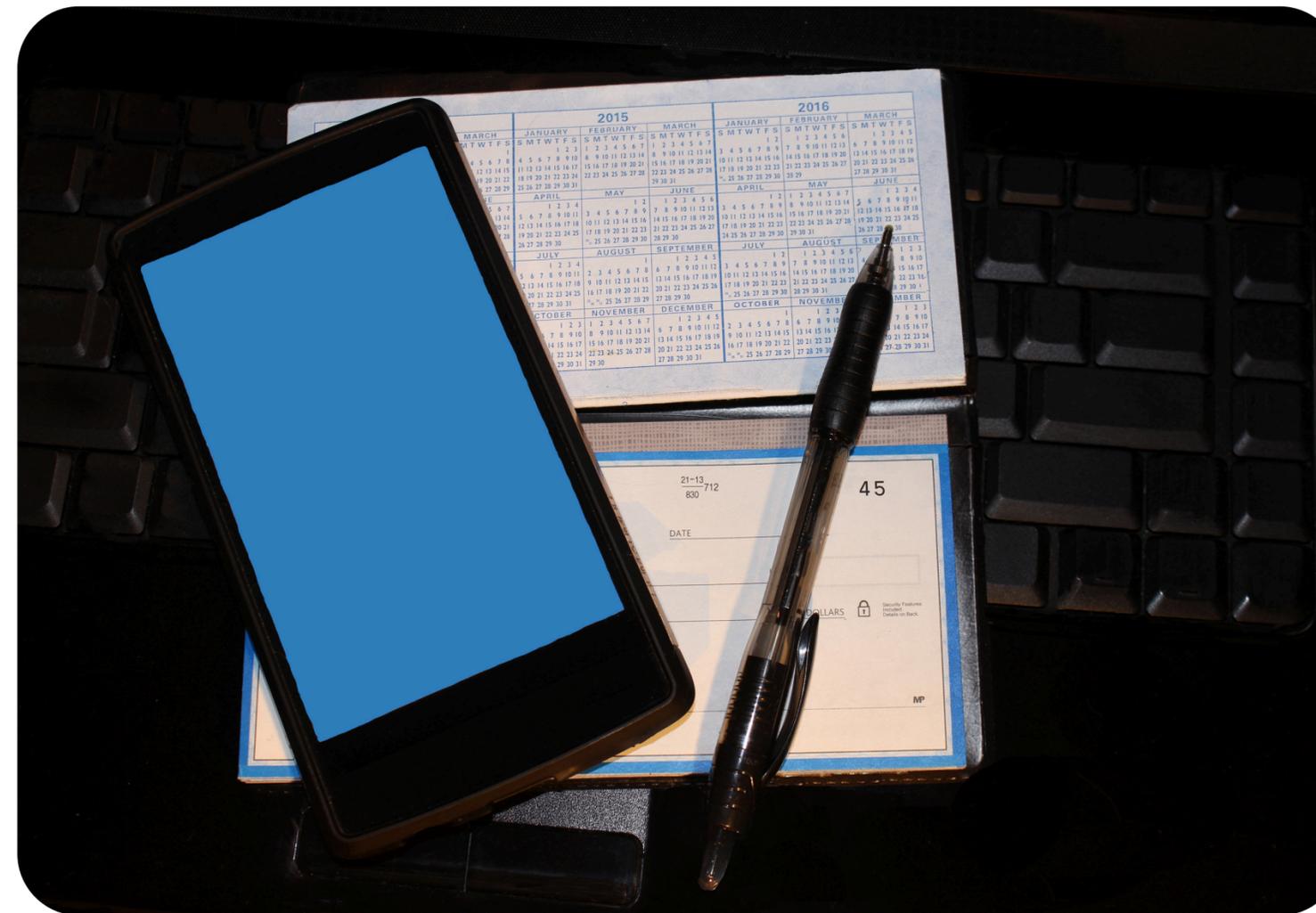
- Training youth in advocacy and leadership.
- Providing resources for youth councils and NGOs.
- Ensuring decision-makers commit to implementing recommendations.
- Making dialogue continuous, not one-off events.

CASE STUDY: ERASMUS+ INCLUDEYOU

IncludeYOU project (2024–2025):

- Brings youth, NGOs, and policymakers together.
- Uses workshops, round tables, and debates to co-create policies.
- Strengthens youth participation at local and EU level.

A practical example of structured dialogue in action.



LONG-TERM IMPACT

Policy dialogue and networking foster:

- Stronger youth trust in institutions.
- More inclusive, youth-friendly policies.
- Democratic renewal through active citizenship.
- A culture of cooperation between youth and policymakers.



CONCLUSION

Policy dialogue and networking ensure that youth are not passive recipients but active co-creators of society. By engaging with councils, NGOs, and EU institutions, young people shape policies that reflect their realities. Structured dialogue, debate, and cooperation are the cornerstones of democratic participation.





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