Changemaker

BE A
CHANGEMAKER!

TOOLKIT

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ABOUT THE PROJECT

Changemaker is a project co-funded by the ERASMUS+ programme, which aims to empower youth, to make them able to realize themselves and make their voices heard, in order to be changemakers.

The objectives of the project are:

O1: To train youth organizations at grass-root level and youngsters in active citizenship;

O2: To improve cooperation and decision-making and negotiation skills of youngsters;

O3: To provide theoretical and practical information for active participation

O4: To inform and raise awareness among youngsters and youth NGOs about: covid-19 and green lifestyle, Inclusion & diversity, EU rights, tools and opportunity, Gender gap, European Youth Strategy.

FIND MORE ON OUR WEBSITE:

CHANGEMAKER-EUROPE.EU/

Changemaker

Co-funded by
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PROGEU - PROGRESS IN EUROPEAN UNION
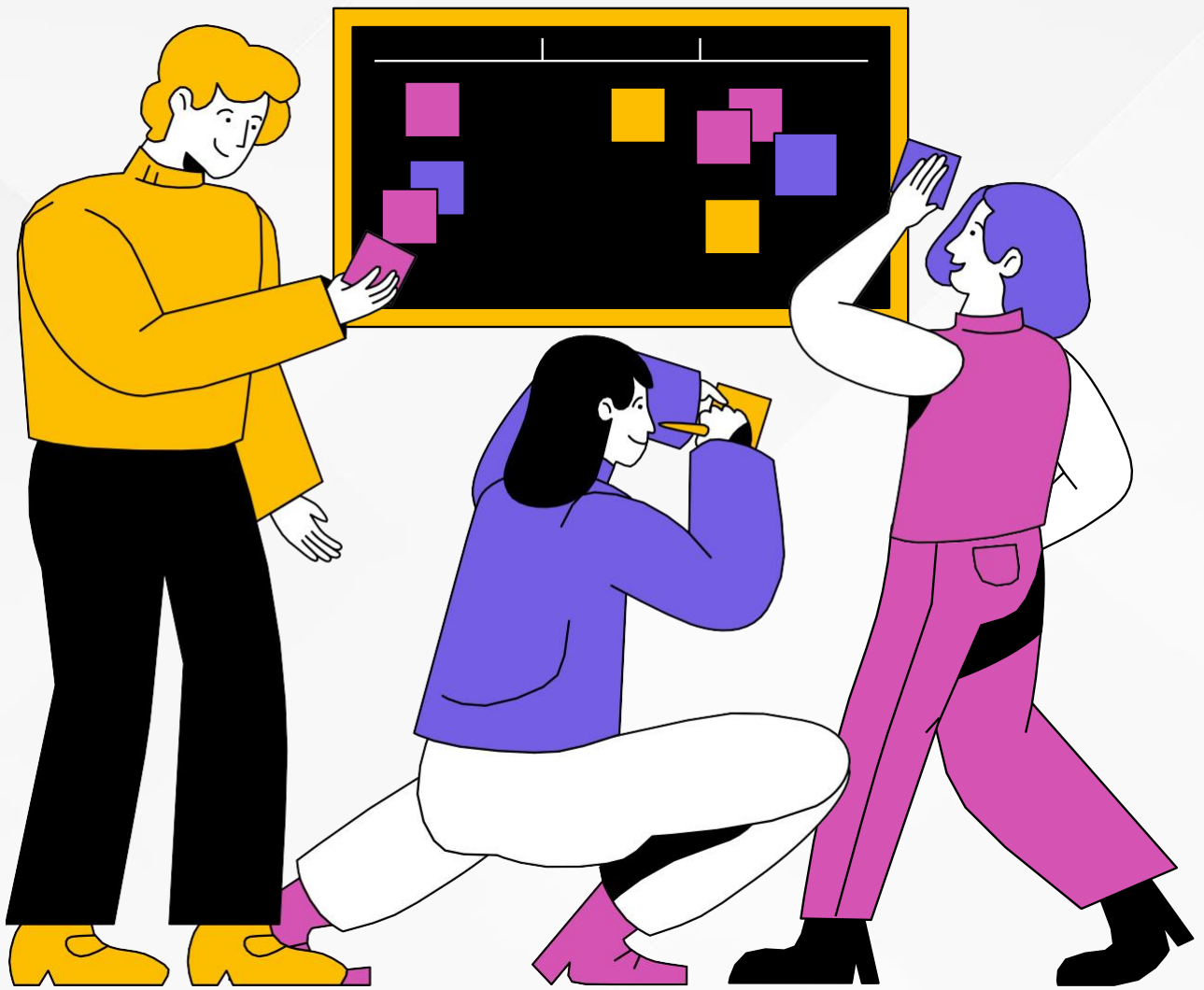**ITALY**
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THE CHANGEMAKER TOOLKIT - INTRODUCTION

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The main aim of the Changemaker project is to empower youth and foster youth civic participation in democratic life.

The project wished to address the gap in democratic participation across European Countries. The gap is based on three main axes: one is socio-cultural, one is economical and the last is political. As regards the socio-cultural axis, which is the one considered in this analysis, the needs analysis takes into consideration "Ageism", which is the discrimination based on age. Youth are considered not capable enough to actively participate in decision-making processes. Being young means having to face obstacles, stereotypes and prejudices which can affect future autonomy.

That's why the project aimed to empower youth to make them able to realize themselves and make their voices heard.

To achieve that the Changemaker project uses three types of methodology: **non-formal training, bottom-up and collaborative approaches and training-intervention method**.

Non formal training gives youth the possibility to **learn skills** useful to **improve motivation, task-oriented approach and self-confidence**, things undoubtedly useful individually, but also within collective contexts, from family to NGOs.

Going to *bottom-up and collaborative approaches*, the project wants the direct beneficiaries, and consequently their community, **to be the real change makers.**

Training-interventions method aim to give learner-centric experiences: coming up with their own ideas on the challenges concerning them with their own voices is a way to make youth protagonists of the changing process. Training-intervention method is useful to e**ncourage active participation strategies instead of passive**.

To reach the goal of training youth and youth NGOs in active citizenship the project provides **4 non-formal training courses**. Courses provide both soft skills and tools to be active citizens.

These 4 courses are now available online on the e-learning academy section of the Changemaker website: www.changemaker-europe.eu/e-learning/.

The courses address 4 topics and aim to provide learners transversal skills to be change makers in a digital world.

1) ADVOCACY & LOBBYING
2) DIGITAL SKILLS FOR DIGITAL PARTICIPATION
3) YOUTH EMPOWERMENT
4) LEADER-TO-BE MINDSET & FUNDRAISING STRATEGIES

The **e-learning academy** is structured to provide **motivational skills**, useful within youth NGOs or the community to empower and motivate to be active citizens, and more practical skills to give youth some basis for widen their NGOs.

Being a change maker means to know and master tools and skills, both temperamental and practical, to build change from the local community to a supranational dimension.

Alongside training courses, an **awareness-raising action has been implemented**, called "Be aware", where youth can find short video-pills about challenging issues for the future. Each video-pill addresses a specific topic with the aim to help youth to develop critical thinking.

The four topics are:

1) Covid-19 & green lifestyle;
2) Inclusion & diversity;
3) Gender gap: Where are we now?;
4) European Youth Strategy & EU Youth Goals.

The E-learning academy and "Be aware" activities acted as preparatory activities that led to the **transnational events**. During these events the youth and youth NGOs had the opportunity to build new networks and partnerships for the future.

During these events, the true protagonists were the youth themselves.

Having had previous training, using the e-learning academy, the young people came together to prepare action plans to address different EU Youth Goals. These events gave young people the opportunity to express themselves, discuss and debate with the other participants and finally com up with the suggestions and ideas that are collected in this action plan.

The events took place in the four countries of the participating organizations and each of the transnational events addressed one of the 11 European Youth Goals.

Specifically:
Greece: Youth Goal n.1 **"Connecting EU with Youth"**
Romania: Youth Goal n.4 **"Information & Constructive dialogue"**
Sweden: EU Youth Goal n.9 **"Space and participation for all"**
Italy: EU Youth Goal n.11 **"Youth Organisations & European Programmes"**

This toolkit provides the pathway that helped the youth to develop the the proposals emerged at the transnational events.

The action plan represents youth's voices and is the result of the preparatory training phase, represented by the E(U)-Academy, and of the direct experience of negotiation and decision-making processes, experimented at the events.

METHODOLOGY
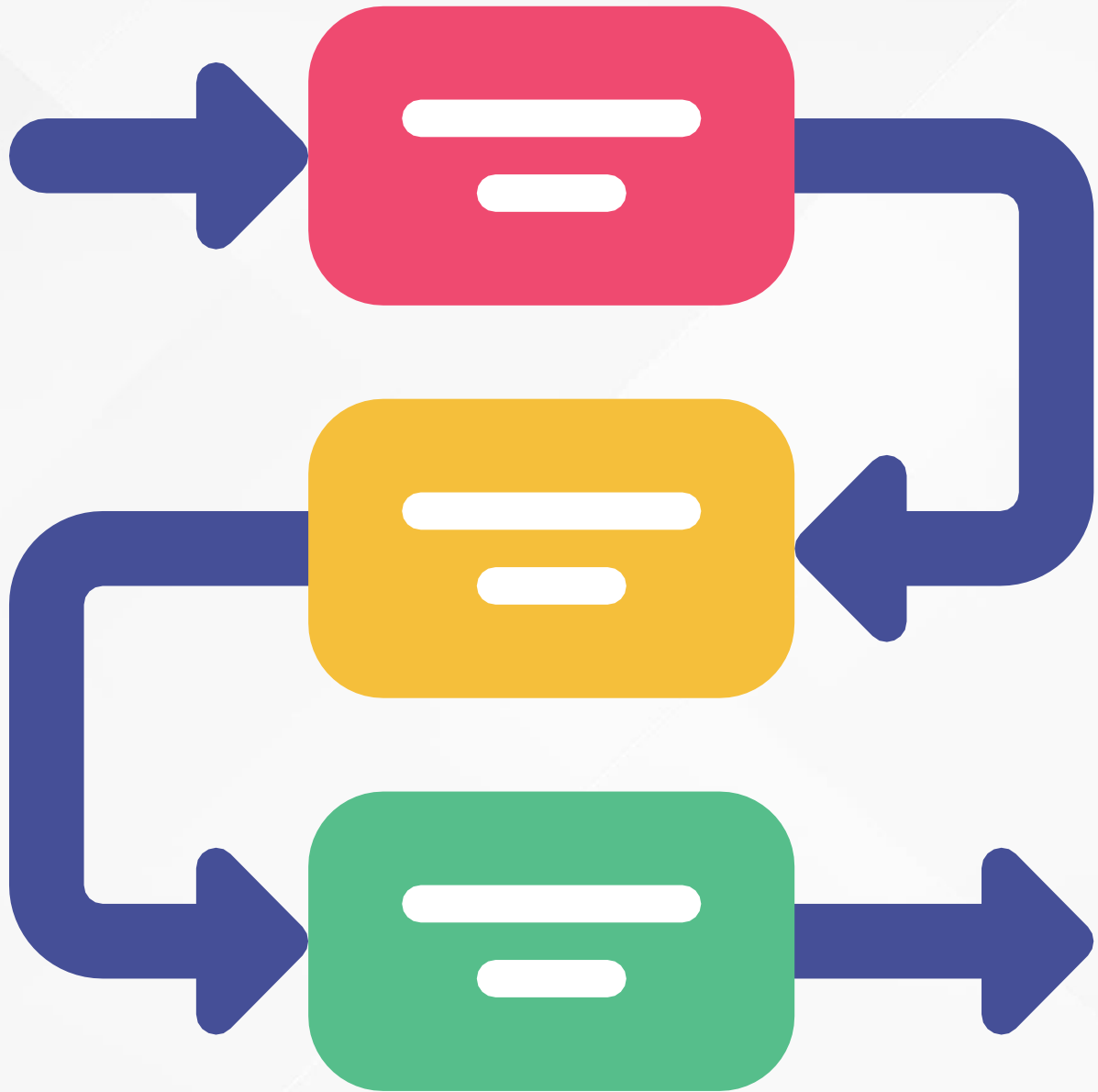
METHODOLOGY

As this document is the result of the events that took place in four different countries, it was imperative that before the implementation of the events, we defined a common methodology to be used.

We started by defining what an action plan is. This common definition was used as the basis of our activities.

So, for the purposes of this document, *an Action Plan is a detailed plan specifying how to achieve a particular goal or objective. It outlines the steps that need to be taken, resources required, and the timeline for completion.*

We then defined the steps that needed to be followed in the creation of our action plans:

Step 1: Identify the Problem
Step 2: Define Objectives and Outcomes
Step 3: Develop Strategies
Step 4: Assign Responsibilities and Allocate Resources
Step 5: Develop a monitoring and evaluation plan

Step 1: Identify the problem

This step was analysed using the specificities of the EU youth goals that each event wished to address.

The instructions that were given to the organizers of each event were the following:

01. Creating an Action Plan to Address European Youth Goal 1: Connecting EU with Youth

Introduction:
The European Union has identified the need to connect with its youth population as a critical aspect of its future success. The first European Youth Goal, "Connecting EU with Youth," aims to strengthen the relationship between the EU and its young people, and to ensure that their voices and opinions are heard and taken into account.

Step 1: Identify the Problem
The first step in creating an action plan to address this goal is to identify the specific issues that are preventing the EU from effectively connecting with its youth population. Some of the factors that may contribute to this disconnect include a lack of information and engagement opportunities, language barriers, and a lack of representation and decision-making power for young people.

You need to work with the young participants to collect their ideas on what the issues are. What do they see as obstacles in achieving this goal. What are the issues to be addressed/needs to be covered?

02. Creating an Action Plan to Address European Youth goal 4: Information & Constructive dialogue.

Introduction:
The European Youth goal 4, "Information & Constructive dialogue" aims to ensure that young people have access to information, media and technology that empower them to participate in decision-making processes and engage in constructive dialogue. In this document, we will outline the steps for creating an action plan to address this goal.

Step 1: Identify the Problem
The first step in creating an action plan is to identify the problem that needs to be addressed. In this case, the problem is that young people do not have access to information, media and technology that empower them to participate in decision-making processes and engage in constructive dialogue.

You need to work with the young participants to collect their ideas on what the issues are. What do they see as obstacles in achieving this goal. What are the issues to be addressed/needs to be covered?

03. Creating an Action Plan to Address European Youth goal 9: Space and participation for all

Introduction:
European Youth Goal 9, "Space and Participation for All," seeks to create inclusive environments where young people from diverse backgrounds can actively participate in society. This goal recognizes the importance of overcoming barriers to participation, such as discrimination, social exclusion, or lack of accessibility, to ensure every young person has a voice in shaping their future and the communities they are part of.

Step 1: Identify the Problem
The first step in creating an action plan is to identify the specific problems and barriers that inhibit young people's participation. In the context of Goal 9, the issues may range from physical accessibility to social spaces, digital divide affecting virtual participation, social and cultural barriers that marginalize certain groups, to a lack of awareness or opportunities for young people to engage in civic activities.

You need to work with the young participants to collect their ideas on what the issues are. What do they see as obstacles in achieving this goal. What are the issues to be addressed/needs to be covered?

04. Creating an Action Plan to Address European Youth goal 11: Youth Organisations & European Programmes

Introduction:
The European Youth Goal 11 focuses on empowering young people by supporting youth organizations and increasing their participation in European programmes. In order to achieve this goal, it is essential to create an action plan that outlines the steps and strategies needed to achieve the goal.

Step 1: Identify the Problem
The first step in creating an action plan is to clearly define the problem that needs to be addressed. This may involve identifying the challenges faced by youth organizations and young people in accessing European programmes and the resources needed to support their participation. This step is crucial in ensuring that the action plan is targeted and effective in addressing the specific needs of youth organizations and young people.

You need to work with the young participants to collect their ideas on what the issues are. What do they see as obstacles in achieving this goal. What are the issues to be addressed/needs to be covered?

Step 2: Define Objectives and Outcomes

Once the problems/issues have been identified, the next step is to define the objectives and outcomes that the action plan should aim to achieve.

These objectives should be specific, measurable, and time-bound, and should align with the overall goals of the European Youth initiative.

For example, the objectives might include increasing youth engagement and participation in EU decision-making processes, improving access to information and resources, and building cross-cultural bridges between young people in different countries.

The goals need to be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART)
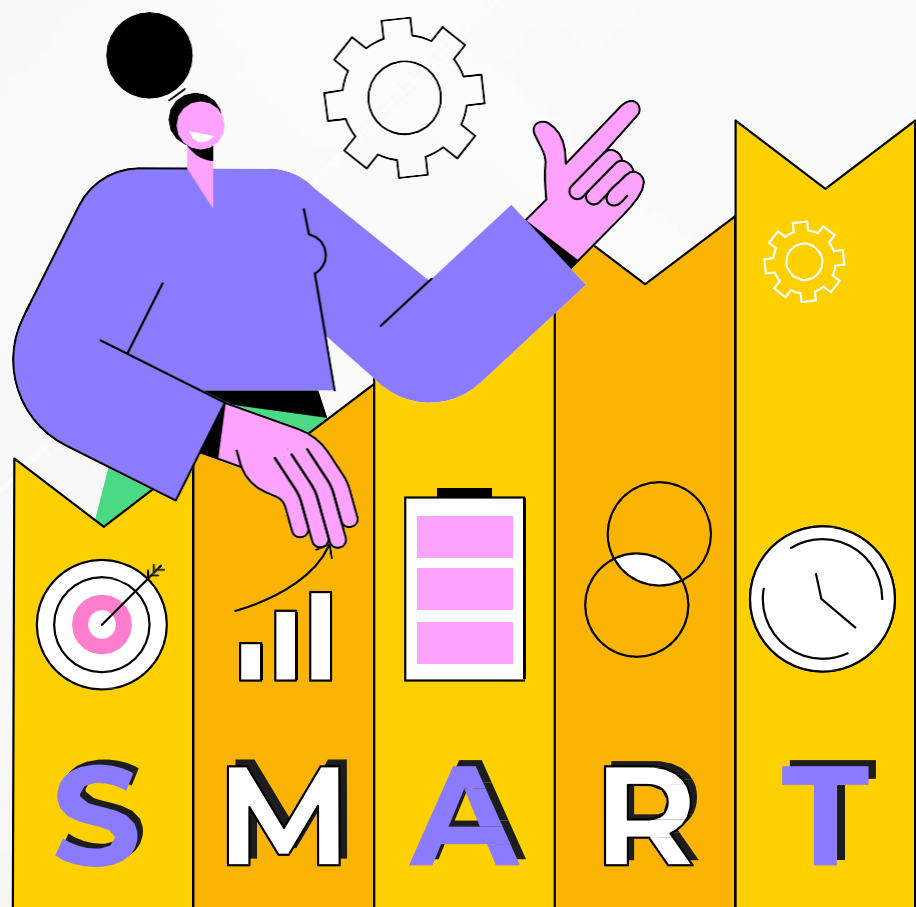
The following are the key elements of setting SMART goals:

Specific: Goals should be clear and specific, so that everyone involved understands exactly what is expected.

Measurable: Goals should be measurable, so that progress can be tracked and evaluated. This might involve setting specific targets or metrics for success.

Achievable: Goals should be achievable, taking into account the resources and limitations of the EU and its member states.

Relevant: Goals should be relevant to the overall objectives of the European Youth initiative and should align with the priority needs and interests of the youth population.

Time-bound: Goals should be time-bound, with a specific deadline for achieving them. This helps to ensure that progress is made in a timely manner and that the action plan remains focused and on track.

By setting SMART goals, you can ensure that this action plan is effective and focused, and that progress towards the goal is tracked and evaluated over time.

It was important that these objectives and desired outcomes came from the young people themselves. The facilitators were there to guide them and not impose upon them your own opinions.

Step 3: Develop Strategies

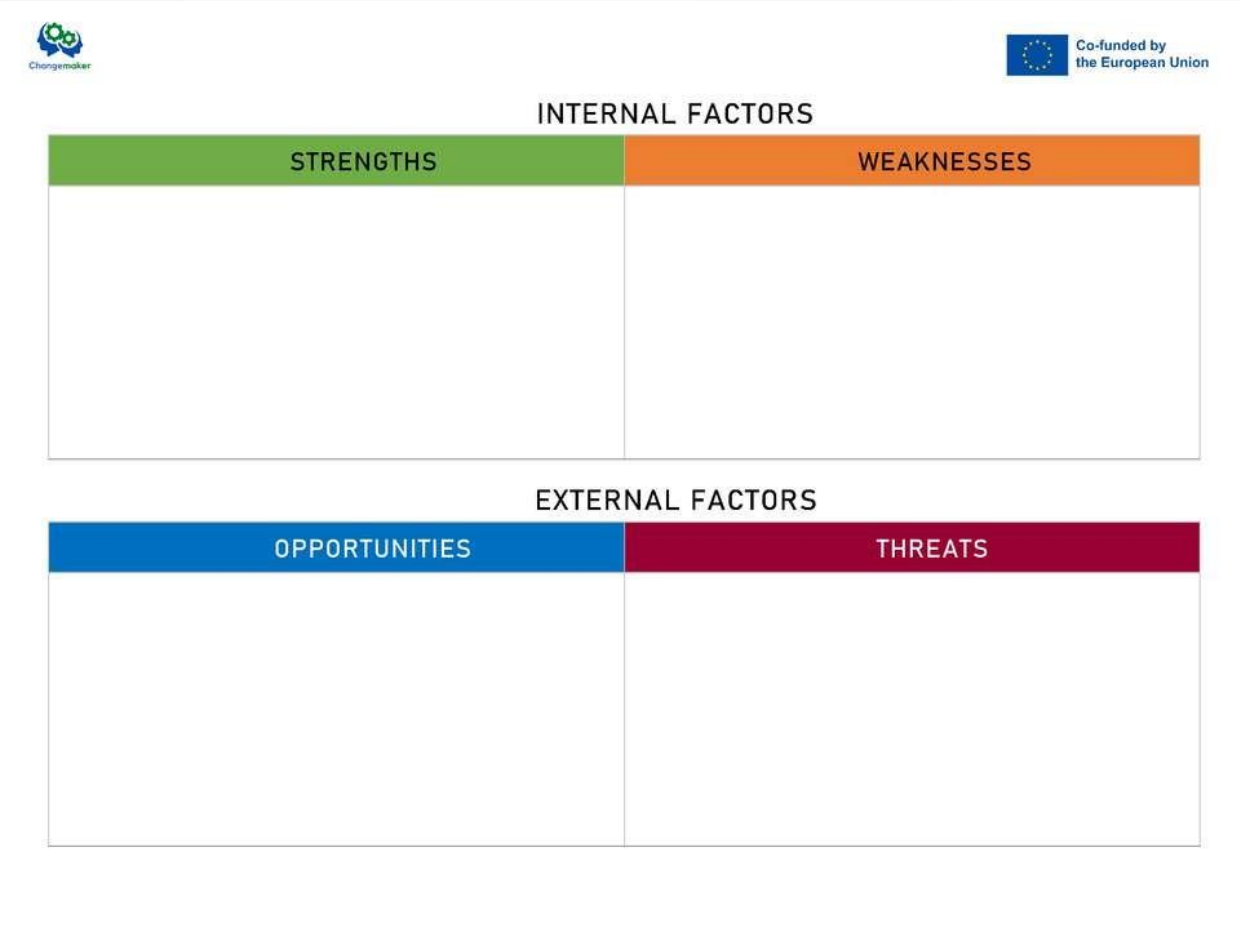Based on the objectives and outcomes, the next step is to develop strategies for achieving these goals.

These strategies should be **realistic, feasible, and actionable**, and should take into account the resources and limitations of the EU and its member states.

Some strategies for improving the EU's connection with its youth population might include increasing funding for youth programs and initiatives, developing online platforms and resources for young people, and providing training and support for young people to participate in EU decision-making processes.

Young people during the events had the opportunity *to brainstorm, **work together on devising strategies, do a SWOT analysis and figure out what would be the best way for them (young people) to move forward**.*

To facilitate the making of a SWOT analysis, the following template was used:

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INTERNAL FACTORS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES

EXTERNAL FACTORS

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS

Additionally, these reflection questions were used to inspire the analysis:

Strengths
Strengths are internal, positive attributes. These are things that are within your control.

- What assets exist in the EU? (ie. Experts, institutions, staff, etc)
- What physical assets are already there, such as technology, funds, and patents?
- What skills and competences can be used?

Weaknesses
Weaknesses are negative factors that detract from the strengths. These are things that might need to be improved on.

- Where is improvement needed?
- What is missing?
- What resources are missing?

Opportunities
Opportunities are external factors that could contribute to success.

- What resources exist out there that can support the achievement of the goals?
- Are there any stakeholders, private or public (organizations, establishments, etc) that can support in achieving the objectives?

Threats
Threats are external factors that you have no control over.

- What are the main difficulties/obstacles?
- Can changes in our environment/counties/communities be a threat?
- Can changes in technology negatively affect our efforts?
-

Step 4: Assign Responsibilities and Allocate Resources

Once the strategies have been developed, the next step is to assign responsibilities and allocate resources for implementing the action plan.

This includes identifying key stakeholders, such as government agencies, non-profit organizations, and youth groups, and working with them to ensure that the necessary resources and support are in place.

It may also include developing partnerships and collaborations to maximize the impact of the initiative.

Step 5: Develop a monitoring and evaluation plan

The final step in creating an action plan is to develop a plan on how to monitor and evaluate progress.

This includes regular assessments of the effectiveness of the strategies and outcomes, as well as tracking progress against the objectives and outcomes defined in the action plan.

The results of these evaluations should be used to make adjustments and improvements to the plan as needed.

Action plan template

The following template was made available to participants to support them in structuring their ideas.

GOAL:							
Objective	SWOT analysis (put here the conclusions)	Activities/steps to be taken	Resources & Support	Responsibilities (write down who is responsible for the completion of this activity)	Timeline	Indicators of success	Monitoring and evaluation tools