



Ayuntamiento
de Plasencia



câmara municipal
TORRES VEDRAS

YOUth Space Link

TRANSFERABILITY STUDY



URBACT



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Interreg

URBACT IV Transfer Network

YOUTH Space Link

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Lead Partner: City of Lublin, Poland

Other partners:

- City of Alba Iulia, Romania
- City of Forlì, Italy
- City of Odense, Denmark
- City of Plasencia, Spain
- City of Sofia, Bulgaria
- City of Torres Vedras, Portugal

<https://urbact.eu/networks/youth-space-link>



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Introduction

Somehow, we keep on being surprised about young people. Everyone of us goes through youth, but still the older generations keep on talking about youth as some alien species, “I don’t understand modern youth at all”. But all of us want spaces where we are welcome and can feel safe, where we can be active, learn new things without judgement and pressure, meet friends and also cooperate with the community, but on our own terms. Youth are not any different and will find these spaces for themselves, either from places where they shouldn’t (by the opinion of others), but of course they would prefer spaces that are created for their needs.

The city of Lublin in eastern Poland answered to this need. Local young people and youth field non-governmental organisations (NGOs) successfully partnered with the City to create now already 10 spaces for

young people aged 10–30. The spaces are officially run by NGOs, but the real decision makers are the youth using the spaces.

The URBACT IV Transfer Network YOUth Space Link is about sharing this model with other European cities. The Transfer Network brings together Lublin with six (6) other cities: Alba Iulia (Romania), Forlì (Italy), Odense (Denmark), Plasencia (Spain), Sofia (Bulgaria) and Torres Vedras (Portugal).

In this Transferability study you will learn about the elements of the Lublin model. It also introduces the diversity of partner cities and finally lays out steps on how to develop the youth led spaces in other places. The study is not an exhaustive presentation as it is describing work that is constantly developing by participating youth, youth workers and other stakeholders in the communities.

In Ljubljana, 30.04.2026

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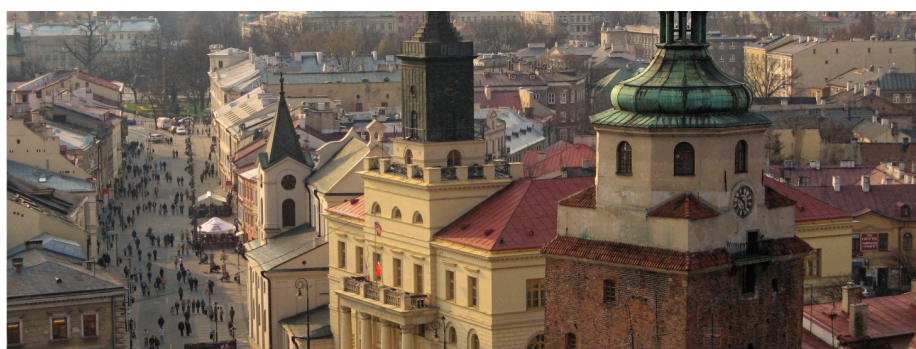


The Lublin model of Youth Spaces

<https://lublin.eu/en/lublin/youth-lublin/>



Lublin introduction



The city of Lublin in eastern Poland is the seat of the Lublin Voivodeship, known for its rich cultural life and nine universities. It is the eighth largest city in Poland, with a population of 328,868 living across 27 districts, growing by around 40,000 students during the academic year.

The city hosts a network of 13 municipal cultural institutions and 40 library branches, alongside 11 regional cultural institutions and one library managed by the Marshal's Office. Lublin is also home to numerous renowned music, theatre and arts events, including Carnival Sztukmistrzów – the largest contemporary circus festival in Poland.

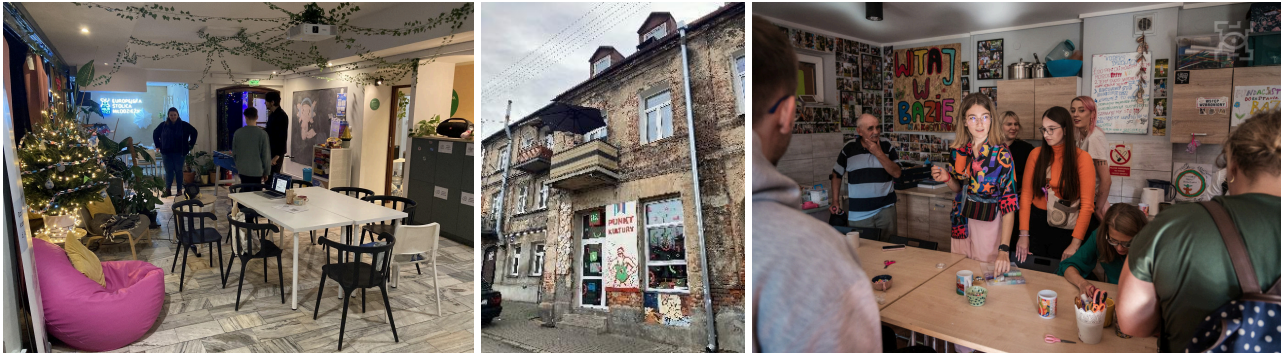
In 2023, Lublin held the title of European Youth Capital, marking a pivotal moment for the city's youth policy and engagement. Its strong and consistent investment in culture has also led to its nomination for the European Capital of Culture 2029.

Lublin has long prioritised the inclusion of its diverse residents in community life and local decision-making, supported by the work of the Social Participation Office in close cooperation with district communities and local NGOs. This approach led to the creation of the Lublin Youth Spaces. Since the first 'Hej!' Space opened in 2022, the network has grown to 10 venues across the city.



Youth Spaces in a nutshell

<https://lublin.eu/en/lublin/youth-lublin/youth-space/>



Youth Spaces brings first in mind Youth Centers. Like youth centers, they are physical spaces around the city dedicated and serving the city's 10-30 years old.

The crucial difference is in the management: these are spaces for youth, led by youth. Young people wanted spaces where they can feel safe to be, to try, make mistakes and try again. But this kind of feeling of safety comes from control over the space: for youth to really

own their spaces they need to have the leadership.

As youth are growing and are often fast in their moves, to ensure flexible, fast adapting continuity for the spaces they are officially run by NGOs, with a long term base funding from the municipality. The youth workers, many of them still young themselves, support the youth in their initiatives and management of the spaces.



Lublin model main elements



CAPACITY BUILDING & SHARING



YOUTH LED



MUNICIPALITY & NGO COOPERATION



SAFE, INCLUSIVE & ACCESSIBLE



YOUTH DESIGNED STANDARDS

Youth led



The main element of the **model** is that the Spaces are led by youth using them. The leadership of youth is formally enshrined in the **Youth Space Standards** that

the NGOs officially running the Spaces commit to.

In practice the youth leadership takes many forms. The **Standards** require each space to form a Youth Group operating continuously. In some of the spaces a group of youth meets weekly, in others many of the decisions are made in a WhatsApp group with 200+ youth. Spaces also have idea boxes and sticky notes on toilet mirrors with proposals from youth. Some initiatives originate from everyday discussions while cooking or playing boardgames.

The youth leadership is intentionally designed to have a low threshold:

- no commitments are required,
- those who participate make the decisions,
- Spaces offer youth a diversity of choices and decisions from small to big – from “What should we cook today?” to “What kind of international project would you like to do next?”,
- structure leaves 2/3 of the opening time free from formal activities, giving youth freedom to decide what they want to do.

The Spaces actively build communities, giving youth the chance to make decisions with their peers, more experienced helping the newcomers. Even some of the youth workers have grown from the users of the Spaces. This in part has created the culture where all the workers tell without thinking that the community of youth have the leadership.



Safe, inclusive & accessible

The Spaces have a strong ethos of being safe and accessible for the diverse youth. This approach is required by the **Standards**, covering physical, digital, financial, social, language etc. accessibility. In practice:



- The Spaces have a legal obligation to develop & implement Standards for the Protection of Minors. The network is also actively training and providing supervision to the youth workers and activity leaders to upkeep physically, mentally and socially safe spaces.
- Physical design with different areas inside the Space like: for talking with your best friend, having a bigger workshop, quiet spot for doing homework, kitchen to cook etc.
- Design of the programme with 1/3 reserved for workshops (for example psychological support and sign language), events and led activities and 2/3 kept free for youth to come and spend time as they like.
- The entry to the spaces is free of charge.
- Spaces with different offers: Some focusing more on arts, other to LGBTQIA+ community, few to socially challenged neighbourhoods etc. allowing youth to test and change places based on their needs.



Youth Space Standards

All Youth Spaces commit themselves to the Standards developed by young people. They are designed to create spaces where youth can feel comfortable and safe to pursue their passions and develop their talents.

1. Access to the space is free of charge.
2. The space and the people working there ensure the safety of those using the space.
3. Standards for the Protection of Minors have been developed and implemented in the space.
4. People under the influence of intoxicants (alcohol, drugs, boosters, etc.) are not allowed in the space and may not consume them within the space.
5. The space is free from political and religious agitation.
6. The space is participatory, inclusive and accessible.
7. A Youth Group operates continuously in the space, and the management of the space is organised on the basis of cooperation with the Youth Group.
8. The functioning of the Youth Group and the space are subject to periodic evaluation.
9. Activities carried out in the space take into account local needs and are planned in consultation with young people and/or initiated by them.

10. Organised workshops and events constitute no more than 1/3 of the available time of the space's operation.
11. The space has rules and regulations, which include, among other things, the following information: fixed opening hours and activities of the space, rules of operation of the Youth Group, etc.
12. The space is open at least 32 hours a week, including Saturdays and Sundays.
13. The space has a publicly available calendar containing information about the opening hours of the space and planned events.
14. The rules and other documents relating to the space are translated into English and Ukrainian or other languages, as needed.
15. The space has a variety of communication channels tailored to different target groups.
16. The premises where the space is located meet architectural accessibility requirements or provide alternative solutions in this regard and others outlined by law relating to public spaces (including fire safety).
17. The space has an accessibility description and ensures communication, information and digital accessibility.
18. The space is of an appropriate size, has an aesthetic design and combines many functions (including the possibility of reheating or preparing a meal or hot tea/coffee).
19. The space provides a variety of leisure activities and is equipped with, for example, games, books, art supplies, electronic equipment, sports equipment, music equipment, etc.

Municipality – NGO cooperation

Another strength of the Lublin model is the well aligned cooperation between the municipality and NGOs running the Youth Spaces. The cooperation goes beyond once per 1-2 years call for public grants and NGOs working as subcontractors. Instead the municipality has taken the role of cooperation hub:

- Organising meetings with the network every 1-2 months and offering support between them on social media.
- Facilitating cooperation between the Spaces,
- Organising the shared communications on the weekly programmes of all the Spaces,
- Offering capacity building,
- Maintaining the brand and standards of the network.
- Renting some of the premises through the Municipal Property



Board (rest are rented by private landlords)

To support and strengthen the long-term cooperation in the network the City of Lublin launched in 2025 call for five years funding for the Spaces, offering grants of max. 50 000 € / year for each of the 10 spaces, making the total contribution of 2 500 000 €. The grant is sufficient in the Polish context to cover the rent and 1,5 full time workers. To make the cooperation sustainable, the NGOs need to raise funds also from other sources, so that they are not completely dependent on the whims of the municipality.

Capacity building & sharing



In Poland there are no national policies on youth work. Neither are there studies to become a youth worker, the workers of the Youth Spaces come from diverse backgrounds. Hence one of the needed elements of the Lublin model has been organising the training in the network. The city has also been working on creating local youth work standards and advocating for national ones.

In practice the work on capacity building has taken many forms, for example:

- **Network meetings** taking place every 1-2 months: NGOs bring up their grievances, ideas, initiatives and needs related to the running of the Spaces with each other and municipality representatives.

Municipality informs on international, national, local and other departments funding calls and policy developments. Meetings can also have inputs by external experts and network members.

- **Mutual training sessions:** By the city funding agreement the Network NGO members are required to organise mutual training based on the needs from the network, for example on psychological support.
- **ŚniadaNGO (BreakfastNGO-meet-ups)** providing low threshold peer support.
- **National and international cooperation:** The city of Lublin and the NGOs are in close cooperation with other Polish cities like Warsaw and Krakow, organising study visits and meetings. The network members apply to EU funding programmes like Interreg and Erasmus+.

History of the Lublin model

Like in many other Eastern European countries, the fall of the communist regime launched a major transformation of the Polish youth work field. Some of the old youth organisations like Scouts were reinvigorated and new actors began to emerge through the 1990's and early 2000's, also supported by EU programmes. By 2010's the City of Lublin already had NGOs advocating for stronger support from the municipality. Around the same time the city made its first bid to become the European Capital of Culture.

As the 2016 Capital of Culture application was unsuccessful, the youth field actors were able to persuade the city decisionmakers to apply for the European Youth Capital. The lobbying met open minds for example in the current Deputy Mayor, a former youth politician. The city engaged with youth, who with many voices expressed a wish for their own spaces.

This eventually successful process proved to be beneficial in many ways, strengthening youth participation, leading to the creation of first **Youth Space Hejl**, but also establishing the

Youth Policy Office of the City of Lublin and paving the way for the stronger cooperation between the City and the youth NGOs.

The city **Social Participation Office** has also played a crucial role connecting the different stakeholders. On top of coordinating the cooperation on Youth Spaces, the office acts as a liaison with the district communities, supporting their development actions. The cooperation between city, NGOs and

neighborhoods has helped to find the best places for the Youth Spaces.

The models of cooperation developed for and tested during the European Youth Capital 2023 have brought plenty of positive attention to Lublin, making it easier to develop the youth work further. They have also supported the City's successful bid as European Capital of Culture 2029.

Policy context

The Lublin model develops practical solutions to ensure Human rights (legally binding in the **UN Convention of the rights of the Child** and the **European Convention on Human Rights**, latter named in the **EU founding treaties**). The Youth Spaces support **Freedom of expression**, Freedom of **thought**, Freedom of **association**, Youth with disabilities **right to participate** in the community, **Right to leisure**, rest and cultural activities and **Prohibition of discrimination**. The Spaces are aligned with the **UN Sustainable Development Goals** (SDG's) promoting the practical application of the Human Rights: The Spaces **mitigate the effects of poverty** (1st goal), **provide free food** for youth (2nd goal), promote **healthy lifestyle** (3rd goal) and **equality** (4th), work to **reduce inequalities** (10th) and support **sustainable cities and communities** (11th).

The Spaces are great practical examples of the **Council of Europe Charter on local and regional participation of youth** implementation, creating inclusive and empowering spaces for youth to participate in new ways. The Lublin model embodies the **EU Youth Strategy**

2019-2027 by **engaging** youth to learn to participate in innovative ways, **connecting** youth with NGOs offering (international) volunteering projects and **empowering** mutual learning and reaching out to diverse youth. Same goes for the **EU Youth Goals** as the Spaces work for Equality of All Genders (2nd goal), Inclusive societies (3rd), Information & constructive dialogue (4th), Mental Health & Wellbeing (5th), Quality learning (8th), Space and participation for all (9th) and Youth organisations & European programmes (11th).

The model supports **EU Cohesion policy** especially in sustainable development and improvements to citizens' **quality of life**. It lowers thresholds for young citizens' access **to services** as called in the **New Leipzig Charter** and they promote the right to participate and **multi-level governance**. The Spaces strengthen the cooperation between public and civil society as asked in **EU Territorial Agenda 2030**. It aims to support **place-based approach &** the accessibility, **proximity, affordability and quality** of (public) services by creating spaces close to people and **builds capacities** of local stakeholders.

Improvements to the Lublin model

- **Strengthening the youth participation knowhow of the youth workers:** Youth as volunteers, peers in decision making, potential board members, co-workers, political decision makers.
- **Improving the outreach (partly inspired by Danish models):** Having good understanding of the city's youth, where are they and what they want – especially the not-so-well-off.
- **Planning the service paths and renewal of the youth using the spaces – and renewal of the workers.** To avoid the spaces becoming places for small aging group of former youth.
- **Strengthening the NGOs democratic and inclusive management and fundraising outside of local and international public call.**

Transferability

The Lublin model is highly transferable to different European cities and contexts. Its main elements – Youth led, inclusive & accessible, Youth designed standards, municipality – NGO cooperation and capacity building –

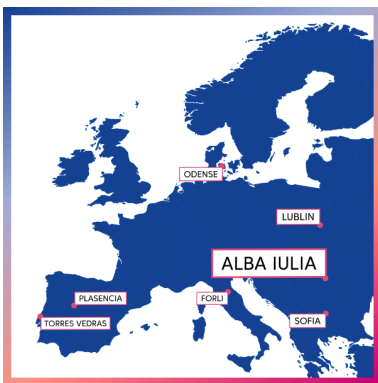
serve well the needs of the youth and their communities anywhere. This is proven by their alignment with the EU policies. At the same time the model is flexible, easy to adapt to different situations and its parts can be implemented also individually.

The Partner City of Alba Iulia

https://www.apulum.ro/index.php/alba_en



Alba Iulia introduction



Alba Iulia in Romania is a city with its long history since Roman times well on display, taking much of the city's central area in the form of Alba Carolina Fortress – one of the largest and best-preserved Vauban-type fortresses in Southeastern Europe. This one time capital of Romania and in 2026 the National Youth Capital is the seat of Alba County with a university and growing population of 74 490. The closeness to bigger cities Cluj-Napoca and Sibiu has brought young families, but also draws youth to study outside of Alba Iulia.

The city 2030 strategy aims to develop a green and innovative city able to attract investors and youth. The city Department of International Relations, Partnerships and Urban Innovation and Programs Department have been successful in getting European funding for the diverse development projects, while the local tax base is growing to meet the needs of the developing city. The city is also strengthening its ties to local business and civil society to find ways to develop the city together.



Youth work in Alba Iulia

Youth work in Alba Iulia is going through pivotal transformation as the city is creating a more coordinated approach. Like in Lublin the transformation is helped by a dedicated year for youth, in Alba Iulia the National Capital of Youth 2026. The city is also co-creating the first youth strategy through consultations with youth and planning to launch two youth centers.

The city's youth work field's traditional actors are sport clubs, schools, universities and different social services. After the fall of communist regime in 1989, the first modern youth NGOs were founded in the early 2000s, organising international projects, volunteering opportunities and non-formal education activities. By the Romanian Youth law the youth are defined to be 14 to 35 years old.

The city's own youth work has developed through municipal initiatives, county and national youth programmes. The cultural and educational events around the Alba Carolina Fortress have also contributed in creating an ecosystem in which the administration and various organisations of the city's 800+ NGOs work together.

Alba Iulia youth related initiatives include for example "Unhack the City" Hackathons, mentorship programs with the business community, volunteers activities and The National Volunteer Week, trainings on fundraising, social media etc., ConLucraTin event for 80 Romanian youth workers, creation of social center close to Roma neighborhood as well as EU Erasmus+ programme and other youth field projects.

Local priorities for Youth Spaces

The city's youth work priorities are construed under the Phyigital (Physical + Digital) concept:

- **Creating an online platform for youth** with all different opportunities, resources and activity providers (NGOs and institutions) in one place.
- **Opening the local branch of the ZborHub Youth space:** Concept and funded by the Romanian BCR -bank.
- **Setting up another youth space**

Strong principles in creating these spaces are **safety and innovation**, where youth can work, collaborate, fail and learn. The city's aim is also to **“hack” the administrative operating system** by creating a Youth Local Action Group (LAG) and a Youth Fund to provide **rapid micro-financing for youth-led ideas**. Through these initiatives the city project office leading the development, also aims to foster **stronger cooperation and coordination between different actors**.

Local challenges for transfer

- **The “braindrain” of young people** to study in bigger cities.
- **Strengthening the youth participation and youth work knowhow:** Romania lacks education for youth workers and youth participation lacks both structures and culture of youth being able to join decision making processes.
- **Lack of local funding.** The city invests directly only 5 000 € /year to youth work and just 0,1% of its budget to youth in general. Raising these funds are limited by the city’s reliance on external project funding to provide current services and development.
- **Lack and scattering of the actors and their services.** The city lacks dedicated youth spaces and the youth NGOs don’t have structures to work together.
- **Bureaucracy:** Overcoming administrative hurdles that can "kill" youth initiatives is a significant barrier to transferring and sustaining new models.

The Partner City of **Forlì**

<https://comune.forli.fc.it/it>



Comune di Forlì

Forlì introduction



The city of Forlì in Italy is located in the Emilia-Romagna region and is the capital of the Forlì-Cesena Province, with 117 600 residents. It is a growing aerospace research hub with vibrant cultural and civil society fields. It's known for its layers of medieval, Renaissance and 20th century architecture and food & wine culture. The city is divided into 21 territorial areas and well functioning local governance structures.

Forlì hosts a diverse network of public cultural facilities, many of which are located in or near the historic centre. The Teatro Diego Fabbrì and a network of local associations drive the city's per-

forming arts and experimental theatre scene. The city also has about 30 sports facilities and 30 school gyms that sports associations use for their activities.

The city ranks high on quality of living in several meters, having strong environmental management, health care and scoring 8th on the Quality of life index. Still, the city is facing challenges with the city center losing businesses to retail hubs outside of the city, integration of the Bologna university campus and its students and with local development project close to the city center.



Youth work in Forlì

Italy has a long history of youth work especially through the Catholic church movements like Salesians / Don Bosco starting in the 19th century. The Emilia-Romagna region is well known around the world for its cooperative and social movements. On the other hand, early 20th century also saw Fascist led by Benito Mussolini (born close to Forlì) trying to force the youth into their mold. This led to plurality of diverse actions in the after World War 2 period, eventually leading into youth work renaissance in the 1990's and after – with the help of local policies and EU Youth programmes.

The city of Forlì founded **Informagiovani** (Youth Information Center) already in 1982 and has had a dedicated Youth Policy Department for 15 years to serve the 14 to 35 years old population. In recent years the city has created two bigger youth serving centers: **Fabbrica delle Candele**, focused on cultural and social innovation, and **Laboratorio Aperto – Ex Asilo Santarelli**, which supports digital innovation and emerging talent. In addition, the Municipality supports youth engagement and entrepreneurship, specifically by attracting talent through dedicated initiatives such as **Hub@FO**

and **ForlìXTalent**. The city has also designated youth policy as a strategic pillar of its urban development.

The city has a good, long time cooperation with local social cooperatives working with youth. Through the 2017 national legislation and 2023 regional laws, there has been a shift toward co-planning and co-designing with the third sector. In 2025, the city of Forlì launched a co-design process where the Municipality and NGOs jointly define needs and objectives for the youth spaces. This agreement currently funds three projects. Each project is led by a social cooperative (**Social Cooperative Paolo Babini**, **Social Cooperative L'Accoglienza**, **Social Cooperative Domus Coop**) and involves five or six third-sector organisations as partners. The three projects aim to cover different areas and neighbourhoods within the Municipality of Forlì, providing indoor spaces and outdoor activities or street-based educational initiatives. Under the agreement, each venue and/or organisation is required to provide at least two hours of activities per week, with the council providing total annual funding of €100,000 for each project.



Local priorities for Youth Spaces

- **Youth empowerment and integration to city life**, in collaboration with families, schools and socio-health services, starting from the university students coming from elsewhere.
- **Empowering informal youth associations** through a permanent forum for dialogue (the ULG). This will also help to address emerging needs from the field.
- **Creating safe, multifunctional, inclusive, decentralized, youth led Youth Spaces** across the city to reach more students and diverse youth in peripheral neighborhoods.
- **Identifying new suitable spaces** for youth engagement and in **mobilising resources** to sustain them.
- **Common Standards:** The city aims to explore the adoption of shared management standards alongside young people and NGOs.
- **Competence building** through non-formal education to enhance the youth participation and youth work knowhow both in municipality and NGOs.
- **Growth in the number and continuity of activities** in educational, cultural, artistic, digital, sports and recreational fields.
- **Addressing youth discomfort** through structured prevention programs and actions.
- **Developing an effective communication strategy** targeting Municipal projects and services aimed at young people.

Local challenges for transfer

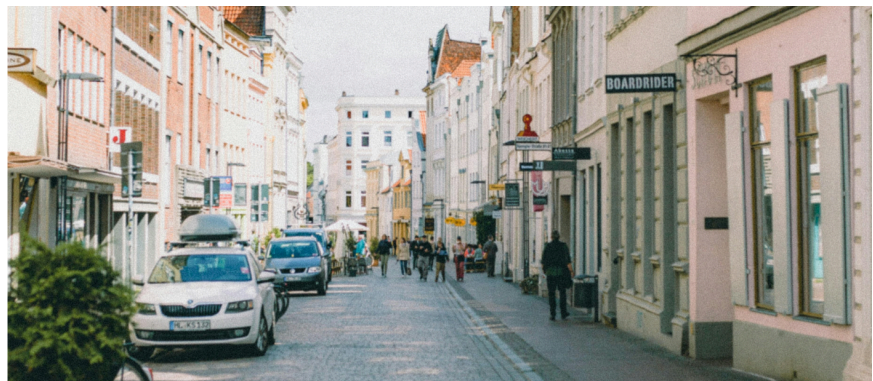
- **Perception Issues:** Young people are often perceived merely as service users rather than active contributors.
- **Space and Resources:** There is a lack of decentralized, self-managed spaces beyond those run by NGOs. The city actors have faced challenges in identifying and funding suitable locations. This is also connected to the lack of enabling frameworks and support measures.
- **Promotion and Communication:** Internal and external promotion of Municipal youth services is currently considered ineffective.
- **Informal Groups:** There is poor valorization and inclusion of informal youth associations that are seeking their own "third spaces".
- **Low integration and participation of university students**, including Erasmus students, in city life and activities.

The Partner City of Odense

<https://www.ungodense.dk/>



Odense introduction



A bit stereotypically for Denmark, its 3rd largest city Odense was founded by Vikings more than 1 000 years ago. Now this growing city, where about 23 000 of its 210 000 inhabitants are 10–19 years, is more known as the Robotic city with the most robot enterprises in Europe. The large university of Odense also hosts research projects on life sciences, green transition and in general across all major academic fields. The city's culture is defined by its long-standing Harbor Festival and its legacy as the home of Hans Christian Andersen, the world's most famous children's storyteller.

As part of the Nordic countries, Odense enjoys the Danish high quality of living

with one of the highest GDP per person rates in the European Union. The Danish welfare state was established during the 20th century on the values of equality, democracy, and social security. This commitment is reflected in high public spending on youth education, wellbeing, and diverse cultural opportunities. Even though the Danish government has been tightening immigration, already up to 15 % of the people living in Odense have immigrant background and this is likely to increase. To accommodate the growth of the city and needs of the surrounding region, the city is currently relocating its main hospital, releasing a large area close to the city center for new initiatives.



Youth work in Odense

Youth work in Odense goes back at least to the beginning of the 20th century with the arrival of Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and Scouts movements. Both remain strongly present in the city, though the YMCA has diversified into areas such as social welfare projects and flea markets. Red Cross and Save the Child are also big youth field actors and there's a vibrant community of smaller civil society organisations as well. 85 NGOs are cooperating with the city Youth Housel every year.

First Youth Clubs in Odense were founded in the 1950's by police workers in their free time. One of the spaces, Spillestedet in the city center is still active. You can even find original tapestry from the 1960's with the Beatles preserved on a small area of its walls. Around the same time as the founding of the Spillestedet, The Danish state required municipalities to provide youth services, leading to the establishment of a local network of public [Youth Schools](#). Nowadays the Odense Youth School and its 200-250 workers run 34 locations in total, with:

- 1 Youth house in the city center, mainly for 18+ and NGOs.
- 10 Youth centers around the city close to youth, mainly for 10-18 -years olds.
- 10 Youth Activity Spaces, many of them located in schools.
- Around 10 single activity spaces like Street house for

skateboarding, parkour and other street activities.

On top of this the Youth School has a full year around programme of over 250 courses, youth activities, workshops, events, street work, cooperation with local businesses and schools etc.

All activities are free; you only pay for food, some materials, and travel expenses such as entrance fees and accommodation.

The youth field is well-structured, although Denmark lacks a unified Youth Law; instead, youth legislation is spread across several different acts with varying definitions of 'youth'. Still, the general aim of policies is to ensure children & youth's well-being, inclusion, learning and development through strong communities and cooperation, early intervention and high quality in day care and schools. The public sector has a good understanding of the local youth population. Through close cooperation between departments and actors, virtually no young person is overlooked.

Youth participation is deeply integrated into youth work. It's taught as part of the local youth workers studies. The youth services employ diverse methods from every day discussions to formal hearings to hear the youth and the city's mayor's office organises often different hearing processes with the city's youth.



Local priorities for Youth Spaces

- **Democratic Empowerment:** Empowering young people as democratic and inclusive citizens and giving them influence over future city development.
- **Collaborative Planning:** The city prioritizes co-creation with youth for new spaces, such as a planned location near the hospital.
- **Inclusive Environments:** Efforts focus on creating social hubs that serve as platforms for co-designed activities, specifically targeting underrepresented groups.
- **Further strengthening the cooperation with the local NGOs** in development of the new spaces and their activities.
- **Gain insights from others'** experiences in designing and facilitating **arenas for talent and development.**
- **Gain new tools** that give young people influence on the future city development.

Local challenges for transfer

- **Youth Well-being:** Every fourth young person aged 16-24 experiences challenges related to anxiety, depression, stress and loneliness.
- **Increasing societal inequalities:** e.g. residential neighborhoods. Specific challenges include negative social control, risk of radicalization, abuse and ghettoization – segregation.
- **Participation Gaps:** There is a noted reluctance toward institutionalized frameworks and a low expectation among youth that they can actually influence city development.
- **Pressures on communities:** Communities are pressured by demands, including those regarding education and work.
- **Inconsistent Implementation:** While strategic foundations are strong, translating these goals into practice across all neighborhoods remains inconsistent.



The Partner City of **Plasencia**

<https://www.plasencia.es/>



Plasencia introduction



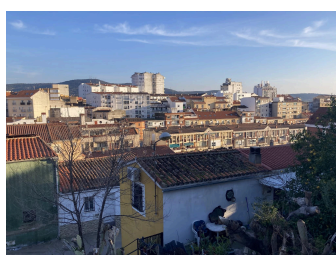
The City of Plasencia in the Region of Extremadura in Spain is a long-time regional hub with a rich history. It is well known for its agricultural products like paprikas. It is one of only seven cities in Spain with two cathedrals and is renowned for its beautiful, well-preserved medieval center with small alleys and many palaces.

Nowadays it is a home for around 40 200 inhabitants with stable local politics with the same party ruling already for over 25 years and same Mayor for several terms. Despite its size, the city boasts 20 cultural spaces, including theaters, museums, and galleries.

Though the city has been able to cut its debt down to 60 % from 160 % where it

was 15 years ago, Plasencia has not yet been able to turn the economically better situation into more opportunities for youth and marginalized communities.

The city is challenged by youth moving to study elsewhere. There is a wide variety of secondary schools, but for higher education the options are limited. Plasencia has only nursing, forest engineer and business faculties by universities of nearby bigger cities. The transportation is also challenging, though a highway passing the city is under construction.



Youth work in Plasencia



Like in Italy the Spanish history of youth work started with catholic church youth movements, with Scouts joining a bit later. After its darker phase under the dictatorship, the resurgence of real civil society youth NGOs started already in the 1980's with the return of democracy. This also led to enshrining the youth work in the Spanish constitution and transfer of many political powers to the autonomous communities (regions), including youth work. Due to the de-centralization there is no unified legislation on youth and still some regions lack local youth laws, though the national Youth Strategy does define youth as 15 to 29 years old.

In Plasencia, though the youth work in the Spanish system belongs to the Region, the city has consistently invested in youth work for over 25 years. Currently the city runs one Youth Center, **Casa de la Juventud**. The city is renovating another, Roberto Iniesta Artistic Center, a former youth center run by the Regional government in a former church. The Regional government is still running a youth center in the city called Youth Factory,

offering facilities for physical activities like skateboarding, climbing and parkour. Plasencia has also invested in outdoor skate and parkour park.

Plasencia's dedicated team of youth workers consists of only two workers. As other of them runs the youth information center, cooperation with local actors has been crucial. It has enabled the city to offer a wide variety of actions from theatre & Japanese culture workshops to Warhammer figurine games and painting. Currently the city Youth department cooperates with 12 youth NGOs, including one supporting the Plasencia youth field with international volunteers. The number of NGOs has been declining after the COVID-pandemic as particularly youth have avoided the extensive bureaucracy related to Spanish NGO structures.

Interestingly the city disbanded its Youth Council somewhere in the 1990's and is not very eager to establish it again citing the often politicised nature of the councils. Instead the city has put effort into hearing youth through other means and is keen to develop more youth participation approaches.



Local priorities for Youth Spaces

The latest assessment of local youth needs from 2022 brought up several challenges and proposals to develop the city of Plasencia as a better place for youth. On top of that, the youth workers and NGOs have discussed several priorities:

- **Participation and Empowerment:** Increasing the direct participation and decision-making of young people in the community.
- **Improving the quality of life of the youth:** Make the city attractive and a place where young people want to live and have job opportunities. Youth themselves hope for more green spaces and recreational areas, improving public transportation services, attracting new businesses, promoting cultural and sporting events, and establishing training and skills development initiatives for young people.
- **Redefinition of youth spaces** as open, flexible and youth-led environments.
- **Co-management:** Strengthening cooperation with youth, local associations (both formal and informal), university and young entrepreneurs to enhance the resources for the city youth work field through pooling up.

Local challenges for transfer

- **Youth outmigration** and lack of long-term prospects in the city.
- **Social issues** including loneliness, drugs and specific challenges related to marginalized communities.
- **Low visibility and awareness of youth services** among young people.
- **Limited human and financial resources** dedicated exclusively to youth. Now much of the staff working hours go to administrative tasks rather than engaging with the youth.
- **Decline of traditional youth associations** and formal participation structures as youth choose new, more informal (digital) forms of networking. Also, training of new youth leaders to replace the old guard has been insufficient.
- **Difficulties in engaging young people with fewer opportunities.**
- **Digital and Social Gaps:** Challenges include growing digital inequalities and the risk of youth disengagement if participation is perceived as merely symbolic.

The Partner City of Sofia

<https://www.sofia.bg/en/web/sofia-municipality/>

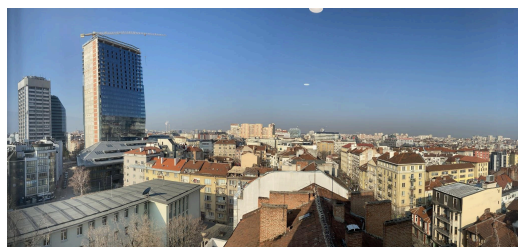


Sofia introduction



The city of Sofia, capital of Bulgaria, is in many ways distinctive in its country context. With its 1 232 900 inhabitants (officially, many presume much more are living in the city) it is the most populous city in Bulgaria and economic hub altering the financial statistics of the wider region around it. It hosts the main universities of Bulgaria with around 100 000 students and a wide variety of cultural activities. Through its long history Sofia has accumulated a rich architectural heritage and diverse population with orthodox and catholic churches and muslim mosques existing close to each other in the city center.

The city has a strong civil society ecosystem and the city maintains a diverse network of public spaces, including community cultural centers (chitalishta), municipal cultural institutes, sports complexes, educational and innovation centers. Just the sport facilities and sport NGOs cooperating with them gather more than 60 000 users each year and other city-NGO cooperations add thousands of more people.



Youth work in Sofia

The city of Sofia has a long tradition of providing public spaces accessible to young people, including community cultural centers and cultural institutions existing since the late 19th and early 20th century. As the nation's capital and a major academic and economic hub, the city offers youth an extensive range of museums, galleries, student programs, and specialized services.

The capital status brings close connections to the political establishment and national umbrella NGOs, like the Bulgarian National Youth Council, making it easier for Sofia youth to get their voices heard on national level politics and be aware of international trends as well.

The Sofia Youth Strategy has ensured long term development with its 10 years perspective over years 2017-2027. It lays out as Strategic priorities:

- youth participation & active citizenship,
- personal & professional development,
- health, sport & prevention,
- volunteering & social inclusion.

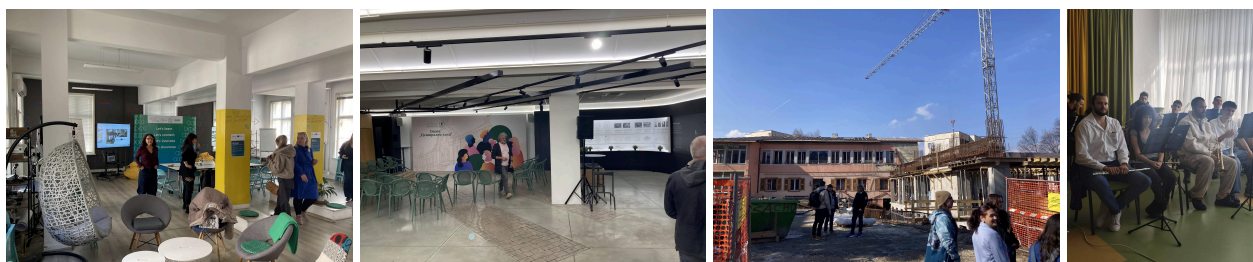
And as main target youth groups:

- students and young professionals,
- youth from peripheral districts,
- NEETs and vulnerable groups,

- ethnic minorities and migrants.

To achieve the strategy aims, the city has launched municipal programmes like the "Sofia – City of the Young and Active" annual program supports approximately 19 projects per year with a budget of roughly €153,000, reaching over 5,800 direct participants. Sofia is also investing in infrastructure. The city supported the founding and first years of "SofiaLab", a living lab for skills and innovation. It is also renovating and expanding the upcoming "Nadezhda" youth house, which will feature psychologists, career consultants, and educational mediators.

The city is exploring new engagement formats, including the "A Star Is Born" talent stage, "CODE: PREVENTION" health campaigns, and the "Sofia Helpers" volunteer network. These are supported by a municipal podcast studio and a strong social media presence across Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. As the Youth and Sport office has only 5 workers focusing on youth, cooperation with the local NGOs is crucial for achieving wider youth engagement. There is active cooperation with 27 NGOs receiving municipal grants of approximately €10,000 each for youth-related projects.



Local priorities for Youth Spaces

- **Youth center:** Opening and sustainable development of the new Youth Center and later expanding the concept into a connected ecosystem of youth spaces.
- **Real participation of young people** in governance and programmes, with clear pathways for the youth to join and feel stronger ownership & co-creation of the city actions. "For" youth "by" youth.
- **Accessible and inclusive services** for different groups of young people, including better coverage across the city districts.
- **Stronger cooperation** between the municipality, NGOs, schools and universities. Learning how to structure and lead a network of NGOs and secure sustainable funding.
- **Support youth wellbeing and capacity building:** Mental health, wellbeing and social connectedness as well as personal & professional development.
- **Sustainable model for funding and development** to transition from temporary, project-based solutions to more long-term and stable youth services.

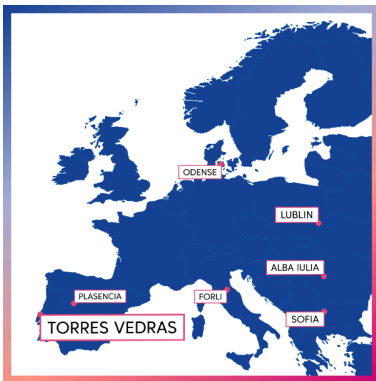
Local challenges for transfer

- **The need for effective youth spaces:** Which requires coordinated efforts between municipal departments, NGOs and young people themselves.
- **Large city scale and different needs across districts** leading to uneven access to opportunities and services.
- **Scattered, project based actions:** The city has many initiatives and temporary, project-based youth actions, but lacks a unified system and long-term, sustainable funding that would enable youth to form long-term ownership.
- **Youth Concerns:** Local youth often struggle with a lack of direction for their future, though they express a strong desire for higher-paying careers.
- **Reaching hard-to-engage young people.**
- **Measuring real impact and results.**

The Partner City of **Torres Vedras**

<https://www.cm-tvedras.pt/>

Torres Vedras introduction

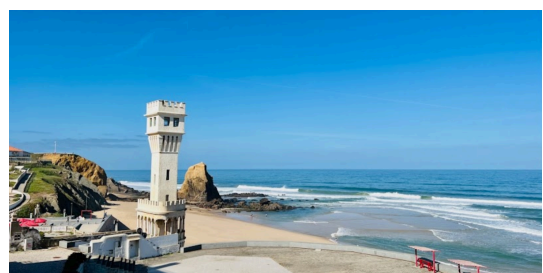


The City of Torres Vedras has 19th century fortifications defending Lisbon, the capital of Portugal. A modern highway connects Torres Vedras to the capital by 45 min drive. It takes youth away to study and brings tourists and metropolitan people to enjoy the satirical Carnival the city is famous for, a 20 km stretch of Atlantic coast and calmer small town feeling among traditional architecture. Like many similar areas of Portugal, Torres Vedras with its 89 500 inhabitants, is growing mainly due immigration that is also driving up real-estate prices.

In 2025 the city underwent a major political shift with a new "rainbow coalition" taking office and bringing in

new political decisionmakers. Many of them are without significant experience on governance as the city has been ruled by another party for years. Though the change has led to some long-time policies and practices being changed the new coalition is eager to develop youth work. In general the city is well connected both internally in Portugal and internationally for example through cooperation projects.

The city covers a relatively large area with several smaller parishes belonging to the municipality with their own Parish councils. The city civil society field has been quite vibrant including Scouts, Red Cross and Rotaract.



Youth work in Torres Vedras

Public youth work began in Torres Vedras in 1991 with the creation of the Municipal Youth Information Centre (CIMJ), offering psychological support and vocational guidance. Over the following decades, youth work expanded significantly:

- Late 1990s: partnership with IEPF and creation of the UNIVA employment unit
- 1997: Youth Information Post
- 2000: Inforjovem Centre (ICT training)
- 2006: Youth and Adolescent Support Office (psychological support)
- 2015: Municipal Youth Council
- 2017: Rehabilitation of Espaço Primavera – Municipal Youth Centre
- 2019: Integration into the Eurodesk network
- 2024: Opening of Porta 10 Study Room
- 2026: During the spring 2026 the city also prepared to open its first dedicated Youth Center in the premises of old Toy museum.

Torres Vedras has also diverse network of cultural institutions and sport facilities serving youth, including Teatro-Cine de Torres Vedras, Centro de Artes e Criatividade, network of libraries and cultural centres across parishes and 10+ sports pavilions, football fields, swimming pools and multi-use courts. The city manages several programmes supporting youth, for example Moinhos – Training to Innovate focusing on skill development, Faz e Acontece -vocational experiences program, Municipality Game: Powered by MyPolis to encourage engagement and Participatory Budgeting specifically for youth ideas.

Youth associative life in Torres Vedras emerged in the 1990s, mainly through student unions, Scout groups and youth wings of political organisations. In 1997, the municipality formally recognised this ecosystem by creating the Municipal Youth Commission, which brought together student associations, scouts, youth political organisations and local youth groups.



Local priorities for Youth Spaces

- **More youth participation and influence** through Youth Council / Municipal Youth Assembly and creation of Municipal Youth Strategy.
- **Better access** to employment, skills development and career guidance.
- **Improved mobility and transport**, especially in rural parishes.
- **More cultural, creative and recreational opportunities** around the city.
- **Support for mental health** and wellbeing.
- **Pathways to autonomy**, including housing and financial independence.
- **New Youth House:** Young people report a lack of spaces to spend their free time.
- **Better communication:** Social media management and others.
- **Strengthening the cooperation with the NGOs.**

Local challenges for transfer

- **Urban vs rural context:** The municipal youth infrastructure is in the city and limited transport options exclude the youth from city's wide rural areas.
- **Social and structural challenges:** Economic vulnerability, mental health concerns, migrants' inclusion, housing and autonomy barriers and risks of social exclusion.
- **Access to opportunities:** Need for local employment and skills development. Unequal access to extracurricular activities.
- **Participation gaps:** Participation often depends on existing associations or school structures – not all youth feel represented or included. Low levels of cultural participation.
- **Association Fragility:** There are relatively few formal youth associations, and many existing initiatives are fragmented.
- **Communication gaps:** Difficulties in effectively managing social media and traditional communication channels to reach the target audience.
- **Projects not focused exactly on Youth.**

YOuTh Space Link network comparison

	Lublin	Alba Iulia	Forlì	Odense	Plasencia	Sofia	Torres Vedras
No. of Youth Sp.	10	~1	25	34	2(+1)	1	3-4
Year 1st Youth Sp.	2022	2021	1982	1956	2007	2025	2026
Youth population	57 851 (17,7 %)	13 477 (18,1 %)	21 163 (18,0 %)	56 669 (30,6 %)	8 200 (20,4 %)	~270 000 (~21 %)	15 500 (17,3 %)
Total Population	327 384	74 490	117 535	185 480	40 106	1 232 905	89 526
Spending on youth	9 664 575 € (0,26%)	179 000 € (0,1%)	17 500 000 € (0,25 %) (2026-2028)	565 162 000 € (25,0 %)	150 000 € (0,3 %)	303 000 €	21 460 000 € (18,5 %)
Total budget	3 684 334 041 € (2025)	135 136 622 € (2025)	676 535 968 € (2026-2028)	2 260 648 427 €	40 537 476 €	1 000 000 000+ €	115 900 000 €
GDP*/capita	24 680 €	19 960 €	38 310 €	68 310 €	34 210 €	18 060 €	28 680 €
State of Youth work	City Youth Policy No national laws No youth work formal education	Youth strategy coming National Youth law No youth work education	City Youth strategy National Youth law No youth work education	City youth strategy Scattered youth legislation Youth work studies	City Youth strategy No youth legislation No youth work education	City Youth strategy National Youth law No youth work education	No city youth strategy Scattered youth legislation No youth work education
3 priorities for Youth Spaces	Ensuring the sustainability of Youth Spaces Capacity building Expanding the Network	Start 2 Youth Spaces Creating digital hub for youth Better coordination of actions	Youth empowerment Expanding the network of Youth Spaces Competence building	Democratic empowerment Co-creation of inclusive spaces Learning together	Improve youth quality of living More Youth participation More cooperation with local stakeholders	More stable funding Cooperation for effective youth spaces Better distribution of youth spaces	Opening the new Youth Center More opportunities for youth Better cooperation
Department in charge of Youth Spaces	Social Participation Office	The Department of International Relations, Partnerships and Urban Innovation	Youth Policy Department Unit for Strategies and Management of EU and National Funds	Youth School	City Youth Department	European Policies, Programs and Tourism Directorate Sports and Youth Activities Directorate	Social Development Division – Youth Quality of Life Unit

*GDP: Gross Domestic Product, monetary value of a country's yearly production

The Transfer Process

Overview of the transfer process

The YOUth Space Link transfer network adapts the Lublin model to local contexts in partner cities. It will share knowhow between the partners horizontally as each of the partners have different experience and their own solutions to common challenges.

The youth participation has to be secured as well. Though Lublin Youth Space Standards are youth made, the youth in each city should design their own standards. In similar way the youth participation methods and structures should be planned in each city with local youth, not replicated as is from Lublin.

The Youth Spaces transfer process consists of four (4) main steps decided in the in-person Kick-off meeting in Lublin:

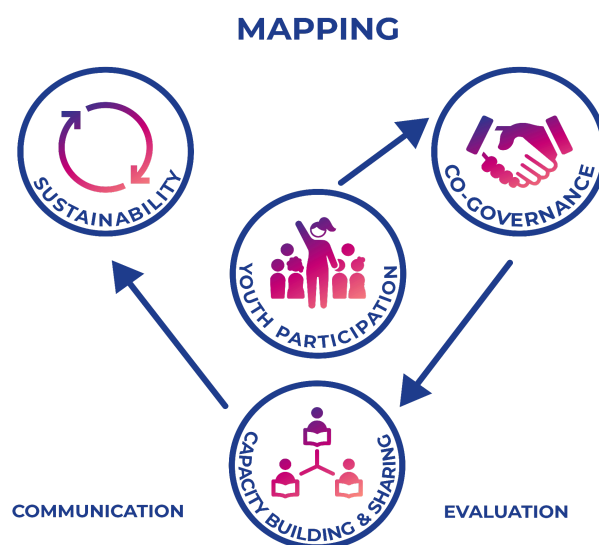
1. **Youth participation,**
2. **Co-Governance,**
3. **Capacity building & sharing,**
4. **Sustainability.**

Around these four main steps it is also good to **map the situation** before starting

Mapping

In January – August 2026, through city visits, questionnaire to partners and internal work

The mapping should give the developers of the Youth Spaces a good



the process. During the process designing the internal and external **communications** as well as **monitoring and evaluation** is needed.

It is good to notice that all these elements are interconnected: for example lack of long-term sustainability demotivates the youth to participate – why would they invest their time for something fleeting

idea of the context and situation where the Youth Spaces are created. This

includes first and foremost getting a better idea of the youth, but also other stakeholders, existing services and physical spaces (used & unused).

Mapping should start by checking what youth – the target group – are doing at the moment.

- How many are they?
- Where do they spend their time now?
- What do they want?
- What challenges do they face?

Actions

- **Find out the exact number of youth:** General numbers on youth can often be found from the national statistics office, if the municipality is not keeping them.
- **Hear youth:** This can be achieved through **discussions at schools** (easiest places to reach youth), asking them to **fill questionnaire**, but also by **organising neighborhood walks**, parental & social NGOs inviting their youth and **joining youth activities** to meet them on their own terms.
- **Check with multidisciplinary teams:** Ask from people working with youth, like teachers, social workers, youth & social fields NGO workers and youth researchers as

they can often give wider perspective to the issues raised by youth.

- **Create maps:** Where the youth live & where existing activities for youth are in your municipality? How expensive & accessible (physical accessibility, openness for diversity, language etc.) for diverse youth the activities are? This will help to find out where the new Youth Spaces are needed.

For mapping the stakeholders, some of them will be identified already when checking things on youth – organisers of their hobbies, parents / guardians, places where they study, services and businesses they use etc. Other relevant stakeholders are for example the decisionmakers, possible funders, NGOs that work on issues important to youth. To find these, **national business registry** can be a useful tool. You can also check [URBACT Tools](#) related to this. Questions to ask here are:

- Who are relevant people and organisations for youth?
- Is the current issue relevant to them?
- Who has some relevant information or position of power?

Youth participation

Ongoing through the project, training package in August – November 2026

Youth participation is both the starting point and the main outcome of the Youth Spaces. Without a chance to join the design of the spaces early on and feel that their opinion really matters, youth (like anyone else) cannot really feel ownership. On the other hand, youth that get to learn participation in Youth Spaces take that experience with them to the world outside.



Actions:

- Youth participation is first and foremost about attitude – do we **recognize young people as active individuals**, with their own opinions, experience and knowledge? **Reflect** your attitudes inside the team or invite youth to meet the workers and reflect with them.
- **Study youth participation:** URBACT has materials like visualisation of Arnstein's ladder of participation below, [Hart](#) has his own version of the ladder, EU Youth programmes has a dedicated [web portal](#) with this [Toolbox](#) as good starting point, Council of Europe (CoE) has several [good materials](#) and both EU and CoE organise trainings for youth workers.



Source: Harvard Catalyst (based on the Arnstein ladder of participation)

- **Invite youth to form a Youth Group:** It can start already before any physical space. Be open to youth's own ideas how the group can work. It is not necessary to require them to commit, they might commit naturally as their ownership grows.
- **Offer diverse ways to participate:** Youth are as diverse as we all, one likes to discuss for hours, another rather sends their opinion in an email, third will write their proposal on a sticky note on toilet mirror and fourth will craft the tool to solve the problem without communicating much with others. Youth themselves are the best persons to ask how they would like to participate. Also sharing ideas and experiences with other participation workers helps.
- **Embrace participation as a skill that has to be learned:** Support youths' learning to participate by creating opportunities to rehearse decision making (in Youth Spaces), connecting them with more experienced people so they can share their tips and insights, support them to get over setbacks and try again, provide chances to network and work together for common goals etc.
- **Recruit young volunteers and youth workers** who youth can see as their peers and with whom they can identify with. Young volunteers and workers will also remember fresh how it has been to struggle through the challenges of youth.
- **Be ready to offer financial and professional support:** Youths participation can end short, if their proposals cannot be implemented. Sometimes this requires money, but more often access to professionals. Like if youth would like to

organise better mental health support for themselves, having the support of trained psychologists can be important. And sometimes it requires connections to decision makers ready to listen to the youth.

- **Repeat:** Youth grow up, so work on youth participation means continuously starting all over again with new youth. In Youth Spaces, older youth can support newcomers. But this requires planning with current users how to welcome new youth and how different age individuals & groups can co-exist in the same space – again and again with each generation.

Co-governance

Preparations in May – August 2026, setting up September 2026 – August 2027, training package November 2026 – March 2027, consolidation September 2027 onwards



The youth need something to participate in and physical spaces require maintenance. Municipality can provide both, but the bureaucracy that ensures equal, neutral and efficient public services can seem too rigid and formal for youth. For municipality to manage the youth-led Space(s) the Spaces need wide autonomy and decisions needing approval from municipality decisionmakers should be fast-tracked.

Another alternative is to give the management of Youth Space(s) to NGO(s) like in Lublin. NGOs can offer a more flexible and engaging management where youth can be active participants, volunteers and leaders. Many of us have learned the basics of participation in our hobbies run by civil society organisations. NGOs can also employ resources and possibilities that are not possible for municipalities – a membership fee sounds better than taxes, even though they are basically the same thing and direct democracy is easier to test in a small NGO than in a much bigger city. Hence bringing the stakeholders of municipality together to cooperate is a good way to ensure that youth will have

the skills needed to take the lead when their time comes.

Actions:

- **Invite the NGOs to discuss with the municipality and youth:** No commitments, just creating a space to share, hear each other's needs, wishes, challenges etc. Those who come are the right ones.
- **Know your resources:** Promises made that cannot be kept are bad for cooperation. Find out internally in your municipality the available financial, administrative and human resources & real-estate assets (empty spaces & buildings). Being prepared to discuss these openly will make it easier to plan the right size and form cooperation. Starting small can soon grow, like in Lublin where the network of Youth Spaces grew from one to 10 in just couple of years.
- **Prepare your structures:** Who / what department(s) and in what role(s) will be involved in management of the Youth spaces or in the cooperation

The structures and preferred cooperation partners are both very contextual – different municipalities have different structures and different NGOs. Hence giving guidelines is difficult.

over them with NGO(s)? How will decisions be made when the youth & cooperation produces initiatives? How will money and equipment change hands when needed? How eventual conflicts will be handled? What policies and internal structures need to be taken into account? Remember to keep the structures ready to change as the cooperation evolves.

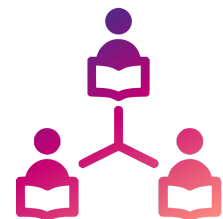
- **Define frame for the cooperation partner:** What will be their role – for example fully responsible to run the Space, co-manager or just single activity provider? What level of knowhow on youth participation (spaces) they need? What wishes youth have expressed for their knowhow? How are their financial and administrative capabilities?
- **Ensure the right kind of workers:** Make it clear that workers are there to support the leadership of youth – helping, not doing for them. Their role, duties, responsibilities, required & offered skills, contract type and funding of their work depend on local context and discussions with youth and possible cooperation partner NGO. In Lublin the workers are employed by NGOs on regular, part-time or student contracts with diverse education. Some ideas for defining the work from Youth work competences by [CoE here](#) and [EU ETS-competence model here](#).

- **Define local Youth Space Standards with youth:** Organise several consultations with diverse youth to define what local youth want from their own spaces. Lublin [Standards](#) can be used as an example. Review the Standards regularly with new youth.
- **Plan for slow launch of the new Space(s) & cooperation(s):** Building new Spaces, partnership and trust takes time. In the beginning plenty of scruples need to be ironed out and new workers & partners need [capacity building](#). Usually the physical space for the Youth Space needs to be found, either from available municipality owned spaces or by renting from the open market.
- **Organise regular meetings and good communication:** How often and in which format(s) the cooperation partners should meet? Lublin Youth Space network meets once in 1-2 months and has a WhatsApp group for communications in-between. The NGOs also meet between themselves for morning coffees and some of the organisations are members of the [Lublin city Public Benefit Council](#). Be there for the NGOs.
- **Plan monitoring and evaluation:** What information is useful to collect and analyse to upkeep the quality and impact of cooperation? Lublin for example monitors weekly visits to the Youth Spaces, but has decided against collecting individual visitors.

Capacity building & sharing

June 2026 – October 2027

The learning needs are very situational. It is good to ask the for the learning needs from the stakeholders regularly. In the Youth work field using Non-Formal Education (NFE) approaches is usually the



norm in trainings. A good guidebook for youth field trainings is [Compass by the Council of Europe](#). In YOUth Space Link following capacity building needs have been identified:

Actions:

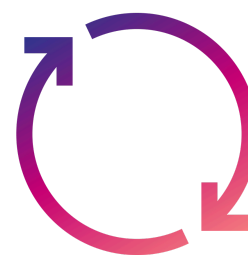
- **Youth participation:** Shared sessions on how Youth participation is understood by the partners and what different policy documents say about it. Share practical solutions used by partners and learned from elsewhere.
- **Cooperation with the NGOs:** Training led by Lublin city officials and Youth Space NGO workers sharing their best practices. Training can also incorporate insights from other similar practices around Europe.
- **Governance of the Youth Spaces in municipality:** Training led by Lublin city officials and decision makers sharing their experiences and insights about development and every day administration of Youth Spaces from municipality perspective. Decision making processes, cooperation between departments, public tender procedures etc.
- **Youth work basics and youth worker competences:** By Lead Expert and Ad-hoc Expert(s) based on [Council of Europe](#), [CoE-EU Youth Partnership](#) and [EU resources](#) as well as experience of partner cities. Organising sessions for the youth workers from the network to meet each other and have a chance to share about their work and good practices.
- **NGOs financial and administrative capacity building:** By Lead Expert and Ad-hoc Expert(s) going through how to fundraise from [diverse sources](#) as well as how to apply for different tenders.
- **Supporting the quality of life of youth:** Shared sessions with youth, youth workers and municipality representatives to exchange ideas on how to enhance the lives of youth.

Sustainability

Ongoing through the project, training package June – October 2027

Like schools & health care, the need for youth work and Youth Spaces is constant – as current youth grow into active citizens, new youth will seek their own spaces. Hence, the financing and management has to be organised on a permanent basis.

The youth that most need the Spaces are those not reached by other youth activities like sports and arts. These youth have a higher risk of becoming marginalized with all the related costs.



Actions:

- **Start advocating for long-term funding early on:** Political processes can take a long time, especially if the new service has to be sold to the decision makers first.
- **Mobilize the youth:** 18-30-years old are a big block of voters if they so choose. Even under 18-year-olds wield political power through their parents and wider

family. Youth can also be formidable in fundraising, renovating spaces, etc. if given the chance and support.

- **Grow your own politicians:** Lublin has been moving fast with Youth Spaces partly thanks to the former youth politician turned into Deputy Mayor. Youth coming to Youth Spaces can be future decisionmakers or municipality bureaucrats preparing the budget proposals.
- **Mobilize the civil society:** Youth NGOs can have a wide membership base and even wider influence through the parents and grandparents of the youth. Hence long-term cooperation with NGOs will also help with sustainability of the Youth Spaces – NGOs are free to lobby the municipality decisionmakers without conflict of interest.
- **Tie the Youth Spaces to the community and municipality services:** The Spaces function well as hubs to reach young people, as places where youth can plan community actions and points to offer municipality services targeting youth. Places with value for the wider community tend to survive.
- **Teach Youth Spaces / NGOs to fundraise for themselves:** Though the Youth Spaces and their actions themselves are better to keep free of charge to ensure accessibility and equality, it doesn't mean that the youth could not raise funds through [diverse means](#).

Communications and evaluation

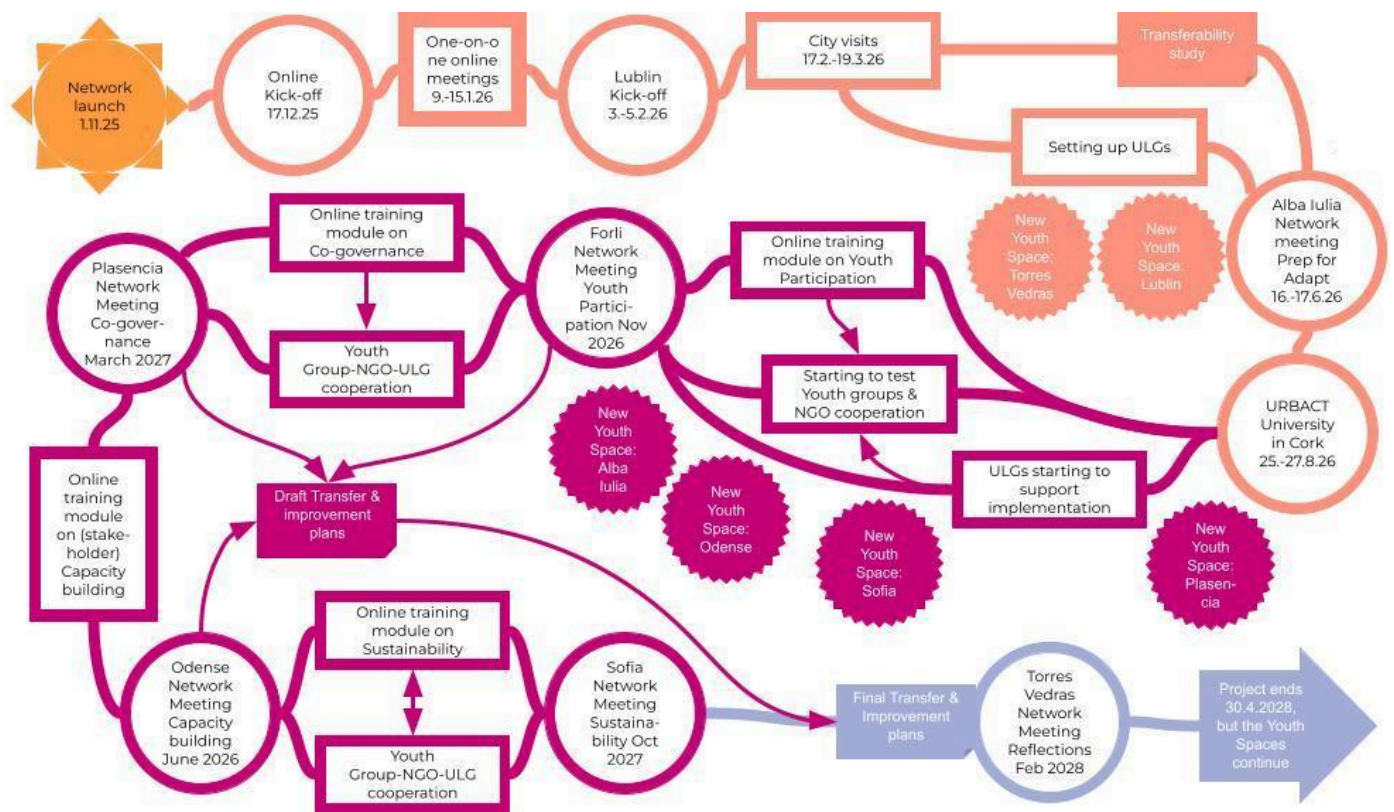
Ongoing through the project

The long term success of the Youth Spaces requires good communications and development based on continuous evaluation. Like some of the YOUth Space Link partners brought up, lack of proper communication channels can be a major hindrance for youth to find the Spaces and their actions. And as youth grow and the users of Spaces change over time the management and work of the Spaces needs to adapt. Good monitoring and evaluation helps to make good decisions. As the YOUth Space Link has separate Communications strategy, underneath will be only actions related to the monitoring and evaluation:

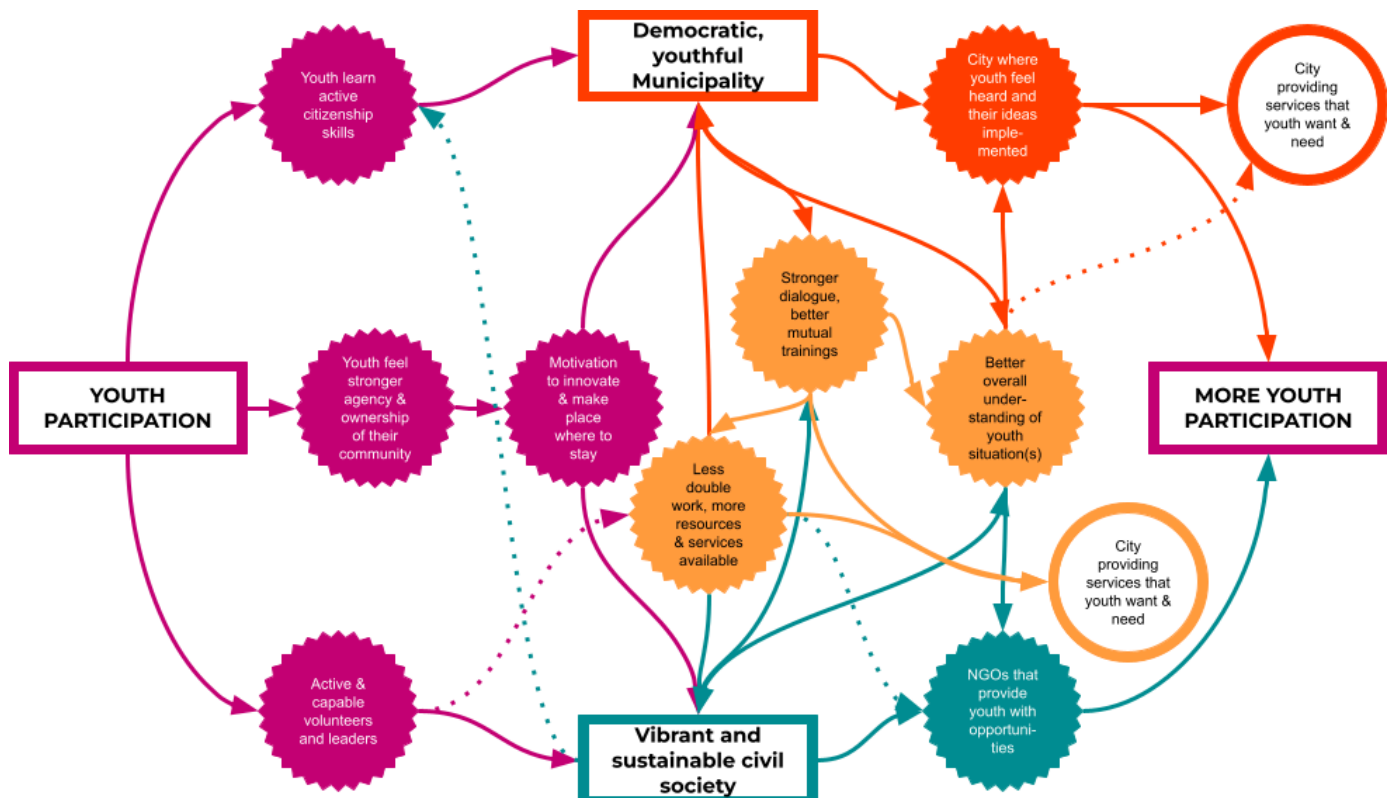
Actions:

- **Defining S.M.A.R.T. aims** for the local and transnational processes. On the local level the URBACT Local Groups (ULGs) will define the aims based on the partner cities priorities and challenges. On the transnational level the aims are based on the transfer process steps and will be settled in the Network meeting in Alba Iulia 16.-17.06.2026. The aims will double as monitoring & evaluation indicators through the process.
- **Training of the financial officers** to monitor and evaluate the progress according to the URBACT funding rules.
- **Monitoring the progress regularly in local and transnational levels:** URBACT Local Group and Network meetings will include as recurring agenda point monitoring & reflection of the progress. The partners are required to report the assessments of ULGs in the Network meetings. Mid-term evaluation will be done according to the URBACT secretariat guidelines.
- **Final evaluation** will be made at the end of the transfer process and discussed in the Network meeting in Torres Vedras in February 2028. It will reflect the progress made to the situation depicted in this Transferability study and to progress assessments made in each of the Network meetings.

Timeline of the cooperation



The logic of expected change



Conclusions

The URBACT IV YOUTH Spaces Transfer Network brings together 7 cities from different parts of Europe, of all sizes from 40 000 to 1,2 million inhabitants and with national GDPs from 18 000 to 68 000 €. The diversity of partners tells how important youth participation and cooperation of public services and civil society is seen around Europe. Writing this study half a year into the transfer process, it is already clear that the differences of the partners just strengthen the cooperation. The Lublin model will evolve with ideas and solutions from the partners.

The workers of the Social Participation Office of Lublin freely admit that the Youth Spaces have been developed through trial and error. This will for sure continue through the transfer process, by youth joining the spaces in partner cities, by the workers of those spaces and by local leaders. But through discussions & cooperation between the project partners, youth and local stakeholders the trials will create spaces for youth to develop their cities more vibrant and better for young citizens.

Ultimately, the transfer of the Youth Spaces model is not about replication, but about a shared journey of learning and co-creation. By connecting cities, experiences and perspectives, the network builds a common understanding of how to create meaningful spaces for young people – spaces that grow with them, respond to their needs and empower them to shape the future of their communities.