
DRAFT CONCEPT FOR **TRANSNATIONAL DEMOCRACY AMBASSADORS**



AS PART OF THE PROJECT "ONE STEP BEYOND", A CONCEPT HAS BEEN DEVELOPED FOR TRAINING YOUNG PEOPLE TO BECOME DEMOCRACY AMBASSADORS. THE TRAINING PROGRAMME AIMS TO ENABLE YOUNG PEOPLE TO CONDUCT PRACTICAL EXTRACURRICULAR TRAINING CAMPAIGNS.

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1. Introduction

Just as a virus knows no borders, democratic shortcomings, disregard for human rights, extremism, and discrimination are problems that affect and threaten an open European society as a whole.

To date, there have been practically no cross-border multilateral youth education programmes that address and actively prevent transregional manifestations of anti-democratic behaviour initiated by populist or extreme-right groups.

Training young people to serve as Transnational Democracy Ambassadors is one way of addressing this problem. After all, it is imperative that the youth education professionals and experts of dedicated civic organisations work together across borders and develop innovative concepts and formats that can be deployed both in local youth work and in transnational, cross-border activism.

2. Starting Position

The Youth Foundation (*Jugendstiftung*) coordinates the ERASMUS+ cooperation project “One Step Beyond”. Working together with project partners from neighbouring countries and Jugendagentur gGmbH, the Youth Foundation implemented the project to promote democracy and combat hate speech in the period from August 2020 to August 2022.

Because the project was terminated ahead of schedule in mid-2022, the present concept is not complete in all its parts. **Wherever content is missing or questions remain unanswered, this will be indicated and the still undecided further steps will be pointed out.**

GOALS OF THE OVERARCHING PROJECT „ONE STEP BEYOND”

- ▶ IO1: Concept for a transnational reporting centre for reporting hate speech on the Internet
- ▶ IO2: Concept for a curriculum for “International Democracy Ambassadors Against Hate Speech”
- ▶ IO4: Preparation of an online glossary on the subjects of democracy education, human rights education, and prevention of extremism

The present concept covers the curriculum developed for “International Democracy Ambassadors Against Hate Speech”.

PROJECT PARTNERS

- ▶ Associazione Villa Vigoni (Italy)
- ▶ Fédération Départementale des Maisons des Jeunes et de la Culture du Bas-Rhin (France)
- ▶ Gesellschaft zur Förderung der grenzüberschreitenden Zusammenarbeit (GFGZ, Switzerland)
- ▶ Infoklick.ch Kinder- und Jugendförderung (Switzerland)
- ▶ Jugendagentur gGmbH (Germany)
- ▶ Kaleido Ostbelgien (Belgium)

GOALS OF THE PRESENT CURRICULUM

1. Conception of transnational and local curricula to train young people to become “International Democracy Ambassadors Against Hate Speech” and youth workers to provide the training

- During the Short-Term Training Programme in Lottstetten in September 2021, the project group decided to rename the IO2 Project to “Transnational Democracy Ambassadors” to give more weight to the idea of transnational collaboration.
- Also in September 2021 in Lottstetten, the project group decided not to limit the multiplier training to youth workers, but to open it also to secondary schools and other institutions.

2. Four- to five-day modular training concepts to enable young people to conduct practical, non-formal education campaigns and serve as democracy campaigners against hate speech and fake news.

- The project group jointly developed the content modules for the training programme (see Chapter 9.1)

3. The training programme will be certified on the basis of agreed standards.

- At the EU level, the YouthPass will be used as an international instrument to certify non-formal and informal learning. The certification method to be applied in Switzerland is still undetermined.

Proven multiplier projects in the project countries of Germany, Switzerland, and Belgium served as the starting point for the joint work on the present concept. The concept of “Diversity Coaches” has been successfully implemented by the Youth Foundation Baden-Württemberg for years and the experience collected in these projects both there and in other project countries, such as the Youth Engagement Initiative (*JugendMitWirkung-Initiative*) was applied in the development of the present concept.

3. Situation analysis

Due to the shortened project duration, it was not possible to perform a needs assessment for the idea of young Democracy Ambassadors Against Hate Speech and in the partner countries.

As mentioned above, multiplier projects of a similar nature have been implemented in some project countries. These projects served as the basis for the development of the Transnational Democracy Ambassadors project. These projects are briefly described in the following.

Project Country	Project Provider
Belgium	Various multiplier projects in the area of youth work
Germany	Primarily: Diversity Coach (Youth Foundation Baden-Württemberg)
France	-
Italy	-
Switzerland	Primarily: Youth Engagement Initiative / Junior Experts (infoklick.ch)
Transnational	Transnational Democracy Ambassadors

A) DIVERSITY COACH

In the *Diversity Coach* mentor programme, which consists of two course units, young people study the topics of identity, diversity and group affiliations, human rights, prejudice, and discrimination, hate on the web and fake news, and then become active themselves. The training course focuses on personal experience, as well as practical exercises and initiatives. As Diversity Coaches, they teach the units they have learned and conduct exercises such as Human Rights City Tours with classes in their schools. When they complete their training, the Diversity Coaches receive a Qualipass Certificate.

Additional information at: <https://demokratiezentrum-bw.de/angebote/vielfaltcoach/>

B) YOUTH ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE

The Youth Engagement Initiative is a method and a process by which infoklick.ch, Kinder- und Jugendförderung Schweiz, and interested communities have promoted social engagement for more than 30 years. The Youth Engagement Initiative is focused on young people between 13 and 16 years of age who want to promote their ideas in their communities. The method involving an organisational committee of adults and youths who plan the Youth Engagement Day (*Mitwirkungstag*) has proved to be very successful. The youth engagement process is also an effective method for planning projects in associations,

schools, or urban districts.

Additional information at: <https://www.jugendmitwirkung.ch/home>

C) JUNIOR EXPERTS

The Junior Experts programme aims to enable young people to implement projects on their own. In regional groups, young people engage in activities with like-minded persons or acquire project management expertise in the course curriculum. The programme consists of a basic course and two advanced courses. The young participants can also find useful tools for their project work on the website.

Additional information at: <https://www.infoklick.ch/juniorexper/kurse/>

4. Foundations

The EU Youth Strategy and the European Youth Goals serve as the foundation for the Democracy Ambassadors concept. We also obtained relevant information from “Understanding Europe”, a peer-building network in Europe (<https://understanding-europe.org/ueber-uns/>).

EU YOUTH STRATEGY

https://europa.eu/youth/strategy_de

“Young people are keen to take control of their lives and engage with and support others. Yet many face uncertainties about their future, as a result of technological change, demographic trends, discrimination, social exclusion, fake news, and populism with yet unknown effects on jobs, skills, or the way our democracies work. More than ever, they need to be resilient and able to adapt to these challenges. They should acquire the necessary skills to contribute to prosperous, democratic, and cohesive societies in Europe and beyond.”

(from the Communication from the EU Commission: **Engaging, Connecting and Empowering Young People: a New EU Youth Strategy**)

3 core areas: **Engaging, Connecting, Empowering**

11 EUROPEAN YOUTH GOALS

https://youth.europa.eu/strategy/european-youth-goals_en

► **4. Information and constructive dialogue**

“Ensure young people have better access to reliable information, support their ability to evaluate information critically, and engage in participatory and constructive dialogue.”

► **8. Quality learning**

“Integrate and improve different forms of learning, equipping young people for the challenges of an ever-changing life in the 21st century.”

https://mitwirkung.dbjr.de/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/2018-11_dbjr_youth_goals_broschuere_aktualisiert_WEB.pdf

5. Organisation

The implementation in the individual programmes will depend on the organisations or institutions to which the programme will be attached. In a first step, the exact situation in each deployment region will be analysed in order to find the best access paths. The programme will then be tailored to the relevant target groups and implemented in each region.

Due to the shortened project duration, the implementation and therefore also the assumption of the lead function in each country have not yet been finally clarified by the project partners.

Project Country	Project Provider
Belgium	Project lead in Belgium still undetermined
Germany	Project lead in Germany still undetermined
France	Project lead in France still undetermined
Italy	Project lead in Italy still undetermined
Switzerland	Project lead in Switzerland still undetermined
Transnational	Overall lead still undetermined

In a next step, each implementing organisation or institution would have performed a thorough analysis to determine whether similar initiatives are already underway and identify the most promising form of collaboration with non-governmental and governmental partners.

The following ideas for potential partner organisations in each project country have already been gathered:

Project Country	Multipliers
Belgium	Institut für Demokratiepädagogik an der Autonomen Hochschule Eupen
Germany	Dachverband der Jugendgemeinderäte, Landesschülerbeirat
France	
Italy	
Switzerland	Amnesty CH / Verein für Menschenrechte / Campus für Demokratie

6. Target groups

The target groups are classified as primary, secondary, and tertiary target groups. This classification signifies the priorities for the target groups to be reached. The weighting of target groups is reflected in the allocation of hours defined in the hourly work budget.

The most resources are deployed to reach the primary target group, which is therefore broadly addressed by the youth promotion programmes.

Selective programmes and explicit initiatives and activities are aimed at the secondary target group; otherwise, contacts with this target group are maintained.

The tertiary target group is informed and actively involved when needed.

► Primary target group

13-18 years of age ("Professional Young People" from other projects)

► Secondary target group

Multipliers (schools, open youth work, communities)

► Tertiary target group

Government, public, interested organisations

7. Performance goals for the project “Transnational Democracy Ambassadors”

(for an assumed project phase of three years)

Young people, particularly those with few opportunities, are trained to become Transnational Democracy Ambassadors Against Hate Speech on the Internet in the areas of human rights and diversity in a modular, regional, and transregional non-formal training programme in each project country.

Indicators

- ▶ Development of an attractive project name for young people
- ▶ Preparation of training materials
- ▶ 1-2 basic training programmes in each project country
- ▶ Creation of a transnational network of young Democracy Ambassadors
- ▶ 1-2 workshops to teach skills that will enable participants to independently plan and implement projects to train young Democracy Ambassadors in each project country
- ▶ YouthPass as certification

The specialist staff of the partner organisations in the project countries are trained in transnational continuing education courses to train young people to become “Transnational Democracy Ambassadors” in workshop formats.

Indicators

- ▶ Preparation of training materials
- ▶ Transnational continuing education has been provided

Youth workers and other multipliers are empowered to conduct workshops on their own – especially for basic certification.

Indicators

- ▶ Preparation of training materials
- ▶ 1-2 multipliers in each project country have been trained

8. Review of goals

Upon completion of the present concept, the goals will be assessed by eliciting feedback on the concept from a transnational group of young people. This feedback will then be considered in the revision of the concept before pilot implementation.

After pilot implementation, the trained young people and multipliers will be evaluated and this evaluation will be considered in the revision of the concept and the further development of training materials.

After a subsequent project phase of three years, a comprehensive project evaluation will be conducted in all the partner countries. This evaluation will serve as the basis for the continuation of the project.

9. Implementation

The start of project implementation will be accompanied by communication measures. A Day of Action will be held in the project countries to mark the start of the project, followed by a communication campaign throughout the first year of the project. The specific design must be adapted to the national conditions of the sponsoring institution in each project country.

9.1 TRAINING TO BECOME DEMOCRACY AMBASSADORS

The participants will receive basic training, broaden their knowledge, and hone their skills. The three main components of the training programme are basic training, (transnational) exchanges, and the practical application of the knowledge obtained.

Contents of the training programme include the following:

- ▶ The young people are familiar with human rights and the political structures of their respective countries;
- ▶ They know what a liberal democracy is and the functions exercised by the media;
- ▶ They are capable of perceiving and recognising hate speech and discrimination, also when the forms are unclear;
- ▶ They have been sensitised to the importance of international, cross-border collaboration and their civic courage has been strengthened.

The courses will teach them project management and media skills, an understanding of positive discussion, and debating skills; and at the end of the training programme, they will have a clear understanding of their role as Democracy Ambassadors.

This will include the acquisition of project implementation skills (initiatives and campaigns) and the affiliation with a transnational network of Democracy Ambassadors.

1) Basic training (4-5 days)

- ▶ Knowledge of human rights
- ▶ Ability to recognise hate speech and discrimination
- ▶ Understanding of the role of Democracy Ambassador
- ▶ Knowledge of political structures (national)

- ▶ Knowing what a liberal democracy is
- ▶ Knowing the function of media (Fourth Estate)
- ▶ Media skills
- ▶ Culture of debate
- ▶ Civic courage

In addition, methodological knowledge such as acquisition and campaigning will be taught.

2) Network of Democracy Ambassadors (Transnational Meetings)

- ▶ Political structure (Europe)
- ▶ Awareness for the importance of international collaboration
- ▶ Discussions, meetings

3) Project planning / implementation skills (3 one-day modules)

- ▶ Project management methods

Methodology

It should be possible to train young people and multipliers both in-person and digitally.

In-person: Regions bordering Germany

Digital: Website / platform with additional online tool (playful learning, e.g. with Concept Board or the like)

Before pilot implementation, the partner organisations in the project countries will jointly prepare the training materials and teaching methods, compile the materials online, and produce target group-appropriate explanatory videos for the website, if possible.

The teaching style should be mainly informal, although the courses may also include formal elements:

- ▶ **Formal teaching:** See the example of Junior Experts
- ▶ **Informal teaching:** See the example of Diversity Coach + Youth Engagement

Certification

The young participants will receive a certificate upon completing the training programme. Each part of the training programme (1-3) will conclude with a separate certificate (Youth Pass: <https://www.youthpass.eu/en/>)

9.2 TRAINING OF MULTIPLIERS

Unfortunately, this point could not be developed before the end of the project.

10. Financing

Financial resources must be available for implementation. The financing in each country will depend on the project's organisational affiliation and the funds available to the respective institutions or organisations.

10.1 COURSES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The courses for young people should be free of cost to them. To make this possible, project funds, the support of local, regional, state, or federal governments, and/or a sponsoring agreement are conceivable.

10.2 TRAINING OF MULTIPLIERS

Multipliers should also be trained at no cost to them. In fact, the possibility of incentivising participation with a small contribution to cover expenses should be considered. This would make it possible to recruit more participants and express appreciation for their important work. On the other hand, this could create false incentives to undergo training as multipliers.



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