



# LOBBYING FOR YOUTH WORK

Outcomes and inspiration from the  
long-term training course 2021-2023



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**EUROPE  
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Supporting Youth Work  
at the Municipal Level

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**With the support of**



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# INTRODUCTION



Youth work is more than pedagogical work with young people. It also has a political dimension that requires concrete action. The everyday work of local youth officers and youth workers is deeply embedded in political contexts. Too often, youth work feels like the victim of political decisions. In addition, the impact of crisis situations - such as pandemics or global security threats - on young people and youth work is clearly visible, sometimes resulting in budget cuts, the closure of youth facilities, and reduced support structures.

At the same time, youth work across Europe holds a unique position in creating spaces for young people's voices and autonomy, and in building bridges that support them, with competence and confidence, in taking the next steps in their lives. Moreover, at the European level, a dynamic debate on youth work - culminating in the adoption of the [European Youth Work Agenda](#) - has created a positive political tailwind. This momentum can serve as a stimulus for strengthening youth work at national and local levels.

For these reasons, engaging in lobbying for youth work is essential. Equally important is the preparation and empowerment of local youth officers and youth workers to advocate for youth work and to successfully influence, co-shape, and position

local youth (work) policy. Lobbying is not a game played in the backrooms of power; it is a competence to be developed and an attitude to be adopted.

The European Advanced Training Course *Lobbying for Youth Work* (LYW) is a multi-component, long-term activity financed through the Erasmus+ Transnational Cooperation Activity (TCA). It is organised within the framework of the Strategic National Agency Cooperation [Europe Goes Local: Supporting Youth Work at the Municipal Level](#). The course addresses municipal youth officers and local youth workers who aim to strengthen their competences in lobbying for youth work in order to actively engage in and influence local youth (work) policy.



In 2019–2020, the German National Agency (NA) of the Erasmus+ Programme coordinated the first

edition of *Lobbying for Youth Work* in cooperation with the Latvian, Belgian-Flemish, Austrian, and Swiss National Agencies. The learning outcomes for participants were significant and had a tangible impact on their local contexts. Building on this successful experience, the second edition of the training course started in January 2022. This edition was coordinated by the Belgian-Flemish NA, in cooperation with the German, Latvian, Croatian, and French NAs, and ran until October 2023.

The aims and objectives of *Lobbying for Youth Work* are:

- to sharpen the profile and political position of youth work;
- to train and qualify municipal youth officers and local youth workers to analyse political frameworks and situations at the local level, enabling them to influence local youth policymaking through political lobbying;
- to encourage the establishment and consolidation of local networks for youth politics (youth policy);
- to create a sustainable training concept at the European level, in an attempt to re-politicize youth work and youth policy;
- and to explore European impulses for local youth work.

This publication summarises the experience, pedagogical approach and outcomes of the second edition (2022–2023) of the European Advanced Training Course *Lobbying for Youth Work*. It presents the curriculum and main thematic blocks of the modular training course, highlights the learning support and expertise required to achieve its aims, and provides insight into the participants' individual lobbying projects and their impact.

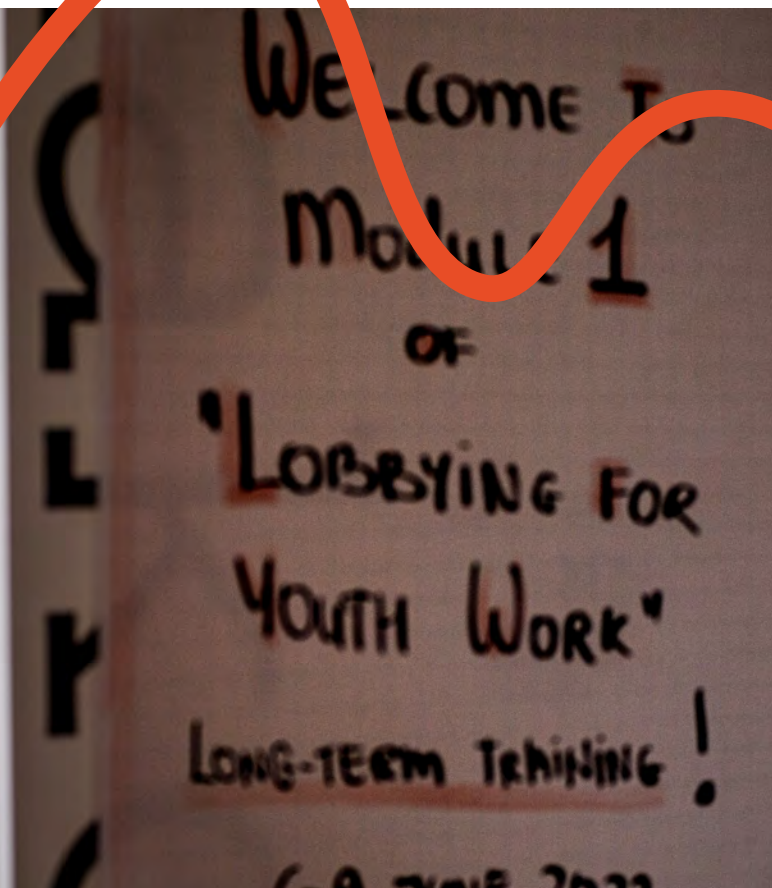
With this publication, the training course team underlines the importance of lobbying within the youth work field and encourages stakeholders to adopt an informed and systematic approach to lobbying for youth work. The publication serves both as a guideline for future training courses at national and European levels and as a source of inspiration for youth work practitioners engaged in lobbying processes.

*“Taking part in Lobbying for Youth Work gave me the chance to review our participative project of international youth work wir weit weg (“we far away”) from a meta-point of view, elaborate a better definition of target groups and stakeholders and create a plan for good lobby and fundraising work.”*

— *Babette Pohle, Germany*



# THE CURRICULUM



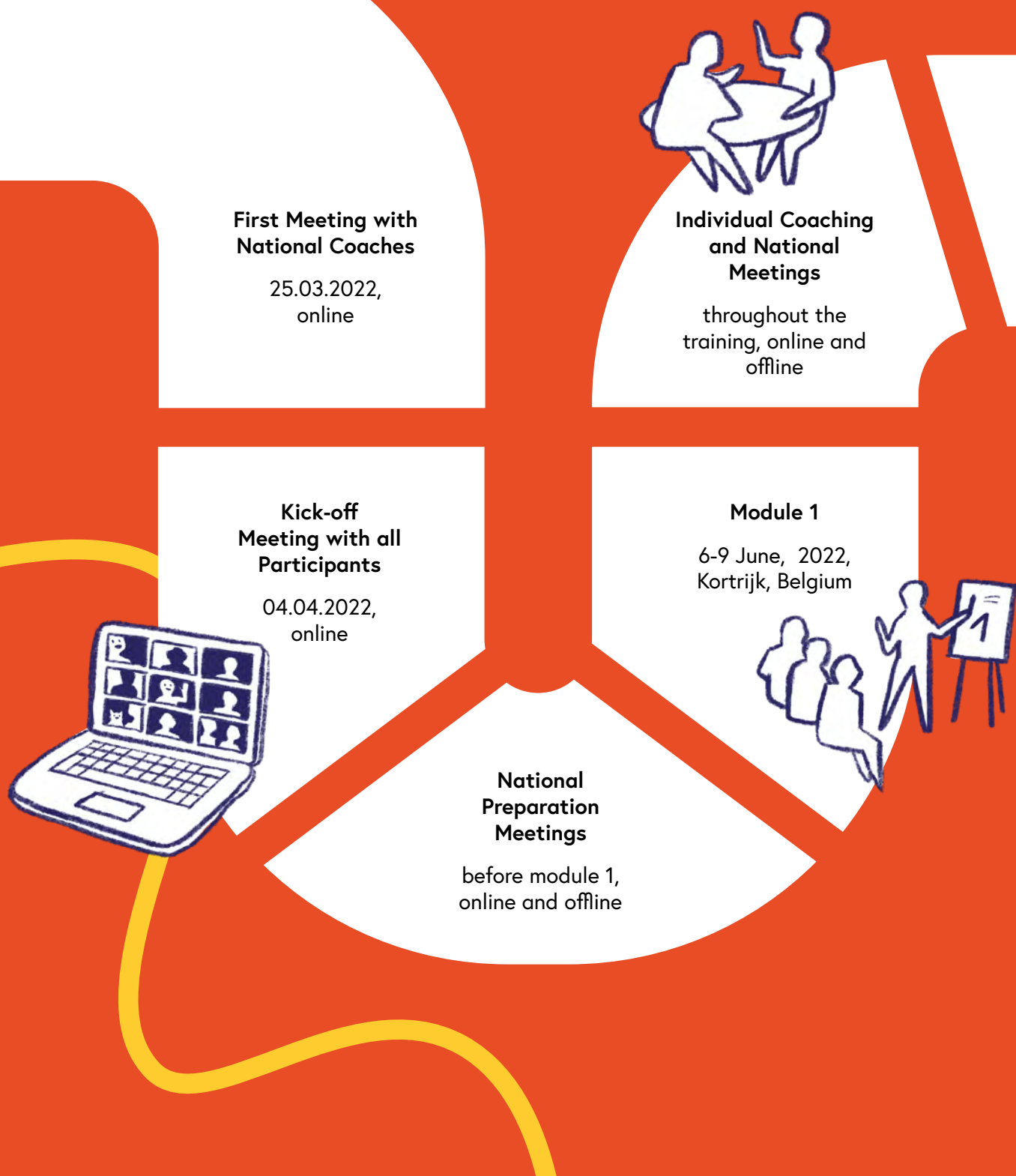
*Lobbying for Youth Work* offered a rich, modular learning experience with a duration of approximately 18 months. It blended the international dimension of youth work training with tailored support at the national level and consisted of different educational activities:

- three international residential training modules;
- two in-between webinars to deepen insights from the international modules;
- additional online meetings to support and sustain team dynamics at the international level;
- personal coaching and national group support throughout the entire process.

*"I truly believe in the importance of LFY, not for the youth work itself but for all children and youngsters wherever they grow up. All young people deserve strong lobbyists."*

*Pieter-Jan Teirlinck, Belgium*

# The Timeline of *Lobbying for Youth Work* (2022-2023)





### Closing Webinar

02.10.2023,  
online  
(and offline)

### Community Meet-up

15.06.2023,  
online

### Webinar 1

31.08.2022,  
online

### Module 2

12-15 September,  
Liepāja, Latvia



### Module 3

20-23 March 2023,  
Leipzig, Germany



### Webinar 2

24.11.2022,  
online

# The Programme Elements

The long-term nature of the training course, together with the richness and complexity of the planned learning support, required starting the process with the **first meeting with the national coaches**. This meeting aimed to support participants in getting to know each other and the project team, to provide clarity on the role of the national coaches, and to discuss the project timeline and plan the next steps.

*“It was one of my most amazing professional experiences! Not only the international context, feeling a part of a big youth worker family! The coaching process (along with the content of the trainers) inspired me and for sure also the coachees, the participants. It was a real interactive process which helped to develop each other’s professional development and the different projects in the municipalities. I learned at least as much as the participants.”*

- Rudi Neu, Coach for the German participants

The main objectives of the online **kick-off meeting** were to bring together all participants of the training course to get to know each other, to learn about the project and its timeline, to hold the first meetings in national teams, and to discuss the preparation process for Module 1. Prior to Module 1, all national teams held in-person and online **national preparation meetings**. These meetings focused on starting the team-building process, clarifying group work dynamics and the role of the coaches, and discussing motivation and learning aims for the entire training course.

*“Lobbying for youth work” was a great opportunity for me to pop my comfort bubble and to gain support and much needed knowledge of lobbying processes. These kind of learning processes, mixed with real work in our own municipalities, are a great way of establishing new ways of work and opportunities for youngsters that will last in the long term.”*

- Amanda Krišjane, Latvia

All participants and the project team met in person for the first time during **Module 1**, which took place from **6 to 9 June 2022 in Kortrijk, Belgium**. The main objectives of the module were to get to know each other and the different youth work realities across Europe, to develop a

shared understanding of the political aspects of youth work and the rationale of the training course, to become acquainted with the essentials of lobbying, and to start working on individual lobbying projects. For more details, see the agenda below:

| DAY 1<br>6 June                                                                                                             | DAY 2<br>7 June                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | DAY 3<br>8 June                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | DAY 4<br>9 June                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>The political aspects of youth work and the rationale/basic idea of this training</p> <p>Input: Prof. Werner Lindner</p> | <p>Sharing local realities</p> <p>The European Youth Work (Policy) Landscape</p> <p>Input: Claudius Siebel</p> <p>Creating a common understanding of youth work: local, regional, national, European</p> <p>SWOT Analysis</p> <p>SWOT Analysis Gallery Walk - posters for peer- and expert feedback</p> | <p>Lobbying Essentials</p> <p>Input: Liesbet De Winter</p> <p>Lobbying aims</p> <p>Defining aims for their concrete lobbying projects at local level and present their first ideas</p> <p>Local Teams work on their SWOT Analysis &amp; Lobbying Aims</p> <p>Exchange on what support they need from peers, national coaches, experts</p> <p>Personal Motto Goals</p> | <p>Youth participation in lobbying for youth work</p> <p>Panel Discussion</p> <p>Next Steps:</p> <p>Open Questions, Milestones, Collaboration, in-between-support</p> <p>Evaluation of the training</p> |

Throughout the training course, and especially from the first module onwards, the national coaches remained in regular contact with their national teams. They provided tailored support through **individual coaching and national meetings**, both online and offline.

The **first webinar** within the framework of the training course focused

on *lobbying aims*. Its purpose was to renew focus and motivation for the training course and the individual lobbying projects, to support participants in formulating strong lobbying aims, and to address questions or concerns. The webinar also offered an opportunity to meet and be inspired by examples from former participants of *Lobbying for Youth Work* (2019–2020 edition).

**Module 2** of the training course took place from **12 to 15 September in Liepāja, Latvia**. The main aim of the module was to strengthen participants' practical capacities in strategic planning, networking and network

analysis, and political communication. It also served as an important moment to track progress and provide peer support for the implementation of individual lobbying projects. For more details, see the agenda below:

## DAY 0 11 September

Arrivals to Riga  
Leave for Liepāja  
Group building on the bus

## DAY 1 12 September

**Welcome back and reconnect**  
Check in with each other

**Where are we now:**  
Short progress reports (by teams)

Reflection and feedback on **policy field analysis and sharing of experiences**

**Getting to a Strategic Plan**  
Input and practice  
By Prof. Werner Lindner

## DAY 2 13 September

**Networking and Network Analysis**  
Input and Q&A  
By Prof. Herbert Schubert, hybrid format

**Networking and Network Analysis**  
Individual work with the support of coaches  
Presentation and feedback

**Getting to a Strategic Plan**  
Worksession with coaching

## DAY 3 14 September

**Communication with Politicians and Stakeholders**  
Input and Q&A  
By Vladislava Marāne

**Communication with Politicians and Stakeholders**

**Study visit**  
Getting acquainted with the local context

**Next steps**  
Individual Plan of Action  
Meeting of National Teams

**Evaluation of the training**

## DAY 4 15 September

Departure to Riga

*"Participating in the Lobbying for Youth Work Process was a great experience of an exchange of Youth Workers with Passion from different Countries."*

- Conny Meyne, Germany

Module 3, the final residential module of the training course, was held from **20 to 23 March 2023 in Leipzig, Germany**. It was designed around the specific learning needs and requests of the participants, based on the current state of their lobbying projects, with a particular focus on the political context of youth work and political communication.

As with the previous two modules, it drew on the richness of the local youth work landscape through study visits and joint sessions with local youth workers. The module also marked an important reflection moment, as participants began planning the approaching end of their lobbying projects. For more details, see the agenda below.

## DAY 0 20 March

Arrivals to Leipzig

Welcome DINNER  
Integration activities

## DAY 1 21 March

### Welcome back and reconnect:

Check in with each other

### Where are we now:

Short progress reports

### Political context of Youth Work in my country

Individual and group work

Input from Prof. Lindner

### Social Work Day in Großpösna:

Presentation of our lobbying projects to local youth workers

### Panel on Lobbying for Youth Work in Rural Areas

Study visit to local social/youth centre

## DAY 2 22 March

### Political communication

Simulation activity

### Learning outcomes and learning needs

Input on Youthpass and Workvivo

### Study visit

Local Youthwork reality: Open Youth Centre and International youth work

## DAY 3 23 March

### Next steps

LYW final steps presentation

Work on a Realistic Plans of Action

Meeting of National Teams

### Learning reflection and Youthpass

Short input and work in learning pairs

### Evaluation of the training

To maintain focus and motivation for the training course and the lobbying projects during the final months, an online **community meet-up** was organised. This brought together all participants to share updates, revive the learning couples, and exchange information about the next steps of the project, including the documen-

tation process, which required active participant involvement.

The final step of the training course was the **closing webinar**, where participants and the project team came together to reconnect, inspire each other through project achievements and personal takeaways, and evaluate the overall training course.

*“After being active as a volunteer for long term youth exchange since a decade, I have started with local political commitment recently. The lobbying for youth work programme was a great opportunity to learn how I can combine these two passions with the goal to increase equal opportunities for all young people to go abroad!”*

- Elise Radtke, Germany

| PROGRAMME LYW Module 1 |                                |                                        |                                |                            |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
|                        | DAY 1 6/6                      | DAY 2 7/6                              | DAY 3 8/6                      | DAY 4 9/6                  |
| 11 <sup>00</sup>       | ARRIVALS                       | SHARING                                | LOBBYING ESSENTIALS            | Youth Participation in LYW |
| 1 <sup>00</sup>        |                                |                                        |                                |                            |
| 13 <sup>00</sup>       |                                | LOCAL REALITIES                        | LOBBYING AIMS                  | WHAT'S NEXT?               |
| 3 <sup>00</sup>        | Lunch @ DakCafé                | Lunch @ Vork                           | Lunch @ Vork                   | Lunch @ DakCafé            |
| 6 <sup>00</sup>        | Introduction to the Training   | EUROPEAN Youth work (policy)           | Work on SWOT & LOBBYING Aims   | DEPARTURES                 |
| 6 <sup>00</sup>        |                                |                                        | +                              |                            |
| 18 <sup>00</sup>       | GETTING TO KNOW Why am I here? | SWOT ANALYSIS                          | (cont. work)<br>PERSONAL MOTTO |                            |
| 19 <sup>00</sup>       | Dinner @ St. Medard            | VISIT to DE STRATE : Dinner by ONESELF | Dinner @ TRANSIT               |                            |





# The Team

The exceptionally positive outcomes of this project are the result of the contribution of Professor Werner Lindner, the content expert and initiator of the project from Germany. He has been dedicated to piloting similar training projects in Germany and acted as the project expert during both international editions of the *Lobbying for Youth Work* training course in 2019–2020 and in 2022–2023.

The educational content of the residential modules and webinars was supported by highly recognised experts in the field of lobbying from Belgium, Latvia, and Germany. Their contributions were drawn both from their in-depth knowledge of the youth work field and from other areas relevant to lobbying and policymaking. The educational journey of the participants was accompanied by national coaches from each of the four countries involved (except in case of the French team, which had a fragmented participation in the process). They supported the participants' learning processes throughout the entire cycle and contributed to the facilitation of the international modules.

*“Even though the training pushed me to my limits in using my working time, I never would have missed this opportunity. I am very grateful for this very enriching time and the new network!”*  
- Marlies Denter, Germany

Representatives of the five partner National Agencies steered the project process, contributing both to the administrative coordination and to the content development of the overall process.

The training course facilitator Anna Yegyohan was responsible for the overall flow of the course, the learning process during the international modules and webinars, and contributed to the communication between all actors involved.

*“It was a bumpy ride and not everything went as I had planned. I had to revise my goals more than once. But every step is a step towards your goal. Be proud of small successes!”*  
- Saïdia Staes, Belgium

## Main expert & facilitator



**Werner Lindner**  
- lobbying expert



**Anna Yegyohan**  
- main facilitator

## Coaches



**Geert Boutsen**  
- lecturer & researcher  
UCLL PBa social work  
- coach Belgian  
participants



**Hrvoje Kovač**  
- mentor Europe  
goes local  
- coach Croatian  
participants



**Inese Minsi**  
- trainer association  
Momadways  
- coach Latvian  
participants



**Rudi Neu**  
- Neu supervision  
- coach German  
participants

## Representatives of National Agencies



**Claudius Siebel**  
- Jugend für Europa



**Anne Roland**  
- Agence Erasmus+ France  
Jeunesse & Sport



**Inez Adriaensen**  
- JINT



**Nils Mosejonoks**  
- Latvian Agency for International  
Programmes for Youth



**Aleksandra Svast**  
- Agencija Za Mobilnost i  
Programe EU

# 5 Steps in a Lobbying Process: the Methodological Approach

The *Lobbying for Youth Work* training course was built up in five steps. These are the essential steps needed to advocate for the big ask of every participant. The process starts with the big ask and continues by investing in all consecutive steps. All these building blocks are essential to become successful in lobbying, and

they all have to be part of the process in order to achieve the intended goals. It is important to have a plan and try to adapt it to every accidental issue that occurs along the way. Being flexible and steady at the same time defines the methodology of every successful lobbying project.



## 1. The Big Ask



Every effective lobbying effort begins with a *big ask* - a central issue that is encountered, a challenge that is recognised, or an opportunity that is identified. This *big ask* is always linked to the youth work policy that is being advocated for, shaping both direction and purpose.

Finding the right *big ask* takes time. It requires careful reflection, clear boundaries, and a thoughtful formulation. In the early stages, the big ask may feel vague or incomplete, and this is completely normal. By taking the time to refine and sharpen it, the foundation is laid for meaningful advocacy and stronger impact.

*“Small steps matter, even if you start from a big ask”*

Mieke Hulin, Belgium

## 2. Policy Field Analysis



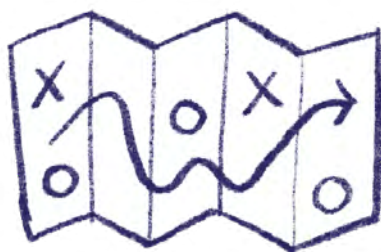
A policy field analysis is a structured way of understanding the broader landscape in which a youth work initiative operates. It helps to explore the policies, decisions, tendencies and expectations that shape the work today and will influence it tomorrow. By mapping this policy environment, insight is gained into the forces, priorities and discussions that are at play, allowing lobbying efforts to be anchored in well-founded knowledge rather than assumptions.

This analysis draws on a wide range of sources, each offering a different perspective on the field. Statistical data, policy documents, vision texts and scientific research provide factual and evidence-based foundations. At the same time, opinion pieces, experiences from the field, and good practices offer valuable insights into how policies are interpreted and experienced in real life. Combining these materials ensures that both the formal and informal dynamics of the policy context are captured.

By bringing these insights together, a policy field analysis helps to identify trends, opportunities and challenges within the selected domain. It shows where policy is heading, where gaps exist and where youth work can offer valuable solutions. It becomes clear who shapes the field, which issues are gaining traction and which narratives dominate public and political debate. This understanding is essential for developing strong, relevant and impactful lobbying messages.

Ultimately, a policy field analysis provides the strategic foundation to position one's organisation with confidence. It ensures that advocacy is grounded in knowledge, aligned with current developments, and responsive to the needs and expectations of the sector. With this clarity, conversations with policymakers can be entered fully informed, better prepared and ready to influence the future of youth work in a meaningful way.

### **3. Gameplan**



A strategic plan is a clear and structured roadmap that guides the lobbying process from an initial idea to

concrete, achievable change. It starts by defining the *big ask*: the positive situation that is sought at the local level and the specific change that is intended to be influenced. This *big ask* is then translated into well-defined goals - future states that can be realised through deliberate action. By working with focused, coherent goals and tools such as SWOT analysis and SMART criteria, a strategic plan ensures that ambitions are not only inspiring but also realistic, measurable and actionable.

From there, the strategic plan evolves into a step-by-step game plan. Through thorough analysis and reflection, the big ask is transformed into sharp objectives and clear milestones. These milestones mark crucial decision moments: precise points in time that indicate progress and signal the transition from one project phase to the next. By arranging milestones chronologically, a logical sequence of project phases emerges - each with its own focus, activities, expected results and approximate duration. This structure makes the process visible, manageable and easy to communicate.

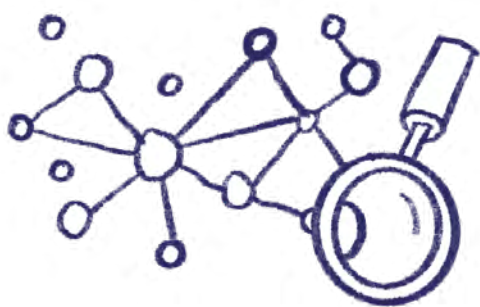
Each phase of the strategic plan is further elaborated with the details needed to move forward with confidence. This includes identifying which results must be developed, what actions need to be taken, and what resources or costs may be involved. Optional deliverables can also be

defined to make outcomes more tangible. In parallel, every milestone is described in detail: what must be completed by which moment, how this will be documented, and by which date the milestone should be achieved. This combination of overview and precision ensures clarity and keeps the lobbying project aligned with its goals.

Ultimately, a strategic plan brings direction, structure and strategy together. It connects analysis, goals, network insights and communication choices into one coherent whole, ensuring that each step contributes to the desired change. With a strong strategic plan, lobbying becomes not a series of separate actions but a purposeful path - guided by strategy, supported by planning and driven by clear milestones towards real impact in youth work.

#### **4. Network Analysis**

---



Achieving a lobbying goal begins with identifying the people who can help make it happen. This process, known as network analysis, allows for

the mapping of individuals and groups that need to be engaged. The key question is: *who are the most important players to approach?* Two factors guide this search - influence and involvement. Influence indicates who holds the power to make decisions, such as a mayor, youth policy alderman or general manager. Involvement reflects how much interest, time or personal stake someone has in the issue that is lobbied for. While these two aspects often overlap, they are not the same; someone may care little about the goal yet have a decisive voice in its outcome.

In order to gain clarity, it is helpful to visualise the network. By mapping out who has influence and who is involved, patterns quickly emerge. This visual overview helps identify supporters, allies, potential risks and people whose position needs to be better understood. Once the diagram is complete, it is important to step back and reflect: who matters most at this moment, who should be prioritised in the lobbying strategy, and how they should be approached - directly or indirectly.

Understanding the key players goes beyond knowing their role or position. People operate based on personal motivations, backgrounds and decision-making styles. Some approach issues analytically, others relationally. Exploring what drives them, how they build their careers, and which topics

they care deeply about provides crucial insights. It is also equally important to consider how the key players perceive the lobbying goal: whether it supports their ambitions or represents a risk, and which elements of the proposal may appeal to them or raise concerns.

With these insights, a strategic and well-targeted approach can be developed. This includes reflecting on intended outcomes, acceptable risks and remaining knowledge gaps. Identifying who is easily reachable, who values the opinions of others, and which allies can support the cause is essential. Lobbying is rarely a solo effort - leveraging the right relationships can make a decisive difference. By emphasising the elements that matter most to each key player, the chances of successfully advancing the lobbying goal increase significantly.

## 5. Political Communication



Effective communication is essential when seeking support for a lobbying project. Influencing the opinions and behaviour of key stakeholders is

not simple, but it becomes far more achievable when communication is intentional and focused. At the heart of strategic communication lies one golden question: *which message should be delivered to which target group, and in which way?* By tailoring both the message and the method to the audience, the likelihood of genuine engagement increases.

The first step is to clearly define the target group. The network analysis identifies those with the greatest influence or involvement in the issue - these individuals form the primary audience that must be reached. While communication may be extended to a broader group for visibility or general support, core efforts should focus on those whose buy-in is essential. Understanding their interests, concerns and motivations helps ensure that the message truly resonate.

*“What’s important when talking to politicians: don’t just come up with a problem, but give them possible solutions and potential funding programs” and respond to the interests or personality of the politician sitting in front of you.*

- Mieke Hulin, Belgium

Next, attention should be given to how the message is communicated. The choice of communication channel strongly affects how a message

is received. Some situations require personal interaction, such as a face-to-face conversation, particularly when issues are complex or emotionally charged. Other messages may be more suitable for email, newsletters or social media. The choice of the appropriate channel depends not only on the preferences of the audience but also on the nature - the complexity and the weight - of the message.

Finally, the content of the message itself is crucial. Different recipients have different information needs: some want detailed explanations, others prefer concise summaries, and

many fall somewhere in between. It is important to avoid overloading people with information, and instead focus on simplicity, clarity and relevance without compromising on substance. Strong arguments should come first, unnecessary details should be removed, and the message should conclude with a clear and memorable point. Knowing when to appeal to emotion and when to rely on logic is equally important, as most decisions are influenced by emotion, even when they appear rational. By striking the right balance, communication can simultaneously inform, engage and persuade.





# THE LOBBYING PROJECTS



# The Participants

The 2022–2023 edition of *Lobbying for Youth Work* targeted approximately 20 participants from Belgium (Flanders), Croatia, Germany, Latvia, and France, with four to five participants from each country. The majority of participants were municipal youth officers and/or local youth workers with a clear long-term ambition to influence and change their local contexts, as well as a solid understanding

of the structures, values, and current challenges of local youth work. The selected participants committed to full participation in all components of the project, including online meet-ups, residential training modules, webinars, coaching in national groups, and individual work. They demonstrated strong dedication to their personal and professional development in both international and national contexts.



# The Big Asks

A unique feature of *Lobbying for Youth Work* was not only its long-term character and in-depth thematic focus, but also the strong practical applicability of the learning process. The training was built around individual action plans, referred to as *big asks*, which formed the core of each participant's lobbying project.

The 17 participants of the training course, representing 16 different communities as municipal youth officers or local youth workers, focused their efforts on the following lobbying aims. These aims can be grouped into the thematic sub-categories outlined below.



## Category 1: Youth Empowerment and Inclusion

Strengthen youth capacity and empower young people to contribute to society, ensuring the inclusion of young people in youth councils.



Keep the youth centre exclusively for youth purposes by building a network of stakeholders and organisations, identifying teenagers' needs and interests, and increasing the engagement of the local youth council.

Improve relationships between young people and the local police force by working on mutual perceptions and strengthening cooperation between local youth, youth councils, and the police.

## Category 2: Collaboration and Information

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Revive cooperation within the network of municipal youth offices after the COVID-19 pandemic by identifying common ground in youth policy and placing young people at the centre of local youth network ambitions.

Maintain enthusiasm within municipalities that have obtained the child- and youth-friendly city label.

Establish a sustainable system of collaboration, supported by local youth policy and municipal authorities, linking school parliaments with youth councils and municipal deputies.

Increase the representation of youth work-related content in local media by creating a functional model that can be replicated at national and international levels.

## Category 3: International Youth Work and Exchanges

---

Form a regional network for international youth work and youth exchanges.

Set up a system that guarantees the annual participation of at least 12 young people in training courses promoting European values.

Establish an international youth work system at community level in a rural area by creating opportunities for young people to go abroad, preventing budget cuts to the youth sector, and bringing together local youth field stakeholders to advocate for local and international youth work.



Ensure that more young people participate in individual long-term exchanges abroad by building a network of non-profit organisations and regional multipliers, disseminating information about the achievements of international youth work, and improving access to information on financial support.

Create a support system for young people from rural areas in their educational and life journeys abroad after the ninth and twelfth grades by connecting young people, youth field actors, municipalities, NGOs, entrepreneurs, and other stakeholders, while encouraging young people to return to their home municipalities.

#### Category 4: Strategic Support to Quality Youth Work

Secure additional human resources within youth services to increase quality and balance the ambitions of municipal youth work policy.

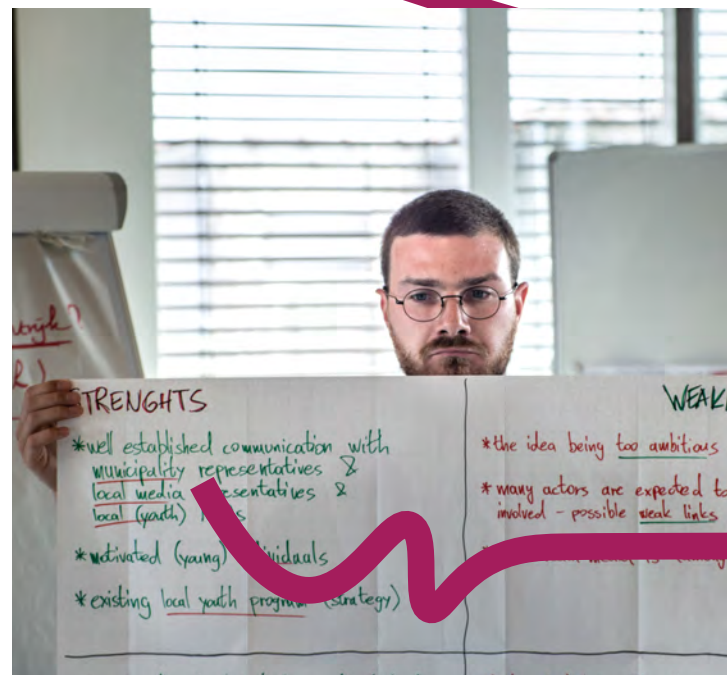


Embed municipal youth programmes within policy documents, motivate young people to act as ambassadors across city departments, and achieve official status for youth working groups with strengthened capacity and active youth participation.

Adopt an action plan for youth work at municipal level as a strategic document, while building stakeholder

capacity, analysing policy documents, and establishing a dedicated working group.

Improve the quality of young people's lives at municipal level by creating a cross-sectoral, non-formal team of youth field employees and youth workers.







# CONCLUSIONS



The main conclusions of this training course are drawn from the learning outcomes of the participants based on the five principles of *Lobbying for youth work* by Professor Werner Lindner:

- COMPLEXITY
- EXPERIMENT
- CONFIDENTIALITY
- DISCIPLINE
- LONG TERM AMBITION



## **First Principle - COMPLEXITY**

*'The stronger the youth worker, the stronger youth policy'*

A *big ask* is a complex problem and needs to be approached as such. Understanding this complexity is a necessary condition for moving towards meaningful change. Taking time for a policy field analysis provides essential knowledge about the context, clarifies how the situation is structured, and helps identify opportunities for action, planning and achievable results.

Another layer of complexity is conditioned by the network of people involved. Every situation includes

multiple actors, each with their own ideas, interests, ambitions and views on possible solutions. Mapping this network makes it possible to understand relationships, influence and responsibilities. It helps to decide who to address, when and how. Strengthening and empowering the network, finding allies and "socialising the problem" - building awareness about it - are effective ways to respond to complex challenges and to build sustainable relationships.

A clear and structured plan is essential. This plan is not linear or simple, but works through defined steps,

well-chosen sub-goals and key milestones, while keeping a clearly defined final goal in focus. Complexity cannot be reduced by oversimplification - it requires a complex strategy combined with a realistic and doable plan. This demands relevant knowledge, skills and professional confidence.

Communication must be adapted to complexity. Messages are not generic but tailored to specific people and situations. Choosing the right moment and understanding the other person's reference frame, feelings, personal context, ambitions, wishes, and qualities are crucial. Different people require different tools to be convinced. Changing perspective, thinking like the opponent, and asking "what's in it for me?" from the other side's point of view would be strengthening long-term cooperation.

Effective lobbying in complex contexts is based on empathy, reciprocity, and shared interests. Taking time to truly know people, role-playing situations mentally, and identifying areas of agreement help to create trust. Give and take - rather than confrontation - forms the basis for sustainable cooperation and meaningful progress.

## Second Principle - EXPERIMENT

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*'Try again, fail again, fail better'*

Lobbying does not follow one pre-defined way. It requires flexibility in attitude and action. Goals, strategies and approaches must remain adaptable and the big ask must be continuously questioned and reassessed. Other perspectives are introduced, networks are expanded, and strategies remain in constant development rather than fixed in one rigid plan.

Experimentation is based on learning by doing. Concrete actions are planned and implemented, experiences are reflected on and learning is growing through both successes and failures. Reflection functions as a key competence: it helps to narrow goals, create a more focused plan, improve communication and strengthen lobbying actions over time. Strategy develops through practice, evaluation and adjustment.

At the same time, experimentation does not mean acting without structure. Quality preparation remains essential. Actions are preceded by thinking ahead, understanding what could help others go along with the request and preparing interventions in a meaningful way. Flexibility and experimentation are therefore combined with preparation, reflection and

intentional action, rather than trial and error without direction.

### Third Principle - CONFIDENTIALITY

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*'Lobbying is putting your cards on the table.'*

*'Lobbying is like a role-playing game in your head.'*

Lobbying requires careful planning and discretion. Plans are first developed privately and shared only with a small, trusted group. Actions are deliberate and methodical, with the big ask as the central focus. Initial efforts rely on a few committed supporters who can act as critical friends - providing feedback and helping build confidence. Small successes are important to strengthen conviction and to guide the way forward. And so are the negative - they are informative and help to refine strategies and avoid unproductive paths.

Credibility is everything in lobbying! Expertise, a clear message and professional conduct establish trust and reliability. Personal energy, passion and belief in the cause are persuasive, but must be balanced with critical reflection and awareness of how others perceive you. Strategic awareness, role-playing scenarios mentally and being attentive to current events help identify opportunities and adjust approaches.

Networking is crucial. Lobbying is never done alone. Patience and moderation, alongside proactive engagement, support long-term progress. First followers are the most important ones - prioritise the relations you trust and believe in. And above all trust yourself, radiate with the idea and let yourself shine - confident leadership encourages your target group and attracts new supporters.

Communication is selective but purposeful. Results - including interim milestones and - are shared strategically with the network. Visibility is given generously to supporters, celebrating contributions and reinforcing collective ownership of progress. Recognizing and respecting the role of others strengthens relationships and amplifies the impact of lobbying efforts.

Confidentiality, careful preparation, professional credibility and strategic communication together create a strong foundation for effective lobbying while maintaining trust and sustainable relationships.

*"Make sure you're prepared when you go out for an interview. If you come back from the meeting frustrated because you didn't achieve your goal, you just weren't well prepared."*

*- Mieke Hulin, Belgium*

## Fourth Principle - DISCIPLINE

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*'Lobbying is taking penguin steps'*

Lobbying is an ongoing effort! It requires discipline and a systematic approach formed round the logical chain of analysis - planning - action - revision. It starts with careful preparation, including thorough analysis and setting clear goals. Goals should be ambitious yet achievable, translated into a well throughout gameplan. The first steps are setting a tone for the entire lobbying process and need to be solid both in preparation and in execution. At the same time, the process must remain flexible to allow constant adjustment as circumstances evolve.

Focused effort is essential. The big ask must stay relevant, consistently linked to current processes, events and challenges. Opportunities are actively sought and integrated into the plan, creating windows for progress. Small, deliberate steps are effective when progress is gradual and every action is supported by analysis and hard data.

Critical reflection is a key part of discipline. Continuous evaluation of one's own actions and feedback from others allows for adjustments and improvements over time. By combining preparation, focus, responsiveness, and reflection, lobbying becomes a structured, goal-oriented process capable of producing sustainable results.

## Fifth Principle - LONG-TERM AMBITION

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*'Timing is everything'*

*'Lobbying isn't a dirty job, it's hard work.'*

Achieving lobbying goals requires a long-term perspective. Success is rarely immediate and depends on sustained effort over time. Belief in the goal, combined with focus, attention and continuous work, is essential for progress.

Choose your battles! Strategic judgment is important in deciding where to invest time and effort. It is necessary to speak up when it advances the cause, but also to recognize when not to engage, conserving energy for meaningful opportunities. Dealing consciously with non-believers prevents distractions and preserves focus on the *big ask*.

Cherish small successes - they maintain motivation, build confidence, and help keep the big ask visible and relevant in ongoing discussions. Persistence and adherence to the plan ensure that the ultimate goal remains the guiding focus, gradually moving closer to achievement.

Long-term ambition requires patience, consistent effort and careful attention to both opportunities and challenges, keeping the *big ask* at the center of all actions.



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