

# IMPACT REPORT

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP & SDGS



**empact  
preneuriat**

**geyc**  
A way for a better you!

**SIRI**

**RESOPA**

**social  
hackers  
academy**



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

**Impact report on the local level impact of various forms of youth work projects and youth led projects and entrepreneurship (as related to environmental protection & SDGs) in EU**

## Contents

Description of paper .....	4
Executive summary .....	5
1. Theoretical background .....	8
The European Union .....	10
The perspective from Romania .....	12
The perspective from France .....	14
The perspective from Greece .....	15
The perspective from Estonia .....	16
2. Method used .....	18
2.1. The main characteristics of qualitative research .....	18
2.2. Interview .....	19
2.2.1. Semi-structured interview .....	20
2.3. Content analysis .....	21
3. Results .....	23
Demographic results .....	23
Results for Greek data .....	23
1. What impact do youth work projects have in the analysed societies? .....	23
2. Do young entrepreneurs need sustainable project management education? .....	25
3. How can youth work and entrepreneurship contribute to the local impact in connection with the SDGs? .....	26
Results for Romanian data .....	28
1. What impact do youth work projects have in the analysed societies? .....	28
2. Do young entrepreneurs need sustainable project management education? .....	29
3. How can youth work and entrepreneurship contribute to the local impact in connection with the SDGs? .....	30
Results from French data .....	32
1. What impact do youth work projects have in the analysed societies? .....	32
2. Do young entrepreneurs need sustainable project management education? .....	34

3.How can youth work and entrepreneurship contribute to the local impact in connection with the SDGs? .....	35
Results from Estonia .....	36
1.What impact do youth work projects have in the analysed societies? .....	36
2.Do young entrepreneurs need sustainable project management education?.....	38
3.How can youth work and entrepreneurship contribute to the local impact in connection with the SDGs? .....	40
Interview results as a whole .....	42
1.The impact of the youth work projects in the analysed societies .....	42
2. The need for young entrepreneurs to take part in sustainable project management education..	45
3. Contributions of youth work and entrepreneurship to local impact on the SDGs .....	47
4. Recommendations for the Digital Guide .....	51
Romania and Greece.....	51
a. Sustainable project management (how to design, plan, implement) in youth work. Examples of good practices and Recommendations.....	52
France.....	52
Estonia.....	52
Romania .....	53
Greece.....	53
b. SDGs reinforcement at European local levels. Examples of good practices and Recommendations. ....	54
France.....	54
Estonia.....	54
Romania .....	55
Greece .....	55
Conclusions .....	57
References .....	59

## Description of paper

*Disclaimer: The European Commission support of the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflect the view only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.*

The aim of this paper is a research process which will investigate the impact of various youth-led projects in our countries to assess their impact on the overall attainment of SDGs.

The need for this output evolves from the fact that despite our observations that youth work and young people, in general, have huge potential to contribute positively to the attainment of SDGs and to community development, we need to know what is actually being done at various European local levels (starting from the 4 partner countries) in order to assess their contribution to our aims and objectives as well as base on them to propose, advice and or promote the existing practices. The impact report comes as a much-needed output that will help bring to light existing local practices at various socio-spatial levels but also permit us to quantify and measure the impact of the projects that will be analysed during the process. Based on the report we can affirm or infirm the roles of youth work projects so far. Also, through this report, we can have a premise to build the IO2 (digital guide on good practices) that will help educate more youth workers and young entrepreneurs on how to design, plan and implement projects that have environmental protection, SDGs and community development at their core. This will not only help in achieving some of the goals and objectives of the ERASMUS+ programme which seek to make young people participate in community building and its development while being active citizens.

### **Credits:**

Editor, researcher- M.G. Adelina Dragomir (GEYC).

Researchers: Gilles Evrard Essuman (Resopa); Nora Roosimölder (SARA); Maro Samara (Social Hackers); Raluca-Andreea Dumitrescu (GEYC).

## Executive summary

**From a theoretical point of view**, this paper is based on elements from different concepts. We used the term “entrepreneurship” as “the activity of making money by starting or running businesses, especially when this involves taking financial risks”<sup>1</sup>. Regarding “youth”, we noticed that the four states analysed have different age categories, thus we decided that this concept should include young people from 16 to 30 years of age.

In terms of “sustainability”, we invoked the most used conceptualisation in the literature which states that “Sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”<sup>2</sup>

“Project management” has a wide range of definitions, however, we chose the one proposed by the Project Management Institute/PMI according to which this term can be understood as “The application of knowledge, skills, and principles to a program to achieve the program objectives and obtain benefits and control not available by managing program components individually”<sup>3</sup>.

**Research questions:** (1) What impact do youth work projects have in the analysed societies? (2) Do young entrepreneurs need sustainable project management education? (3) How can youth work and entrepreneurship contribute to the local impact in connection with the SDGs?

**The method used:** The project was based on qualitative research, that includes a set of interpretive, material practices especially in the form of interviews; it generates detailed information from participants and explores differences and divergences through the data. The main characteristics of qualitative research are the following: (1) fieldwork and naturalistic engagement; (2) descriptive and analytic; (3) complexity and contextualization; (4) processes and methods shaped by the researcher; (5) process and relationships between participant and researcher; (6) fidelity to participants and their experiences; (7) meaning and meaning-making during the interview; (8) the process of induction. The chosen approach and related methods depended on the research questions, goals of the study, and contextual variables. The methodological approach emerged from the research questions, study goals, and the context in

---

<sup>1</sup> \*\*\*, “entrepreneurship”, Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries, accessed in 12.01.2022, <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/entrepreneurship?q=entrepreneurship>

<sup>2</sup> UN. Secretary-General, World Commission on Environment and Development, “Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: note/by the Secretary-General”, 1987, p.54, accessed in 08.01.2022, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/139811?ln=en#record-files-collapse-header>

<sup>3</sup> Project Management Institute, *The Standard for Project Management and A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge, 7th ed.* (USA: Project Management Institute, 2021), p.318

which the research was carried out. Results are presented as analytical narratives based on the main outcomes. For the present study, we chose the interview and we took into consideration three main aspects when we implemented it. Firstly, we used the principle of triangulation, gathering data from at least three different sources. Secondly, it is possible that not all research questions are well handled only through a qualitative study, which may affect the generalizability of the data to other contexts. Thirdly, we needed to be careful how power dynamics affect an interview, especially because of the different backgrounds. In general, interviews are divided into structured, semi-structured, and unstructured/open interviews. According to our objectives, we chose the semi-structured one because it includes a set of open questions and depends on the answers offered by the participants. To gain a better insight into the impact youth-led entrepreneurship initiatives might have on community building and attainment of SDGs, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 35 youth workers and young people active in community development, project management as well as youth educators from the EU and young entrepreneurs and freelancers from the first two main target group of the project. Interviews were conducted in each of the four countries of the consortium and lasted approximately 30-45 minutes each. Data gathering started with the identification of interviewees. Given the purpose of our research, we used one of the following two sampling techniques: (1) snowball sampling, where initial informants are identified and the subsequent sample is built by asking for key recommendations from these informants; and (2) key informant sampling, where you target key people that are knowledgeable about the issue. These sampling techniques served as a starting point to identify the 35 respondents. The respondents were part of TG1 (TG1: youth workers & young people active in community development, project management as well as youth educators from the EU) and TG2 (young entrepreneurs & freelancers from the EU). Data gathering continues with ethical clearance, specifically getting consent. The qualitative analysis was performed in the following way: the data obtained from the interviews were analysed which helped to organize and create a complete view of the information gathered during data collection.

**Results:** Of the 35 respondents in the study sample, 11 are citizens or work in Greece, 9 participants are from Romania, 6 are from France, and 9 workers are from Estonia. Through the interviews. the entrepreneurs presented the main activities of the organizations, their goals and the way they do business. Most of them encourage people in the community to get involved in activities, educate the community for an environmentally friendly lifestyle and/or provide information about available job opportunities. Sustainable project management was a challenging

concept for some organisations because the majority of the participants did not take it into consideration when they started the projects. However, some entrepreneurs take into account some thematic SDGs, including poverty, hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, climate action, and partnerships for the goals.

**Conclusions:** This project is a preliminary one, as it focuses mainly on analysing the ideas and actions of entrepreneurs in the four European countries. Even if the research did not identify many successful models, it emphasized several insights regarding the role and activity of youth in the community.

## 1. Theoretical background

The theoretical chapter presents the main concepts used. Thus, in this approach, we started from an academic perspective and later we discussed, on the one hand, about the European Union's operationalisation of these concepts and on the other hand about the particular visions of the states involved in this project.

Like many of the existing concepts in the field of social sciences, the term “entrepreneurship” has multiple and diverse definitions. In this context, there is no general/perfect definition for this term and Halliru Shuaibu, Yusri Bin Kamin, Umar Muhammad Isa, Abdullahi Musa Cledumas expressively summarized the whole debate –

*“[...] the psychologist (behaviourist) sees it as ‘the need for achievement, perceived locus of control, and risk-taking propensity’. The economist looks at it as bringing together the factors of production (land, labour, capital, and entrepreneur) and bearing the risk of buying at a certain price and selling at uncertain prices. While the sociologist views it as the ability to recognize and act upon market opportunities in order to provide social services.”<sup>4</sup>*

Despite this situation, we found some relevant definitions to mention. This elusive concept is defined by *The Oxford English Dictionary* as “the activity of making money by starting or running businesses, especially when this involves taking financial risks”<sup>5</sup>. The *Merriam-Webster* dictionary gives a similar perspective for the concept of “entrepreneur” – “a person who starts a business and is willing to risk loss in order to make money”<sup>6</sup>. The last definition we mention here is the one offered by Howard H. Stevenson (“the godfather of entrepreneurship”) who claims that “entrepreneurship is a process by which individuals - either on their own or inside organizations - pursue opportunities without regard to the resources they currently control”<sup>7</sup>. Howard Stevenson's

<sup>4</sup> Halliru Shuaibu, Yusri Bin Kamin, Umar Muhammad Isa, Abdullahi Musa Cledumas, “*The Concept of Entrepreneurship*”, in Sharon Waller, Lee Waller, Vongai Mpfu, Mercy Kurebwa, “*Education at the Intersection of Globalization and Technology*”, IntechOpen, 2021, accessed in 09.01.2022, <https://www.intechopen.com/chapters/74162>

<sup>5</sup> \*\*\*, “*entrepreneurship*”, Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, accessed in 12.01.2022, <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/entrepreneurship?q=entrepreneurship>

<sup>6</sup> \*\*\*, “*entrepreneur*”, Merriam-Webster, accessed in 12.01.2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/entrepreneurship>

<sup>7</sup> Stevenson, H. H., M. J. Roberts and H. I. Grousbeck. *New Business Ventures and the Entrepreneur*, Irwin, Homewood, IL, 1989 in Howard H. Stevenson, J. Carlos Jarillo, “*A Paradigm of Entrepreneurship: Entrepreneurial Management*”, *Strategic Management Journal* 11, Special Issue: Corporate Entrepreneurship (1990): p.23

definition is relevant because it has a high degree of universality and can be used for entrepreneurship in any domain/sector of activity.

The literature in the field of youth entrepreneurship is still in its infancy, but various research papers emphasized that this category of entrepreneurship cannot be neglected and that is relevant for the economic and/or social dimension. More precisely, youth entrepreneurship is “[...] more flexible and susceptible to changes in the external environment, which contributes to the implementation of the innovative potential of the economy, commercialization of innovations and the introduction of innovative technologies”<sup>8</sup>. Even at this initial stage of the institutionalisation of the term “youth entrepreneurship”, we can find different definitions of this phenomenon. Thus, a useful working definition is the following: “Entrepreneurial activity that is encompassed by young people, typically aged between 15 and 24 years old”<sup>9</sup>.

Within academia, we can find a heated discussion regarding the term “sustainability”, so it is necessary to specify the definition that we take into consideration for this paper. The traditional conceptualization of “sustainable development” (this term often serves as a synonym for sustainability), and which is the most used, is the one from the Brundtland Commission Report “Our Common Future” of 1987: “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”<sup>10</sup> This perspective is relevant because it contains the concept of “needs” of populations and the idea of limitations.

The concept of “project management” is defined in *the Project Management Body of Knowledge Guide* of the *Project Management Institute/PMI*<sup>11</sup> as “The application of knowledge, skills, and principles to a program to achieve the program objectives and obtain benefits and control not available by managing program components individually”<sup>12</sup>. Taking into account that sustainability is now more relevant than ever, by “sustainable project management” we understand “the planning, monitoring and controlling of project delivery and support processes, with consideration of the environmental, economical and social aspects of the life-cycle of the project’s resources,

<sup>8</sup> Zhartay, Zh., Khussainova, Zh., Yessengeldin, B. 2020. “Development of the youth entrepreneurship: example of Kazakhstan”, *Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Issues* 8, no1, (2020): p.1191

<sup>9</sup> \*\*\*, “What is Youth Entrepreneurship”, IGI Global, accessed in 13.01.2022, <https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/youth-entrepreneurship/74309>

<sup>10</sup> UN. Secretary-General, World Commission on Environment and Development, “Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: note/by the Secretary-General”, 1987, p.54, accessed in 08.01.2022, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/139811?ln=en#record-files-collapse-header>

<sup>11</sup> *the PMI* is one of the most important professional project management association.

<sup>12</sup> Project Management Institute, *The Standard for Project Management and A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge, 7th ed.* (USA: Project Management Institute, 2021), p.318

processes, deliverables and effects, aimed at realising benefits for stakeholders, and performed in a transparent, fair and ethical way that includes proactive stakeholder participation.”<sup>13</sup>

## The European Union

At the European Union level, the concept of “entrepreneurship” is understood as “an individual’s ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation, risk taking, ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives”<sup>14</sup>. In addition to this definition, it is specified that “Our entrepreneurship policy aims to support companies, in particular SMEs, throughout their life cycle, promoting entrepreneurial education at all levels, as well as reaching out and encouraging specific groups with entrepreneurial potential”<sup>15</sup>.

At this point, some additional clarifications are needed. An “enterprise” is considered to be an “entity engaged in an economic activity, irrespective of its legal form”<sup>16</sup> and the concept of “SME” (micro, small, medium-sized enterprises) includes those enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and which have an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million, and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million<sup>17</sup>. This definition of SME is very important because small and medium-sized enterprises represent 99% of all businesses in the EU<sup>18</sup>. The Commission reviews this definition at irregular intervals (at the last evaluation from 2021, the Commission concluded that “the definition remains relevant, fit for its purpose, and has been effective in reaching its objectives”<sup>19</sup>).

<sup>13</sup> A.J. Gilbert Silvius, Ron P.J. Schipper, “Sustainability in project management: A literature review and impact analysis”, *Social Business* 4, no. 1 (2014): p.79

<sup>14</sup> \*\*\*, “*Entrepreneurship – Sailing to Success*”, European Commission, accessed in 07.01.2022, <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplu-project-details/#project/2019-1-DK01-KA105-059994>

<sup>15</sup> \*\*\*, “*Supporting entrepreneurship*”, European Commission, accessed in 04.01.2022, [https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/supporting-entrepreneurship\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/supporting-entrepreneurship_en)

<sup>16</sup> \*\*\*, “Commission Recommendation of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises”, *Official Journal of the European Union*, 2003, accessed in 03.01.2022, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32003H0361&from=EN>

<sup>17</sup> \*\*\*, “Commission Recommendation of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises”, *Official Journal of the European Union*, 2003, accessed in 03.01.2022, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32003H0361&from=EN>

<sup>18</sup> \*\*\*, “SME definition”, European Commission, accessed in 03.01.2022, [https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/sme-definition\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/sme-definition_en)

<sup>19</sup> Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, “*Commission Staff Working Document. Executive Summary of the Evaluation of Commission Recommendation of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises*”, European Commission, 2021, accessed in 05.01.2022, [https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=SWD\(2021\)280&lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=SWD(2021)280&lang=en)

Regarding the term “youth”, there is no general consensus on what it means, but a useful conceptualisation is the following one “Youth is socially constructed and refers to the period of complex transitions to autonomy, from childhood to adulthood”<sup>20</sup>. If the United Nations defines youth as “[...] those persons between the ages of 15 and 24, without prejudice to other definitions by Member States”<sup>21</sup>, the European Union’s strategic framework sees young people as those between 15 and 29 years old<sup>22</sup>. It is important to specify that definitions of youth vary between European countries.

At the constitutional level of the EU, “sustainable development” is not defined. Even so, in the *Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union*, in article 3(3), we can identify the EU’s commitment regarding this objective of sustainable development because it is stated that

*“The Union shall establish an internal market. It shall work for the sustainable development of Europe based on balanced economic growth and price stability, a highly competitive social market economy, aiming at full employment and social progress, and a high level of protection and improvement of the quality of the environment. It shall promote scientific and technological advance.”*<sup>23</sup>

From the perspective of the European Union policy documents we have the reflection paper – “*Towards a Sustainable Europe by 2030*”<sup>24</sup> – submitted by the Commission, in which it is specified that “sustainable development” is “about making sure that our economic growth allows us to maintain a model that produces fair outcomes for all of humanity; and about ensuring that humans don’t consume more resources than the Earth has to offer”<sup>25</sup>. As can be easily seen, this definition is similar to that from the *Brundtland Report*, and it is based on the main three pillars: economic development, social development, and environmental protection.

<sup>20</sup> \*\*\*, “*Youth Policy Essentials*”, 2019, p.6, accessed in 05.01.2022, <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47261953/Youth+Policy+Essentials+-updated.pdf/92d6c20f-8cba-205f-0e53-14e16d69e561>

<sup>21</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, “*Definition of youth*”, accessed in 05.01.2022, <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-definition.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> European Commission, “Report From The Commission To The European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions on the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy (2019-2021)”, Brussels, 2021, p.2, accessed in 03.01.2022, [https://europa.eu/youth/d8/sites/default/files/inline-files/1\\_EN\\_ACT\\_part1\\_v3.pdf](https://europa.eu/youth/d8/sites/default/files/inline-files/1_EN_ACT_part1_v3.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> \*\*\*, “Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union”, Official Journal of the European Union, 2012, p.7, accessed in 05.01.2022, [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:2bf140bf-a3f8-4ab2-b506-fd71826e6da6.0023.02/DOC\\_1&format=PDF](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:2bf140bf-a3f8-4ab2-b506-fd71826e6da6.0023.02/DOC_1&format=PDF)

<sup>24</sup> this paper analyses the main challenges for a sustainable Europe.

<sup>25</sup> European Commission, Directorate-General for Communication, “*Towards a sustainable Europe by 2030: reflection paper*”, Publications Office, 2019, p.3, accessed in 07.01.2022, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2775/647859>

In the methodology developed by the European Commission to help teams to manage their projects, “project management” is defined as “the activities of planning, organising, securing, monitoring and managing the resources and work necessary to deliver specific project goals and objectives in an effective and efficient way”<sup>26</sup>. As we have shown so far, at the level of the European Union, it is difficult to identify a central definition of the term “sustainable development”. This also applies to the concept of “sustainable project management”. However, the Union points out that “Projects should also be feasible, meaning that objectives can be achieved within the constraints of the operating environment and within the competencies of the implementing organisation. Projects should also generate sustainable benefits”<sup>27</sup>. Thus, it can be deduced that sustainable project management must take into account these criteria.

## The perspective from Romania

- *entrepreneurship and youth entrepreneurship* – “Entrepreneurship is the process that involves discovering, evaluating and exploiting opportunities to introduce new products, services, processes, ways of organizing or markets”<sup>28</sup>. Regarding the concept of “youth”, law no. 350 from July 21, 2006, defines young people as belonging to ages 14-35<sup>29</sup>.

In an overview on entrepreneurship, start-ups, and innovation, it was shown that “As of 2015, there were over 450 000 SMEs in Romania, constituting 99.7% of all companies [...] the share of micro enterprises is 5.1% lower than the EU average, while shares of small and medium-sized ones are above by 4.2% and 0.8%, respectively. Romania’s SME sector provided about 67.5% of employment in the private sector [...]”<sup>30</sup>. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/OECD highlighted that “Over the period 2015-19, 7.2% of women, 11.4% of youth (18-30 years old), 6.2% of older people (50-64 years old) were early-stage entrepreneurs. These

<sup>26</sup> European Commission, Directorate-General for Informatics, “PM<sup>2</sup> project management methodology: guide 3.0”, Publications Office, 2018, p.7, accessed in 06.01.2022, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2799/078039>

<sup>27</sup> \*\*\*, “Managing a project”, European Commission, accessed in 04.01.2022, [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/funding/managing-project\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/funding/managing-project_en)

<sup>28</sup> Scott Shane, S. Venkataraman, The Promise of Entrepreneurship as a Field of Research, *The Academy of Management Review* 25, no. 1, (2000): p.219 in Nuică Cristina Ștefania, “Studiu privind analiza mediului antreprenorial. **START ROMÂNIA – Finanțare pentru românii din Diaspora**”, *Camera de Comerț și Industrie Vâlcea*, accessed in 05.01.2022, <http://www.cci.vl.ro/studiu-privind-analiza-mediului-antreprenorial/>

<sup>29</sup> Parlamentul României, “Lege nr.350 din 21 iulie 2006. Legea tinerilor”, *Monitorul Oficial* no.648 from 27 July 2006, accessed in 06.01.2022, <http://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/73834>

<sup>30</sup>\*\*\*, “Specific Support to Romania – Starts-ups, Scale-ups and Entrepreneurship in Romania”, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2017, p.21, accessed in 05.01.2022, <https://ec.europa.eu/research-and-innovation/sites/default/files/rio/report/KI-AX-18-008-EN-N.pdf>

proportions were all greater than the EU average for each group”<sup>31</sup>. These figures can be partially explained by the fact that in Romania, the youth category is strongly supported through initiatives such as *Start-up Nation*.

- *sustainability* – the administration from Bucharest, in “*Romania’s Sustainable Development Strategy 2030*”<sup>32</sup> (2018) uses the conceptualisation of “sustainable development” from the *Brundtland Report*, emphasizing the pillars relevant for the 2030 Agenda:

*“In economic terms, it is necessary to ensure long-term economic growth that benefits the country’s citizens [...] In social terms, it is necessary to create a cohesive society able to benefit from improvements in education and health care systems, a reduction in gender inequality, and the urban-rural divide [...] Environmental awareness has risen significantly in recent years. Protecting our environment be it natural or human-made, is the responsibility of everyone [...]”*<sup>33</sup>.

“*The Europe Sustainable Development Report 2021*” analyses the progress of the EU and its member states in achieving the goals for sustainable development. In this report, Romania obtained the following values: SDG Index Score – 61.56/100, SDG Index Rank – 29/34<sup>34</sup>. These figures show that there is still much to be done until all objectives are met.

- *project management and sustainable project management* – as in the case of “sustainability”, Romania recommends for “project management” the definition from the “*Project Management Methodology Guide*” developed by the European Union<sup>35</sup>. For “sustainable project management” there is no official definition.

<sup>31</sup> \*\*\*, “*Inclusive Entrepreneurship Policies, Country Assessment Notes. Romania*”, 2020, p.5, accessed in 05.01.2022, <https://www.oecd.org/cfe/smes/Romania-IE-2020.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> this Strategy is a roadmap for achieving the 17 sustainable development goals agreed at the United Nations Sustainable Council from 2015.

<sup>33</sup> \*\*\*, “*Romania’s National Sustainable Development Strategy 2030*”, Paideia, București, 2018, p.18, accessed in 06.01.2022, <http://dezvoltaredurabila.gov.ro/web/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Romanias-Sustainable-Development-Strategy-2030.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> Lafortune G, Cortés Puch M, Mosnier A, Fuller G, Diaz M, Riccaboni A, Kloke-Lesch A, Zachariadis T, Carli E, Oger A, “*Europe Sustainable Development Report 2021: Transforming the European Union to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals*”, SDSN, SDSN Europe and IEEP, France: Paris. 2021, p.140, accessed in 03.01.2022, <https://s3.amazonaws.com/sustainabledevelopment.report/2021/Europe+Sustainable+Development+Report+2021.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> see this guide in Romanian at [https://www.pm2alliance.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Ghid.Metodologiei.PM%C2%B2.v3.0.PM%C2%B2Alliance.Romanian.Translation.RO\\_.pdf](https://www.pm2alliance.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Ghid.Metodologiei.PM%C2%B2.v3.0.PM%C2%B2Alliance.Romanian.Translation.RO_.pdf)

## The perspective from France

- *entrepreneurship and youth entrepreneurship* – entrepreneur is a “person who sets up a business or businesses, taking on financial risks in the hope of profit”<sup>36</sup>. By “youth”, the France administration addresses the population aged 16 to 25<sup>37</sup>.

The situation regarding entrepreneurship in France is impressive. Official statistics showed that “In 2018, the EU-27’s business economy was made up of 25.3 million active enterprises with more than 131 million persons employed. The largest active enterprise population was registered in France (4.0 million) [...]”<sup>38</sup>. Also, it is relevant to emphasize that “The self-employment rate in France was slightly below the European Union (EU) average in 2017 (10.9% vs. 13.7%). This holds for women and youth but not for older people. However, over the 2013-17 period, people from these groups in France were more likely to expect to create a business over the next three years than the EU average, especially youth (27.5% vs. 20.4%)”<sup>39</sup>.

- *sustainability* – the French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (part of the Ministry for the Economy and Finance) uses the definition from Mrs. Gro Harlem Brundtland, Norwegian Prime Minister (1987)<sup>40</sup>.

Compared to Romania, France obtained a better overall score in *The Europe Sustainable Development Report 2021* – SDG Index Rank 10/34, SDG Index Score 72.71/100<sup>41</sup>.

- *project management and sustainable project management* - Association Française de Normalisation/AFNOR specified that project management “covers all the tools, techniques and methods that allow the project manager and the more or less large team, which is directly associated with him, to lead, coordinate and harmonize the various tasks carried out within the framework of

<sup>36</sup> Oxford English Dictionary, “Entrepreneur” in Business France, Foreign Investment in France, “Definition entrepreneur”, accessed in 07.01.2022, <https://investinfrance.fr/argument/definition-entrepreneur/>

<sup>37</sup> \*\*\*, “Youth Wiki national description. Youth policies in France 2019”, p.9, accessed in 07.01.2022, [https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021-06/France\\_2019.pdf](https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021-06/France_2019.pdf)

<sup>38</sup> \*\*\*, “Business demography statistics”, Eurostat. Statistics Explained, 2020, accessed in 04.01.2022, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Business\\_demography\\_statistics](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Business_demography_statistics)

<sup>39</sup> \*\*\*, “Inclusive Entrepreneurship Policies: Country Assessment Notes. France”, 2018, p.3, accessed in 06.01.2022 <https://www.oecd.org/cfe/smes/France-IE-Country-Note-2018.pdf>

<sup>40</sup> sustainable development is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” - \*\*\*, “Sustainable development”, Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques, 2016, accessed in 06.01.2022, <https://www.insee.fr/en/metadonnees/definition/c1644>

<sup>41</sup> Lafortune G, Cortés Puch M, Mosnier A, Fuller G, Diaz M, Riccaboni A, Kloke-Lesch A, Zachariadis T, Carli E, Oger A, “Europe Sustainable Development Report 2021: Transforming the European Union to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”. SDSN, SDSN Europe and IEEP, France: Paris, 2021, p.104, accessed in 06.01.2022, <https://s3.amazonaws.com/sustainabledevelopment.report/2021/Europe+Sustainable+Development+Report+2021.pdf>

the project so that it meets the explicit and implicit needs for which it was undertaken”<sup>42</sup>. Although we have not been able to identify an official French definition for the term “sustainable project management”, it is important to highlight that the administration from Paris actively supports *the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. This provides a framework through which the French authorities relate to this concept.

### The perspective from Greece

- *entrepreneurship* and *youth entrepreneurship* – in an e-book elaborated by *the Institute of Entrepreneurship Development* (a Greek non-profit organization), “entrepreneurship” is defined as “both the study of how new businesses are created as well as the actual process of starting a new business”<sup>43</sup>. Similar with the case of Romania’s youth policy, Greece defines the concept of “youth” as young people between the ages of 15 and 35<sup>44</sup>.

From a general perspective, “the percentage of the population aged 18-64, which in 2018 was at the early stages of entrepreneurial activity (including self-employment), increased to 6.4% (approximately 418,000 people) from 4.8% (approximately 314,000) in 2017”<sup>45</sup>. These positive figures are also found in the case of youth entrepreneurship because 30% of early-stage entrepreneurs come from the age group of 18-24 years old<sup>46</sup>.

- *sustainability* – in a written contribution from Greece submitted to the *OECD Competition Committee*, the term “sustainable development” is used in the manner defined by the *Brundtland Report*<sup>47</sup>.

<sup>42</sup> \*\*\*, “*Qu’est-ce que la gestion de projet? Définition AFNOR*”, accessed in 07.01.2022, [https://ics.utc.fr/portail\\_linios/Linios/LINIO\\_qpfoad/co/intro\\_6.html](https://ics.utc.fr/portail_linios/Linios/LINIO_qpfoad/co/intro_6.html)

<sup>43</sup> Institute of Entrepreneurship Development, “*E-Book for Entrepreneurship*”, 2018, p.8, accessed in 06.01.2022, [https://ied.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/E-book-for-Entrepreneurship\\_%CE%95%CE%9D.pdf](https://ied.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/E-book-for-Entrepreneurship_%CE%95%CE%9D.pdf)

<sup>44</sup> Angeliki Moschou, “*Country sheet on youth policy in Greece, 2012*”, p.3, accessed in 06.01.2022, [https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47261563/Hellenic\\_country\\_sheet\\_2011.pdf/05049a39-c832-4c53-ae44-1e5fa985204e](https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47261563/Hellenic_country_sheet_2011.pdf/05049a39-c832-4c53-ae44-1e5fa985204e)

<sup>45</sup> Aggelos Tsakanikas, Giannis Giotopoulos, Evangelia Valavanioti, Sofia Stavraki, “Annual Entrepreneurship Report 2018-2019: Early stage entrepreneurship improves”, *The Foundation for Economic and Industrial Research*, 2019, p.5

<sup>46</sup> Aggelos Tsakanikas, Giannis Giotopoulos, Evangelia Valavanioti, Sofia Stavraki, “Annual Entrepreneurship Report 2018-2019: Early stage entrepreneurship improves”, *The Foundation for Economic and Industrial Research*, 2019, p.7

<sup>47</sup> see “Sustainability and Competition – Note by Greece” at [https://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=DAF/COMP/WD\(2020\)64&docLanguage=En](https://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=DAF/COMP/WD(2020)64&docLanguage=En)

In the *Europe Sustainable Development Report 2021*, Greece obtained the following numbers – SDG Index Rank 27/34, SDG Index Score 64.75/100<sup>48</sup>.

- *project management and sustainable project management* – at the *Annual Meeting of the Greek Project Managers* from 2019 it was used the following definition for “project management” – “The application of specific knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques in order to meet projects’ requirements”<sup>49</sup>. For the concept of “sustainable project management” we could not identify the definition used by the Athens administration.

## The perspective from Estonia

- *entrepreneurship and youth entrepreneurship* – in Estonia, universities are key players in the field of entrepreneurship, by offering courses and training. In this context, it is useful to mention that in a paper on entrepreneurship education it is specified that, historically, in Estonia, this concept was understood as “the creation and development of new businesses”<sup>50</sup>. More recently, they tried to implement a broader definition – “Entrepreneurship is when you act upon opportunities and ideas and transform them into value for others. The value that is created can be financial, cultural, or social”<sup>51</sup>. Also, in Estonia, Youth Work Act defines a young person as “a person between 7 and 26 years of age”<sup>52</sup>.

In terms of entrepreneurship, Estonia is a success story. For 2020, *the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor* showed that “[...] there are currently about 133 300 early-stage entrepreneurs [...] Of these about one-third are women, 25% were 18-30 years old and 13% were over 50 years old.

<sup>48</sup> Lafortune G, Cortés Puch M, Mosnier A, Fuller G, Diaz M, Riccaboni A, Kloke-Lesch A, Zachariadis T, Carli E, Oger A., “Europe Sustainable Development Report 2021: Transforming the European Union to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”, SDSN, SDSN Europe and IEEP, France: Paris. 2021, p.108, accessed in 07.01.2022, <https://s3.amazonaws.com/sustainabledevelopment.report/2021/Europe+Sustainable+Development+Report+2021.pdf>

<sup>49</sup> Harris Apostolopoulos, “*Transformation PMO: Leading the way to Corporate Excellence and Sustainability!*”, 2019, p.7, accessed in 03.01.2022, [http://www.boussiasconferences.gr/files/boussias\\_conferences\\_content/presentations/project\\_management\\_congress/2019/charis\\_apostolopoulos\\_pm\\_conference19.pdf](http://www.boussiasconferences.gr/files/boussias_conferences_content/presentations/project_management_congress/2019/charis_apostolopoulos_pm_conference19.pdf)

<sup>50</sup> Urve Venesaar, Marge Täks, Grete Arro, Elina Malleus, Krista Loogma, Kaja Mädamürk, Eneken Titov, Martin Toding., “*Model of entrepreneurship competence as a basis for the development of entrepreneurship education*”, p.152, accessed in 07.01.2022, [https://eha.ut.ee/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/11\\_06\\_venesaar\\_summary.pdf](https://eha.ut.ee/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/11_06_venesaar_summary.pdf)

<sup>51</sup> L. Vestergaard, K. Moberg, C. Jørgensen, “Impact of Entrepreneurship Education in Denmark - 2011”, *The Danish Foundation for Entrepreneurship - Young Enterprise*, Odense, 2012, p.11, accessed in 05.01.2022, [https://eng.ffe-ye.dk/media/202248/impact\\_of\\_entrepreneurship\\_education\\_in\\_denmark\\_2011.pdf](https://eng.ffe-ye.dk/media/202248/impact_of_entrepreneurship_education_in_denmark_2011.pdf)

<sup>52</sup> Riigikogu, “*Youth Work Act*”, 2020, accessed in 06.01.2022, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/517072020007/consolide>

Compared to the EU average, a greater share of the population reported being involved in early-stage entrepreneurship (16.1% vs. 6.8%) and a high proportion of youth were engaged in these activities (22.6% vs. 7.9%)<sup>53</sup>. These figures were obtained through the active involvement of Estonian citizens who understood that entrepreneurship is an essential component in raising the living standards.

- *sustainability* – in the Law on Sustainable Development adopted by the Riigikogu (the Parliament of Estonia) from 1995 it is specified that this act “is based on the principles established in the decisions of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992)”<sup>54</sup>. Even if we do not have a clear definition for “sustainable development”, the Rio Conference addresses this concept in terms of 27 principles that emphasize that peace, development and environmental protection are interdependent.

In *the Europe Sustainable Development Report 2021*, Estonia obtained the following values – SDG Index Rank 8/34, SDG Index Score 73.70/100<sup>55</sup>.

- *project management and sustainable project management* – taking into account the academic dimension from Estonia, we could observe that, in different types of scientific papers, the term “project management”, is used according to the definition developed by the *Project Management Institute* in *PMBOK Guide*. Regarding the concept of “sustainable project management” we could not identify an official definition.

<sup>53</sup> \*\*\*, “*Inclusive Entrepreneurship Policies: Country Assessment Notes. Estonia, 2020*”, p.5, accessed in 12.01.2022, <https://www.oecd.org/cfe/smes/Estonia-IE-2020.pdf>

<sup>54</sup> Riigikogu, “*Sustainable Development Act*”, 2013, accessed in 12.01.2022, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/530122013003/consolide>

<sup>55</sup> Lafortune G, Cortés Puch M, Mosnier A, Fuller G, Diaz M, Riccaboni A, Kloke-Lesch A, Zachariadis T, Carli E, Oger A., “*Europe Sustainable Development Report 2021: Transforming the European Union to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals*”, SDSN, SDSN Europe and IEEP, France: Paris, 2021. p.100, accessed in 03.01.2022, <https://s3.amazonaws.com/sustainabledevelopment.report/2021/Europe+Sustainable+Development+Report+2021.pdf>

## 2. Method used

### 2.1. The main characteristics of qualitative research

Qualitative research includes a set of interpretative, material practices in the form of field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, or recordings<sup>56</sup>. More broadly, it is based on the methodological pursuit of understanding the ways that people view, approach, and experience aspects and make meaning of their experiences<sup>57</sup>. Moreover, the qualitative approach deals with understanding and interpreting local meanings, recognizing data depending on a certain context, and producing knowledge for a general understanding. Also, it generates detailed accounts from each participant, explores differences and divergences through the data, and it is interpretative so it tends to take longer to complete<sup>58</sup>.

Qualitative research starts from the assumptions and interpretive/theoretical frameworks that informed us about the research problems of the studied theme. It presents the following five main characteristics: (1) analyses meanings and interpretations of the phenomena studied for those involved; (2) works with process as much as with content, specifically interaction mechanisms between people and their social and physical surroundings (*how* and *what* questions); (3) focuses on the context of the theme (spatial, temporal and social one); (4) works inductively or abductively, meaning that it develops understandings, concepts and potential theories based on empirical data; and (5) uses sensitizing concepts and directions along which to focus<sup>59</sup>.

The key components of qualitative research described in the literature are the following: (1) fieldwork and naturalistic engagement – the researcher observes and records experiences and behaviours in a natural setting; (2) descriptive and analytic – the researcher understands, describes, and analyses the complex processes; (3) seeks complexity and contextualization – participants can share perspectives and experiences on a certain theme; (4) the researcher is considered the primary instrument because he/she shapes the processes and methods; (5) the researcher pays attention to the process and relationships for understanding data; (6) fidelity to participants and their experiences to take an emergent approach to research design; (7) the researcher invests in meaning and meaning-making – attention to understanding participants'

<sup>56</sup> Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*: Sage Publications, 2018

<sup>57</sup> Ravitch, S. M., & Carl, N. M. *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological*: Sage Publications, 2019

<sup>58</sup> Braun, V., & Clarke, V. *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners*: Sage Publications, 2013

<sup>59</sup> Järvinen, M., & Mik-Meyer, N. *Qualitative Analysis: Eight Approaches for the Social Sciences*: Sage Publications, 2020

responses; (8) the process is inductive – the researcher formulates concepts, questions and theories from the data collected<sup>60</sup>.

In general, qualitative research includes studies that collect interview information (individuals or groups), detailed case studies, or involves observational studies. In this case, results are presented as analytical narratives based on the main outcomes, so it takes longer to analyse the responses<sup>61</sup>.

Qualitative research is not a linear process because the phases are continuously interacting. A qualitative study begins with a problem/question, which is the basis of building a theoretical framework and reviewing the literature. Then, the researchers develop a set of research questions that guide the study. This is the starting point in the process of designing the study and includes the selection of the methods used to answer the research questions. The design process needs the development of a research setting, to determine the participant selection criteria, and plan the data collection and analysis. Methods and research instruments need to be piloted to ensure that they are going to generate the data necessary to answer the research questions. Then follows data collection. The analyses of the data include validation and trustworthiness. Also, it means revisiting and reviewing the literature to make sense of the findings. Further, the researchers can develop and emphasize the findings in research to disseminate the findings. As a consequence, each of these steps is intersecting, overlapping, and recursive. In the present project, the chosen approach and related methods depended on the research questions and goals of the study as well as on the contextual variables<sup>62</sup>.

## 2.2. Interview

One of the most commonly used methods for qualitative research is the interview. It helps the researcher to analyse responses and to ask follow-up questions or change the course of the conversation<sup>63</sup>.

There are three main aspects that we considered when we implemented the study based on interviews. Firstly, the principle of triangulation that refers to considering data from at least three different sources. This implies interviewing three individuals about a theme, interviewing one

<sup>60</sup> Ravitch, S. M., & Carl, N. M. *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological*: Sage Publications, 2019

<sup>61</sup> Goodwin, K. A., & Goodwin, C. J. *Research in psychology: Methods and design*: John Wiley & Sons, 2017

<sup>62</sup> Ravitch, S. M., & Carl, N. M. *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological*: Sage Publications, 2019

<sup>63</sup> Saldaña, J., & Omasta, M. *Qualitative research: Analyzing life*: Sage Publications, 2017

person at three different points in time, or comparing interviews with other empirical materials. This aspect could determine whether any patterns emerge consistently across them. Secondly, it is possible that not all research questions are well handled only through a qualitative study, which may affect the generalizability of the data to other contexts. In qualitative research, it is difficult to generalize the results because it does not comply with the sampling procedures of quantitative research. Thirdly, researchers need to consider how power dynamics affect an interview. Both researchers and participants may come from different backgrounds (gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and so on) so this could affect any type of interview. That is why the researchers have to make efforts to create an equitable relationship<sup>64</sup>.

In general, interviews are divided into structured, semi-structured, and unstructured/open interviews. A structured interview includes standardized questions addressed in the same way and in the same order to all participants. The main goal is to compare and quantify the answers depending on the chosen theme. An unstructured interview includes the lack of an explicit interview guide so that participants can relate experiences and conceptions about the topic and researchers can generate clarifying questions during the interview process. The third type of interview, the semi-structured one, is the most used form of qualitative research and includes a set of open questions, accompanied by the developing of new ones, depending on the answers offered by the participants (could vary from interview to interview)<sup>65</sup>. Regardless of the type of interview, participants can discuss issues that have a huge impact on them and that the researcher has not anticipated completely or are not in the interview guide<sup>66</sup>.

Given this theoretical background, this project used the semi-structured interview because it allows the interviewer to adapt to the participants' answers and to formulate new questions depending on how the interview is conducted. The following section presents the main information about this type of interview.

### 2.2.1. Semi-structured interview

The semi-structured interview is one of the most used methods in qualitative research. Even if this type of interview has an established structure, it also offers the possibility to make adjustments in the course of the discussion. The role of the researcher is to register carefully the participants'

<sup>64</sup> Saldaña, J., & Omasta, M. *Qualitative research: Analyzing life*: Sage Publications, 2017

<sup>65</sup> Järvinen, M., & Mik-Meyer, N. *Qualitative Analysis: Eight Approaches for the Social Sciences*: Sage Publications, 2020

<sup>66</sup> Braun, V., & Clarke, V. *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners*: Sage Publications, 2013

answers and nonverbal indicators (for instance, vocal tone, body language). Also, the interviewer presents the questions in a coherent and logical order, so that the participant naturally answers all the questions<sup>67</sup>.

To gain a better insight into the impact youth-led entrepreneurship initiatives might have on community building and attainment of SDGs, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 35 youth workers and young people active in community development, project management as well as youth educators from the EU and young entrepreneurs and freelancers from the first two main target group of the project. Interviews were conducted in each of the four countries of the consortium and lasted approximately 30-45 minutes each. Answers were audio-recorded, but in case any interviewee did not agree with this method, notes were taken.

Respondents provided information through semi-structured interviews about themselves and their role in society (referring to youth workers, young entrepreneurs, freelancers, educators, etc.), the situation before they started their activity in their community/country, how the situation changed after they started their activity, the use of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in planning their activity, the reasons for choosing SDGs, a description related to the project management approach, the importance of sustainable project management in their activity, the top needs of their community related to the SDGs, the methods that they used to address any of the needs mentioned, the impact in their community/country and how they measure it.

Semi-structured interviews can provide reliable, comparable qualitative data, along with the opportunity to identify new ways of seeing and understanding the topic, even if it cannot be generalized to the entire population. However, structured interviews present more reliability than unstructured interviews.

### 2.3. Content analysis

Data gathering started with the identification of interviewees. Given the purpose of our research, we used the following two sampling techniques: (1) snowball sampling, where initial informants are identified and the subsequent sample is built by asking for key recommendations from these informants; and (2) key informant sampling, where we target key people that are knowledgeable about the issue.

---

<sup>67</sup> Saldaña, J., & Omasta, M. *Qualitative research: Analyzing life*: Sage Publications, 2017

These sampling techniques served as a starting point to identify the 35 respondents. The respondents were part of TG1 (TG1: youth workers and young people active in community development, project management as well as youth educators from the EU) and TG2 (young entrepreneurs and freelancers from the EU).

Like any interview, the protocol followed the general recommendations. It started with the introduction of the researcher to the participant, reviewing any informed consent required, answering all the questions participants have, confirming the available time for the interview, and ensuring they sign all the appropriate forms<sup>68</sup>. Also, data gathering continued with ethical clearance, specifically with getting consent (Annex 1). A consent form represents an agreement between the researcher and the participant, outlining their role and responsibilities.

The qualitative analysis was performed in the following way: the data obtained from the interviews were decomposed and grouped, so it was easier to organize and create a complete view of the information gathered during data collection. Specifically, we followed the next steps: (1) annotation was used by emphasizing words, phrases, sentences, or sections; they helped identify important data and patterns; (2) conceptualizing qualitative data was implemented through aligning it with the theme; (3) *creating categories and subcategories* by grouping the information, eliminating or combining certain data, and keeping only the relevant data; (4) segmentation was used by positioning and *connecting the categories*, allowing to establish the bulk of the data cohesively; (5) identifying a hierarchy among the categories and if one is more important than the other; and (6) using the specific data to answer the questions in the field, and compare it with relevant studies, theories, and concepts related to the study<sup>69</sup>.

---

<sup>68</sup> Saldaña, J., & Omasta, M. *Qualitative research: Analyzing life*: Sage Publications, 2017

<sup>69</sup> Braun, V., & Clarke, V. *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners*: Sage Publications, 2013

### 3. Results

#### Demographic results

Of the 35 interviews undertaken for this research and 35 responders, 11 are citizens or are people working in Greece, 9 young participants represented Romania, 6 youth from France, and 9 are participants of Estonia. Related to their job, their positions varied from founders and co-founders, project managers, to young entrepreneurs, youth workers, international volunteer project coordinators, educators and lecturers in schools, trainers and mentors, volunteers.

#### Results for Greek data

Related to the respondents from Greece, two are male and nine are female. Also, six of the participants are project managers, three of them are young entrepreneurs, and the other two are youth workers.

Interviews were conducted in English or Greek (and translated into English), via the phone, online or offline without recording. They last approximately 30 minutes each and we made sure that each participant agreed to the consent form aspects.

The participant's role in society varies from youth worker, freelancer, educator/teacher to a young entrepreneur, program coordinator, project manager, and co-founder of an organization. Before they started their work in the community/country, participants were active in various social/community activities, such as social entrepreneurship, students association, volunteering in various organizations (focused on feminism, environment, vulnerable people) and refugee camps, member of university clubs, teacher's assistant in the university, founder of an organization (artists, feminism, environment, disabilities topics), coordinator of social events (awareness of disabilities), participants of Erasmus+ projects. Given that the Greek data was collected through the semi-structured interview, the results were analysed according to the three research questions asked.

#### 1. What impact do youth work projects have in the analysed societies?

The impact youth work projects have in the Greek community/country is related to various aspects. Firstly, they tried to create safe spaces and habitats that allowed people to express themselves. These aspects are important to “learn, create and regenerate the environment by

acting proactively”. Also, they focused on visibility and awareness for women, young people, and the LGBTQ+ community. In addition, youth work projects aimed to inform people about all the job opportunities they could apply for. These activities help women entrepreneurs by keeping in touch with each other. Secondly, their main aims were related to increasing well-being, involving people in the process, belonging to social groups, and even finding a job. Other projects are targeting stigma related to mental health, especially in rural areas. So, in terms of impact, the focus is on mental health awareness; they are trying to reduce stereotypes and help people. Also, activities are targeting the children, especially to create a safe space for relaxation. These could help them develop adaptive behaviours. Thirdly, some of the projects have a cultural impact. They provide accessible and inclusive actions for people, access to guided museum tours and jobs for many artists and people in the local community. Fourthly, they tried to create an international network, to promote local destinations and attract people and more tourists through social groups. Fifthly, some of the projects have helped around 2 600 people in and outside Greece.

In general, the impact in their community/country was measured by the entrepreneurs. The methods applied were the following:

- a) the number of people involved in the events;
- b) the number of events organized;
- c) feedback related to advantages and disadvantages of the projects;
- d) through evaluation forms to fill in by the beneficiaries;
- e) number of visits on various platforms developed for the programs;
- f) a questionnaire filled in by tutors of the beneficiaries;
- g) evaluation/interpretation of children drawings;
- h) testimonies;
- i) focus groups;
- j) analytics.

After they started their activity, the situation changed in various ways. Firstly, they developed a more organized type of working, in a supportive and communicative environment, open to new methods and opportunities, including an experiential learning activity through digitalization. Secondly, they tried to involve local entrepreneurs, but also, they created plenty of safe spaces where young people started to be engaged. Thirdly, they advocate for people to approach the topic of disability, and even big companies and employees to learn methods of being more inclusive. Fourthly, they succeed in changing people's vision, so they are treating with more

respect the artistic actions. Fifthly, they are trying to develop self-awareness, empathy, self-confidence, and continuous learning.

## 2. Do young entrepreneurs need sustainable project management education?

Sustainable project management was critical for eight participants' activities, and only two of them did not know what this concept means. They justified their answers by considering the following aspects:

- a) it brings stability so the actions, the results, and the benefits will last;
- b) it defines “constructing procedures and mechanisms from the simplest task to the most complicated one that lasts in time and is transferable”;
- c) it generates opportunities within a project and after a project ended;
- d) it could change people's minds.

For the Greek participants, sustainable project management means flexibility, commitment, meritocracy, communication, engagement, and collaboration between colleagues. It could update the way of thinking, addressing real needs, respect for the environment by being aware of the limited resources. Also, participants referred to this concept as “something that lasts” and is associated with the future.

Other aspects that matter more for them were the implication of the team and communication in decision making, continuous development and learning, networking, and training of the volunteers, humanitarian rules and rights, accessibility in art and education.

The management approach used by the participants was quite different, but it was based on communication, cooperation, engagement, support, responsibility, and visible results in the community. These elements are also based on ethical aspects. Some of the key issues described by participants from Greece regarding the project management approach were the following:

- a) The decisions are taken horizontally, specifically people emphasize their ideas;
- b) They establish the main objectives, a target group, make a needs analysis, see the strong and weak points, set a timeline;
- c) When they make an initiative, they try to be curious and learn, observe the need and take into account the profit for them and for the beneficiaries, the type of the environment, the region, and the authorities;

- d) Other entrepreneur recognizes the needs, shape the goal, consult the European Guide related to the skills of the 21st century and the SDGs guidelines, emphasize expected results, and make an evaluation;
- e) Some participants start by checking the logistics and practical aspects, making sure that the partners have similar perspectives, and ensure that every aspect is available;
- f) In the art domain, the participants approach situations alone, making a sketch, and showing it to others. They like to improvise and promote free expression and safe space for the beneficiaries;
- g) Other teams organize the week schedule with many activities like cinema hour, yoga hour, dance hour, football hour.

### 3. How can youth work and entrepreneurship contribute to the local impact in connection with the SDGs?

Whenever planning their activity, participants were aware of the following SDGs: quality education, reduction of inequalities, climate actions, less consumption, well-being regarding mental health, partnership for the goals. Moreover, some of them are planning new projects that will include all the 17 SDGs and how to approach them in everyday life.

Some young people confess that they did not take SDGs into account consciously when organizing their initiative, but they promote the local economic growth, the empowerment of local entrepreneurs, well-being, health, environmental awareness, inclusion, quality education, gender equality, and the reduction of inequalities, and also, they have taken climate action, especially recycling things in their work as much as possible.

The reasons why they chose those SDGs are quite similar. Firstly, SDGs involve refugee, immigrant, and unemployment themes. One of the entrepreneurs said that Greece is also affected by unemployment so economic growth could help regions like Pieria and Imathia. Secondly, quality education presents major issues and needs support with gender and LGBTQ+ equality. Moreover, participants observed that inequality is present at an early age in many children with stereotypical gender behaviours. From the participant's point of view, this aspect needs the development of critical thinking to address all the needs in everyday life. By reducing them, “a better accessible world for the vulnerable groups and everyone” could appear. Thirdly, other participants are concerned about environmental aspects and try to implement green solutions in

projects. All the SDGs need attention because “only through functional partnerships and a holistic approach will all the goals be achieved because they are all connected”.

The top needs that the Greek community has when it comes to the SDGs are identified by the participants, as follows:

- help for refugees and homeless people living on the edge of poverty, but also for many families that cannot afford to buy food;
- awareness in mental health issues, especially stigma and COVID-19;
- projects for decrease gender inequality;
- decent work circumstances for youth;
- women empowerment;
- accessibility for quality education and information about digitalization;
- inclusion;
- environmental regeneration.

Participants are trying to address the needs mentioned above through different activities. For gender equality, they are making efforts to balance the employees depending on their gender in various activities. For unemployed people, they are trying to advise them and find them a job. Also, they offer soft skills lessons and support to students in seeking a job after graduation. Regarding quality education, they developed programs of sex education, gender stereotypes, and human rights. Also, they promote art and museums (offer guided tours). In mental health issues, they are providing services and teams for emergency or catastrophic circumstances, running awareness campaigns, giving resources, and organizing workshops. Moreover, they provide food to families and people living on the edge of poverty. Their impact can also be seen through their involvement in Erasmus projects and the development of activities related to awareness of social cases.

Participants know other initiatives that are addressing the needs mentioned above, and they even collaborate:

- a) They collaborate with local entrepreneurs and promote local products;
- b) *Rahes* promotes eco-building activities;
- c) *Save your Hood* gathers people in every neighbourhood to clean it together;
- d) *Rainbow Families* and *Intersex Greece* spread awareness about relevant topics and support the communities;
- e) *Scouts* and *AISEC* have many initiatives related to awareness;

- f) Some organizations cook and provide food for homeless people;
- g) *Solidarity Now* focuses on education and offers free Greek classes;
- h) *Gender Equality Office of Greece, Organizations for Abused Women, I for You* work to empower women and offer them support and a safe space.

### Results for Romanian data

Related to the respondents from Romania, three are male and six are female. Interviews were conducted in English or Romania (and translated into English) and lasted approximately 30 minutes each. We ensured that each participant agreed to the consent form aspects.

Before starting their work in the community/country, participants were active in entrepreneurship, ecology, information technology, and so on. Given that the Romanian data was collected with the help of the semi-structured interview, the results were analysed according to the three research questions asked.

#### 1. What impact do youth work projects have in the analysed societies?

The impact that youth work projects have in the Romanian community/country is related to various aspects. Firstly, some of the projects helped with the education of 30,000 people in sustainable, low-impact climate change living. Secondly, others tried to emphasize global solidarity, by promoting fair trade and charitable actions for hundreds of vulnerable people. Thirdly, the participants were trying to promote the local community products. Fourthly, their projects involved being educated about eco-centric habits, especially to reduce the dozens of packaging, textile, and food waste. Fifthly, they were trying to offer premium service and to involve small businesses for elderly people.

In general, the impact in their community/country was measured by entrepreneurs. The methods applied were the following:

- (a) the number of donations;
- (b) the number of people participating at events;
- (c) the number of followers on their platforms;
- (d) the number of new businesses;
- (e) the number of employees;
- (f) feedback.

After participants started their activity, the situation changed in various ways, such as:

- From the launch of some projects, they helped more than 2000 young people and carried out activities related to coaching and mentoring;
- After years of constant promotion of sustainable living alternatives in theory and practice, the areas addressed are now embraced by hundreds of people;
- In other projects, taking advantage of the advent of revolutionary products and techniques has helped them to adopt safer procedures and thus change clients' preconceptions and educate them to maintain certain outcomes;
- They see more interest from other farmers to invest in sustainable alternatives because they see that it can be done differently;
- They noticed that many people are involved in their community activities, promote their goals, and share their methods with them.

## 2. Do young entrepreneurs need sustainable project management education?

Sustainable project management is important for all participants' activities, even if one of them did not use it. They argued by considering the following points:

- a) people need to work and leave something better for future generations;
- b) the main concepts should be sustainability and people's kindness to each other;
- c) it is very important in the development of their project activities;
- d) contribute to producing/creating resources and carrying out their activities in the most nature-friendly way;
- e) is the first step in creating a synergy between entrepreneurs, nature, and the community;
- f) is relevant in recycling a large amount of plastic and other non-recyclable materials or materials;
- g) organise the business in such a way as to make a profit and at the same time to give something back to the community or try, as far as possible, not to create an imbalance with their business;
- h) addressing sustainability through a so-called holistic approach, which requires the integration of the three dimensions of development (nature, society, and economy).

For the participants from Romania sustainable project management means the following aspects:

- a) approaching sustainability (through a so-called *holistic approach*) in the field of *sustainable living*;

- b) taking action by considering the environmental, economic, and social aspects of a project's life cycle;
- c) having organizational, financial, and community resilience and corporate social responsibility;
- d) changing habits and attitudes in the community (e.g., reducing consumption and avoiding waste, buying local/Romanian food);
- e) encouraging green habits (e.g., 10% of persons who come by bike, 5% of persons who come with their food containers);
- f) implementing environmental workshops for the community;
- g) involving constant training and self-awareness.

The managerial approach used by young people was quite different, but based on learning, constant adaptation, innovation models, and hard work. Specifically, their responses were based on the following issues:

- Some of them started intuitively, without experience and training in project management and organizational development;
- Other participants said they go with the flow and act on intuition or take advantage of opportunities in real-time;
- They took inspiration from other companies and tried to implement important aspects on their own. Their projects are based on the following aspects: writing a project with purpose, smart goals, action plan, budget (after the project was funded by the EU), finding a space, interior design, menu creation, testing, finding suppliers, marketing strategy, creating a team of people who resonate with their concept and values of protecting the Earth and helping others, finding suppliers in their local area and from Romania (with a few exceptions), internal procedures for selective waste collection and composting and the elaboration of an educational plan for workshops;
- Other participants needed structure, ideas, SWOT analysis, processes, tools, courses, resources in their management process.

### 3. How can youth work and entrepreneurship contribute to the local impact in connection with the SDGs?

Each time they planned their work, participants considered the following SDGs: ensuring sustainable community and production patterns, responsible consumption, hunger reduction,

establishing equality, health and well-being, quality education, building partnerships for goals and collaboration.

Some participants confessed that they did not consciously consider the SDGs when organizing their initiative because when they started their work, the SDGs were not yet formulated by the UN or because they did not know about the SDGs when they started.

However, the reasons for choosing these SDGs are quite similar. Firstly, some of them contribute directly to the SDGs through sustainable production and consumption, which is seen as the most important behavioural approach to increase positive impact in society and reduce negative environmental impact. Secondly, the SDGs are very important in a community if people are aware of the damages caused on Earth, because resources are limited. Living in a consumerist world creates too much damage and they want to raise awareness about living in an environmentally friendly way and in harmony with nature. Thirdly, agriculture is one of the most polluting industries, but it also has the greatest potential for sustainability, so they wanted to transform/improve the agricultural process in the area. Fourthly, they based their projects on gender quality, so they always tried to hire young people and form a mixed team. Fifthly, the SDG related to partnership is also important, so they have chosen to work with associates who consume and produce sustainably.

The main needs that the Romanian community has regarding the SDGs are identified by the participants as follows:

- SDG 1 no poverty;
- SDG 3 good health and well-being;
- SDG 4 quality education;
- SDG 8 decent work and economic growth;
- SDG 9 industry, innovation, and infrastructure;
- SDG 10 reduced inequalities;
- SDG 11 sustainable cities and communities (educating citizens as members of the urban community who have a role to play in creating resilient cities);
- SDG 13 climate action (understand and respond appropriately to the climate crisis and build resilience to climate change);
- SDG 16 peace, justice, and strong institutions;
- SDG 17 partnerships for the goals.

Participants try to respond to the needs mentioned above through different activities. In general, they all offer jobs for people in the community, workshops, and discounts for those with green habits and sustainable practices. Their businesses rely on the quality and useful resources, public policy, advocacy and lobbying, and a diverse and supportive community. They also provide a discount on labour to families with incomes below the minimum income limit and help the homeless by paying their rent for a year. In addition, at least 30% of the properties they work on have some sustainable features.

Other initiatives that participants are aware of and that address the needs mentioned above are the following: UNITE 2030, UNLEASH, Banca de Alimente Maramureş, ARC, Pro Vobis, Aluziva, Daddycool.ro, Magda Savuica.

### Results from French data

There were six respondents from France. Participants are entrepreneurs or presidents/directors of associations. Before starting their community/country activity, participants were active in various social activities such as food waste awareness, climate social justice, and construction with affordable or recycled materials.

Interviews were conducted in French (and translated into English) in a video format as the participants consented to it. They lasted approximately 30 minutes each and the interviewer ensured that each participant agreed to the aspects of the consent form. As the French data were collected via semi-structured interview, the results were analysed according to the three research questions asked.

#### 1. What impact do youth work projects have in the analysed societies?

The activities of the organisations in which the interview participants work are part of various fields. For example, L'écolieu de Kervillé's activities are based on the technical side and aim at well-being, planning eco-renovation, and eco-construction. In addition, they organise a weekly meeting to make group decisions and organise future events on the site for local people and stakeholders. Another association, the National Federation Les Paniers de la Mer, has daily activities in the main ports of France. One of their collaborators, The Food Bank, mainly deals with the daily collection of unsold products from supermarkets and their redistribution to associations. In contrast, La Doume, a local currency in the Puy de Dôme whose aim is to facilitate local development through the strengthening of the local economy and short-supply chain, is part of a citizens' collective, so it is essential to have a certain number of people to launch the activity

and a group of professionals to take it on at the beginning. They need to decide together on the rules, the status of how the currency will circulate and what it will be used for. La Doume is part of a network of local, complementary and local currencies (ADML63<sup>70</sup>) and on this note joins the vast majority of the 82 local currencies in France. It is also part of the SOL movement, an association that brings together some smaller-scale alternative currencies, but it is also a very active network, in which there are many exchanges between different local currencies. Another association, the WIP, requires that all employees within the company must be members and participate in company decisions. As activities, they organize once a month an amateur practice festival. Moreover, they also had a tree-planting project with an association called Silva Domestica, the main aim being to anticipate climate change. In the case of Métabatik, the entrepreneurs-built relationships with builders, demolition firms, architects, and local authorities. When they set up the activities, they deal with collection and recycling through DIY workshops. There are mainly deconstruction or demolition sites because that's where most materials go to the dump.

The impact of youth work projects in the French community/country is substantial and covers various aspects.

- Within the L'écolieu de Kervillé project, there is a certain alternative way of living in the community, based on food self-sufficiency and a commitment to ecological and social resilience.
- The National Federation "Les Paniers de la Mer" started with general ideas about food, energy and financial autonomy. Specifically, it focused its three main objectives on the recovery of unsold fish, the integration of people who are unemployed and food aid (the fish they recover is entirely redistributed to food aid associations).
- The Conserverie Locale aimed to turn unsold products into innovative ones such as soups, jams, spreads, and syrups. Also, they raised awareness of food waste among the general public through anti-waste cooking workshops (stale bread, carrot tops, etc.). Moreover, they offer support for school canteens.
- La Doume operates in the form of locally formed groups, where volunteers' knowledge of the territory facilitates the application of the professionals' expertise. In addition, the monetary reserve fund is placed in ethical banks and allows annual support for economic

---

<sup>70</sup> Association pour le Développement des Monnaies Locales dans le Puy-de-Dôme, <https://adml63.org/>

projects. Limiting the territory in which a currency is used allows them to promote short circuits and local businesses. The association is also aware of the social problems linked to the currency and launches several solidarity actions such as the conversion premium. In the long term, it aims to develop short-circuit networks between professionals.

- The WIP is a citizens' initiative that aims to rehabilitate an old industrial building and transform it into a working space. This place will be used for culture or dedicated to issues of ecology, citizenship, social links, and diversity. The project has sought bank funding and grants to set up the site and carry out the first actions. The WIP is a *collective interest cooperative* company (SCIC), so it has adopted a statute that favours joint governance among its members.
- Métabatik is a materials reuse platform in the Puy-de-Dôme department of Auvergne. It offers for sale materials recovered from deconstruction sites. The association organizes training workshops on reuse and recycling, in particular by launching DIY workshops. The association aimed to reuse materials or to give them a new function.

After they started, the situation changed in different ways. In some projects, respondents involve people from the community in daily tasks, a few hours a week. Other projects, such as La Conserverie, have developed several anti-waste actions (Les Frigos solidaires and Disco soupe) that have led to the reuse of unsold food. Moreover, La Doume is involved in euro to local currency exchange activities (the reserve fund is placed in an ethical bank, so it is partly at Crédit Coopératif, partly at Nef, and it is directed towards projects focused on local actions) and the main purpose was to make the local economy more resilient in the face of a crisis.

## 2. Do young entrepreneurs need sustainable project management education?

As the interviews focused mainly on the daily activities of the organizations as well as the organization of their activities, the essence of their action and how they involve the local communities in their projects we cannot directly assess the management approach used by the participants' organisations. However, listening to the various interviews and analyzing the actions of the various initiatives shows that the various organizations are using a lot of volunteers and youth who are engaged on issues related to sustainable development. Through this, they can learn practical and concrete strategies and tools to achieve successful results. More specifically, they can learn how to determine project scope, milestones, budgeting, and resource allocation. Sustainable project management requires the acquisition of these skills with consideration of the

environmental, economic and social aspects of the life cycle of resources, processes, products and project impact.

### 3. How can youth work and entrepreneurship contribute to the local impact in connection with the SDGs?

In the interviews, participants did not mention if they were aware of the SDGs when planning the activities. However, indirectly, through their various initiatives, they raise awareness on food waste and zero hunger, decent work and economic growth, responsible consumption and production. Also, the top needs that the French community has when it comes to the SDGs were not clearly identified through the interviews. However, the issue of funding was recurrent in all the initiatives and also that of the regular involvement of their volunteering communities in the implementation of their various initiatives. As most of the projects are mostly non-profit and community oriented, there's usually a vicious circle between funding it, raising enough capital to pay people who are working hard to implementing them while maintain initiatives at a scale that are sustainable and resilient. A good example of a local strategy or approach to funding is the "*Fédération nationale Les paniers de la mer*" – an association which reuses unsold fish from local fisheries for food aid – highlights that, in their approach to project management, they have focused on the existence of multiple sources of funding (even though most resources come from the *General Directorate for Social Cohesion*). Based on this example, a natural recommendation is to identify more sources of funding.

Furthermore, as an attempt to respond to community needs, many of the initiatives develop social innovations in order to respond to the local needs. For instance, La Doume, through its reserve created the *SoliDoume* initiative that works like a grassroots' social security scheme where various members of the initiatives contribute an amount of money during a specific period of time and afterwards that money is either redistributed equally among everyone or invested in a project led by a member in need of financial supports. Among these initiatives exist many more that are focused on the issues of food waste, economic problems, recycling, sustainability and responsible resource consumption issues.

The majority of the responders did not readily mention other initiatives that are addressing the community issues or handling topics similar to theirs. However, the participant that represented the Conserverie Locale said that this initiative is part of the European Interreg project which allows them to exchange and develop a long-term network of food waste exchange with neighbouring partners, such as Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany. Métabatik began to establish partnerships,

notably with a wood construction company, Ossabois, that would ship them materials with manufacturing defects for reuse. The WIP representative believes that local authorities, larger companies, or financial partners could be involved in a partnership with their business.

## Results from Estonia

Nine responders from Estonia attended the interviews. Participants are project managers, international volunteer project coordinators, employees in organisations for people undergoing integration, youth worker and adult educator, lecturer in schools, trainers and mentors, and volunteers. Interviews were conducted in English, by telephone, online and offline. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes and the interviewer made sure that each participant agreed to the aspects of the consent form.

Before starting their community/country work, participants were involved in various social activities such as teaching, volunteering, and studying. Also, some participants said that before starting their activities, the community used to be less aware of volunteering and the issues they address through their projects (such as environmental protection, sustainable development, and climate action, inclusion and diversity, solidarity, digital transition, participation in democratic life and so on). As the Estonian data was collected via semi-structured interview, the results were analysed according to the three research questions asked.

### 1. What impact do youth work projects have in the analysed societies?

The roles of respondents in society are diverse. First and foremost, they try to get as involved as possible in the community by talking about the problems observed and supporting their opinions. For them, these characteristics define an active citizen. This young generation perceives themselves as someone who encourages others to get involved and be more active in their community. Some of the participants are part of civil society and have been involved in youth activities for more than 10 years. In general, their roles are to enable people, strengthen, and encourage the participation of young people in civil society. Others want to empower people by offering training and mentoring, seeing their needs, and approaching them according to their wishes. So far, some of them said they have done almost everything to pursue their interests and learn new skills to pass on to others. As youth workers, some of them think that can hold people together. Other participants see their role as a "bridge" between volunteers, the community, the organisations and the national agency. Specifically, they help the community and local

organisations to grow and develop and help volunteers integrate, find and showcase their talents. Finally, respondents see their main role in society as being youth workers and adult educators, bringing and implementing new ideas.

The impact of youth work projects in the Estonian community/country is substantial and covers different aspects. Some of the participants said that they are still young and need to learn more, build relationships, and have a bigger impact. So, it is too early to speak on this topic. However, other participants are trying to observe, train and encourage people to grow and have a big impact on the world. Through their work, young people want to become active members of their societies by creating their projects and facilitating participants and developing their skills in a non-formal educational setting. Participants said they focused their work on the SDGs, raising awareness, providing skills, competencies and tried to attract local and international contributors. They also focus on presenting the true values of a citizen, having people see them as trustworthy and giving them opportunities to take on new tasks.

In general, respondents measured the impact in their community/country through both qualitative and quantitative methods. So, the impact of the work of these participants can mainly be seen *"through the change within the implementers, through the type of development and empowerment of their target group"*. The procedures applied were as follows:

- the number of applications received for funding;
- number of participants who started their initiatives;
- events organised and those to which they were invited;
- feedback from their peers, clients;
- observing people's progress;
- creating a social space where participants can stay involved in their local activities and update each other on their progress;
- observing positive changes among young people participating in the project;
- evaluation of each activity and information contained in organisational annual reports;
- the Kirkpatrick model of evaluation that looks at the reaction, learning, behaviour and results;
- new project ideas and initiatives created by applicants;
- success stories from the local community.

After they started, the situation changed in different ways. Some of the respondents hoped that they have had at least a small impact among young people in Estonia, introducing them to new

ideas, and creating more diversity with the new opportunities young people have within the community. They believe that this has helped to bring more attractive visibility for young people to participate in opportunities for personal growth and development through volunteering activities, or seminars and youth exchanges abroad. In this way, the participants saw that many young people started to regularly attend the youth center and participate in the initiatives and events planned by them. Moreover, they have noticed an increased interest among young people and local organisations in writing local and international projects. In this way, young people have more opportunities to participate in activities related to democracy, human rights, self-esteem, gender equality, education, climate change, and so on. However, others feel that they have not been able to contribute enough for the situation to change yet. Moreover, some of them said that the situation has remained unchanged so far because there is still a shortage of teachers in Estonia, especially in science subjects.

## 2. Do young entrepreneurs need sustainable project management education?

Sustainable project management is essential for the activities of some participants. However, some respondents did not know what this concept meant or who felt that sustainability, in general, was not very important for their work. In their view, sustainability implies a positive definition. They also see this element as extremely important for the realization of a project. For a plan to thrive, the project manager must be efficient and maintain a balance to see the project through to completion. Individuals need to take responsibility for the results because their impact does not disappear once the project is completed. Also, planning and management must take into account what is happening in the world and society.

Respondents say they need to support people, especially the workforce and resources. Moreover, it is essential to ensure that their work does not harm the environment, that they use resources (e.g., time, money) responsibly, that people are treated equally and decisions made are ethical. There are strategies designed to achieve objectives in the most effective way for the organisation and the community.

In everything they do, they said that they take into account both the environment and human welfare (use of environmentally friendly materials, circular economy, equal treatment, and so on). It makes them think more about their steps and make more informed and sustainable choices.

For the Estonian participants, sustainable project management has the following characteristics:

- the plans are relevant or necessary in the first place;

- to effectively addresses a crucial or significant problem or challenge;
- to have a team of people who contribute equally, communicate effectively, and share tasks that have a conclusive result;
- people are empowered to achieve a greater vision;
- durable in time and relevance, taking into account its economic, environmental, and social impact, so that *“it’s about balancing or harmonizing”*;
- to use resources responsibly and wisely and to make the materials as user-friendly as possible;
- all tasks are assigned to employees and there is support from colleagues;
- if some things can be done digitally, then there is no need to waste paper;
- quality is chosen over quantity, as a participant said, *“everyone needs to be able to manage an activity sustainably, to carry it out as efficiently as possible, with the same care!”*.

Other aspects that matter a lot for respondents were described in the interviews. A healthy working environment is one of the most important elements, they need to feel safe and to be listened to work. Also, working with people, there are constant changes and obstacles in the way. Teamwork, effective communication, active listening and productivity are essential in their business. Additionally, to thrive, kindness and empathy should be at the forefront of literally everything. However, two participants said that sustainable project management and the SDGs cover many important areas, including social issues.

The managerial approach used by the participants was quite different. These are as follows:

- In general, respondents specified that they often use the traditional approach, starting from initiative (planning and design), execution (monitoring and control), and completion. They also use the critical path method when they need to prioritise resources.
- One of the participants said that the process is quite similar in all initiatives. Firstly, they analyse the needs of the target group. Second, they do focus groups to validate the approach. Thirdly, they create systems and materials to empower the target group. Fourthly, they validate the materials once again. Fifthly, they launch the initiative and support the target group.
- Some of them set a domain and objectives, schedule the work, resources, budget, risks, communication, then execute and in the end assess strengths and weaknesses.
- Another respondent sets initial goals and vision, then creates a timeline for meeting those goals, contacts people who would like to collaborate on the project, then creates a plan for

the project, with a focus on activities and financial support. Next, he/she creates the public event and recruits participants.

- Other participants set the hours, coordinate with their colleagues and take a hands-on approach to the initiative.
- As far as the educational environment is concerned, some of them participate in the activities of organisations working in this system (associations, societies, workshops), which allows them to introduce young people to the teaching profession and show why this work is so important. In Toidupank, for example, the participant must show initiative and be present when the organisation needs help.

### 3. How can youth work and entrepreneurship contribute to the local impact in connection with the SDGs?

When planning their work, participants were aware of the following SDGs: climate action, high-quality education, partnerships for the goals, peace, and justice, reducing inequalities, responsible consumption, and gender equality. They believe that a good civil society greatly strengthens the educational system. Young people involved in civil society initiatives are an important part of quality education in society. They were aware of the inclusiveness and diversity of the participants to have the opportunity to get involved. It was also important to create projects that also pursued their sustainability and goals.

Some young people confessed that they did not consciously take the SDGs into account when organising their plan, but they believe that it is the moral responsibility of every association to do business responsibly and take the global goals into consideration. Specifically, the reasons for not considering the SDGs are as follows:

- they have not studied youth work per se and do not belong to the youth worker community, because they did not have time to attend any meetings due to their university/work schedule;
- they have no real knowledge about them;
- some of them did not have time to educate themselves in this direction;
- they think that their organisation did this without thinking of SDGs;
- they did not need to, as SDG is more of a new concept for some of them.

The reasons for choosing these SDGs in their organisations are the following:

- their activities are closely related to the SDGs, and they can influence their development by implementing projects and activities;
- young people have enough knowledge about the SDGs, their activities are related to them, and they can contribute through the activities they plan to the development of these ST goals;
- these are the issues or concerns that have brought them in the closest contact, and they feel they are binding and want to contribute to them.

Participants identified the main needs of the Estonian community concerning the SDGs as follows: spreading knowledge in all areas, gaining new skills and perspectives, more initiatives and actions organised within the community as part of an SDG-based approach, reducing inequalities within the community (e.g. people with disabilities would be able to participate in everyday life as normally as people without disabilities), enacting positive social change by gaining different perspectives on life, gender equality, providing quality education, responsible consumption and production, climate action, peace and justice, providing affordable energy; more sustainable forest management.

Participants try to respond to the above needs through different activities. First and foremost, they want to learn more about what the SDGs entail and develop their work around them. They also want to raise awareness about them and provide sufficient information to their team members. They develop youth work activities, address and self-development for people, and even want to invite a person with a mobility disability to be a team member. Regarding energy, many companies work to provide affordable resources and the state also supports them. As far as forest management is concerned, one participant emphasized the importance of voluntary settlement actions that can be joined.

As for other initiatives that address the needs mentioned above, most participants said, *"I'm sure there are many, but I don't know exactly"*. However, they pointed out that there are a variety of local and international projects in Estonia related to these needs, including youth magazines, exhibitions and more. There are also projects addressing these needs, training, and practices.

## Interview results as a whole

This research involved the data from four countries, namely Greece, Romania, France, and Estonia. The main objectives of this research were the following: (1) to analyze the impact of young people's activities on the community; (2) to promote the exchange of good practices within European youth related to SDGs, environmental protection, and community development; and (3) to promote a common understanding of the concept of environmental impact as related to youth work and youth-led projects (community projects, entrepreneurial ventures, and so on).

A total of 34 interviews were conducted, involving 35 participants. They come from different professional backgrounds, where they hold positions such as project manager, international volunteer project coordinator, trainer, or mentor. In this section, we present the results of the interviews as a whole, highlighting emerging patterns across the four European countries.

The collected data played a variety of roles in the report: (1) it provided facts from key informants; (2) it brought local/community experience into the spotlight; (3) it highlighted, in some cases, identical points of view and, in others, the differences; (4) it illustrated the participants' arguments; and (5) it provided case studies from four countries with quite different cultures. The main research issue discussed in this research was related to the possibility that the youth-led entrepreneurship initiatives and projects have contributed to the attainment of SDGs and community building. Thus, the qualitative analysis of the data extracted from the interviews was carried out by answering the three research questions.

### 1. The impact of the youth work projects in the analysed societies

The participants in these interviews briefly presented the activities of the associations, their objectives and how they carry out their work. Most of those interviewed try to involve the local community in their actions, make efforts to support young people and try to develop strategies that take the environment into account. Specifically, respondents consider that they have the following roles in the community: (1) to support their own opinions and be responsive to community needs; (2) encourage people in the community to get involved in activities and be more active; (3) offer training and mentoring to young people according to their professional needs; (4) facilitate the link between volunteers, the community and organisations; and (5) provide spaces where young people can develop projects.

The youth projects try:

- to provide safe spaces and habitats for people to express themselves;

- to create a space where children can relax and help them develop adaptive behaviors;
- to raise awareness of the problems faced by vulnerable groups (women, young people, and the LGBTQ+ community) as well as mental health issues;
- to inform people about job opportunities and give them the chance to apply for them;
- to increase well-being and support the inclusiveness;
- to ensure access to guided tours of the museum; provide places of work for artists and/or people from the local community;
- to educate people about sustainable, climate-friendly lifestyles and eco-centric habits (to reduce the dozens of packaging, textile, and food waste);
- to create an international network to promote local destinations in order to attract as many tourists as possible;
- to emphasise the importance of global solidarity by promoting fair trade and charitable actions for vulnerable people;
- to offer premium customer service;
- to involve and support small enterprises run by older people;
- to convert unsold food into new products;
- to organise cooking workshops to raise awareness of food waste among the general public;
- to develop short-circuit networks between professionals;
- to rehabilitate an old industrial building and convert it into a cultural space;
- to organize training workshops on reuse and recycling;
- to offer an alternative way of living in the community (food self-sufficiency, and ecological and social resilience).

After participants started their activity in their community/country, the situation changed in various ways:

- responders noticed that more and more people are getting involved in community activities, promoting the objectives of the implemented projects and sharing their methods;
- they helped thousands of young people through coaching and mentoring activities;
- as a result of the constant promotion of sustainable living alternatives, the areas addressed are now accepted and implemented by hundreds of people;
- the advent of advanced products and techniques has helped people to adopt safer procedures, change clients' preconceptions and educate them to achieve certain results;

- participants noted greater interest from farmers in investing in sustainable alternatives;
- participants included digitisation;
- participants call for more integration of people with disabilities in companies;
- responders managed to change people's vision to treat artistic actions with more respect;
- the responders involved people from the community in daily tasks, especially for renovation activities;
- participants developed their and community's self-awareness, empathy, self-confidence and continuous learning;
- they implemented some anti-waste actions;
- responders tried to make the local economy more resilient in the face of a crisis (local currency exchange activities).

The methods applied by the participants to measure the impact in their community/country were both qualitative and quantitative:

- the number of employees and volunteers, applications received, organized events, events to which they were invited, new businesses, followers and visits on their platforms, donations;
- the Kirkpatrick model of evaluation that measures the reaction, learning, behaviour and results;
- a questionnaire filled in by the beneficiaries or tutors;
- results of the focus groups;
- annual reports;
- tracking applicants' progress, success, and new project ideas or initiatives;
- testimonies;
- feedback from their peers and clients related to the projects.

As for the impact on the community, in the case of France, this topic has not been addressed. Thus, we cannot present the perspective of French entrepreneurs.

Youth work projects in the four countries support the process of building a strong local community. Specifically, the majority of youth work organisations are engaged on various topics that aim to empower other people in various socio-economic domains, implicate the community, and promote products and techniques to adopt safer procedures. In this way, participants could ensure that the projects implemented will have both medium and long-term applicability in these countries.

## 2. The need for young entrepreneurs to take part in sustainable project management education

Sustainable project management was an important concept for most youth projects, but many of the interviewees had no knowledge of the term. In general, youth emphasized, firstly, the manager has to be efficient, take responsibility for the results, and ensure that their results and benefits are sustainable. Secondly, a sustainable approach can create new opportunities both within a given project and after its completion. Thirdly, approaching sustainability holistically may help to integrate the three dimensions of development (nature, society and economy). Fourthly, given that people need jobs, sustainable project management can contribute to a better future for generations, but also it could change human thinking in chosen communities. Fifthly, the business needs to be organized in such a way to make a profit and help the community. Finally, sustainable project management implies activities in a nature-friendly way by recycling as much plastic and other recyclable/non-recyclable materials as possible.

However, some respondents did not know what this concept entailed, and others felt that sustainability was not so important in their activities.

For the youth, sustainable project management means the following aspects:

- flexibility, commitment, communication, involvement, information sharing, and collaboration between colleagues.
- it could update the way of thinking, addressing real needs, and respecting the limited resources of the environment.
- long-lasting, associated with the future, with economic, environmental, and social impact;
- approaching sustainability through a so-called *holistic approach* in the field of sustainable living;
- taking action on the environmental, economic, and social aspects of a project's life cycle;
- to have financial, organisational and community resilience as well as corporate social responsibility;
- changing habits and attitudes in the community: reducing consumption and avoiding waste, buying local food and support mainly the local economy;
- encouraging green habits, especially in terms of consumption and transport;
- organising environmental workshops in the community;
- involves continuous training and self-awareness.
- digitisation of procedures.

Other issues that mattered to them were: a healthy work environment, team involvement and communication in decision making, continuous development and learning, active listening, networking and volunteer training, humanitarian rules and rights, accessibility in art and education, productivity, psychological elements (kindness and empathy).

The management approach applied by the participants was quite different, but it was based on communication, cooperation, engagement, responsibility, support, visible results in the community, learning, adaptation, innovation models, and hard work. All these aspects are based on ethics. In general, respondents use the traditional approach, which has the following steps: initiative (planning and design), execution (monitoring and control), and completion. Also, decisions made are based on people's ideas. Entrepreneurs establish the main objectives and target group, conduct a needs analysis, note strengths and weaknesses and establish a timetable. When developing a project, they try to analyse as much as possible the development possibilities, taking into account the needs of the organisation, possible benefits and environmental impact. Responders have several approaches:

- (1) they establish a domain and objectives, schedule the activities, resources, budget, risks, then execute and in the end assess strengths and weaknesses;
- (2) other recognise the needs, outline the objectives, consult the European Guidelines on competencies and the SDG guidelines, outline the expected results and start an evaluation;
- (3) participants start by checking logistics, making sure partners have similar perspectives;
- (4) responders start with goals and vision, develops a timeline, contacts collaborators for the project, then develops a plan, with activities and financial aspects;
- (5) in art, participants improvise and promote free expression by approaching situations on their own;
- (6) other entrepreneurs supplement their weekly schedule with activities such as directing classes, yoga, dance classes, or soccer.

Some participants started their projects based on intuition, with no experience or training in project management and organisational development. Other participants said they acted on intuition or took advantage of real-time opportunities. Also, a natural strategy was to take over relevant models/elements found in other companies.

Other respondents based their projects on the following aspects: a suitable team, development of the project goal, smart objectives, action plan, budget, available space, testing, identification of

suppliers, marketing strategy, separate waste collection procedures. Other entrepreneurs focused on: the need for new ideas, establishing a structure, SWOT analysis, identifying necessary tools, necessary courses and available resources. They use the critical path method if the participants need to prioritise resources.

In the current global context, following the answers of the analysed respondents, sustainable project management represents a relevant concept and implies individual and organisational responsibility from the beginning of the project. In the activities where sustainability was planned from the beginning of the project, it could not be changed or forgotten in the long term. Even if sustainability was a challenging concept for some organisations, participants considered that it involves environment, society, economy, and administration. When these four elements were taken into account, along with other essential aspects listed in the interviews, respondents were able to successfully implement sustainability in projects.

### 3. Contributions of youth work and entrepreneurship to local impact on the SDGs

The Global Goals are an important call to action by all countries on 17 thematic issues, including food, water, education, energy, climate, urbanisation, transport, science and technology and so on. They underline the need to implement various strategies to improve these issues in the long term.

When planning their activity, participants were aware of certain SDGs, including SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 2 (zero hunger), SDG 3 (good health and well-being), SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities,) SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), SDG 13 (climate action), SDG 16 (peace and justice), SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals). Moreover, some of them are planning new projects that will include all the 17 SDGs and how to approach them in everyday life.

Some youth confess that they did not take SDGs into account consciously when organizing their initiative, but they promote climate action (recycling things in their work as much as possible), empowerment of local entrepreneurs, environmental awareness, gender equality, health and well-being, inclusion, local economic growth, quality education, and reduction of inequalities. Other participants confessed that when they started their work, the SDGs were not yet formulated by the UN or they did not know about the SDGs when they started. Some young respondents did not include the SDGs in their activities because they did not have management studies or real

knowledge about them, in addition they did not have time to invest in this direction, and their associations did not think about this aspect when implementing their projects.

The reasons why participants chose these SDGs mentioned above are quite similar. Among other things, the SDGs involve addressing the issue of refugees, immigrants and the unemployed, problems that exist in the various communities in which participants carry out their projects. The regions studied have problems and need support in areas such as gender equality and LGBTQ+. In this respect, participants believe that it is important to develop critical thinking to address these issues. Also, they hire young people and form as many mixed teams as possible. The SDG related to partnership is essential, with participants choosing to work mainly with partners who consume and produce sustainably. Given that resources are limited, promoting the SDGs is essential to make people aware of the damage caused by a consumerist world. Thus, the young people set out to raise awareness of an environmentally friendly way of life in harmony with nature. Some of the projects contribute directly to the SDGs through sustainable production and consumption. This is one of the most important approaches to reducing negative environmental impacts. Specifically, participants tried to take action by implementing eco-friendly solutions in their projects. Agriculture is a substantial contributor to pollution, but it also has enormous potential for development. Thus, respondents stressed that there is a need to transform this sector by adopting more environmentally friendly processes.

The main needs of the communities studied about the SDGs are identified by participants as the following:

- SDG 1 no poverty and SDG 2 zero hunger (helping refugees, the homeless, and families who cannot afford to buy food);
- SDG 3 good health and well-being (awareness of mental health issues, especially stigma and COVID-19);
- SDG 4 quality education (accessibility for quality education and information about digitalization);
- SDG 5 gender equality;
- SDG 7 affordable and clean energy;
- SDG 8 decent work and economic growth;
- SDG 9 industry, innovation, and infrastructure;
- SDG 10 reduced inequalities (projects to decrease gender inequality, increase women empowerment and promote inclusion in the society);

- SDG 11 sustainable cities and communities (educating citizens as members of the urban community who have a role to play in creating resilient cities);
- SDG 12 responsible consumption and production;
- SDG 13 climate action (understand and respond appropriately to the climate crisis, build resilience to climate change, and propose approaches for the environmental concern through regeneration);
- SDG 15 life on land (forest management);
- SDG 16 peace, justice, and strong institutions;
- SDG 17 partnerships for the goals.

Even though participants from France did not mention in the interviews if they considered SDGs when planning their activities, we indirectly deduced that they may promote awareness of food waste and zero hunger, decent work and economic growth, and responsible consumption and production.

Participants try to address the main needs of the communities through various activities. Firstly, in order to restore gender equality, the participants are working, through the projects implemented, to balance the number of employees according to their gender in carrying out different activities. Secondly, unemployed people and students are helped to find a job. In addition, courses in transversal skills and vocational counselling are organised. Also, responders and their teams coordinate youth work activities, provide information, and inspire action. Thirdly, participants are trying to provide high-quality education (some of the projects developed by the participants aimed to initiate programmes on sex education, gender stereotypes and human rights). Other projects developed by participants promote art and museums where they offer guided tours. Fourthly, some projects aim to provide services and teams for emergency or mental health issues. They also run awareness-raising campaigns, provide resources and run workshops. Fifthly, the projects support the feeding of families and people living on the poverty line. Sixthly, interview participants are involved in Erasmus projects and help raise awareness. Seventhly, they offer discounts for people with green habits/sustainable practices and for families with incomes below the guaranteed minimum income. Eighthly, projects developed by participants are based on usage and quality resources, public policy, advocacy and lobbying, and a supportive community. Ninthly, at least 30% of built properties have certain sustainable features. Tenthly, related to energy actions, some companies are trying to provide affordable resources. Lastly, participants want to learn about the SDGs and develop projects around them.

Participants are aware of other initiatives/associations addressing similar needs such as charity actions (ALUZIVA, Banca pentru Alimente Maramureş Association, Daddycool.ro, Magda Săvuică); eco-friendly actions (Raheş, Save your Hood); education projects (Solidarity Now, Scouts); support actions for women (Gender Equality Office of Greece, Organizations for Abused Women, I for You); support actions for communities (Rainbow Families, Intersex Greece); volunteer centres (Pro Vobis); global innovation (UNLEASH, UNITE 2030); and global network of people (AIESEC). Some respondents did not know exactly of other initiatives/associations, but they said that there are plenty of national and international projects related to these needs.

In a context where global economies are suffering, this project has shown how youth workers and young people in the European Union can contribute to youth empowerment, community development and support for the SDGs. Following information extracted from interviews, we can emphasize that some of the participants have taken into account certain SDGs when implementing projects and are constantly trying to balance the economic, social, and environmental aspects, in order to reduce development gaps, to increase the community well-being, and to keeping the environment clean. Thus, it is necessary for each association to make important changes to its development plan to meet the challenges of the current century.

## 4. Recommendations for the Digital Guide

### Romania and Greece

A sustainable future is something relevant for all of us and each person can contribute to achieving this goal in different ways and/or at different levels. In this sub-chapter of the report, we have outlined two areas of recommendations – sustainable project management in youth work; and SDGs reinforcement at European local levels - for those who work on sustainable projects. We will also make a common list of good practices for the four countries involved in the project.

In the process of analysing the involvement of the young generation in achieving the objectives of sustainable development, a first step is to mention the perspective set by the United Nations. These 17 Sustainable Development Goals (see Fig.1) were adopted in 2015 at the New York Summit. The 2030 Agenda is a program of action that highlights the need for a balance between the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social, and environmental.

**Fig 1. UN sustainable development goals<sup>71</sup>.**



<sup>71</sup> United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, “Sustainable Development. The 17 Goals”, accessed in 05.01.2022, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

- a. Sustainable project management (how to design, plan, implement) in youth work. Examples of good practices and Recommendations.

### France

The interviews conducted in France helped have a renewed perspective on how grassroots initiatives organize themselves to answer to local needs, However, as mentioned above, most of the respondents did not consciously mention the SDG goals that their initiatives are targeting. This makes us almost assume that such initiatives are not consciously developed to answer some specific SDG needs but rather territorial needs and the answers provided to the local context mostly end up answering to some of the SDGs. Projects such as Metabatik, the WIP and the Ecolieu are at the core of transition movements and they are a result of a desire to engage directly on local territories in order to answer the socio-ecologic and territorial needs of the communities in which the initiatives are invested. Take home notes from here is the need for local communities, youth people especially to be empowered and motivated to take up action regardless of their exposure to the SDGs in order to answer local needs and hence, help promote and navigate the train towards the SDGs. The trend in the French interviews is a bottom-up one where the various projects are more context-sensitive and crisis oriented than a top-down SDG thought-out process. This gives another view on how to develop initiatives that then can be analysed based on their impact and observed to be good catalysts towards SDGs attainment.

### Estonia

- In the case of Estonia, we observe a mixed situation in terms of understanding the main concepts to which this report relates. Half of those interviewed are familiar with the concept of *"sustainable project management"* and apply it in their work, and the other half openly state that they have never heard of the term.
- To the question *"how to design, plan and implement a project?"*, several examples of good practice can be given from interviews. For example, one respondent (Maris) describes his approach to project management as taking into account the following stages: planning - setting objectives, schedule, resources, budget, risks and communication efforts; project implementation

and completion. This respondent also highlighted the need to take into account the sustainability requirements throughout the project lifecycle. Another respondent has a similar approach (Beata - coordinator of international volunteer projects).

- The best example for Estonia is that of respondent Nina because she has a nuanced approach to project management: most of the time she uses *“the waterfall model”* – initiatives, planning and design, execution, monitoring and control, maintenance – but when she wants to prioritise resources she uses *“the critical path method”*.

#### Romania

- In the case of Romania, we were able to observe, through interviews, that the majority of entrepreneurs do not have a clear approach to project management (there are situations in which it is explicitly stated that this is not relevant for their activity). In terms of sustainable project management, it is observed that some of these entrepreneurs do not know how to define this concept and/or are not interested in it. In this context, examples of good practices regarding sustainable project management in Romania cannot be offered.
- Even if we can't talk about sustainable project management, it is worth mentioning that one of the entrepreneurs uses in his project management approach, three elements – the SMART criteria; The Eisenhower Matrix; The helix business model of innovation.

#### Greece

- As in the case of Romania, Greek entrepreneurs do not have specific knowledge about what is sustainable project management. Also, regarding the concept of project management, through interviews, only extremely vague information is provided and thus it cannot be evaluated in terms of the definition proposed in the theoretical framework of this report. However, the only example of good practice that can be mentioned in the case of Greece is that of the entrepreneur Elena Skarpidou who mentioned that in their management approach they aim to: 1. recognise the needs; 2. shape the goal; 3. consult the European Guide for the Skills of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and the SDG guidelines; 4. highlight the expected results; 5. make the evaluation.

## b. SDGs reinforcement at European local levels. Examples of good practices and Recommendations.

### France

- Similar to the situation of the concept of *"sustainable project management"*, in the interviews conducted in France, the subject of the goals set by the United Nations for sustainable development was not directly addressed. However, examples of actions that are part of the efforts to achieve these goals can be identified.
- The actions of the association "Fédération nationale Les paniers de la mer" can be linked to the second objective of the 17 for Sustainable Development – *"End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture"*. This organisation, present in France's main ports, takes fish that is not purchased and then distributes it to food aid associations throughout the country.
- Also for the second SDG, we can mention the actions of the initiative "La Conserverie Locale" which aims to prevent food waste and reuse unsold food. These objectives are pursued by transforming food excluded from distribution into different products, depending on the season. This processing service is offered also to local producers and to the Food Bank Association.
- A final example of good practice is the Métabatik organisation, which focuses on recycling building materials. More specifically, it offers for sale materials recovered from sites/areas to be demolished/destroyed. This approach can be associated with UN goal number 12 - Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns – because it supports the achievement of the target 12.5 – By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse.

### Estonia

- In the case of Estonia we see a greater awareness of the existence of sustainable development objectives. About half of those interviewed say they take these objectives into account in their work. For example, the main goals mentioned are: gender equality; quality education; reduced inequalities; responsible consumption and production; climate action; peace, justice and strong institutions; partnerships for the goals.

- From the interviews can be drawn examples of good practices regarding the measurement of the impact that the interviewees have in the community. Beata (coordinator of international volunteer projects) and Nina (youth worker and educator) rely on an approach that includes qualitative and quantitative elements. Thus, in these two dimensions we find: the number of participants, events and projects; the feedback received; the conduct of surveys; the Kirkpatrick model of evaluation which analyses four levels – reaction, learning, behavior and results.

#### Romania

- Alexandra Irina Pînzariu – *The FutureKit* and *Storyada.ro* – these youth focused initiatives are an example of good practices because they have organised their work according to certain specific SDGs and aim, in a concrete way, to develop future actions that will have a greater impact.
- through the interviews, it was possible to see that many of the entrepreneurs do not know how to measure the impact that they have in the community/country and/or are not interested in this subject. *Thus, a natural recommendation is to use an impact measurement system that can help to make the necessary corrections for a sustainable project.* A good example is Cadar Andreea Stefania (Greenys bistro) who analysed the impact according to several dimensions: the number of donations, of bicycles coming to the bistro, of people participating at educational events, surveys, or depending on how many kilograms of compost were gathered.

#### Greece

- an example of good practice is the work of Tara Clavel (worker in refugee camps in Greece). Although she focused her activity only on SDG 5 – gender equality, she took relevant actions to consolidate this goal: by providing psychological counselling for children, or by organising games through which she sought to empower girls (in the context in which she observed that there are certain stereotypes about women’s place in the camps, she tried to offer a counterexample by playing football with the boys).
- unlike the case of Romania, some Greek entrepreneurs seem more aware of the SDGs and their importance. From the interviews we also have examples of good practices regarding:

1. *the identification of the needs of the community in terms of SDGs* - Marianna Anagnostopoulou uses surveys when talking about the needs of her community, thus in this manner is moving away from a purely subjective perspective.

2. *the development of activities to address community issues* - Marianna Anagnostopoulou states that she provides mental health services, food to families and people in need, company to elderly people, conducts awareness campaigns about vulnerable groups, organises workshops.

At this point, it is also relevant to specify a general recommendation to be addressed in the digital guide. We believe that young entrepreneurs need to be better informed about the concept of “sustainable project management” and about the UN Sustainable Development Goals. They must also be able to identify concrete ways to manage their projects efficiently and sustainably. Such a goal can only be achieved by supporting education.

## Conclusions

The central objective of the project was to assess the impact of European youth in the community building process, the attainment of SDGs, and in creating sustainable communities. This report will be useful in achieving the four general objectives which focus on promoting a common understanding of the concept of environmental impact as related to youth work.

Starting from these elements, it is helpful to briefly present the main results of the research. Starting from the first research question - *What impact do youth work projects have in the analysed societies?* – we noticed that most of the entrepreneurs try to involve the community in their activities, support young people, and develop environmental strategies. They also provide trainings and workshops for young people to develop projects and facilitate links between volunteers, the community and organisations.

Related to the second research question - *Do young entrepreneurs need sustainable project management education?* – the results emphasized that most young entrepreneurs don't know enough about this concept and how it is put into practice. Thus, they need education in sustainable project management to assimilate new knowledge that will be used in the development of their future projects.

Through the third research question - *How can youth work and entrepreneurship contribute to the local impact in connection with the SDGs?* – we identified that participants were aware of the following SDGs in: no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, climate action, peace and justice, partnerships for the goals. However, some entrepreneurs confessed that they did not take SDGs into consideration when they planned their activities. Thus, a natural recommendation is for each entrepreneur to change their plan in order to balance the economic, social, and environmental aspects.

A necessary step for the evaluation of this project is also to present possible limitations. Even though 34 interviews were carried out through this project in four European countries - Estonia, France, Romania, and Greece - the results cannot be evaluated as representative. This is because the sample drawn is not representative for the population under investigation. Also, it will be helpful to include more European countries to discover new elements that are relevant to the objectives of this research, which could represent the basis of a new partnership in the

European context. Future studies may focus on choosing respondents who meet certain inclusion criteria relevant to the project (e.g., knowledge of minimum information on the concepts studied). Another relevant limitation of this project is related to the lack of information about the organisations in which some participants work (for example, the case of Estonian respondents). However, this project could represent a preliminary step in comparing and quantifying the answers on the impact of European youth in the community building process, the attainment of SDGs and in creating of sustainable communities. Also, the interviews are a source of information about this theme and are very useful to understand respondents' personal opinions, beliefs, and values related to their activities in the community. Therefore, this project has highlighted several relevant insights regarding the role and impact of youth involvement in the community, their activities' consequences, the need to follow sustainable project management education and to implement a relevant plan in this direction, as well as to study and develop projects based on SDGs.

## References

- \*\*\*, “Business demography statistics”, *Eurostat. Statistics Explained*, 2020, accessed in 04.01.2022, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Business\\_demography\\_statistics](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Business_demography_statistics)
- \*\*\*, “Commission Recommendation of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises”, *Official Journal of the European Union*, 2003, accessed in 03.01.2022, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32003H0361&from=EN>
- \*\*\*, “Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union”, *Official Journal of the European Union*, 2012, accessed in 05.01.2022, [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:2bf140bf-a3f8-4ab2-b506-fd71826e6da6.0023.02/DOC\\_1&format=PDF](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:2bf140bf-a3f8-4ab2-b506-fd71826e6da6.0023.02/DOC_1&format=PDF)
- \*\*\*, “entrepreneur”, Merriam-Webster, accessed in 12.01.2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/entrepreneurship>
- \*\*\*, “Entrepreneurship – Sailing to Success”, *European Commission*, accessed in 07.01.2022, <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplu-project-details/#project/2019-1-DK01-KA105-059994>
- \*\*\*, “entrepreneurship”, *Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries*, accessed in 12.01.2022, <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/entrepreneurship?q=entrepreneurship>
- \*\*\*, “*Inclusive Entrepreneurship Policies, Country Assessment Notes. Romania*”, 2020, accessed in 05.01.2022, <https://www.oecd.org/cfe/smes/Romania-IE-2020.pdf>
- \*\*\*, “*Inclusive Entrepreneurship Policies: Country Assessment Notes. France*”, 2018, accessed in 06.01.2022, <https://www.oecd.org/cfe/smes/France-IE-Country-Note-2018.pdf>
- \*\*\*, “*Inclusive Entrepreneurship Policies: Country Assessment Notes. Estonia*, 2020”, accessed in 12.01.2022, <https://www.oecd.org/cfe/smes/Estonia-IE-2020.pdf>
- \*\*\*, “Managing a project”, *European Commission*, accessed in 04.01.2022, [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/funding/managing-project\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/funding/managing-project_en)
- \*\*\*, “*Qu’est-ce que la gestion de projet? Définition AFNOR*”, accessed in 07.01.2022, [https://ics.utc.fr/portail\\_linios/Linios/LINIO\\_gpfoad/co/intro\\_6.html](https://ics.utc.fr/portail_linios/Linios/LINIO_gpfoad/co/intro_6.html)
- \*\*\*, “*Romania’s National Sustainable Development Strategy 2030*”, Paideia, București, 2018, accessed in 06.01.2022, <http://dezvoltaredurabila.gov.ro/web/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Romanias-Sustainable-Development-Strategy-2030.pdf>
- \*\*\*, “SME definition”, *European Commission*, accessed in 03.01.2022, [https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/sme-definition\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/sme-definition_en)

- \*\*\*, “Specific Support to Romania – Starts-ups, Scale-ups and Entrepreneurship in Romania”, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2017, accessed in 05.01.2022, <https://ec.europa.eu/research-and-innovation/sites/default/files/rio/report/KI-AX-18-008-EN-N.pdf>
- \*\*\*, “Supporting entrepreneurship”, European Commission, accessed in 04.01.2022, [https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/supporting-entrepreneurship\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/supporting-entrepreneurship_en)
- \*\*\*, “Sustainable development”, Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques, 2016, accessed in 06.01.2022, <https://www.insee.fr/en/metadonnees/definition/c1644>
- \*\*\*, “What is Youth Entrepreneurship”, IGI Global, accessed in 13.01.2022, <https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/youth-entrepreneurship/74309>
- \*\*\*, “Youth Policy Essentials”, 2019, accessed in 05.01.2022, <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47261953/Youth+Policy+Essentials+updated.pdf/92d6c20f-8cba-205f-0e53-14e16d69e561>
- \*\*\*, “Youth Wiki national description. Youth policies in France 2019”, accessed in 07.01.2022, [https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021-06/France\\_2019.pdf](https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021-06/France_2019.pdf)
- A.J. Gilbert Silvius, Ron P.J. Schipper, “Sustainability in project management: A literature review and impact analysis”, *Social Business* 4, no. 1 (2014)
- Aggelos Tsakanikas, Giannis Giotopoulos, Evangelia Valavanioti, Sofia Stavragi, “Annual Entrepreneurship Report 2018-2019: Early stage entrepreneurship improves”, *The Foundation for Economic and Industrial Research*, 2019
- Angeliki Moschou, “Country sheet on youth policy in Greece, 2012”, accessed in 06.01.2022, [https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47261563/Hellenic\\_country\\_sheet\\_2011.pdf/05049a39-c832-4c53-ae44-1e5fa985204e](https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47261563/Hellenic_country_sheet_2011.pdf/05049a39-c832-4c53-ae44-1e5fa985204e)
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners*: Sage Publications, 2013
- Business France, Foreign Investment in France, “Definition entrepreneur”, accessed in 07.01.2022, <https://investinfrance.fr/argument/definition-entrepreneur/>
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*: Sage Publications, 2018
- Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, “Commission Staff Working Document. Executive Summary of the Evaluation of Commission Recommendation of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises”, European Commission, 2021, accessed in 05.01.2022, [https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=SWD\(2021\)280&lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=SWD(2021)280&lang=en)

- European Commission, “Report From The Commission To The European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions on the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy (2019-2021)”, Brussels, 2021, accessed in 03.01.2022, [https://europa.eu/youth/d8/sites/default/files/inline-files/1\\_EN\\_ACT\\_part1\\_v3.pdf](https://europa.eu/youth/d8/sites/default/files/inline-files/1_EN_ACT_part1_v3.pdf)
- European Commission, Directorate-General for Communication, “Towards a sustainable Europe by 2030: reflection paper”, Publications Office, 2019, accessed in 07.01.2022, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2775/647859>
- European Commission, Directorate-General for Informatics, “PM<sup>2</sup> project management methodology: guide 3.0”, Publications Office, 2018, accessed in 06.01.2022, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2799/078039>
- Goodwin, K. A., & Goodwin, C. J. *Research in psychology: Methods and design*: John Wiley & Sons, 2017
- Harris Apostolopoulos, “Transformation PMO: Leading the way to Corporate Excellence and Sustainability!”, 2019, accessed in 03.01.2022, [http://www.boussiasconferences.gr/files/boussias\\_conferences\\_content/presentations/project\\_management\\_congress/2019/charis\\_apostolopoulos\\_pm\\_conference19.pdf](http://www.boussiasconferences.gr/files/boussias_conferences_content/presentations/project_management_congress/2019/charis_apostolopoulos_pm_conference19.pdf)
- Institute of Entrepreneurship Development, “E-Book for Entrepreneurship”, 2018, accessed in 06.01.2022, [https://ied.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/E-book-for-Entrepreneurship\\_%CE%95%CE%9D.pdf](https://ied.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/E-book-for-Entrepreneurship_%CE%95%CE%9D.pdf)
- Järvinen, M., & Mik-Meyer, N. *Qualitative Analysis: Eight Approaches for the Social Sciences*: Sage Publications, 2020
- L. Vestergaard, K. Moberg, C. Jørgensen, “Impact of Entrepreneurship Education in Denmark - 2011”, *The Danish Foundation for Entrepreneurship - Young Enterprise*, Odense, 2012, accessed in 05.01.2022, [https://eng.ffe-ye.dk/media/202248/impact\\_of\\_entrepreneurship\\_education\\_in\\_denmark\\_2011.pdf](https://eng.ffe-ye.dk/media/202248/impact_of_entrepreneurship_education_in_denmark_2011.pdf)
- Lafortune G, Cortés Puch M, Mosnier A, Fuller G, Diaz M, Riccaboni A, Kloke-Lesch A, Zachariadis T, Carli E, Oger A, “Europe Sustainable Development Report 2021: Transforming the European Union to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”, SDSN, SDSN Europe and IEEP, France: Paris, 2021, accessed in 03.01.2022, <https://s3.amazonaws.com/sustainabledevelopment.report/2021/Europe+Sustainable+Development+Report+2021.pdf>
- Nuică Cristina Ștefania, “Studiu privind analiza mediului antreprenorial. **START ROMÂNIA – Finanțare pentru românii din Diaspora**”, *Camera de Comerț și Industrie Vâlcea*, accessed in 05.01.2022, <http://www.ccivl.ro/studiu-privind-analiza-mediului-antreprenorial/>

- Parlamentul României, “Lege nr.350 din 21 iulie 2006. Legea tinerilor”, *Monitorul Oficial* no.648 from 27 July 2006, accessed in 06.01.2022, <http://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/73834>
- Project Management Institute, *The Standard for Project Management and A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge, 7th ed.* (USA: Project Management Institute, 2021)
- Ravitch, S. M., & Carl, N. M. *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological*: Sage Publications, 2019
- Riigikogu, “Sustainable Development Act”, 2013, accessed in 12.01.2022, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/530122013003/consolide>
- Riigikogu, “Youth Work Act”, 2020, accessed in 06.01.2022, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/517072020007/consolide>
- Saldaña, J., & Omasta, M. *Qualitative research: Analyzing life*: Sage Publications, 2017
- Sharon Waller, Lee Waller, Vongai Mporu, Mercy Kurebwa, “Education at the Intersection of Globalization and Technology”, IntechOpen, 2021, accessed in 09.01.2022, <https://www.intechopen.com/chapters/74162>
- Stevenson, H. H., M. J. Roberts and H. I. Grousbeck. *New Business Ventures and the Entrepreneur*, Irwin, Homewood, IL, 1989 in Howard H. Stevenson, J. Carlos Jarillo, “A Paradigm of Entrepreneurship: Entrepreneurial Management”, *Strategic Management Journal* 11, Special Issue: Corporate Entrepreneurship (1990)
- UN. Secretary-General, World Commission on Environment and Development, “Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: note / by the Secretary-General”, 1987, accessed in 08.01.2022, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/139811?ln=en#record-files-collapse-header>
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, “Definition of youth”, accessed in 05.01.2022, <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-definition.pdf>
- United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, “Sustainable Development. The 17 Goals”, accessed in 05.01.2022, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>
- Urve Venesaar, Marge Täks, Grete Arro, Elina Malleus, Krista Loogma, Kaja Mädamürk, Eneken Titov, Martin Toding., “Model of entrepreneurship competence as a basis for the development of entrepreneurship education”, accessed in 07.01.2022, [https://eha.ut.ee/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/11\\_06\\_venesaar\\_summary.pdf](https://eha.ut.ee/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/11_06_venesaar_summary.pdf)
- Zhartay, Zh., Khussainova, Zh., Yessengeldin, B., “Development of the youth entrepreneurship: example of Kazakhstan”, *Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Issues* 8, no1, (2020)

# IMPACT REPORT

**ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
& SDGS**



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

**CONSORTIUM**

**geyc**

A way for a better you!



social  
hackers  
academy

**SÅRÅ**



RESOPA