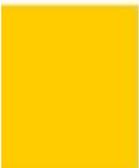EMPOWERING
You!

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Transnational Analysis

O1 Background Analytical Work

EmpoweringYou: Empowerment of young EU citizens through a gamified virtual collaboration platform for political and civic participation.

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I Introduction

a. Background

The present Transnational Analysis aims to join the findings of the 6 national reports developed in **Cyprus, Romania, United Kingdom, Italy, Greece** and **Spain** by the European **EmpoweringYou** project partner organisations in order to draw concrete recommendations for the development of a user-friendly, adaptable and widely accessible online platform.

This activity belongs to the EmpoweringYou project O1 **Background Analytical Work**. The purpose of this Intellectual Output is to:

- Conduct a literature review on the pedagogical models for fostering civic participation of young persons with the use of platforms in non-formal learning environments.
- Research the conventional means used for fostering civic participation of young persons.
- Carry out mapping of project's stakeholders which will be engaged in the later stages of the project, during the training process on how to use the platform.
- Investigate through focus groups and online surveys the learning and training needs of the target groups and stakeholders, as well as the socio-economic characteristics of the target group that will affect the use and characteristics of the platform.
- Analyse data and provide suggestions, recommendations, and guidelines for the development of a user-friendly, adaptable and widely accessible civic participation and capacity building online platform for young persons.

The national research from each of the project's partner countries was carried out through the use of the following techniques:

Desk research

A country level intensive literature review to collect and systematize information about the following topics:

- Pedagogical models for fostering civic participation of young persons with the use of platforms in non-formal learning environments
- Conventional means used for fostering civic participation of young persons.
- Existing platforms in the field of fostering civic participation of young persons
- Mapping of project stakeholders

Focus groups

Two communicative focus groups for collecting data from both agents:

- Stakeholders with different profiles as NGOs, Public Administrations, organisation developing games or online platforms, organisation working on civic participation and other relevant organisations that provided important information for the development of the online platform
- Young persons participants at risk especially the ones with fewer opportunities, whose learning and training needs were investigated.

Online Survey

An online survey in each partner country, enabled six research teams to explore the opinions, experiences and capacity / knowledge in a wider spectrum of sectors and geographical areas of each country, reaching:

- Stakeholders
- Young persons

The **Methodology** used in this phase by the project partners was the Communicative Methodology, consolidated as one of the methodological approaches that has the greatest social and political impact in the social and educational field (Gómez & Holford, 2011), that has been applied in the field of ICT and communication for more than 15 years.

"As a summary, research in education and training needs to contribute to policy making. Critical communicative research perspective has shown to have a significant social and political impact on the European educational and social systems" (European Union, 2010[1]).

b. Comparing the national contexts

The following overview of the national context of each of the participating countries has been drawn based on the national reports previously developed during the elaboration of the desk research. This review is essential in order to contextualize the results obtained as well as comparing them among countries.

Spain

As a consequence of the economic crisis, unemployment is one of the most significant problems of Spanish citizenship, a concern that is actually acknowledged by young people in vulnerable situations. The Spanish

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[1] EUROPEAN UNION. (2010). *Conclusions"Scienceagainstpoverty"conference 8-9 April 2010*. Madrid: Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación, Gobierno de España; Unión Europea.

rate of young persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion is higher than the EU's rate and, in fact, the young population is the age group with one of the highest risks suffering from social exclusion.

The organisations working with young persons manifest difficulties for access of the non-academic young persons, noticing that there is a lack of dissemination of their programmes. Meanwhile, the young persons' perception is often that the local government is not concerned about them.

The strongest activity on civic participation of Spanish youth occurs in associationism, mainly among the young students, although they are not commonly the ones who are suffering with vulnerable situations.

Romania

Romania has faced the highest economic rise in the previous 10 years; this relevant fact is reflected in the rising of the employment rate, the increase of the salaries in the public sector and the improvement of the conditions of the labour market, amongst other things.

However, the country has a lower rate of occupation in the case of young persons than the European average. Unfortunately, a significant number of young persons are neither included in the educational system, nor in the labour market.

The relevance of the engagement of young people in Romania lies in the meaningful service to their communities, in order to gain valuable, real-world skills that improve their employability in today's competitive labour markets, which contributes to combat high rates of youth unemployment.

Greece

Since the past few years and intensified by the financial crisis, Greece is living with a significant decline of political, civic and social participation of young persons, leading to their marginalisation, social exclusion and even radicalisation. The radicalisation phenomena was evidenced with the rise of far right-wing political party "Golden Dawn", considered a populist and extremist movement.

The crisis also triggered serious consequences of both unemployment and poverty, causing a rise to 42,5% of young people being born in Greece at risk of poverty or exclusion in 2012.

Furthermore, there is a correlation between low educational level, unemployment, risk of poverty and active citizenship that has been recently demonstrated at the Greek national elections with a great absenteeism of young people, particularly those with low educational qualifications.

Italy

Italy, which is currently recovering from a deep and long recession, has improved their labour market and raised employment. However, there still is a high unemployment rate and in particular youth unemployment rate. Actually, it has widened the gap between those with more and those with fewer opportunities and some young people are increasingly excluded from social and civic life.

Moreover, concerning the category of NEETs, Neither in Employment nor Education or Training, Italy placed amongst countries with the worst results in the most recent years. The trust in institutions and politics is very low amongst all young people, especially among NEET, who are much more confident in their proximity networks and relations rather than in institutions and authorities.

Even if there is a great potential for the involvement of youth in social and civic action in Italy, the participation of young people is a bit lower than the European median.

Encouraging and supporting young female and migrants especially fundamental, so that they can participate to build respectful, inclusive and peaceful societies.

United Kingdom

Same as most of the mentioned countries in Europe, young people in United Kingdom are experiencing a lack of political engagement. In fact, they declare feeling under-represented and having lost the belief that politicians act in their interest.

At the same time, there is a notable relation between belonging to minority ethnic families and experiencing income poverty, as well as the educational under-achievement and low income.

During the last decades, civic participation and young engagement have been included into the politics of the UK Parliament. Besides, some of the developed educational programmes around civic participation cover essential issues such as disadvantaged young people or promote online education in politics.

Taking into account the mentioned situation, civic participation must aim to improve the social situation of young disadvantaged groups.

Cyprus

Cyprus, as well as most of the mentioned countries, has been very hurt by the economic crisis that even collapsed its financial system. This caused an impact on Cypriot society but especially in the situation of young people. Even though the unemployment rate is continuously falling, the youth unemployment rate in Cyprus arrived to be one of the highest unemployment rates for youth in the EU28. This fact, as well as the number of NEET young persons, has become an obstacle for being engaged into civic participation activities. Currently, the Cypriot society show a lack of Interest in democratic life reflected in the unprecedented abstention rate in the 2016 Parliamentary elections.

In view of the situation, undergraduates or postgraduates intend to emigrate, which places Cyprus in the second position of higher education graduates receiving their degrees abroad.

Conclusion

Gathering the above information on each of the counties, the following common circumstances of their situation are identified:

- Most of the countries have lived through an economical crisis in recent years and their population is still living with some of the consequences.
- In most of the countries young people are facing the problem of the unemployment, which can lead into serious situations such as poverty and risk of social exclusion.
- Besides the unemployment rate, amongst these young people there is also a significant number of NEET, Neither in Employment nor Education or Training.
- It is remarkable that in some of the countries there are some segments amongst the youth which are more vulnerable, for example young persons belonging to minority ethnic groups.
- In some countries it is declared that civic participation is considered a resource for the integration and to improve the situation of these young persons in vulnerable situations.

II International context

a. What is civic participation?

Each of the countries has defined what civic participation means, highlighting the most commonly used meanings.

Spain

Different perspectives are presented about the concept of civic participation:

- The first one uses the word civility as the **compromise** of individuals with **society** or an active attitude of **citizenship**.

- For the second one, the own perceptions of young people are taking into account, collecting their definitions about different key concepts. About participation as a concept, young people turn to the **common good**, **civil society** and their demands, defining participation as the way in which civil society channels its concerns. Finally, it remarks **associationism** as the structuring of a civil citizenship.

Romania

- Both civic participation and civic engagement are often used with different definitions based on different cultural contexts.

- Civic participation is defined as individual or collective actions in which young people participate to improve the **wellbeing** of communities or society in general, and which provide opportunity for reflection, generally, done for minimal or no compensation. It is active involvement that focuses on the **common good**.

- **Volunteering** is seen as a central part of civic participation and activism, together with the **charity** activities and helping people in need.

- Civic participation involves as well the **affiliation** to certain organisations. Generally, young persons illustrate the civic participation through their involvement in **charity actions** and **environmental activities**.

Italy

A debate had been developing during the last 30 years around two main concepts that must be separated and clarified: **citizenship** and **civic participation**:

- Citizenship is a principle that rules the belonging of individuals to a national community, based on the right/duty to participate in the public life according to common rules.
- Civic Participation is defined as the active, informed and voluntary involvement of people in decision-making and the life of their communities, both locally and globally.
- Interventions focused on promoting social change and political action are the ones commonly initiated by youth.

Greece

Civic participation is usually understood as engagement with **political and social issues**, such as participation in community-driven initiatives, community-problem solving, **volunteering** and activism.

There is also a useful distinction of civic participation in formal and informal civic participation:

- Formal modes refer to participation in strikes and protests/marches, signing petitions, writing letters/e-mails to politicians and media with a political content, using social media to join groups with a **political focus**, etc.
- Informal refer to participation in actions outside of official politics, including spontaneous non-organised actions to collectively organised protest events, participation in formal social movements, NGOs advocacy acts, **community problem solving**, undertaking organised **voluntary** work, fundraising activities for good causes, donations to **charities**, etc.

United Kingdom

The concept of civic participation is related to actions such as voting in elections, **political party membership, volunteering** etc, as all manner of activities that touch upon public and social issues or involve **community contribution**.

One of their considered definitions is divided in three types:

- Political participation as social and community engagement, related to their right to vote.
- Engagement in society through volunteering, campaigning, fundraising, when the issues in question are closer to their own communities
- Finally, civic participation through participation in which young are engaged in the decision-making process.

Cyprus

Since there is not a standard definition, the most popular definition of civic engagement is provided:

- "Individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern" (Bers:2010:12). This means that civic participation or civic engagement can take many forms and

conceive of many elements for example being a good neighbour, individual **voluntarism** and involvement with political processes such as voting. (Bers:2010:12)

Conclusion

We can conclude that there is not a common vision about its meaning, turning to a diversity of points of view. However, the definitions from most of the different countries have the incorporation of the following concepts in common:

- Volunteering, as an informal mode of civic participation related to the action of helping other people
- Common good as one goal of the participation
- Affiliation, referring to the fact of being part of organisations
- Charity actions as for example donations
- Political activity, as the way to solve community problems

b. Concepts around videogames and civic participation

In order to research the international context of civic participation of young persons through videogames, the different institutions working on the development and dissemination of videogames with social impact and their origin is necessary, as well as mentioning the diverse definitions surrounding it.

Serious games is a concept referred to the games used not just with the objective of the entertaining but also to transfer some values to the players. Even this resource is also used for the social or political denunciation, among others, and it is specially related to education. *"Games that do not have entertainment, enjoyment or fun as their primary purpose"* (Michael & Chen, 2005). Although this term was defined in the 70's and since 2002 it has been increasingly used, many authors coincide that serious games have always existed; the fact of transferring this concept to the videogames is what raised its prevalence. The main entity working in this scope is the **Serious Games Institute** belonging to Coventry University that develops research, business and study of the serious games. As it is visible below, most of the serious games are developed in the educational sector, being a useful resource as they include problem-solving, encouraging learners to be active and learning of new concepts.

However, the term **Games for impact** has started to be used with the Academic Consortium on Games for Impact being its leaders, as the result of the divergence of many actors with the definition of Serious games, claiming that games cannot be serious. The organisation works on the collaboration of different institutions

for the progress of games with impact. Among the Games for impact, in the field of games focused on health promotion or risk reduction, it is remarkable the **Play2PREVENT** organisation, which is part of the Yale Centre for Health & Learning Game. The worked topics in their videogames include sexually transmitted infections, substance use, unintended pregnancy or obesity.

Alternate reality games are a kind of Serious game, developed with the purpose of solving real problems in order to get a positive impact. In this context, the work of the organisation **Games for change** is remarkable. It is a non-profit corporation that works to empower creators and social innovators and develop projects for social change through games. Additionally, the organisation holds the annual G4C Festival in order to join the best game creators and games including education, healthcare, civic and social issues.

Games Learning Society produces games to get the engagement of players about biological systems or civic activism, among others. Besides, they held the annual GLS Conference for game researchers, designers, and educators.

Moreover, among the Serious games there are many other designations for the games with an impact purpose, such as:

- Educational entertainment, commonly named as Edutainment
- Alternative Purpose Games
- Digital Game-Based Learning
- Social Impact Games

c. Outstanding games

Among the Serious games, there are many successful experiences developing videogames especially with educational purpose. It is interesting for this project to outline some of the ones targeted to young persons and those that incorporate values related to civic participation:

The programme **iCivics** is a remarkable experience used by over 150,000 teacher-users. They offer civic education through diverse videogames targeted to students, in order to improve their civic knowledge, civic attitudes, and core literacy skills. The most popular game is "Win the white house" in which players need to manage their own presidential campaign.

Food Force is an educative videogame addressed to children, supported by the World Food Programme of the United Nations, estimated around 10 million players. The objective that players need to achieve is to distribute food among countries with famine. This way, the awareness of users about the problem of hunger in the world increases while they learn about

The videogame **Darfur is Dying** developed by the company Take Action works around the situation in Sudan, which reached more than 800,000 users. During the game, players have to deal with the persecution of Yanyauid military patrols or get water and use it for crops and to build cabins. This way the learning about politic conflicts, human rights is incorporated.

The game **Peacemaker** got many great reviews in press as well as some awards and recognitions. It is set on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in order to increase the players' sensibility about the situation. They play the role of the Israeli Prime Minister or the Palestinian President that must bring peace to the region.

Half the Sky Movement is a Facebook Game created by the organisation with the same name that aims to raise awareness about real challenges that women face around the world and empower women and girls to face them. With this objective, the game develops around four life parameters: Economy, Education, Security and Health.

Some of the most successful videogames have also created new versions adding a civic perspective in them. The videogame Sims launched the game **SimCity Societies**, getting great reviews by the critics. It is a social simulator in which players create cities, which makes them get closer to the problems of citizens and raise awareness about environmental issues. In fact, it helps users be conscious of how decisions have global consequences. The popular construction videogame Minecraft developed the **Minecraft Education Edition** in which students and teachers have additional options such as collaborating on projects with classmates or documenting the work made and sharing it in class. It had a positive impact, improving student engagement as well as skills such as creativity or collaboration.

It is interesting to note the common aspects of the aforementioned successful games:

- Raising awareness about political and social circumstances
- Incorporation of roles that users have to play with, which allows them to acquire skills such as empathy
- Using decision-making features to increase the players' responsibility

III   Analysis on the findings

a. Overview of the principle national findings

The main findings obtained through the desk research, focus groups and online surveys with the stakeholders working in the youth field with young people as the target group, will be taken into account for the development of the EmpoweringYou online platform.

Spain

- There are few experiences in the field of using games in order to develop civic participation among young people.
- Even if there are many interesting educational programmes on civic participation, they are mainly addressed to children and adolescents.
- The existing educational programmes on civic participation have no particular approach to youth in vulnerable situations. For this reason, a programme directly addressed to youth in vulnerable situation is recommended, to guarantee their participation in order to favour their inclusion.
- Currently, unemployment is one of the most serious concerns for young people, that is why any platform that may help them acquire knowledge and skills which could improve their employability may be useful.
- National civic participation programmes and studies incorporate the use of debates and both young persons and stakeholders support this idea. This can help young people develop their skills in order to analyse the reality, argue, organise ideas and be respectful with others' opinion, which are basic for their empowerment.
- Both stakeholders and young people coincide that the view of the online platform as a traditional pedagogical resource should be avoided; even if it has an educational goal, it should be perceived by young people just as a videogame.

Romania

- Young persons consider that their participation is both important and the key to change something. Despite the fact that there are also negative opinions, young persons appreciate that there are many opportunities to be actively involved in the society, having the opportunity to develop, to grow up and become the key to a future change for the next generations.

- In general, young persons are involved especially because of the fact that they are not satisfied with the current situation in Romania and with the future perspectives for youth, whereas those who are not willing to participate in the civic life of the society consider that the isolated participation will not change anything, seeing no resolution to the actual problems.

- There are very few platforms in the field of fostering civic participation of young persons, while the programmes developed prove to use rather conventional means than platforms or other digital resources.

- The games should be more often used in the alternative education of young people; the non-formal learning environments should be supported through national strategies of the authorities.

- The organisations that address non-formal education issues should develop more partnerships with formal education institutions, in order to increase their impact and visibility; best practices in the domain of non-formal education should be valued and capitalised by stakeholders in education.

- Diversification of means used for fostering civic participation of young persons should be an objective of the stakeholders in the domain.

- Including gaming as a very important means of fostering civic participation of young persons in the national and local strategies regarding youth and education.

Greece

- Even if young people have started to be more interested in political issues and the majority of them stated that they participate in the elections, their stance against politics, politicians and the political parties is extremely negative

- The solutions to the low level of civic participation of youth can be found in the following actions: The assignment of initiatives and responsibilities to young citizens for actions on which they have particular knowledge, the close collaboration of the Members of Local Youth Councils with the members of local councils, and the search of local initiatives and actions towards the improvement of social conditions.

- Young Greeks seek alternative forms of participation through social media and new technologies. Hence, the creation of a unique civic participation game linking social media accounts and combined with innovative learning methodologies can be the key behind boosting public awareness on values of democracy, access to rights, freedom and inter-cultural dialogue among young persons communities

- There are no electronic games for the above purposes. However, there are civic engagement platforms which are currently being used by Greek citizens for civic participation purposes

- Civic Participation should be promoted by the family environment and the educational system; hence the project's non-formal education learning tool can contribute towards this aim.

- The problem of low access to games and platforms for disadvantaged youth due to the non-availability of Wi-Fi in some remote cities and villages of Greece should be taken into consideration by national and local governments, though tailored policies and practices for increasing the access to internet services for disadvantaged youth.

- Based on the findings that the higher the social class, the more frequent the participation in relevant activities, there is an utmost need to empower young people deriving from lower social classes and from disadvantaged backgrounds to have equitable access to civic participation practices, tackling therefore under-representation and social exclusion.

Italy

- Females and young people living in the southern regions have major obstacles to the access to full citizenship and to participate actively in the civic and political field.

- Young migrants face many challenges to achieve their rights to legal and social protection, health, education and decent work. Participation gives them a strong stake in policies, programmes and practices as well as in the affairs of the communities. For this reason, they must be encouraged and supported to share their experiences and challenges and to participate in local organisations.

- Both young people and stakeholders consider the online tool effective only if complementary to face to face meetings and supervision for youngsters.

- In particular, it seems necessary to include adolescents and youth in policy-making processes, follow through on their suggestions and recommendations, and ensure their continued participation from beginning to end of the process.

- Enhance among institutions the data collection in order to have a clear and realistic picture of numbers, needs and major constraints to be addressed, aiming to enhance the evidence base for sound policy and promote policy innovation. In particular, so far data and specific researches targeting NEETs, has been scarce in Italy, and a huge work of mapping and analysis must still be done at institutional level.

- Working to support and empower young people and their full participation in society can be done more successfully through a transversal youth strategy. This requires stronger cross-sectorial cooperation between policy fields impacting on youth and a greater focus on youth in such policies. All stakeholders and actors at local and/or national level must collaborate first in investigation around this topic, and afterwards to deliver better opportunities for young people, concentrating

on actions that will be more beneficial to young people's professional integration, social inclusion and active citizenship.

United Kingdom

- According to the national studies, promoting civic engagement and political participation among young people in vulnerable situations can, on one hand face the decline of political participation of the young people and on the other hand improve their own situations.

- The internet is a useful tool to engage those who are already interested in civic and political participation, but so far it has not been proven to be as useful to attract the ones who are not.

- The message of an online platform needs to be subtle, without telling them it is made to increase their civic participation.

- Social media should be incorporated not just in the online platforms but also in the dissemination activities, combining them with physical promotion as door-to-door recruitment, through stakeholders or reaching out and providing incentives for participation.

- Online education platforms have a significant role in promoting civic participation and political knowledge. However, any online platform should have materials and activities adapted to real-life sessions as well, combining online activity and face to face actions. Besides, activities must be accompanied by real-life examples showing how they impact the lives of those that engage in civic participation and examples of who've made a difference through civic participation.

Cyprus

- The most notable challenge is facing the fact that young persons in Cyprus have become increasingly disengaged from any form of civic participation and engagement. They are simply not interested anymore in democratic life.

- Even if several community-based organizations are civically engaging young people in Cyprus, many non-governmental organization representatives insist that infrastructure for youth civic participation in general remains fragile. The topic is generally absent from official discourse and often refers only to training courses and individual activity during leisure time.

- Very few large-scale educational programmes have been implemented in Cyprus, something that stresses the need for state and for civic and non-governmental organizations to coordinate their efforts to increase youth civic participation.

- Both stakeholders and young persons declare to be interested in online platforms to promote civic participation, which is very encouraging for the development of the project. In fact, their use

is increasingly important especially for youth who do not plan to attend a university or college and for youth that are exposed to less civic education in general.

- The importance of the platform to be free of charge is highlighted by the own participants

b. Similarities and differences across countries

The following board contains the most relevant information gathered during the development of the Desk research, focus groups and online surveys with young persons in vulnerable situations and with stakeholder organisations working in the field of youth. It has been elaborated with the objective of analysing which are the similarities and differences across the six participating countries in a visual way.

	SPAIN	ROMANIA	GREECE	ITALY	CYPRUS	UNITED KINGDOM
Derived from Desk research						
Civic participation programmes	- Leadership and participation - Service to the community - Scout movements - Mentoring programmes - Community participation - Political participation - Personal autonomy - Creation of young collectives - Education for development of social action	- Well-being of the society and of the community - Educational, political and economic problem - Different religions, origins, and social categories or young people at risk - Human rights - Promoting the Romanian culture and modern ways of communication - Team work - Democratic and civic culture	- Municipal and community youth councils - Expressing their concerns - Being active in their community - Collective actions - Principles of democracy - Volunteering - Support creativity - Intergeneration solidarity - Innovation and excellence - Dialogue, tolerance, mutual understanding and solidarity	- National Civil Service in the fields of social services, education, environment, historical-artistic, cultural and civil protection - Facilitating entry into the job market through hospitality, orientation, training, accompanying at work apprenticeship, internships	- Youth Board for representatives of youth organization - Council to bring the concerns of civic participation organizations to government	- Youth council and parliament -Charitable and volunteering organisations - Participation in their communities - Raising community awareness about youth contributions.

	SPAIN	ROMANIA	GREECE	ITALY	CYPRUS	UNITED KINGDOM
		- Willing to help - Developing social, civic and life competences - Nowadays' technologies				
Educational programmes on civic participation	- Training courses for young monitors and managers - Designing spaces for the participation - Group dynamics - Assemblies - Values: political participation, self-management, critical thinking - Seminars, talks - Entrepreneurship workshops - Actions in the community - No particular approach to youth in vulnerable situations	- Use of conventional means - Dancing camps with working teams to promote solidarity, tolerance and civic behaviour - Participating in the social life of the society. - Competition in International law, European Union law and Human Rights - Disabilities and terminal conditions, social etiquette, prejudices associated to certain groups, marginalized groups etc. - Educational workshops based on urban	- Parliament for adolescents progamme working around dialogue, tolerance, mutual understanding and solidarity - Educational programmes in active citizenship, volunteerism, solidarity, activism, philanthropy - Training programme based on simulation of councils - Training programme based on a simulation of the processes of the institutions of the EU	- Collaborative and participative urban planning - Creating a Youth Urban Centre, a site for co-design and incubation of services for the city - Volunteering and civic participation in their own communities - Skills to understand the present society, for their daily choices and relational and solidarity skills	- Tool for candidates of the elections to share political and social issues and get involvement of young Cypriots - Accredited course on civic participation - Bring together Cypriot citizens with their elected representatives	- Accessible knowledge about democracy - Youth centres for disadvantaged youth t - Training in engaging community and local government for young at risk - Online platform with material for teachers about political and civic participation

	SPAIN	ROMANIA	GREECE	ITALY	CYPRUS	UNITED KINGDOM
		anthropological elements and participating urbanism				
Use of games or platforms in fostering civic participation	- Participatory process for remodelling a public space through Minecraft - Being in the place of politicians and business people - Reaching of social transformation - Making donations and volunteering	- Negotiation games - Solving problems - Making a group decision - Argumentation and cooperation	- Web-documentary series - Problem solving on city problems - Citizens ask questions to their representative and Members of Parliament (MPs) and Members of European Parliament (MEPs) can post a public response	- Basic information regarding civic education and Parliament's role - Interactive vocabulary related to political life - Engagement in the Senate role and activities - Citizenship (rights and duties), history of Italian Chart and democratic history - Hypertexts, documents, didactical tools, quiz and exercises	- Partnerships / Collaboration - Civic engagement and civic participation - Positive change - Inspiration - Improve communities by using technology - Peace - Social Cohesion - Active citizenship	- Simulation games with the role of the President and members of the Parliament
Derived from focus groups and online surveys						
Advantages of the	- Interest of organisations and young people in using an online platform to help promoting civic participation - Most of the organisations have taught civic	- Complementing the existing educational programmes - It could bring a "new face" for the formal educational activities on civic education.	- Use as an alternative and flexible approach to educational practices - Low cost for learners and educators			

	SPAIN	ROMANIA	GREECE	ITALY	CYPRUS	UNITED KINGDOM
online platforms/ games	participation among young people before	- Quick and useful information, a common space to interact and share contents				
Difficulties/ Obstacles/Challenges	**Difficulties/ Obstacles:** - **Lack of interest**, time or self-discipline - Online platforms are not usually fun nor dynamic - Little dissemination - Lack of knowledge in young people about the learning opportunities **Challenges:** - Showing young people the benefits of participating - Starting from some basic learning - Inclusion of all members in society - Making young people feel that their contributions are useful	**Difficulties/ Obstacles:** - Lack of information regarding the advantages offered by online games and platforms. **Challenges:** - Adapting the platform as an offline application which does not require the latest hardware configuration of the device (to be able to run on older devices).	**Difficulties/ Obstacles**: -**Lack of interest**, motivation and attraction -Rigidity and formality of platform -Few opportunities of participation of youth in their communities - Excessive information - Insufficient updating on the use of educational platforms - **Commercial banners** during the game - **Challenges:** - Renewal of politicians by including young politicians willing to contribute to society - Creating new visions for youth	**Difficulties/ Obstacles**: - **Lack of motivation** - Low interest for politics **Challenges:** - Low level of trust in adults - Low level of skills - Difficult space to find among young persons already engaged - Low level of trust in politicians and institutions - Low school preparation for engagement - Involving schools and families in this process.	**Difficulties/ Obstacles:** - **Lack of motivation** **Challenges:** - Being free of charge - Including and providing many practical rewards - Catching their attention, making them feel that their time will be valued - Motivating and inspiring them - Connection between the stakeholders and young people - Political neglect to young people's problems	**Difficulties/ Obstacles** - **Lack of desire and interest** - Retaining the attention of young people - Ensuring the safety of young people using the platform **Challenges:** - Distrust of authorities and opinions - **Being bombarded with commercial advertising** - The need to survive/succeed overrides the need to be civically/politically involved

	SPAIN	ROMANIA	GREECE	ITALY	CYPRUS	UNITED KINGDOM
	- Involving public institutions - Using different channels to reach individual and young persons that are not part of an association		- Low civic engagement of youth due to economic crisis, crisis of consciousness, unemployment - Addressing issues directly affecting youth - Finding new fun ways for engaging youth (e.g. games etc.) - Disappointment from the current political situation - Better collaboration among involved stakeholders - Maintain the interest of young people - Globalisation and social media networking		- Making them act as a group - Understanding the benefits of youth civic participation	

	SPAIN	ROMANIA	GREECE	ITALY	CYPRUS	UNITED KINGDOM
Recommen-dations for games	**Brief text** - Small challenges that become bigger - Questions to be answered by players - Obtaining new powers at the end of every challenge - Making it fun - Breaking the structure of competition	-Content structured in modules, related to educational level - Entourage, being popular among the group of friends to be adopted by other members of the group - Suspense/ action to give adrenaline and keep them involved in the game - Attractiveness in terms of graphics, theme, good responsive time of the platform	- Game based on a simulation of society, where each user will assume his/her own role	**Online tool with complementary offline actions to get them engaged.** - Game/tool as final step of a wider process. involving other actors - Opportunities for engagement in the local community	- **Brief** and useful information. -Learning and entertaining elements -With characters and a mission -Content and information related to users -Basic form of trainings - Including a reward system / points allocation	- **Not using too many words** - Being visually appealing for young people without making it seem childish and condescending - Activities should be **transferable to such face-to-face actions**
Implication and civic participation	- Importance of the social environment of young people: friends, families - Need of assemblies and dialogue - Need of individual but also collective implication	- Low implication of young people - Interest of young people in volunteering activities - Activities that promote self confidence - Activities with immediate results and own ideas application	- Believe of young persons that most of them do not participate in any political activity, and they are not offered any incentives for being civically engaged. - Civic participation should be promoted by the family environment	- Participation is not a priority for those youngsters dealing with unemployment and/or isolation - Short term proposal/project, emotional issues (like	- Importance of youth civic participation to Cyprus's civic life	- Disengagement and anger with politics - Even if they are involved in some actions, initiatives or politics 'clubs' they don't know how to translate that into greater civic involvement

	SPAIN	ROMANIA	GREECE	ITALY	CYPRUS	UNITED KINGDOM
	- Giving young people autonomy and confidence - Making young people feel useful - Carrying out solidarity actions - Offering physical spaces - Including identification of social problems - Making the results of the civic participation programmes visible	- Providing interesting information to promote their involvement - Material benefits - Collaborative networks at local level	and the educational system. - The use of the Internet and social media is a key to promoting youth civic engagement. - The socioeconomic crisis has prevented people from being engaged.	earthquake emergency, environmental topics, poverty…) - Horizontal approach, collaborative environment - Face to face activities and support - Being involved in their proximity environment and recognized to feel important and useful for the community		Civic participation doesn't hold any intrinsic value to disadvantaged young people. - They are unable to exert any influence over their environment.
Access to existing educational games	**Lack of access of some young persons in vulnerable situations to PCs and internet** - Young people receive a lot of information but there is a lack of a correct distribution of this information	- **Low access to devices**, young persons cannot afford having a mobile device/ PCs - Joint working of public and private stakeholders could lead to youth centres with facilities in order guarantee to access	- **Limited access to internet and hardware for disadvantaged youth** - Organisations don't have access to existing educational games - Low access to games and platforms by disadvantaged youth due to the non-availability of wifi	- **Low availability of connection** - Low experience of educational games - They don't usually play - They are curious	Being easily accessible to all users Free of charge Not asking too much information in order to log in	**Many disadvantaged young people don't have access to the Internet or the technology to play games**

	SPAIN	ROMANIA	GREECE	ITALY	CYPRUS	UNITED KINGDOM
Suggested Curriculum topics	**Languages** - Gender issues, gender violence and feminism - Social criticism, critical thinking - Validation of participative abilities - Knowledge on democratic and equal society - Solidarity - **Human rights** - **Inclusion of ethnic minorities and multiculturalism** - Decision making - Community engagement - Diverse realities and **functional diversity (people with disabilities)**	- Soft topics: communication, mother tongue **languages**, cultural specificities, etc. - Educational system based on flexible curriculum content (individual options for educational plan). - Practical skills	- Community and social issues - Local and national systems of government & voting and elections - Social and environmental issues - Culture, youth issues, **political issues** and actions, **human rights** and freedom, self-expression and art. - **Volunteering** - Social economy and entrepreneurship. - Sports - Historical retrospect in relation to the political history of Greece Europe - History-General subjects interesting for the majority of young people - Avoid using terminology related to politics.	**Languages,** communication, innovation - Social media - Emotions and life - How to help their own community	**Volunteering**(how to attack and keep youth volunteers) - Environment (how to activate young people around environment) - Voting why we need young voters more than ever) - Civic engagement (in what ways you can become more 'civically' active in Cyprus. - **Human rights** (how young people can work together on human rights) - Soft skills and transversal skills - Technological and communication skills	- Topics linked to everyday life - National **political systems** – government, voting, political parties and platforms. - Social issues – **social barriers, overcoming stereotypes, being aware of prejudice.** - Creative activities, art. - Community issues, activism and protesting. - News and current events.

	SPAIN	ROMANIA	GREECE	ITALY	CYPRUS	UNITED KINGDOM
Suggested devices	**Apps for Smartphone Tablet PC**			**Mobile Tablet**	- **Smartphones** - **Laptop**	
Suggested characters of the graphic	Characters that reflect the **diversity of society** **Attractive animations** for young people With no gender stereotypes	Use of **warm colours** Use of avatars Positive characters	Characters based on the role-playing game (rpg) Vibrant graphics Clear characters Real-life examples and next-door characters. Faces of young people Mythological heroes or legendary heroes. **Videos, real-time animations and pictures** in the text	Super heroes, young people and **attractive graphic** Coloured graphic Music included	-Vibrant graphics - Adopted to young people's ideals and standards. -Vibrant and **colourful** characters -Use of comic characters -Use of real life examples	Fine balance between being too bright, child-like and patronising Engaging enough for young people to pay attention and feel comfortable. **Different perspectives, from different points in society** Simple but not patronising **Bright** Use **video** and audio
Suggested interface	**Intuitive and easy to use** Available in different languages like English or Arab	**Intuitive** Encouraging curiosity Simulating real life situations that end with a moral	**Easy to use** **Quizzes** Chats to express their ideas and opinion		-User friendly, **easy to navigate**	**Easy to use** Engaging Easy to navigate and use Interactive **Quizzes** Case studies

	SPAIN	ROMANIA	GREECE	ITALY	CYPRUS	UNITED KINGDOM
Recommended length	Young participants: lessons **between 20 and 40 minutes** **Stakeholders less than 20 minutes**	**20 to maximum 40 minutes**	**Between 20 and 40 minutes**	**Less than 20 minutes**	**Between 20 and 40 minutes**	**No more than 25 minutes**
Dissemination of the online platform	Using **social networks** like Facebook, Twitter or Instagram Posters in institutes and **education centres**	Using **social media** Direct promotion in **schools** and public places as parks, squares or malls	Television **Social media** Distribution of leaflets at **schools** and Universities Advertisement in sports portals	Self organized and horizontal Only at the end of a participative and F2F process	Paid advertisements in different **social medias** Use of young ambassadors Online advertisement Famous/popular people Direct promotion and advertisement in **schools**, parks, festivals, coffee shops Television and radio spots	**Social Media** Direct recruitment: Knock on doors, have conversations with people, get in front of them. Target the selfishness of people; make it specific for them. Create a hashtag 'Lightning Links' - links that come up inside the app. Make sure it comes up in search results. Get political parties involved. Create an animal mascot.

IV. Recommendations and suggestions for the development of the EmpoweringYou online platform

The following recommendations and suggestions have been drawn based on the previous analysis of the findings obtained through the report developed in each of the six European countries, as well as the identification of their common results. Furthermore, they will be considered in the following phases of the development of the EmpoweringYou online platform.

Background recommendations

- Since it has been evidenced that the serious concern of young persons from most of the participating countries is the unemployment, along with the situations of NEET youth (Neither in Employment nor Education or Training), the EmpoweringYou online platform could contribute to their acquisition of knowledge and skills related to civic participation, that can help their employability.

- Overcoming lack of motivation or interest of young persons is the main challenge for the development of the online platform

- The field of games to develop civic participation among young people haven't been deeply experienced in the analysed countries. This fact offers the consortium of the EmpoweringYou project an opportunity of being the first successful experience at European level

- The common aspects that some of the successful civic participation games at worldwide level must be considered, such as raising awareness about political and social circumstances, incorporating roles that users have to play with or including decision-taking.

Practical recommendations

- The access to the internet for young people, especially for the ones in vulnerable situations, can be limited. For this reason, some collaboration with the stakeholder organisations is recommended in order to provide them with the access

- Concerning the devices for the development of the fame, the platform should be available in the following forms of media: Smartphones, tablets, laptops and computers.

- The interface needs to be intuitive and with a high usability. Furthermore, the text should be brief.

- Regarding the graphics, in order to be attractive for young people, it is suggested to include animations, using bright and warm colours.

- The characters of the game should reflect the diversity of society, incorporating diverse realities of the society.
- In addition, multimedia content such as videos or audios should be included, as well as quizzes in which users can take part.
- The lessons should not be longer than 20 minutes.
- Commercial banners should be avoided in the online platform, considering that young people declare that it is an obstacle for their use.

Suggested Curriculum topics

- Inclusion of ethnic minorities and multiculturalism.
- Social barriers, overcoming stereotypes, being aware of prejudice.
- Human rights.
- Languages.
- Political issues like voting or political parties.
- Volunteering

Dissemination

- The most recommended resources for the dissemination of the online platform are the social networks, which are mainly used by youth.

V. References

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