



Communities Causes & Recommendations

Portugal | Greece | Lithuania | Romania

Project Information

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I. Introduction

I. Introduction

This document of «Communities Causes & Recommendations» was developed as part of Communities Driving Change (CIVIC) project, co-financed by the European Commission – Europe for Citizens programme, coordinated by Contextos – Cooperativa para o Desenvolvimento e Coesão Social, CRL (Portugal), in partnership with United Societies of Balkans (Greece), Asociacija Aktyvus Jaunimas (Lithuania) and Asociatia Centrul Pentru Strategii de Dezvoltare a Tineretului (Romania).

The set of different Causes & Recommendations here presented resulted from the activities of Democracy Labs, Gathering of Opinions and Public Consultations of the project, that were implemented locally, between the years of 2021 and 2022, in each Partner country city – Faro (Portugal), Thessaloniki (Greece), Kaunas (Lithuania), and Timișoara (Romania).

To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the citizen's causes, a mixed methodology approach was used, to collect and analyse the data, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative methods, such as open-ended interviews and focus groups, provided with in-depth insights into the participants' experiences and perceptions. In the meantime, quantitative methods, such as surveys and statistical analysis, provided with numerical data that aided to identify trends. By combining both methods, the project consortium gained a more complete picture of the citizens' needs, and the validity and reliability of the findings was improved. This approach additionally allowed to mitigate the weaknesses of each method by balancing its limitations with its strengths.

Each of the following chapters is dedicated to present the Community Causes & Recommendations that resulted from this work, as follows:

- Chapter II – Faro, Portugal;
- Chapter III – Thessaloniki, Greece;
- Chapter IV – Kaunas, Lithuania;
- Chapter V – Timisoara, Romania.

With this work, the project consortium aims at:

- Giving back to the local communities and presenting to decision makers the proposals developed in each Partner city, giving more voice and visibility to the needs and desired changes of local citizens (*National Versions of the local Causes & Recommendations collected are made available by each Partner organization in Portuguese, Greek, Lithuanian and Romanian languages*);
- Reflect on possible similarities and differences of Causes identified in the different Partner countries and Recommendations given by each community to achieve the desired outcomes.

The Community Causes that are presented in this document are colour-coded to identify the main topic they address, as follows:

Access to Information **Accessibility for All** **Community**
Engagement and Participation **Education and Employment**
Environment and Green Spaces **Funding Opportunities**
Health Access **Housing** **Human Rights** **Public Transports**
Senior Computer Literacy **Sports and Leisure for Youth**
Youth Participation

Tables of Colour-Coded Causes & Recommendations

Per order of greater concordance in the different Communities/Countries

Environment and Green Spaces

Causes & Recommendations (3 countries, 5 causes)	Pages
Faro N° 2 More green and leisure spaces and connection to nature	15
Faro N° 8 Raising civic awareness in AEProsa	26
Thessaloniki N° 1 To create vegetation paths within the campus of AuTh	31
Thessaloniki N° 2 A greener Thessaloniki	33
Timisoara N° 5 Creating more green spaces and reducing pollution	77

Education and Employment

Causes & Recommendations (3 countries, 4 causes)	Pages
Faro N° 1 More and better job opportunities and salaries	14
Thessaloniki N° 8 Connectivity between education and employability	42
Timisoara N° 1 Education should have a better quality, be more accessible and affordable	65
Timisoara N° 2 More job opportunities for young people	68

Public Transports

Causes & Recommendations (3 countries, 3 causes)	Pages
Faro N° 3 Improving public transport services in Faro and in the Algarve region	17
Thessaloniki N° 4 More time-efficient and ecological transportation in Thessaloniki	36

Timisoara N° 3 Public transportation quality to be increased, made more affordable and reliable.	71
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Community Engagement and Participation

Causes & Recommendations (2 countries, 5 causes)	Pages
Faro N° 6 More community activities for all ages and more participation	24
Faro N° 7 Volunteering to help our community – 1ª Companhia de Guias de Faro	25
Kaunas N° 2 Make different people to feel as a community	48
Kaunas N° 3 More indoor and outdoor community spaces accessible to everyone	50
Kaunas N° 6 Better communication and alignment between the government and the citizens	58

Health Access

Causes & Recommendations (2 countries, 2 causes)	Pages
Faro N° 4 Better health services for all	20
Timisoara N° 7 Opening access to private healthcare and reducing costs of medical expenses	82

Housing

Causes & Recommendations (2 countries, 2 causes)	Pages
Faro N° 5 Quality and affordable housing options	21
Timisoara N° 8 Better financial policies regarding housing, renting, and purchasing living spaces for young people	84

Human Rights

Causes & Recommendations (2 countries, 2 causes)	Pages
Faro N° 9 Awareness actions for the equality between nations at UAIG	27
Thessaloniki N° 5 Dealing with the discrimination that LGBT+ people are facing	37

Youth Participation

Causes & Recommendations (2 countries, 2 causes)	Pages
Thessaloniki N° 7 University support for the activation of young people.	40
Kaunas N° 7 Young people to be more involved and empowered in city life	60

Accessibility for All

Causes & Recommendations (1 country, 2 causes)	Pages
Thessaloniki N° 3 Accessibility for people in Thessaloniki with audiovisual disorders & mobility	35
Thessaloniki N° 6 Easier accessibility around monuments of Thessaloniki for people with disabilities	39

Sports and Leisure for Youth

Causes & Recommendations (1 country, 2 causes)	Pages
Timisoara N° 4 Sports practicing to be more affordable and made more attractive	74
Timisoara N° 6 Making more recreational, leisure and entertainment facilities for the community	79

Senior Computer Literacy

Causes & Recommendations (1 country, 1 cause)	Pages
Kaunas N° 1 More spaces for seniors to gain computer literacy knowledge	47

Funding Opportunities

Causes & Recommendations (1 country, 1 cause)	Pages
Kaunas N° 4 Citizens understand projects' writing and implementing better and there is bigger financial support	53

Access to Information

Causes & Recommendations (1 country, 1 cause)	Pages
Kaunas N° 5 Easy access is ensured to information about what is happening in the city using different tools and media channels	55

II. Community Causes and Recommendations in Faro, Portugal

II. Community Causes and Recommendations in Faro, Portugal

The Community Causes and Recommendations of Faro, Portugal, presented next, resulted from the following project activities:

- **Democracy Labs** – a total of 7 sessions were conducted, between October 2021 and January 2022, involving a total of 106 participants, from the community groups of 1ª Companhia de Guias de Faro, AEPRosa, UAlg – ESEC, and Senior Academy of Red Cross Faro-Loulé (87 young people up to 30 years old; 8 adults aged between 30–65 years old; and 11 aged more than 65 years old).
- **Gathering of Opinions** and **Public Consultations** – a total of 10 sessions and an Online Survey were conducted, between November 2021 and June 2022, involving a total of 128 participants, from the general community, and community groups of 1ª Companhia de Guias de Faro, AEPRosa and UAlg – ESEC, (in total 112 young people up to 30 years old; 15 adults aged between 30–65 years old; and 1 aged more than 65 years old; of those, 87 participants answered to the online survey).

Here are presented 9 community Causes that resulted from these activities: from 1 to 6 the Causes and Recommendations that were more strongly presented by the general community; and from 7 to 9, one exemplificative Cause per community group of 1ª Companhia de Guias de Faro, AEPRosa – Agrupamento de Escolas Pinheiro e Rosa, e UAlg – ESEC, Social Education Studies from the University of Algarve.

Community Changes & Recommendations presented next:

Nº 1 More and better job opportunities and salaries **Education and
Employment**

Nº 2 More green and leisure spaces and connection to nature
Environment and Green Spaces

Nº 3 Improving public transport services in Faro and in the Algarve region
Public Transports

Nº 4 Better health services for all **Health Access**

Nº 5 Quality and affordable housing options **Housing**

Nº 6 More community activities for all ages and more participation
Community Engagement and Participation

Nº 7 Volunteering to help our community – 1ª Companhia de Guias de Faro
Community Engagement and Participation

Nº 8 Raising civic awareness in AEProsa **Environment and Green Spaces**

Nº 9 Awareness actions for the equality between nations at UAlg
Human Rights

PT – Faro | **Education and Employment**

Nº 1 **More and better job opportunities and salaries**

Community Need explained:

- Salaries and pensions are very low considering the high cost of living in Faro (housing expenses, products, services, etc.).
- Seasonal employment due to tourism.
- Difficulties in accessing the labor market.
- General impoverishment of the population.
- Low wages affect the citizens quality of life.
- Finalist students afraid of job opportunities not existing/not possible to get in their field of studies.

Recommendations:

Implement the following **solutions/actions**:

- Increase wages and pensions.
- Lower the costs of living.
- Increase the net income of families, so that they can keep up with the costs of living.
- Increase the number of job vacancies and possibilities.
- Disassociating the dependency of employment to tourism.
- In addition to the third sector, invest also in the primary sector, sustainable, without ecological footprint.
- Promote the establishment of young people in the local community.
- More training offers, for unemployed and employed people, in order to promote self-efficacy, well-being and foster employability.

PT - Faro | **Environment and Green Spaces**

Nº 2 More green and leisure spaces and connection to nature

Community Need explained:

- Lack of green spaces in Faro city, especially when comparing with other cities in Portugal.
- Few green spaces to enjoy with the family.
- Lack of playgrounds.
- Garbage bins are too full.

Recommendations:

Implement the following **solutions/actions**:

- More green spaces and trees.
- More playgrounds distributed through residential areas.
- More spaces and parks for children to play.
- Create a pedagogical farm.
- Create community gardens.
- Create green spaces in the center of the city, and use native vegetation, generating areas to enjoy and socialize.
- In addition to creating more green spaces, don't forget their subsequent maintenance.
- More trees in the riverside location and others, to create areas of shade for picnics, etc.
- Improve the existing park in Bom João (behind Social Welfare).
- Investing on green spaces in Faro as a way to combat pollution in the city

-
- Use initiatives to raise awareness (promoted by young people and others) to draw attention to the importance of green spaces.
 - A more pedestrian-friendly, more accessible city, with fewer cars; limit the passage and access of cars to the Historic Center.
 - Create spaces for the practice of sports and outdoor activities and encourage their use.
 - Promote access to, and promote the protection of nature, namely referring to the connection to the Ria Formosa and the islands (Culatra and others) while preserving its dynamics and essence.

Nº 3 Improving public transport services in Faro and in the Algarve region

Community Need explained:

BUSES:

- There is a lack of information (if a bus is suppressed in a certain schedule, for example, there are no warnings).
- The little existing information is not easily accessible.
- Lack of response/availability from the telephone service of the bus company.
- Few frequencies: some buses run only every hour; certain buses don't operate on weekends.

TRAINS:

- Late trains.
- Lack of carriages due to demand.

GENERAL (BUSES AND TRAINS):

- High price.
- Reduced timetables/frequency.
- Delays.
- Insufficient public transport connections between different municipalities.

Recommendations:

Implement the following **solutions/actions**:

- More public transports, more routes and timetables/frequency, and extended functioning hours.

- Improve online and physical information regarding timetables, itineraries and prices.
- Provide standardized information at bus stops, such as: bus numbers, timetables, and routes.
- Create a dedicated customer telephone line.
- Practice special, more advantageous prices for residents of Faro (to, for example, go to the beach), or create a cheaper, unified intermodal card for residents.
- Consider the attribution of transport subsidies to residents by their municipalities (in line with ACRAL – Association of Commerce and Services of the Algarve Region).

In the proposed **timeframe**:

- The proposed solutions must be implemented within a period of 1 year and a half (until the end of 2023 at the time of carrying out the consultation).

Use and leverage the following **existing resources and means**:

- Diagnostic study on public transport in the Algarve region, already developed, for which several entities were consulted.
- University of the Algarve (public transport issues in the Algarve could be subject of study in final course work).
- European elections.
- The Tourism Region Authority.
- Third sector entities.
- The population itself.

Consider **other needs and necessary means**, such as:

- The need to (re)design and (re)think bus routes.

- Creating new roads (reduced timetables and continuous delays of public transport are worsened by car traffic congestion at peak hours).

Caution **possible obstacles**, such as:

- The need for political will, and for management improvement, due to the fact that we live in a vicious cycle: more options and better conditions of public transport are not created because there are no people using it, and because there are no people using it, more options and better conditions of public transport are not created.
- Eventual resistance of the population to the use of public transport.
- Private transport services (namely Taxis, Ubers, Transfers).

Appeal and **call for responsibility**, namely of:

- The private companies that won the public tenders in the Municipality to provide the public transport service.

Engage **people and organizations** such as:

- AMAL – Algarve Intermunicipal Community (Vamus study).
- Mar Shopping, for example, and other private partners that may benefit from the process of improving public transport services
- Local organizations and movements such as Glocal, the Student Climate Strike, the Grupo dos Amigos de Faro, the Moto Clube de Faro, and others.

Engage the population through the following approaches, for example:

- Creating a list of needs.
- Conducting demonstrations.
- Open letter of intent.
- Collection of signatures, etc. to hand over to policy makers and transport operators (City Council, EVA, Próximo, etc.).

Nº 4 Better health services for all

Community Need explained:

- Health is important to be able to work in the other areas/causes;
- The pandemic has shown the fragility of being human, reinforcing the need to invest in health services, and promote physical and mental health (vulnerabilities made worse by the pandemic).
- Public health services are unable to respond to citizens' demand and their problem-solving needs.
- Health services are very bureaucratic and difficult to access.
- Too much waiting time and delays in medical appointments and surgeries.
- Lack of quality response from health services due to lack of:
 - Human Resources/employees and equipment;
 - Organization/management issues.
- Hospital de Faro presents a high daily demand, and the waiting time and the quality of care are not always the best.
- Money limits the access to health, with a correlation between purchasing power and access to (private) health services.

Recommendations:

Implement the following **solutions/actions**:

- Hire more people in the health field.
- Increase services proportionally to the amount of population.
- More healthcare providers accessible to all.
- Create a new Health Centre and Hospital Facilities.

Nº 5 Quality and affordable housing options

Community Need explained:

PURCHASE/RENTING:

- Cost vs. income problem.
- Accommodation presents very inflated prices and has poor quality.
- The offer of accommodation is scarce, and the existing options are very expensive.
- Accommodation is too expensive in relation to employment opportunities in Faro city.
- Existing accommodation difficulties may cause people not to want/not be able to settle down in Faro.
- Need to live in the surroundings and away from the workplace.

RENTING:

- Very high rents taking into account the average monthly salary.
- Room prices too expensive for students.
- Many landlords do not issue receipts.

Recommendations:

PURCHASE/RENTING:

Implement the following **solutions/actions**:

- Decrease the price of accommodation.
- More housing with real prices for the real wages.

- Construction of housing at controlled costs (for purchase) and controlled rents (for lease).
- Reinforce social housing.
- Reconstruction of abandoned or degraded housing so that it can be used at a social level.
- Signing of agreements with institutions for the recovery of degraded/abandoned/vacant housing.
- Increase the technical capacity of public institutions Human Resources to provide better support to citizens.
- Reinforce the housing inventory survey (housing stock).
- More quality accommodations.

RENTING:

Implement the following **solutions/actions**:

- Formalize complaints and create complaint mechanisms for accommodations without lease contracts.
- Define a mandatory maximum rent price limit per square meter (m²).
- Renting with controlled costs for all.
- Construction of more residences for young people / a specific accommodation area for young people who want to move to Faro.
- Implement the following solutions/actions:
 - Macro Level: Review legislation, namely lease laws. Law No. 62/2018 – Local Accommodation is more beneficial for landlords than the Lease Law No. 6/2006 in terms of taxes.
 - Local Level: Local Housing Strategy of the Municipality of Faro – <https://bit.ly/3OIUVyZ> (housing construction at controlled costs; rent

support; building housing on the outskirts of Faro and/or parishes such as Estoi, Santa Barbara de Nexe - which implies reinforcing public transport.)

- Civil Society Level: "Faro Acolhe" Program - support program for renting/housing for students and support for the elderly - <https://www.ualg.pt/programa-faro-acolhe>

PT - Faro | **Community Engagement and Participation**

Nº 6 More community activities for all ages and more participation

Community Need explained:

- Social isolation.
- There is no contact with neighbors.
- Youth activities don't exist.

Recommendations:

Implement the following **solutions/actions**:

- Activities to bring people of all ages closer.
- More spaces for activities and good times with friends and family.
- More investment in Culture (Museums, Theaters, etc.).
- Greater dynamism in supporting children and young people.
- Creation of a psychology service space for young people.
- More activities for seniors.
- Promoting intergenerationality.
- Creation of neighborhood forums and more local participatory budgets.
- Increased community participation.
- That the Municipality listens more to the city's inhabitants through meetings between the different communities of Faro.
- More awareness actions and inclusion programs on various topics.

PT - Faro | **Community Engagement and Participation**

Nº 7 Volunteering to help our community – 1ª Companhia de Guias de Faro

Recommendations / What can we do?

Implement the following **solutions/actions**:

- Volunteering actions to help our community, in topics such as:
 - Animals.
 - Kids.
 - Homeless people.
 - Elderly people.

“Help, share, collect”

Ideas for volunteering actions:

- Help in kennels, catteries, associations that help animals, or simply feed stray animals.
- Gather with the children/young people at Casa de Santa Isabel (Home for Children and Youth and Nursery and Kindergarten).
- Distribute food and essential goods to the homeless (CASA – Support Center for the Homeless Association).
- Go to nursing homes and socialize with the seniors.

Engage **people and organizations** such as:

- Ourselves/Our branch/company, specifically the heads of our branch/company.
- With the help of other associations.

PT - Faro | **Environment and Green Spaces**

Nº 8 Raising civic awareness in AEProsa

Community Need explained:

- Need for people to start changing habits and have more civic awareness.

Recommendations / What can we do?

Implement the following **solutions/actions**:

- Create an exhibition with biodegradable waste regarding the lack of civic behaviors.
- Give a talk and explain why we should be civic aware.

Responsible:

- (We) students create the exhibit.

Why?

- For people changing their habits and have more civic awareness.

Nº 9 Awareness actions for the equality between nations at UAlg

Community Need explained:

- There is no equality, and we have to fight this problem.

Recommendations / What can we do?

Implement the following **solutions/actions** at the University of Algarve:

- Actions to raise awareness regarding equality between nations.
- Through, for example:
 - Lectures: equal cost, union of nationalities and inclusion/exclusion.
 - Multicultural intervention.
 - Days/weeks dedicated to nationality(ies);
 - Workshops: Cooking, Music, History.

Estimated costs: Workshops 25€/h, hiring of staff, speakers, trainers, etc.
30€/hr.

Proposed **timeframe**:

- During the school year.

Engage people such as:

- Director of the Social Education studies course.
- Director of ESEC – School of Education and Communication.
- Dean.
- Students.
- Teachers.
- Staff.

III.

Community Causes and Recommendations in Thessaloniki, Greece

III. Community Causes and Recommendations in Thessaloniki, Greece

The Community Causes and Recommendations of Thessaloniki, Greece, presented next, resulted from the following project activities:

- **Democracy Labs** - the session was conducted on the 8th of December 2021 in the Municipal Building of Thessaloniki in collaboration with the Municipal Youth Council of Thessaloniki, involving a total of 70 participants (63 young people up to 30 years old; and 7 adults aged between 30-65 years old;).
- **Gathering of Opinions and Public Consultations** – one session and one Online Survey were conducted, between April 2021 and June 2022, involving a total of 105 participants (72 participants in the Gathering of opinions; and 33 respondents to the Online Survey. The profile of the participants of the Gathering of Opinions was: 69 young people up to 30 years old; and 3 adults aged between 30-65 years old. The profiles of the online survey's respondents of the 33 were: 69.7% were aged between 18 - 25, and 30.3% were aged 28 - 35).

Community Changes and Recommendations presented next:

N° 1 To create vegetation paths within the campus of AuTh

Environment and Green Spaces

N° 2 A greener Thessaloniki **Environment and Green Spaces**

N° 3 Accessibility for people in Thessaloniki with audiovisual disorders & mobility

Accessibility for All

N° 4 More time-efficient and ecological transportation in Thessaloniki

Public Transports

N° 5 Dealing with the discrimination that LGBT+ people are facing

Human Rights

N° 6 Easier accessibility around monuments of Thessaloniki for people with disabilities **Accessibility for All**

N° 7 University support for the activation of young people

Youth Participation

N° 8 Connectivity between education and employability

Education and Employment

GR - Thessaloniki | Environment and Green Spaces

Nº 1 To create vegetation paths within the campus of AuTh

Recommendations:

Implement the following **solutions/actions**:

- Tree planting in AuTh spaces.

Take advantage of the **time period**:

- 2023 European Mobility Week, from September 16, 2023 - September 22, 2023 or during the events: "Sunday at AUTH".

Use and leverage the following **existing spaces**:

- At the School of Law, Economics and Political Science (NOPE AUTH.). Specifically, parallel to the red sidewalk and the park above it.
- The library of AUTH.
- Around the pedestrian path from the library to the A.X.E.P.A.

Take into consideration the **resources needed**, namely:

- Plants (a significant part of the cost can be reduced using plants from Public Nurseries (of the Municipality or the Forest Service) or of the University Departments themselves).
- Staff and/or volunteers with knowhow on tree planting.
- Authorised permission.

Caution **possible obstacles**, such as:

- Lack of financial resources or due to bureaucratic processes, the rector of the AuTh might resist.

Reach out / call for responsibility, namely of:

- The Rector of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

Engage **people and organizations** such as:

- The Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.
- The university's students.
- Civil society.

GR - Thessaloniki | Environment and Green Spaces

Nº 2 A greener Thessaloniki

Recommendations:

Implement the following **solutions/actions**:

- Digitisation of its services, in order to reduce waste of consumables and raw materials.
- Installation of reciprocal recycling bins.
- Creation of an environmental website, in combination with the existence of a register of environmental organisations, in order to immediately inform the citizens about recycling points, environmental actions and further environmental issues in the city.
- Exchange of good practices with other Municipalities of Greece, which are models in environmental actions and issues, in order to network the Municipality of Thessaloniki and create a more sustainable Thessaloniki.

Take advantage of the **time period**:

- Of elections, as it is a motivation for mayors and decision-makers to take action.

Use and leverage the following **existing resources and means**:

- Digital resources such as websites and apps from the municipality of Thessaloniki.

Consider **other needs and necessary means**, such as:

- Direct collaboration with relevant decision-makers responsible for the Municipality's green development, for a better estimation of the actual resources needed.
- Creation of citizen training programs on such environmental issues, which could be either funded for young citizens or funded for older citizens.
- The integration of environmental culture in schools through information days, always accompanied by activities, such as tree planting and recycling, is essential for proper learning from an early age.
- Installation of recycling bins that will give money-back coupons to markets.

Caution **possible obstacles**, such as:

- A lack of interest from decision-makers to take into account the arguments.
- A lack of funds for actualising the plan.
- Bureaucratic and legal processes.

Reach out / call for responsibility, namely of:

- The Municipality of Thessaloniki.
- The Mayor's Office.
- The Deputy Mayor of Education in Greece.

Engage **people and organisations** such as:

- Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.
- The universities' students.
- Civil society.

Nº 3 Accessibility for people in Thessaloniki with audiovisual disorders & mobility

Recommendations:

Implement the following **solutions/actions**:

- To facilitate public transportation access to people with visual and auditory difficulties.

Use **existing**:

- Telematic resources that already Thessaloniki's public transportation uses.

Take into consideration the **resources needed**, namely.

- Voice announcement and written display of attitudes for our fellow citizens with visual and auditory difficulty.
- The integration of Google Maps mapping service into bus routes and stops;
- Communication and approval from decision-makers.

Be aware and account for **possible barriers and resistance** such as:

- A lack of interest from decision-makers to take into account the arguments.
- A lack of funds for actualising the plan.
- Bureaucratic and legal processes.

Reach out / call for responsibility, namely of:

- The Transport Authority of Thessaloniki and OASTH (Thessaloniki's public bus transportation company).

Engage **people and organisations** such as:

- Stakeholders that will benefit from the project.
- People with audiovisual & mobility difficulties.
- Guides.

GR - Thessaloniki | Public Transports

N° 4 More time-efficient and ecological transportation in Thessaloniki

Recommendations:

Implement the following **solutions/actions**:

- To facilitate mobility by bike and on foot on the road next to the sea of Thessaloniki.

Take advantage of the **timeframe** of:

- The European Mobility Week (Sat, Sep 16, 2023 – Fri, Sep 22, 2023).

Use **existing**:

- Lines that exist for pedestrians and bicycles, as well as wide street spaces for creating bike roads.

Take into consideration the **resources needed**, namely:

- Refreshing the lines for pedestrians and bicycles with red as it is the most distinct colour.
- Low signposts at pedestrian crossing points.

Caution **possible obstacles**, such as:

- Signposts that often go unnoticed and are located higher than a typical cyclist's field of vision.

Reach out / call for responsibility, namely of:

- The funds for actualizing the plan, and bureaucratic and legal processes.

Inform:

- The general public.

N° 5 Dealing with the discrimination that LGBT+ people are facing

Recommendations:

Implement the following **solutions/actions**:

- Updating and reinforcing public education on gender and sexuality.

Use **existing resources and means**:

- Educational resources that are involved in the formal education of other countries, as well as educators and trainers that are experienced and have worked with the topics of gender and sexuality.

Take into consideration the **resources and necessary means**, namely:

- Textbooks (with emphasis on texts) that reflect the diversity that exists in our society – without stereotyped and outdated projections.
- Sex education courses will not be based on taboos and social stereotypes, but will promote safe sexual practices for all sexual orientations.
- Appropriate training of teachers on issues of gender and sexuality. With the aim of properly dealing with and intervening in abusive and racist behaviours within the classroom and the most correct promotion of the diversity of society.

Caution **possible obstacles**, such as:

- Reactions that might come from parents and individuals who consider sexual education a taboo topic.
- Not-well-informed educators who will be teaching the courses.

Reach out / call for responsibility, namely of:

- General Secretariat for Gender Equality.
- Deputy Mayor of Education.

Inform:

- Parents and the public.

N° 6 Easier accessibility around monuments of Thessaloniki for people with disabilities

Recommendations:

Implement the following **solutions/actions**:

- Application of constructional changes for the facilitation of access to monumental spaces for citizens with disabilities.

Use existing:

- Models for accessibility that exist in other monumental spaces.

Take into consideration the **resources needed**, namely:

- Creation of local and small "openings" on the protective walls around the monuments, which will enclose our fellow citizens in a wheelchair and this part will be bordered by metal bars.
- Application of paintings with a relief floor plan of the monuments accompanied by a relief text (Braille language) for our fellow citizens with visual impairment.

Caution **possible obstacles**, such as:

- The runoff of water during the rain and its accumulation at the levels of monuments that result in the erosion of their structure. The rainwater runoff management could be achieved with standard drains (which of course allow for safe wheelchair parking).

Reach out / call for responsibility, namely of:

- The Office of Urban Sustainability of the Municipality of Thessaloniki.

Involve:

- Stakeholders such as people with disabilities and guides.

Nº 7 University support for the activation of young people

Recommendations:

Implement the following **solutions/actions**:

- To strengthen the structures and contribution of the University to the activation of young people.

Take advantage of the **time period**:

- Where national and European funds are available and eligible for the creation of Youth Centers.

Use existing:

- Know-how and operational schemes from existing Youth Centers around Greece and other countries.

Take into consideration the **resources needed**, namely:

- Youth Centers, where young people can be found and coexist and produce actions with a social impact.
- The Municipality of Thessaloniki to manage the Youth Centers in collaboration with local organisations/youth organisations.
- Creation of a digital "Idea Platform" (Forum), so that the ideas that young people are gathered in a publicly visible spot.
- A stable memorandum of cooperation between the Municipality of Thessaloniki and the local Universities, in order to promote and address the problems of the city.

Caution **possible obstacles**, such as:

- Bureaucratic processes and a lack of adequate funds.

Reaching out to:

- The Mayor of Thessaloniki.
- KEDITH – Europe Direct.
- Youth organisations in the city.
- Youth workers and educators.

Inform:

- Young people.
- Schools.
- Parents.
- The general public.

GR - Thessaloniki | **Education and Employment**

N° 8 Connectivity between education and employability

Recommendations:

Implement the following **solutions/actions**:

- Update formal education and institutions to be more compatible with current employability demands.

Use existing:

- Curriculums from other countries that have a bigger connectivity rate between education and employment.
- Insights from Greece's job markets and agencies.

Take into consideration the **resources needed**, namely:

- New forms of teaching, such as experiential learning, by conducting educational trips to places where young people will be able to use their knowledge, develop their skills and enhance their self-efficacy.
- Vocational guidance course and the corresponding presence of educational advisors.
- Training of the teaching staff through the obligatory attendance of free seminars on sexuality and gender issues.
- Recruitment of individuals from all social groups.
- Creation and participation of all educational levels in Erasmus + mobility programs.

Caution **possible obstacles**, such as:

- The difficulty of applying changes to the educational system.

Reach out / call for responsibility, namely of:

- Mayor of Thessaloniki.
- KEDITH - Europe Direct.
- The Deputy Mayor for Education.
- Youth workers.
- Educators.

Involve:

- Psychologists.
- Social workers.

IV.

Community Causes and Recommendations in Kaunas, Lithuania

IV. Community Causes and Recommendations in Kaunas, Lithuania

The recommendations were created after gathering information from Kaunas citizens through a series of events and online tools. Starting with 4 events of **Democracy Labs**, which happened in August–November (2021), where participants (gymnasium students (approximately 15–18 years old), adults and high school students (18–65), elderly (more than 65 years old)), together with analysing participatory mechanisms, were asked about their needs and issues visible in Kaunas. Then **Gathering of Opinions** via an online Google Survey followed. In total, 68 answers were collected (51 participants under 30 years old, 16 – between 35 and 65 years old, and one elderly participant over 65 years old; it was 51 women and 17 men). And later, other events of **Public consultations** happened from November (2021) to March (2022) in 2 phases: the first 2 events were similar to the Democracy Labs but focused more on people's needs, issues and possible solutions in their environment or the city (55 young participants under 30 years old, 7 between 30 and 65 years old, and 9 senior citizens; in total, 48 women and 23 men), and the third event, which was different because it followed the stage of analysing previously collected information and trying to gather more specific information for the development of the recommendations. It was an online focus group where discussions were raised based on presented information, slide by slide (71 interviewers were under 30 years old, 3 were between 30 and 65 years old, and 1 was over 65 years old; in total, 38 women and 37 men). All of the opinions of Kaunas citizens were analysed and summarized into these recommendations.

Some people from the municipality were involved in some processes, as well as many representatives from various community organizations or even universities.

Community Changes and Recommendations presented next:

N° 1 More spaces for seniors to gain computer literacy knowledge

Senior Computer Literacy

N° 2 Make different people to feel as a community **Community**

Engagement and Participation

N° 3 More indoor and outdoor community spaces accessible to everyone

Community Engagement and Participation

N° 4 Citizens understand projects' writing and implementing better and there is bigger financial support **Funding Opportunities**

N° 5 Easy access is ensured to information about what is happening in the city using different tools and media channels **Access to Information**

N° 6 Better communication and alignment between the government and the citizens **Community Engagement and Participation**

N° 7 Young people to be more involved and empowered in city life **Youth Participation**

LT - Kaunas | Senior Computer Literacy

Nº 1 More spaces for seniors to gain computer literacy knowledge

Community Need explained:

- More attention to computer literacy for seniors.
- Young people being more involved to ensure this opportunity.

Recommendations:

Implementing the following **solutions/actions**:

- Improve collaboration between organizations (elderships, schools, universities, NGOs) to ensure there are spaces and people who organize these activities for elders.

Use and leverage the following **existing resources and means**:

- Contacts with institutions and communities.

Consider **other needs and necessary means**, such as:

- Human – lecturers and space for education.

Appeal and **call for responsibility**, namely of:

- Different NGOs, schools, and universities to find the space and teachers (or students who could teach).
- Elders to gather the community.

Engaging **people and organizations** such as:

- “Gedimino legionas” which is an association of volunteers specialising in IT (cybernetics, Internet of Things, drones, data, etc.).

Engage the population through, for example, the following approaches:

- Call and inform different Kaunas city districts (Seniūnijos), Universities (e.g., KTU), Youth NGOs, culture centres, and libraries.

LT - Kaunas | Community Engagement and Participation

Nº 2 Make different people to feel as a community

Community Need explained:

- For people to be more active and participate in different events and activities, to feel being part of the community.

Recommendations

Implementing the following **solutions/actions**:

- Establish day centre in each Kaunas city district in order for people to have common place to gather.
- Organize discussion between different organizations to see how each can contribute to the goal.
- Initiate better communication between youth and elders by organising joint events of different age groups of community.
- Provide events to showcase why is it essential to be a part of a community.
- Provide events on coming back to live communication with people – how to deal with emotions, how to speak up to a stranger, etc.

Consider other **needs and necessary means**, such as:

- Financial needs, apply to projects to get funding for strengthening communities.
- Human resources who would like to take up this action.
- Place for the discussion and a moderator.
- Space for elders and youngsters to gather and have some common activities, events.

Caution **possible obstacles**, such as:

- Lack of political leadership and decision making: city municipality not wanting to take up these actions or ignoring the request at all, as well elderships because they are ruled by city municipality and it is not into discussions and involving citizens that much.
- Stereotypical look and different views on any points between youth and elders, lack of openness from youth to collaborate.

Appeal and **call for responsibility**, namely of:

- City municipality and different district elderships.
- Kaunas city NGOs, schools, and universities.

Engaging **people and organizations** such as:

- Psychological organisations to provide events on coming back to live communication.

Engage these **populations**:

- Decision-makers.
- Communities that live together.
- Culture centres.
- General public through elderships.
- NGOs, and university representatives.

LT - Kaunas | Community Engagement and Participation

Nº 3 More indoor and outdoor community spaces accessible to everyone

Community Need explained:

- To have more spaces (inside and outside) for different events or community activities that are accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities.

Recommendations

Implementing the following **solutions/actions**:

- If mechanisms for obtaining funding for premises are possible, share more publicly about trainings on project writing and submission.
- Encourage communication and good practice exchange between city and it's district institutions as well as people about citizens involvement in creating different community spaces and activities.
- Organize people's involvement in creating different community spaces in the city through publicising meetings with community about public space projects.
- Institutions to access, publicise and encourage citizens participation in public consultations.
- To encourage apartment building communities to apply to be a part of the project "Perfect courtyard" and improve their courtyard space together, also disseminate it more widely (Lithuanian: "Svajonių kiemas").
- Invite other cities or districts to share their experience and good practice while using participatory budget mechanism – for Kaunas city to consider taking up this mechanism as well for empowering citizens.

- Invite other cities or districts communities to have a discussion about different ways to improve the city's / yard's infrastructure, financial sources and abilities to sustain as communities and organisation.
- Make accessibility for disabled people mandatory in various buildings or at least make mandatory to name if the building is accessible or not.
- To encourage Open Youth Centres to share about their existence with schools and collaborate more for students to know of those places.

Use and leverage the following **existing resources and means**:

- Already existing places.
- Abandoned public spaces.
- Tools already created for this aim, such as those created by "Kurk Lietuvai" (the file) participants or "Perfect courtyard".
- NGOs and their project writing capabilities to help communities.

Consider other **needs and necessary means**, such as:

- Organizations to lead the consultations, places to conduct consultations, and promotion material.
- Consultations regarding project writing.
- Transportation fee, accommodation if needed, food, and place for discussions.
- Funding for creating accessible spaces.
- Human resources who would manage actions.

Caution **possible obstacles**, such as:

- The lack of political will, and management improvement, considering the vicious cycle of this example: *more options and better transport conditions are not created because there are no people using them; and because there*

are no people using them, more options and better transport conditions are not created.

Appeal and **call for responsibility**, namely of:

- Kaunas city municipality.
- Different elderships.
- Different organisations.
- Companies.
- Communities of apartment buildings.
- NGOs.
- Open Youth Centres and Schools.

Engaging **people and organizations** such as:

- Different district elderships.
- Disabled people associations.

Engage the **population** through, for example, the following approaches:

- Handling these recommendations.
- Creating a list of needs.
- Conducting demonstrations.
- An open letter for decision makers.
- Collecting signatures etc, to hand over to policy makers.

Nº 4 Citizens understand projects' writing and implementing better and there is bigger financial support

Community Need explained:

- Citizens have knowledge on how to write projects and there are dedicated representatives from the municipality to consult regarding project writing and execution. As well, communities get financial support for their initiatives.

Recommendations:

Implementing the following **solutions/actions**:

- Improve training and its dissemination on project writing and submission.
- For institutions that are distributing finances arrange educations on different platforms on how to get funding for different age groups, e.g., live, via zoom, on different social media platforms.
- Consider the involvement of different type organizations (NGOs) to help with writing and executing the projects, give guidelines on how to do it more efficiently.
- Gather good case practises from districts and organisations on what kind of projects work the best, what is the most effective way to write them. This could be done by conducting a survey from different NGOs, municipality or having a discussion between different organisations.
- Improve collaboration with municipalities to know what projects they offer for communities and NGOs to apply to and what kind of support they offer when writing the projects.

Use and leverage the following **existing resources and means**:

- Contacts.
- Knowledge of project writing in implementation.
- Third sector entities (NGOs).

Consider other **needs and necessary means**, such as the need of:

- Promotion companies.
- Financing institutions, venues for education, paid social media ads.
- Spaces for education.
- Surveys.

Caution **possible obstacles**, such as:

- The lack of political will: Kaunas city municipality not wanting to be involved.

Appeal and **call for responsibility** these actors:

- City municipality.
- Institutions who give financing for writing projects.
- Communities to participate and share good practices.

Engaging **people and organizations** such as:

- NGOs who work with writing projects.
- Elderships and organisations of the city.
- Kaunas Union of Youth Organizations "Apskritasis stalas" (KJOSAS).

Engage the **population** through, for example, the following approaches:

- Kaunas city and region municipality, NGOs, elderships, and district communities while asking to initiate and engage in these actions.
- Financing institutions, municipality, students, and elders while inviting them to the actions.
- Different NGOs in the city, while asking to give consultations.

Nº 5 Easy access is ensured to information about what is happening in the city using different tools and media channels

Community Need explained:

- Simply presented, structured and easily accessible information about all events, projects and initiatives happening in Kaunas. It is easy to understand the concept, target audiences, and other information regarding the events. This information can be found both on online and offline platforms for easy accessibility for all.

Recommendations:

Implementing the following **solutions/actions**:

- Start a platform where all city events would be displayed and create an agreement with the city municipality that information about events must be added not just to the organisers' platform but to the common one as well.
- Do research about where different age groups get the information about upcoming events, to understand where the most useful and potential places to promote different events are; and work on putting more effort in promoting specific areas. In order to do that, contact the elderships to release a survey to understand what and how information is currently received by the public and what information is missing. With the given information, improve the current information channels.
- Collaborate with different communities and social groups to make the information accessible for all.

- Have the information not just on internet platforms but on physical ones as well (newspapers, flyers, posters).
- During the city events promote other community events so people would be more aware of them.
- Trainings about effective communication.
- Good knowledge exchange between organisations about what is working while communicating and what is not.

Use and leverage the following **existing resources and means**:

- Knowledge of events.
- Existing websites.
- The population itself.

Consider other **needs and necessary means**, such as:

- A website for this initiative, people to create and support it and the budget;
- Survey from elderships to all age groups.
- Informational flyers to be more accessible for elders.
- Flyers, posters printing in collaboration with a newspaper branch.

Caution **possible obstacles**, such as:

- The lack of political will: Kaunas city municipality not wanting to be involved.

Appeal and **call for responsibility** these actors:

- City municipality.
- Elderships.
- Various organisations or companies having knowledge about that.

Engage **people and organisations** such as:

- The municipality, companies that create big scale events in the city, NGOs, Elderships, universities, and schools.
- Communities, students, elders, and working people.
- Different organisations – those who are good at promoting events and those who struggle.

LT - Kaunas | Community Engagement and Participation

Nº 6 Better communication and alignment between the government and the citizens

Community Need explained:

- People are being heard and valued by the government, their ideas are implemented in their communities, and easy communication with a government official regarding needs.

Recommendations:

Implementing the following **solutions/actions**:

- Have more surveys, and discussions to understand what the people of the city and region want and need; have the government do the needed actions and projects accordingly to what people want in their communities.
- Elderships having monthly reports about what they did that month and what are they planning to do next month and ensure that anyone could have access to that information, ask questions and raise discussions.
- Eldership communities arrange an annual meeting where people from the municipality and from different communities would be present to address the issues and think of solutions together.
- Elderships show the trust they have in young people – involve them in the discussion, collaborate with different youth NGOs for them to be able to realize the initiatives they have for the city.
- Create a system to ensure the people of the city are being heard – one website for different discussions, surveys, suggestions of activities.

Use and leverage the following **existing resources and means**:

- Contacts.
- Existing platforms.
- The population itself.

Consider other **needs and necessary means**, such as:

- Have a platform with all information accessible.
- A place for these meetings (online or offline).

Caution **possible obstacles**, such as:

- The lack of political will: elderships not wanting to be involved (as it wouldn't be in the plans of the municipality).
- Low turnout rate: citizens are not commuting to meetings, not answering surveys.

Appeal and **call for responsibility** these actors:

- Municipality.
- Elderships.
- Eldership communities.

Engage **people and organisations** such as:

- The municipality, NGOs, elderships.
- Youth NGOs.
- Youth.
- Communities.

Nº 7 Young people to be more involved and empowered in city life

Community Need explained:

- For youth to be more active in city initiatives, present in discussions about cities problems and solutions, voicing youth perspective, participate in city events and help to organize them.

Recommendations:

Implementing the following **solutions/actions**:

- For schools and teachers to promote and share opportunities for young people and encourage them to participate in projects and events at school and outside of it, talk about the benefits of it.
- Encourage peer-to-peer good practice exchanges which are very impactful – share this need with schools, youth organisations, school councils, student councils.
- Have a youth representative active in the work that eldership of a specific city region is doing, for them be a part of the discussion, to involve the youth voice in decisions making and to create spaces and events for all age groups to be interested in attending.
- Not well-known groups of young people being asked to attend and perform in different events around the city, for them to feel included and seen by their communities.

Use and leverage the following **existing resources and means**:

- Contacts;
- Decision makers;
- The school pupils population itself.

Consider other **needs and necessary means**, such as:

- Places for groups to perform.
- Mentors.

Appeal and **call for responsibility** these actors:

- Schools.
- Eldershops.
- Youth communities in the elderships.

Engage **people and organisations** such as:

- Schools.
- Youth organisations
- School councils.
- Student councils.
- Volunteering organisations.

V. Community Causes and Recommendations in Timisoara, Romania

V. Community Causes and Recommendations in Timisoara, Romania

The following recommendations are the result of all the hard work put into the implementation of the project so far by having implemented a series of activities starting from **Democracy Labs**, **Gathering of Opinions**, **Public Consultations** in Timișoara, Romania, during which we have used a variety of non-formal methods such as presentations, focus group & group work, conducted interviews, conducted surveys, used educational board-games which were tailor made for these activities. Democracy Labs involved a total of 55 participants (51 young people up to 30 years old; and 4 adults aged between 30–65 years old); Gathering of Opinions a total of 74 participants (70 young people up to 30 years old; and 4 adults aged between 30–65 years old); and Public Consultations a total of 35 (27 young people up to 30 years old; and 8 adults aged between 30–65 years old).

Community Changes and Recommendations presented next:

Nº 1 Education should have a better quality, be more accessible and affordable

Education and Employment

Nº 2 More job opportunities for young people **Education and Employment**

Nº 3 Public transportation quality to be increased, made more affordable and reliable **Public Transports**

Nº 4 Sports practicing to be more affordable and made more attractive **Sports and Leisure for Youth**

Nº 5 Creating more green spaces and reducing pollution **Environment and Green Spaces**

Nº 6 Making more recreational, leisure and entertainment facilities for the community **Sports and Leisure for Youth**

Nº 7 Opening access to private healthcare and reducing costs of medical expenses **Health Access**

Nº 8 Better financial policies regarding housing, renting, and purchasing living spaces for young people **Housing**

RO - Timisoara | **Education and Employment**

Nº 1 Education should have a better quality, be more accessible and affordable

Community Need explained:

- Lack of access to quality education, quality education is expensive, scholarships are cheap, education funding is not enough.

Recommendations:

Implement the following **solutions/actions**:

- Increasing funding for schools and educational programs.
- Providing affordable or free education for all students.
- Improving teacher training and support programs.
- Implementing initiatives to increase student enrollment and attendance.
- Partnering with community organizations and businesses to provide additional resources and support for education in the area.
- Partnering with local organizations and businesses to provide educational resources and support.
- Advocacy for increased funding for education at the local and national level;
- Volunteer tutoring and mentorship programs for students who need extra support,
- Starting a scholarship fund for low-income students to access higher education.
- Collaborating with schools and school districts to implement innovative educational programs and initiatives;

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- Seeking out alternative education options, such as online courses or vocational training programs;
 - Participating in free or low-cost educational programs, such as community college courses or adult education programs;
 - Utilizing online resources and communities to access educational materials and support;
 - Seeking out scholarships or financial aid to help cover the costs of education;
 - Participating in work-study programs or internships to help pay for education costs;
 - Utilizing flexible or self-paced education options, such as correspondence courses or MOOCs (massive open online courses);
 - Seeking out educational resources or support from local organizations or community groups;
 - Participating in educational programs or initiatives that offer stipends or other forms of financial assistance;
 - Enrolling in a community college or other institution with lower tuition costs before transferring to a four-year college or university;
 - Utilizing resources such as tutoring services or study groups to help improve academic performance and potentially qualify for academic scholarships;
 - Participating in or supporting initiatives to increase funding for education at all levels;
 - Advocating for policies that increase access to affordable education for all individuals;
 - Collaborating with local organizations to provide educational resources or assistance for young people;
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- Utilizing resources such as libraries or educational centers to access educational materials and support;
 - Seeking out educational opportunities through employers or professional organizations;
 - Participating in or supporting initiatives to make higher education more accessible and affordable, such as tuition-free college programs;
 - Utilizing alternative financing options, such as crowdfunding or microloans, to help cover the costs of education;
 - Seeking out educational resources or support from local governments or community organizations;
 - Participating in or supporting initiatives to improve the quality of education at all levels;
 - Collaborating with educational professionals or institutions to provide educational resources and support for young people in the community.

RO - Timisoara | **Education and Employment**

Nº 2 More job opportunities for young people

Community Need explained:

- Limited job opportunities for young people.

Recommendations:

Implement the following **solutions/actions**:

- Partnering with local businesses to create internships and job shadowing opportunities for young people.
- Starting a job fair specifically for young people to connect with potential employers.
- Offering job training and skill-building programs for young people to prepare them for the workforce.
- Advocate for policies that support small businesses and entrepreneurship, which can create new job opportunities for young people.
- Collaborating with local colleges and universities to create job placement programs for recent graduates.
- Connecting young people with mentorship and networking opportunities to help them find job openings and build professional connections.
- Helping young people build their resumes and improve their job application skills.
- Encouraging young people to start their own businesses or social enterprises.
- Supporting initiatives that promote the hiring of young people, such as youth hiring quotas or tax credits for businesses that hire young workers.

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- Working with local governments and community organizations to create job programs for young people, such as community service projects or apprenticeship programs.
 - Seeking out alternative job opportunities, such as freelancing or contract work.
 - Participating in internships or job shadowing programs to gain experience and make connections in the field.
 - Utilizing online job search resources and networking platforms to find job openings.
 - Seeking out job training or skills development programs to improve employability.
 - Volunteering or participating in community service projects to gain relevant experience and make connections.
 - Utilizing resources such as career counselling or job placement services to find job opportunities.
 - Participating in job fairs or other events to meet with potential employers and learn about job openings.
 - Starting a small business or freelancing to create job opportunities for oneself.
 - Seeking out part-time or flexible work arrangements to supplement income while continuing to search for full-time employment.
 - Participating in apprenticeship or mentorship programs to gain practical experience and make professional connections.
 - Seeking out job training or skills development programs to improve employability.
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- Utilizing resources such as career counseling or job placement services to find job opportunities.
- Participating in job fairs or other events to meet with potential employers and learn about job openings.
- Starting a small business or freelancing to create job opportunities for oneself.
- Seeking out part-time or flexible work arrangements to supplement income while continuing to search for full-time employment.
- Participating in internships or job shadowing programs to gain experience and make connections in the field.
- Utilizing online job search resources and networking platforms to find job openings.
- Seeking out job opportunities in growing industries or fields with a high demand for workers.
- Utilizing networking and professional development opportunities to make connections and learn about job openings.
- Advocating for policies that support the creation of new jobs, supporting small businesses and startups, or participating in community development projects or programs that create new job opportunities.

Nº 3 Public transportation quality to be increased, made more affordable and reliable

Community Need explained:

- Bad quality public transportation, not enough public transport, expensive public transport, the busses don't respect their schedule.

Recommendations:

Implement the following **solutions/actions**:

- Advocating for increased funding for public transportation at the local and national level.
- Working with local governments to expand public transportation options, such as adding new bus routes or creating a commuter rail system.
- Promoting the use of alternative modes of transportation, such as carpooling, biking, and walking.
- Encouraging the use of public transportation by offering incentives or discounts for regular users.
- Partnering with ride-sharing companies to provide discounted or subsidized rides for low-income individuals or those living in underserved areas.
- Working with local governments to improve the safety and reliability of public transportation systems.
- Starting a campaign to educate the public about the benefits of public transportation and how to use it effectively.

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- Collaborating with local businesses to provide employee shuttle services or other transportation options for workers.
 - Supporting initiatives to make public transportation more accessible for people with disabilities.
 - Advocating for the creation of dedicated lanes for buses and other public transportation vehicles to improve travel times and reliability.
 - Advocating for improved public transportation options and services, such as increased funding or the development of new transportation systems.
 - Participating in public transportation planning and advocacy groups to have a voice in transportation decision-making.
 - Encouraging the use of alternative modes of transportation, such as biking or carpooling, to reduce the demand for public transportation.
 - Utilizing online resources and tools to track public transportation schedules and plan trips more efficiently.
 - Seeking out discounts or special offers on public transportation, such as student or senior fares.
 - Participating in or supporting initiatives to make public transportation more accessible and convenient, such as the development of app-based payment systems or the expansion of transportation networks.
 - Encouraging the use of public transportation by offering incentives or rewards for regular users.
 - Participating in carpooling or ride-sharing programs to reduce the number of vehicles on the road and improve the efficiency of transportation.
 - Supporting initiatives to improve the safety and reliability of public transportation systems, such as increased funding for maintenance or the development of safety protocols.
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- Advocating for the creation of dedicated lanes or other infrastructure improvements to improve the speed and reliability of public transportation.
- Advocating for the development of alternative modes of transportation, such as light rail or commuter rail systems.
- Supporting initiatives to improve the reliability and punctuality of public transportation, such as increased funding for maintenance or the development of improved scheduling systems.
- Encouraging the use of alternative modes of transportation, such as biking or carpooling, to reduce the demand for public transportation.
- Advocating for the expansion of public transportation networks to better serve underrepresented or underserved areas.
- Seeking out discounts or special offers on public transportation, such as multi-trip passes or reduced fares for certain groups of people.
- Participating in or supporting initiatives to make public transportation more accessible and convenient, such as the development of app-based payment systems or the expansion of transportation networks.
- Encouraging the use of public transportation by offering incentives or rewards for regular users.
- Participating in or supporting initiatives to improve the safety and security of public transportation systems, such as increased funding for security measures or the development of safety protocols.
- Advocating for policies that support the development of more environmentally-friendly modes of transportation, such as electric buses or trains.
- Collaborating with public transportation providers to identify and address issues with service quality or reliability.

Nº 4 Sports practicing to be more affordable and made more attractive

Community Need explained:

- Practicing sports is very expensive for a youngster and also not very attractive.

Recommendations:

Implement the following **solutions/actions**:

- Partnering with local organizations to provide discounted or free sports equipment and facilities.
- Starting a fundraising campaign to raise money for sports equipment and facilities.
- Collaborating with local schools and community centers to provide sports programs and activities for young people.
- Volunteering to coach or assist with sports teams or programs in the community.
- Starting a sports league or club for young people in the community;
- Partnering with local businesses to provide sponsorships or funding for sports programs and activities for young people.
- Encouraging the use of public parks and open spaces for sports and physical activity.
- Working with local governments to allocate more funding for sports programs and facilities for young people.

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- Starting a scholarship program to help young people cover the costs of participating in sports programs.
 - Collaborating with local sports organizations to offer discounted or reduced-fee programs for young people.
 - Seeking out alternative sports and physical activity options that may be less expensive, such as outdoor sports or workouts, or utilizing public parks and open spaces for physical activity.
 - Participating in organized sports or physical activity programs through local schools or community centers.
 - Utilizing online resources and communities to find and participate in sports and physical activity programs or events.
 - Volunteering time or skills to help improve or maintain local sports and recreational facilities or programs.
 - Seeking out discounts or special offers on sports and physical activity programs or equipment, such as group rates or student discounts.
 - Participating in or supporting initiatives to play sports and physical activity more accessible and affordable for young people.
 - Utilizing sports and physical activity resources or programs offered by local businesses or organizations.
 - Participating in sports or physical activity events or competitions that offer prize money or other forms of financial assistance.
 - Utilizing low-cost or at-home options for physical activity, such as bodyweight exercises or home workout videos.
 - Seeking out alternative sources for sports and physical activity equipment, such as second-hand stores or online marketplaces.

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- Participating in or supporting initiatives to improve the quality and availability of sports and recreational facilities in the community.
 - Promoting the benefits of sports and physical activity to young people, including the physical and mental health benefits, as well as the social and personal development opportunities.
 - Seeking out sports and physical activity programs or events that offer financial assistance or scholarships to participants.
 - Participating in or supporting initiatives to increase funding for sports and physical activity programs in schools and the community.
 - Encouraging the use of sports and physical activity as a way to improve community health and well-being.
 - Collaborating with sports and physical activity organizations or professionals to provide resources and support for young people in the community.
 - Seeking out alternative financing options, such as crowdfunding or microloans, to help cover the costs of sports and physical activity programs or equipment for performance young athletes.

Nº 5 Creating more green spaces and reducing pollution

Community Need explained:

- Practicing sports is very expensive for a youngster and also not very attractive.

Recommendations:

Implement the following **solutions/actions**:

- Starting a campaign to educate the community about environmental issues and ways to reduce their impact.
- Partnering with local organizations to organize clean-up events and other environmental initiatives.
- Advocating for policies that protect the environment and promote sustainability.
- Starting a community garden or other green space project to promote environmental conservation and beautification.
- Encouraging the use of alternative modes of transportation, such as biking or walking, to reduce air pollution.
- Supporting businesses and organizations that prioritize environmental sustainability.
- Encouraging the use of reusable bags, water bottles, and other eco-friendly products.
- Advocating for the reduction of single-use plastics and other environmentally harmful products.

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- Collaborating with local governments to implement recycling programs and other environmental initiatives.
 - Supporting initiatives to protect and conserve natural habitats and wildlife.
 - Participating in or organizing community clean-up events or initiatives.
 - Advocating for increased funding for street cleaning and maintenance services.
 - Supporting initiatives to increase the availability of public recycling bins and other recycling options.
 - Encouraging the use of reusable bags, water bottles, and other eco-friendly products to reduce waste.
 - Participating in or supporting initiatives to create or preserve green spaces in the community.
 - Advocating for policies that protect the environment and promote sustainability.
 - Encouraging the use of alternative modes of transportation, such as biking or walking, to reduce pollution and improve the cleanliness of streets.
 - Supporting businesses and organizations that prioritize environmental sustainability.
 - Participating in or supporting initiatives to reduce the use of single-use plastics and other environmentally harmful products.
 - Volunteering time or skills to help maintain or improve local green spaces and public areas.

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Nº 6 Making more recreational, leisure and entertainment facilities for the community

Community Need explained:

- Limited recreational facilities, limited leisure facilities, limited entertainment facilities for young people.

Recommendations:

Implement the following **solutions/actions**:

- Partnering with local organizations to provide recreational and leisure activities for young people.
- Starting a campaign to raise money for the development of new recreational facilities or the improvement of existing ones.
- Collaborating with local governments to allocate more funding for recreational and leisure facilities for young people.
- Encouraging the use of public parks and open spaces for recreational and leisure activities.
- Partnering with local businesses to provide discounts or sponsorships for recreational and leisure activities for young people.
- Starting a community center or other gathering place for young people to participate in recreational and leisure activities.
- Organizing events and activities for young people in the community, such as sports tournaments, movie nights, or music festivals.

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- Collaborating with local schools and community centers to provide after-school programs and activities for young people.
 - Advocating for the development of more entertainment facilities, such as movie theaters or concert venues, in the community.
 - Supporting initiatives to create more public spaces, such as plazas or pedestrian-friendly streets, that can be used for leisure and recreation.
 - Seeking out alternative recreational and leisure options, such as free or low-cost community events or activities.
 - Participating in organized sports or recreational programs through local schools or community centers.
 - Organizing recreational and leisure activities with friends or peers, such as sports games, movie nights, or game nights.
 - Volunteering time or skills to help improve or maintain local recreational facilities or programs.
 - Utilizing public parks and open spaces for recreational and leisure activities.
 - Participating in outdoor recreational activities, such as hiking, camping, or biking, which may be less expensive than indoor leisure options.
 - Seeking out discounts or special offers on recreational and leisure activities, such as group rates or student discounts.
 - Utilizing online resources and communities to find and participate in recreational and leisure activities.
 - Participating in cultural or artistic events and activities, such as concerts, plays, or museums, which may be less expensive than traditional entertainment options.
 - Supporting local businesses and organizations that offer recreational and leisure activities for young people.
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- Partnering with local schools or community centers to offer youth programs and activities.
- Collaborating with local youth organizations or clubs to provide additional activities and resources for young people.
- Developing or improving public spaces, such as parks or community centers, to provide more opportunities for youth activities.
- Supporting local businesses or organizations that offer youth activities or programs, such as sports leagues or art classes.
- Seeking out grants or other funding sources to support the development of youth programs and activities.
- Collaborating with local governments or community organizations to provide funding or resources for youth programs.
- Participating in or supporting initiatives to increase the availability of youth programs and activities in the community.
- Seeking out volunteers or community members with specialized skills or interests to lead or support youth activities.
- Encouraging local businesses or organizations to offer discounts or special offers to young people to make youth activities more affordable.
- Developing or supporting initiatives to engage young people in the planning and development of youth programs and activities.

Nº 7 Opening access to private healthcare and reducing costs of medical expenses

Community Need explained:

- Limited access to private healthcare and medical facilities, dentists are very expensive, healthcare is expensive.

Recommendations:

Implement the following **solutions/actions**:

- Partnering with local organizations to provide free or discounted healthcare services for young people.
- Advocating for policies that increase access to affordable healthcare for young people.
- Collaborating with local governments to create programs that provide healthcare services for low-income individuals or those without insurance.
- Starting a campaign to raise money for the development of new healthcare facilities or the improvement of existing ones.
- Encouraging the use of telemedicine and other remote healthcare services to increase access to medical care.
- Collaborating with local businesses to provide healthcare benefits or discounts for employees.
- Partnering with local schools and universities to provide healthcare services or resources for students.

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- Supporting initiatives that increase the availability of affordable prescription medications.
 - Advocating for the development of more community health clinics and other healthcare facilities in underserved areas.
 - Collaborating with local healthcare professionals to provide educational resources and support for young people to make informed healthcare decisions.
 - Seeking out sliding scale or low-cost healthcare options, such as community health clinics or non-profit healthcare organizations.
 - Negotiating with healthcare providers for lower rates or payment plans.
 - Shopping around for the best prices on prescription medications and seeking out generic options whenever possible.
 - Using health savings accounts or flexible spending accounts to pay for healthcare expenses.
 - Seeking out healthcare coverage through employer-sponsored insurance plans or government-funded programs like Medicaid or Medicare.
 - Participating in clinical trials or other research studies to receive free or discounted healthcare.
 - Seeking out alternative forms of healthcare, such as acupuncture, chiropractic care, or naturopathic medicine.
 - Volunteering time or skills to receive free or discounted healthcare services.
 - Utilizing telemedicine and other remote healthcare options to reduce the need for in-person visits.
 - Participating in wellness programs or preventative care initiatives to reduce the need for expensive medical treatment in the future.
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N° 8 Better financial policies regarding housing, renting, and purchasing living spaces for young people

Community Need explained:

- Inadequate affordable housing, apartments are expensive, houses are very expensive, it is hard to get a loan from the bank, rent is expensive, it is almost impossible to put money aside in order to buy a home.

Recommendations:

Implement the following **solutions/actions**:

- Advocating for policies that increase funding for affordable housing initiatives.
- Collaborating with local organizations to provide housing assistance or resources for young people.
- Partnering with local governments to create programs that provide affordable housing options for low-income individuals or those who are struggling to find housing.
- Encouraging the development of more affordable housing units, such as through the use of tax credits or other incentives.
- Supporting initiatives that aim to increase the supply of affordable housing, such as through the construction of new units or the rehabilitation of existing ones.
- Advocating for the implementation of rent control measures to make housing more affordable.

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- Collaborating with local banks and financial institutions to create programs that offer more favourable loan terms for young people.
 - Partnering with local businesses to provide housing assistance or benefits for employees.
 - Encouraging the use of alternative housing options, such as co-living or shared housing arrangements.
 - Advocating for the development of more public housing options for low-income individuals.
 - Partnering with local organizations to provide affordable housing options or assistance for young people.
 - Advocating for policies that increase access to affordable housing for young people.
 - Collaborating with local governments to create programs that provide housing assistance for low-income individuals or those without a stable place to live.
 - Starting a campaign to raise money for the development of new affordable housing options or the improvement of existing ones.
 - Encouraging the use of alternative housing options, such as co-living arrangements or tiny homes.
 - Collaborating with local businesses to provide housing benefits or discounts for employees.
 - Partnering with local schools and universities to provide housing resources or assistance for students.
 - Supporting initiatives that increase the availability of affordable rental housing.

- Advocating for the development of more affordable housing options in underserved areas.
- Collaborating with local housing professionals to provide educational resources and support for young people to make informed housing decisions.
- Seeking out alternative housing options, such as co-living arrangements or shared housing.
- Participating in or supporting initiatives to increase the availability of affordable housing in the community.
- Advocating for policies that increase access to affordable housing for young people.
- Collaborating with local organizations to provide housing resources or assistance for young people.
- Utilizing online resources and communities to find and connect with potential roommates or housing options.
- Seeking out housing assistance programs or financial aid to help cover the costs of housing.
- Participating in or supporting initiatives to make home ownership more accessible and affordable, such as down payment assistance programs.
- Negotiating with landlords or property managers for lower rent or more flexible lease terms.
- Seeking out housing options in areas with lower costs of living.
- Utilizing alternative financing options, such as crowdfunding or microloans, to help cover the costs of housing.

VI. Conclusions

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Different problems, needs and desires in the form of Causes have been identified by the communities of the 4 Partner countries – Faro (Portugal), Thessaloniki (Greece), Kaunas (Lithuania) and Timisoara (Romania). Some are similar, some are different, but all show that communities are aware, know well what they need and want, and can easily express opinions and recommendations to improve community life in their cities. The challenge remains how to reach more efficiently the decision makers, to make the voices of the citizens heard, in order to make these cities, the places where these communities live, work and study, more and more participative for the benefit of all. Combined with the increased awareness and knowledge regarding the already existing Participatory Mechanisms, some of which were presented in the Toolkit [“Why Does Participation Matter? A Guide to Citizen Engagement”](#), publication previously developed by the project consortium, we hope this gathering of Causes & Recommendations and its National Versions of Local Causes & Recommendations (in Portuguese, Greek, Lithuanian and Romanian languages), made available by each Partner to their local communities and decision makers, can contribute to fill in the gap between the voices of citizens and the local power, fostering opportunities of dialogue and cooperation towards increased participation and quality of life in these places.

