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South Baltic



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D-EFFECT - CIVIC SOCIETY DEMOCRACY LESSONS, bringing a youth perspective in the EU policymaking at all levels in line with Youth Strategy 2022-2027



2.

YDF – Youth Democratic Festivals

Three-Level Model



PILL OF KNOWLEDGE



Youth Democratic Festivals (YDF) - are an innovative method of engaging young people in democratic life, developed within the D-Effect project.

OBJECTIVE

Their aim is to strengthen active citizenship, foster intergenerational dialogue, and build lasting cooperation between young people, local authorities, civil society organisations, public institutions and other stakeholders.

METHOD

YDF is based on the principle that young people are not merely participants in events, but their co-creators – from programme planning and implementation to evaluation. The method draws inspiration from major European democracy festivals, such as Almedalsveckan (Sweden), Arendalsuka (Norway) and Folkemødet (Denmark), adapting their concept to the local and regional level. In this way, it creates a practical space for discussion, shared decision-making and the development of civic competences, in line with the EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027 and the European Youth Goals.

To enable the gradual development of events and their adaptation to the organisers' capacities, the YDF methodology is based on a three-level festival scaling model.



YDF 1 – Pilot Festival (Local/Regional)

The first level is the pilot stage, designed to test the YDF methodology in a local context. The festival engages young people, representatives of local authorities, civil society organisations and local stakeholders, creating a space for dialogue on the most important challenges facing the community. The event provides an opportunity to test different

participatory formats, build trust among participants and develop good practices that can be further refined in subsequent editions.



YDF 2 – Medium-Scale Cross-Border Festival

The second level adds an international dimension to the event by involving at least one international partner. Young people from different countries co-create the festival programme, take part in joint activities, and exchange experiences and perspectives. In addition to local participants, the festival welcomes regional and international guests. The cooperation results in a joint element of the event developed by the international

partners. The festival becomes a platform for mutual learning, relationship-building and the development of cross-border cooperation.



YDF 3 – International Youth Democratic Festival

The third level represents a fully developed international YDF model. The event involves at least two international partners, while the programme brings together a broad range of young participants, representatives of public institutions, non-governmental organisations, experts and decision-makers from different countries. The festival becomes an international celebration of youth democracy, enabling the

exchange of experiences, the joint development of solutions to challenges facing the younger generation, and the strengthening of cooperation across the Baltic Sea Region. The event results in a jointly developed outcome, which may take the form of recommendations, a declaration, an action plan or other solutions further developed by the partners after the festival.

The three-level YDF model enables the gradual expansion of the scale and complexity of events – from local initiatives testing the methodology, through cross-border cooperation, to fully international festivals. This allows organisers to build their experience, establish lasting partnerships and create increasingly strong platforms for youth participation in democratic processes.



3 LEVELS OF YDF – DIFFERENT SCALE, SAME GOAL: ACTIVE YOUTH!



THE PRINCIPLES THAT GUIDE US



 **YDF IS NOT JUST A FESTIVAL. IT IS A PROCESS OF BUILDING CIVIC COMPETENCES, EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE AND CREATING LASTING RELATIONSHIPS BEYOND BORDERS.**





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