

## CONTINUE Pan-European Stakeholder Meeting Synthesis Report

<b>Name of Organisation</b>	Peoples Voice Media
<b>Country</b>	UK
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<b>Name, Organisation and Role/Job Title of interviewees</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ingrida Jotkaitė / Senior Project Lead, Active Youth / President, Euro Desk Association</li> <li>2. Daniela Tumbarello / Board of Directors, Italian National Agency / Municipal Councillor, Sixth District, Municipality of Palermo</li> <li>3. Barnabás Gulyás / Head of Gyöt, Hungarian NGO</li> <li>4. Elisabetta Leone / Supervisor, Europe Direct Caserta</li> <li>5. Luis Alves / National Agency Erasmus+ Director, Portugal</li> </ol>

### Short description of interview settings. (3-5 sentences)

- Online, over the phone, in-person, via email, etc.?
- Individual conversations or group meetings?

Interviews with Ingrida, Barnabás and Elisabetta were held online over Zoom. The interview with Daniela was held in-person with Per Esemplio, and Luis's interview was conducted by email by FADJP. All interviews were individual.

### Why did you approach these particular stakeholders to take part?

We approached these particular stakeholders because they perform their roles at the European level and so can give the CONTINUE project insights into the issues facing young people post-pandemic.

Some, such as Barnabás and Ingrida work directly with young people, while others, such as Daniela, are involved in local government as policy makers. Daniela also has a role in the field of Youth Programmes within the Italian National Agency, while Luis is a Director at the Portuguese National Agency, putting them in a position to give us insight on policy direction in Europe, particularly through the lens of Erasmus funding and projects.

Elisabetta and Ingrida's respective roles with Europe Direct and Euro Desk also give them insight at the European level which will be beneficial to this project.

**What responses and feedback did stakeholders have to the findings of WP2? (List any relevant points made by interviewees)**

- The interviews found significant similarities between the findings of WP2 and the experience of young people in the stakeholders' local contexts.
- In particular, the lack of motivation of young people and the worsening of mental health issues were noted.
- Some stakeholders noted that the research so far was very 'heavy' on mental health and feelings, although this is because of what came out of the stories in WP2.
- The CONTINUE project is interesting, but it's vital that we follow up on our findings.

**From their own experience, what do they perceive to be the key issues that young people are facing in light of the pandemic? (List all issues)**

- Many young people were at a crucial stage in their development which was suddenly interrupted by the pandemic. Adults, institutions, teachers etc. were not prepared for this and could not offer appropriate support in many cases.
- Young people are more aware of mental health and see it with less stigma than adults do. As such they recognise the importance of seeing help and treat mental health with the same importance as physical health. However, across Europe there is little institutional recognition of this.
- Isolation from peers has resulted in an overuse of smartphones and social media. While not dangerous in themselves, the way in which they are used can negatively affect people.
- In many cases, young people do not feel comfortable confronting 'adult authorities' because they feel they are not listened to.
- Many of the issues existed before the pandemic but the pandemic has highlighted them.
- The pandemic also strongly affected youth work and has shaken it at all levels: from European and national youth programmes, grassroots organisations, teams, projects, activities, frameworks, daily tasks, budgets, networks and support environments. Youth work showed resilience, capacity of adaptation and flexibility, as an important pillar not only to young people but to their ecosystems.
- Employment and careers is also a big issue for those working with young people at the older end of the scale.
- Some young people have 'lost' several social skills.
- Some programme leaders are finding that young people want to participate in programmes and travel but want to postpone as they don't feel comfortable doing it right now – however, this is also down to the war in Ukraine.
- The closures of youth centres/services left young people isolated and led to suicides in some countries.

**Are there any relevant policies or policy directions that they are aware of that are relevant to supporting young people in the COVID-19 recovery, or that address the issues in the insight briefing?**

- **These could be internally within their organisations, or at a local, national or European level.**

- “At the European level, there are several initiatives and projects. The tools are there, the funds are there, but they need to be better disseminated and sponsored so that they reach everyone.” – Daniella Tumbarello
- European Commission, together with different member states, national authorities and National Agencies formulated and developed immediately, answers to support youth sector, youth workers and young people during this unexpected and challenging period that impacted not only the past years and present days but also the future.
- Several strategic long-term projects between National Agencies went further and moved faster as an answer to the pandemic situation. Mental Health and Wellbeing, European Youth Work Agenda, Ray Network, Digital Youth Work with the aim to better support youth workers and young people.
- There is a need for more resources and tools to be made available to support young people’s mental health.
- The Role Model Network is an initiative supported by the Italian National Agency. This initiative is based on the idea that a peer-to-peer advice or message arrives at young people more powerfully rather than when it comes from adults.
- We need integrated approaches to policy and focused topics.
- Peer-to-peer approaches are favoured by several stakeholders.
- The current polarising opinions on social media are a problem for young people and greater media criticism skills are needed.
- EU Recovery Funding is being used in several countries, although the schemes are more generalised, not specifically focused on young people.

**What concrete actions were identified that stakeholders could begin to implement immediately? (List all actions)**

- Change attitudes towards young people so that young people feel heard.
- Restart from where we left off, in particular focusing on gathering and socialising places for young people, so they can also be more active in their local communities.
- "It's necessary to make young people protagonists: the future is theirs". Participatory listening is needed, for example there should be young people on the political staff because adults have a different vision than young people. “Young people must shout to be heard, and we have an obligation to listen to them. We need to put young people in decision-making positions.

- Motivating more young people. "If you are motivated, if you are encouraged and pushed to do better, you fly because you know there is someone who has believed in you and is facilitating your path by standing by your side."

**Use the space below to tell us any other relevant details or reflections that emerged.**