



November 2024

YOUTH SHAPING EUROPE'S TOMORROW

YOUTH WORKSHOP ON GLOBALIZATION, GENTRIFICATION AND CULTURE

YOUTH RECOMMENDATIONS



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Executive Summary

Overview

Nau Bostik in Barcelona hosted on **the 30th and the 31st of October 2024** the **Youth Workshop on Globalization, Gentrification and Culture**, as an event from the **U4EU 2.0** project. It was organized by **Mitjans. Xarxa de Comunicadors i Educadors**, in collaboration with eight other European NGOs.

This international meeting was participatively organized with a very diverse group of young people living in Barcelona and other cities from its metropolitan area, Spain, based on their interests, their concerns and the experiences they have had so far. 44 people, 17 of them young people from 8 other European Union's countries (Germany, Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands and Portugal) attended to this Youth Workshop. This group from the EU was from very diverse origins and characters, too.

The purpose of this Youth Workshop was to reflect and debate together about the processes of gentrification and globalization that are taking place in cities, towns and villages. It also wanted to talk about how Culture is in the middle of this new socio-political framework and what the future prospects are. It highlighted the consequences that all of this has on the daily life and expectations of young people, in a dialogue between the local and the global dimension.

Key Recommendations

The youth participants actively engaged in workshops, a geocaching urban route in Barcelona's city centre and debates, generating a set of insightful recommendations across various topics. The most significant recommendations include:

- **Globalization and glocalization:** The discussion on globalization and glocalization highlighted the relationship between local and global dynamics, emphasizing how global influences often integrate with local cultures to create unique forms. Participants noted the growing cultural interconnectivity facilitated by international sharing and adaptation, but also explored the challenges, such as the generational gap and the homogenizing impact of phenomena like Americanization. Participants also discussed what might help preserve some cultural elements they consider an integral part of our society. This discussion was more difficult and controversial, as some members of the group proposed a sort of censorship or some mandatory quota of country-based culture to be consumed. They did not reach a consensus over possible solutions, aside from agreeing on education and discussion being very relevant in the process of finding and defining their own identity.

- **Gentrification and tourism:** Three key terms emerged during the conversation: studentification, globalization, and touristification. After identifying these challenges, the group proposed solutions to counteract gentrification. Participants recognised the importance of collective responsibility and suggested sustainable travel practices to avoid contributing to the issue. This includes being mindful of the food we eat, the places we visit, the stores we support, and the accommodations we choose. Systemically, we need regulations that prioritise local people's interests over capital. Raising awareness of the harmful effects of gentrification, investing in education, and creating safe spaces to share lived experiences were highlighted as essential steps toward addressing this issue.
- **Culture and linguistic landscape:** Participants explored how culture reflects the shared values, practices, and heritage of a community, while the linguistic landscape –the use of language in public spaces, signs, and communication– acts as a tangible representation of cultural identity. When discussing culture, the team concluded that it is a complex concept encompassing the history, traditions, customs, and collective behaviours of a nation's people. Participants stressed the importance of respecting all cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Recognizing and valuing diversity is crucial for fostering an inclusive and equitable society.

These recommendations reflect the collective insights, aspirations, and priorities of the young citizens engaged in the summit activities. They provide a valuable framework for the implementation of future project activities and the development of impactful policies that address the needs and challenges faced by young Europeans.

Introduction

Background

The **U4EU 2.0** project: **Youth Shaping Europe's Tomorrow** is a collaborative initiative involving nine European NGOs, each dedicated to supporting young people and promoting social inclusion. Building on the successes and lessons learned from the first edition, U4EU: Youth Debating the Future of Europe, this project aims to amplify the voices of young Europeans and foster vibrant discussions about the future of our continent.

The primary goals of the U4EU 2.0 project are to create a platform for young people to engage in meaningful dialogue, share ideas, and contribute to shaping the future of Europe. By providing opportunities for youth to participate in workshops, trainings, and conferences, the project seeks to equip them with the knowledge, skills, and platforms needed to lead and inspire change within their communities and beyond.

The **Youth Workshop on Globalization, Gentrification and Culture**, held in Barcelona, Spain on the 30th and the 31st of October 2024 was the second activity from the 13 events in the timeline of U4EU 2.0. Organized by Mitjans. Xarxa d'Educadors i Comunicadors, this summit gathered **44 participants**, the majority of them young, from over 15 nationalities and 14 countries.

The event aimed to reflect and debate together about the processes of gentrification and globalization that take place in European cities, towns and villages, and their impacts on its population. The idea was to think about districts and neighbourhoods as territories that play a key role in social change.

Objectives

The specific objectives of the Youth Workshop were:

- 1. Engage young Europeans:** Provide a forum for young people to discuss and debate the processes of gentrification and globalization affecting European cities, towns and villages today. By facilitating open discussions, the summit aimed to bring diverse perspectives to the table and foster a sense of unity and purpose among young Europeans.
- 2. Generate insights and recommendations:** Collect the views and recommendations of young participants to inform future project activities and policy discussions. The insights gathered during this workshop are intended to reflect the collective aspirations and priorities of the youth, ensuring their voices are heard in the decision-making process, specially City Councils.
- 3. Foster collaboration:** Encourage networking and collaboration among young people from diverse backgrounds and nationalities. By building connections and partnerships, the workshop sought to create a supportive network of young changemakers who can inspire and assist each other in their endeavours.

4. Ensure dialogue and debate spaces: By bringing face to face experiences, the event raised awareness of impacts of globalization and gentrification on the population of European cities, villages and towns and thoughtful discussions. Participants also achieved a deeper understanding of these key issues affecting European population today through citizens' activism.

5. Inform About the Project and Future Activities: Provide participants with detailed information about the U4EU 2.0 project and its upcoming activities. By keeping the participants informed and engaged, this event aimed to ensure continued involvement and active participation in the project's subsequent events and initiatives.

Activities

The summit featured a full day of engaging activities, designed to spark thoughtful conversations and innovative ideas:

- **Opening Session:** The event started with a general explanation on the association responsible for this Youth Workshop, Associació Mitjans. Xarxa d'Educadors i Comunicadors (Association Media. Network of Educators and Communicators). It also included a general view on the previous event made in Athens and the next activities to be done, from Youth Workshop on Migration, Discrimination, and Intolerance (November 2024 in Lisbon, Portugal) until the Final Conference (April 2026 in Athens, Greece).
- **Interactive Youth Workshops:** young participants contribute to a common and colourful explanation of the meaning of different meanings, with their own knowledge and experiences in their cities and towns. These definitions were give following these starting questions:
 - How would you define this concept?
 - How are you being affected by this situation in your cities, towns and villages?
 - How do you identify or detect this situation? What areas are affected by this concept?
 - What propositions or solutions do you know /can you share to improve this situation in your country/environment?

At the end of the group's works, all of them presented a public exposition of all what they discussed.

- **Geocaching Urban Route:** An experimental activity on Barcelona's streets. In order to introduce this Geocaching Urban Route, they made a presentation about Gentrification and Glocalization in this city. A historical context on the beginning of these two concepts was provided. Every single group had to follow a different itinerary with the same stops but with different orders. Participants were invited to explore how these processes are influencing the transformation of neighbourhoods and the lives of their residents.
- **Networking Opportunities:** Throughout the two days, attendees were encouraged to connect with each other, exchange contact information, and build relationships that could extend beyond the summit. This aspect aimed to create a network of young changemakers who can support and inspire each other.
- **Representation on cinema of empowered neighbours. Debate on neighbours' struggles and premiere of the film *El 47*:** Projection of *El 47*'s movie trailer (English subtitles were provided). Participatory interview with a member of Torre Baró's neighbours' platform in Barcelona, Spain, who played an extra role in this film, based on neighbour's struggle on improving public transportation in a Barcelona's northern neighbourhood during the 70s from last century.

- **Debate on fight for housing rights in Vallcarca neighbourhood (Barcelona, Spain):** Presentation and discussion on neighbour's struggle in the neighbourhood of Vallcarca, in Barcelona, Spain, to improve life of those who live in hut's settlements. Projection of two short films about this subject were projected. Participants made questions and were provided answers on this topic.
- **Round table on neighbours' associations and housing unions:** a member of a neighbours' platform and Barcelona's Street and Metro Musicians Association; a representative of an assembly against gentrification; and a member of a housing union; as well as an expert in Architecture and cities rights activist; focused on how residents in Barcelona organize themselves to face gentrification impacts on districts. They also explained local solutions for these matters, led by both neighbours and Barcelona City Council. Speakers and participants exposed their reflections and debated on consequences of gentrification on neighbourhoods, impacts on social bonds, changes on neighbours struggles due to population changes, and cultural propositions to promote.

Youth Recommendations

The Youth Workshop on Globalization, Gentrifications and Culture generated a full range of insightful recommendations across several key topics. Below is a summary of the challenges identified, and the recommendations proposed by the participants during the activities.

Globalization and Glocalization

Challenges:

1. Generational gap,
2. Homogenizing impact / Polarizing effects of social media *bubbles*,
3. McDonaldization / Standardization of practices.

Recommendation:

- Preserve some cultural elements considered an integral part of our society.

Future Activities:

- Promote education and discussion activities, as very relevant elements in the process of finding and defining identities.

Culture and linguistic landscape

Challenges:

1. The dangers of cultural superiority and fanaticism,
2. The belief in the inherent superiority of one culture over others can foster division, leading to harmful outcomes such as racism, nationalism, and social exclusion,
3. Lack of cultural awareness among local citizens.

Recommendation:

- Respecting all cultural and linguistic backgrounds is very important. Recognizing and valuing diversity is crucial for fostering an inclusive and equitable society.

Future Activities:

Workshops that highlight the importance of diversity in both cultural and linguistic ways, as well as performative activities to experience and to raise awareness on the importance of cultural diversity.

Gentrification and tourism

Challenges:

1. Studentification / touristification.
2. Pressure on housing prices / unaffordable rents for local people.
3. Lack of resources to travel for local people.

Recommendation:

- Raise awareness on the importance of collective responsibility and promote sustainable travel practices to avoid contributing to the issue.
- Being mindful of the food eaten, the places visited, the stores supported and the accommodations chosen.
- Promote regulations that prioritise local people's interests over capital.
- Raise awareness of the harmful effects of gentrification, investing in education.

Future Activities:

- Create safe spaces to share lived experiences were highlighted as essential steps toward addressing gentrification's consequences.
- Promote activities in local neighbourhoods for experiencing the impacts of massive tourism and gentrification on local residents.
- Impulse meetings with active neighbours for knowing diverse ways of facing gentrification and massive tourism.

Key Topics Addressed

Migration: Addressing challenges such as disinformation, access to information, and the lack of common ground and budget distribution. Recommendations included more intercultural mediation and involving youth migrants in future activities.

Culture: Discussing the renewal of traditions involving animals, recognition of professional artists, and cultural awareness. Recommendations focused on integrating cultural heritage into non-formal education and innovating formats for EU-level advocacy.

Environment: Focusing on challenges in food and agriculture, transportation, and energy. Recommendations included promoting local markets, free public transportation, and raising awareness about commoning practices.

Gender: Tackling issues such as gender violence, professional inequalities, and mental health support. Recommendations highlighted the importance of men's involvement in education, promoting equity, and providing education about stereotypes and sexual health.

Youth Engagement: Addressing the lack of opportunities and connectivity, faith in the political system, and communication platforms. Recommendations included creating a European digital platform and ensuring a minimum participation of young people as MEPs.

Outcomes, Conclusion & Next Steps

The Youth Workshop on Globalization, Gentrification and Culture successfully achieved its objectives by engaging young participants in meaningful dialogue, fostering a sense of unity, and generating a set of actionable recommendations. It also made a difference on the diverse group of young people from Barcelona, who participatively organized the event. They felt that this workshop was truly based on their interests, their concerns and the experiences they have had so far. These feelings were also transmitted to the rest of participants, who were from very diverse origins and characters, too.

The recommendations reflect the collective insights, aspirations and priorities of the young citizens engaged in the workshop's activities. They address various aspects of the project's implementation, including workshop content, training methodologies, and future activities.

By the end of the summit, participants felt more aware of impacts of globalization and gentrification on cultural diversity and local populations. They also felt empowered and inspired to take an active role in shaping the future of European cities, towns or villages where they live.

The event not only allowed a space for their voices to be heard, but also for the voices of aware and activist neighbours. It also provided to them with the ideas and tools necessary to effect positive change in their communities.

Following this Youth Workshop, the **U4EU 2.0** project will continue to build on the momentum generated by this event. The **next phases** of the project are designed to further engage young people and translate their recommendations into actionable outcomes:

- **Youth Workshops:** We will organize a series of five more youth workshops across different countries to delve deeper into specific topics, fostering further discussion and collaboration.
- **Training Sessions:** Three training sessions will be held to equip young people with essential skills in areas such as youth participation, democracy, and advocacy. These will include both in-person and online components.
- **Online Roundtable with EU Policymakers:** An online roundtable will provide a platform for participants to present their youth-generated policy recommendations directly to EU policymakers.
- **Final Conference:** The project will culminate in a final conference in Greece, where the outcomes of the previous activities will be reviewed, and further strategies will be developed to implement the recommendations.

We are committed to ensuring that the voices of young Europeans continue to be heard and that their ideas lead to meaningful change. The insights and recommendations from this Youth Workshop on Globalization, Glocalization and Culture will guide our future efforts and contribute to promote more diverse European cities, towns, villages, districts and neighbourhoods.

In the name of Associació Mitjans, we would like to thank all the participants, speakers, and partners who made this Youth Workshop an event to be remembered. Our aim is to start dialogue between the local and the global dimensions based on cultural diversity. We look forward to working together to turn these recommendations into reality and to continue our journey towards a future for Europe based on diversity and inclusion.

Appendices

- **Detailed agenda of the Youth Workshop**
- **Project's website**