

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

(To be filled in and uploaded as deliverable in the Portal Grant Management System, at the due date foreseen in the system.

 Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum).)

PROJECT	
Participant:	[2] - [Agorà Società Cooperativa Sociale] (Agorà)
PIC number:	[918449254]
Project name and acronym:	Actions Supporting the Participation of Youth through Relevant Education - Europe _ASPYRE Europe

EVENT DESCRIPTION			
Event number:	4		
Event name:	WP4: Co-creation workshop in Italy		
Type:	Workshop;		
In situ/online:	In-situ		
Location:	Italy, Genoa		
Date(s):	21/11/2024; 05/12/2024; 12/12/2024; 14/01/2025; 21/02/2025		
Website(s) (if any):			
Participants			
Female:	25		
Male:	30		
Non-binary:	/		
From country 1 Italy:	55		
From country 2 [name]:			
From country 3 [name]:			
...			
Total number of participants:	55	From total number of countries:	1
Description			

Summary of the Event

The first event of the ASPYRE-EUROPE project in Italy was organized with the following **objectives**:

- To engage teachers, youth workers, and local communities in the project.
- To present the 'ASPYRE-EUROPE' initiative, outlining its rationale, objectives, goals, and future steps to ensure full ownership by local stakeholders, including associations, youth workers, educators, teachers, and young people.
- To introduce the first draft of the 'ASPYRE-EUROPE Toolkit,' highlighting its activities and workshops, and to gather insights and feedback from prospective toolkit users.
- To explore the toolkit's relevance and application in various contexts, such as youth deviance, informal settings, and among street and social workers.

A series of co-creation workshops took place in Genoa and its surrounding areas between November and January. These events were held at diverse locations, including youth associations, high schools, and public spaces.

The first four meetings of the main event were specifically designed for youth workers operating in formal and informal settings (e.g., streets, informal youth groups, grassroots youth associations) and for social service workers, such as professionals working with vulnerable youth and experts in youth deviance and juvenile justice.

The last two meetings of the event were designed for teachers from two high schools, one in Genova and the other in Rapallo. In the second phase (collage and reading groups), the workshop format for this group was different, as the formal setting allowed the direct introduction of the toolkit activities, without relying on indirect methods to gather feedback.

Workshop Overview

The co-creation workshops began with a general introduction to the ASPYRE project and an overview of the toolkit. This included context-setting, an explanation of objectives, and details of completed and forthcoming project steps, some of which may involve the participants. This comprehensive introduction provided clarity on the project's scope and highlighted the roles participants could play.

Overall, participants expressed strong interest in the project and its various phases, recognizing youth activation and engagement as pivotal to their work. They emphasized the following key points:

- The importance of community participation as a form of freedom.
- The need to foster independent thought and support movements for change.
- The critical role of engaging youth to ensure the resilience and continuity of informal groups and youth associations, fostering a lasting legacy.
- The necessity of equipping youth, particularly vulnerable youth, with skills, languages and knowledge to effectively communicate with adults, institutions, and communities, as reflected in the toolkit.

Workshop Methodology: Collage and Reading Groups

The second phase of the workshop utilized the collage methodology and thought-provoking reading groups to facilitate discussion and gather insights.

Participants collectively read and discussed an excerpt from *A Thousand Plateaus* by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. This text, chosen for its thought-provoking exploration of the conceptual dichotomy of majority-minority, encouraged participants to reflect deeply and collect evocative concepts related to youth political engagement.

Following the reading, participants worked in groups to create collages that expressed their ideas and feelings about the relationship between young people and institutions. Using images and words cut from provided magazines, they visualized their thoughts, sparking group discussions on key elements

relevant to the project's goals. Once completed, each group titled their collage to encapsulate its core ideas and themes (for more information on the workshop outputs please see the attached pictures).

Overview of Activities

Activity 1: Rapallo, Genoa 21st of November 2024 (17 participants, 12 males, 5 females)

Activity 2 Genoa, Oregina: 05th of December 2024 (9 participants, 3 males, 6 females)

Activity 3: Genoa 12th of December 2024 (9 participants, 7 males, 2 females)

Activity 4: Genoa 14th of January 2025 (4 participants, 1 males, 3 females)

Activity 5 : Genoa, 17th of January 2025 (7 participants, 3 males, 4 females)

Activity 6 Rapallo: 21st of January 2025 (9 participants, 4 males, 5 females)

Participants per target group

- Youth (16-24): 5
- Teachers, educators and youth workers: 50
- Decision-makers: 0
- Others / the general public: 0

Gender Representation: The event attracted a fairly balanced gender distribution, with 25 females and 30 males participating.

Age Groups: A majority of the youth workers engaged in the event (54%) are young adults, aged between 19 and 29 yo. The oldest was 67 yo.

Overview of activities - Narrative

Activity 1: Rapallo, Genoa 21st November 2024

The first co-creation activity brought together youth workers from Agorà and those from a local grassroots organization: Nassa. The activity took place in Rapallo, Genoa, where the association is located.

The involvement of youth workers from a local youth association is considered strategically important for two main reasons. First, these workers, who engage with different segments of the youth population through a bottom-up approach, have firsthand experience with both the challenges and best practices for youth participation. Their insights and feedback are therefore invaluable in the creation of the toolkit. Second, their participation plays a crucial role in the next stages of the project, including the Active Youth Forum and Civic Café. As a 'success story' and a strong example of youth engagement, they can further inspire and strengthen youth participation.

The methodology previously introduced was tested for the first time during this activity, proving to be highly suitable for both the target audience and the project's objectives. It facilitated an engaging and in-depth discussion, particularly focusing on:

- The challenge of maintaining initial enthusiasm over time while managing fatigue and internal disagreements, especially in the absence of adequate institutional support. While interactions with institutions can provide new resources and motivation, they also risk exhausting participants and, at times, diluting the essence of grassroots participation.

As a result, two key areas for improvement emerged:

- Reinforce youth communication and mitigation skills to encounter institutional demands and secure resources
- Reinforce understanding among youth of the institutional regulations to guarantee a long-lasting and informed participation.

Activity 2 Genoa, Oregina: 05th of December 2024

The second meeting was held at the Pasubio Association in Oregina, a peripheral neighborhood of Genoa. The association serves as a hub for various educational actors working in the area, aiming to foster socialization and community-building among young people living in the suburbs.

Agorà, which operates in the area through its team of street workers, brought together the association's president, youth workers, and social workers who engage with and support the local youth.

The Agorà youth workers applied the same methodology as previously described, which, despite challenging the participants, facilitated a dynamic and engaging discussion.

In this context, the discussion focused on the perspective of adults and institutions, who themselves acknowledged the difficulties of engaging with young people. The lack of adaptation in communication and behavioral codes often creates a gap between institutions and youth. Furthermore, when economic and cultural barriers prevent young people from developing the "stylistic and expressive" skills expected by institutions, they are effectively excluded from meaningful dialogue and opportunities.

From this discussion, three key areas for action emerged:

- Strengthening young people's social and political competencies.
- Bridging the gap between institutional language and the diverse realities young people represent.
- Overcoming prejudices and moral judgments toward behaviors that deviate from conventional norms.

Activity 3: Genoa 12 of December 2024

The third activity followed the same approach as the first: engaging with youth workers from a grassroots organization—individuals who are both youth themselves and have firsthand experience with the challenges of youth participation. Now, they are working to spread their message and encourage other young people to get involved. In this session, Agorà met with the association *Spazio 126*, based in Genoa.

Both the reading and the graphic analysis exercises were effective, and the final reflection highlighted several key issues:

- Developing strategies to make dialogue with institutions more functional and aligned with their objectives, while managing frustration and feelings of devaluation.

According to the participants, this is achievable through:

- Providing youth with tools and competences to build a strong and well-defined political and social identity.
- Building a community-focused and relational space.
- Aligning goals (such as securing resources and permits) with the necessary means (adapting to institutional timelines and language).

Activity 4: Genoa 14/01/2025 (4 participants, 1 men, 3 women)

This meeting was dedicated to a group of teachers from the Calvino High School in Genoa, who kindly welcomed us into their school. On this occasion, we chose to engage in a direct discussion about the contents of the "Toolkit" to better understand their perspectives and gather valuable suggestions.

Overall, their feedback on the feasibility of the proposed activities was positive. However, they emphasized the need to carefully consider the time commitment and level of engagement required to avoid a decline in student participation and interest.

Additionally, they recommended involving an already active group within their school to explore their aspirations and engage in a dialogue about the project proposal. This approach could provide useful insights and help tailor the initiative more effectively to the students' needs.

Activity 5 : Genoa, 17/01/2025 (7 participants, 3 men, 4 women)

The activity directly involved street educators working in various areas of Genoa, along with two communication experts from Agorà. The primary focus of the meeting was to explore how the activities, tools, and concepts outlined in the Toolkit could be effectively implemented in informal settings—such as streets, public squares, and other non-traditional spaces where street education takes place.

During the discussion, participants reflected on the challenges of adapting all the proposed activities to such dynamic and unstructured environments. While some concerns were raised about the feasibility of certain activities, the overall response from the street educators was positive. They expressed a strong enthusiasm for both the themes covered in the Toolkit and its proposed format, recognizing its potential as a valuable resource for engaging young people in meaningful ways outside of formal educational contexts.

Activity 6: Rapallo 21/01/2025 (4 participants, 1 men, 3 women)

For the final meeting, we returned to Rapallo, this time to engage with a group of educators from various youth services and teachers from Liceti High School.

Among the key themes that emerged, particular attention was given to the issue of frustration—understood as an ever-present risk arising from the gap between the expectations of young people (and social workers) and the actual responses provided by institutions.

In this regard, two important aspects were highlighted:

- The crucial role of social workers in mediation and facilitation, as they must interpret, translate, and support the proposals that emerge from their work with vulnerable young people.
- On the other hand, the need for institutions to be more receptive to different forms of communication, ensuring that their responses are both timely and concrete in order to foster meaningful engagement.

This discussion reinforced the importance of creating stronger synergies between youth, social workers, and schools, aiming for more effective and responsive collaboration.

Key Outcomes and Discussions

Therefore, as results of our activities several key ideas emerged:

- The pervasive prejudice that adults harbor against youth movements.
- A significant lack of communication and dialogue, contributing to a generational divide.
- Social networks as both tools of control and platforms for expression and connection.
- The idea that young people are a powerful force that should not need external validation.
- Explain power logics and balances is a delicate subject, as youth - especially the vulnerable ones- usually see institutions as inherently adversarial.
- Youth deviance as a form of communication, reflecting unmet needs or societal discomforts that require community attention. Therefore, an effort should be made to channel their transformative forces by enhancing the communication skills of deviant youth, who often perceive adults and the community as adversaries.
- Some youth workers see youth deviance as dismissive or capricious behavior, which is ineffective for driving meaningful change.

Workshop Methodology and key insights from teachers:

Activities 4 and 6 were specifically aimed at teachers from two high schools located in Genoa and Rapallo. The workshops utilized traditional discussion methods and facilitation techniques to gather valuable information. The key outcomes of these meetings are as follows:

- The project is proving to be a catalyst for fostering new connections between the municipality, schools, and the broader community education sector. It is creating meaningful partnerships and encouraging collaboration across different sectors.
- The activities outlined in the project's toolkit, along with its core content, have the potential to become a central component of the 'Civic Education' curriculum, enriching students' understanding of civic responsibility and engagement.
- Furthermore, the project holds significant promise for initiating new participatory mechanisms within schools. It could lead to the revitalization of school spaces, transforming them into hubs for youth participation and empowerment, allowing students to take an active role in shaping their educational environment.

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).