

## YOU PRO CLIMA - YOUlt in PeRipheries fOr CLImate engageMent Actions

Project ID: 2023-1-IT03-KA220-YOU-000155348

### WP2 - Research and develop community engagement skills toolkits addressed to youth leaders and youth organizations

#### Case study description's guidelines

Please follow the guidelines below and briefly answer the following questions regarding community engagement on the topic of youth activism and climate action in peripheral territories of your country. Ensuring that the document is clear and comprehensive and providing a thorough understanding of the subject matter.

#### **Important Information to answer the following questions:**

- **Language & Length:** The answers should be reported in English in approx. 1-2 pages.
- **Sources & Referencing:**  
Sources reported must be relevant and reachable. Older and more recent data can be used, which can be useful in order to demonstrate any evolution of the issue over the years.  
The material could include websites, articles, links, photos, videos if available.

The activity **A2.2** contributes to the achievement of the S.O.1 of WP2, it means, “to contribute to increase community engagement skills environmental based by developing analytical material on community engagement case studies and specific characteristics on the topic of youth activism and climate action in peripheral territories”.

For the achievement of this objective, all partners have to identify and analyse **8 case studies on community engagement on the topic of youth activism and climate action** and produce an analytical report. They also have to conduct desk research on specific characteristics of youth engagement interventions in peripheral areas.

The expected result of **A2.2** will be an analytical report on relevant practices in community engagement experiences on the topic of youth and climate action finalised.

Please collect 2 cases studies per partner country.

## **Introduction:**

Please provide an **analytical description** of the case study you selected. Description will have to include information about where and when your case study was conducted. Emphasize the relevance of understanding the specific context within the peripheral area you studied and young people's behaviour about the issue. Also, please provide sources from which further information can be obtained (websites, articles, links etc.). If some **photos/videos** are available please add them **by providing references** (links, documents or any others).

The #NatureThanksYou (#NaturaÎtimultumește) movement began to gain momentum in 2019 when several young people from the Apuseni Mountains area, in the territory of LAG Napoca Porolissum, decided to do something about the phenomenon of deforestation and waste, especially plastic, improperly dumped in nature. This case study will focus especially on afforestation actions whose initiators are two young entrepreneurs and environmental activities from Cluj area, Gabriel Iepure and Cosmin Zirbo, in partnership with Horia Apuseni Forestry Department and Mărișel Village Hall. We also mention here that Mărișel Village Hall is a public partner of our Association, while Cosmin Zirbo is also a private partner and beneficiary.

The most significant event of the series #NatureThanksYou is Bring Back the Forest, in which over 400 participating volunteers of all ages managed to plant 10,000 seedlings on a wooded area of 5ha, and the norm of seedlings / ha was 2000. These are the concrete results of afforestation, but the movement itself is broader than that. We focus on how Gabriel and Cosmin managed to gather in a short time active volunteers at this event, through a massive promotion in the online environment, but also physically. They attracted local partners and sponsors to the event, involved members of the Forest Department and made extensive research on the territory, establishing the objectives of the action, the necessary raw material, managing the volunteers' work and maintaining their interest in getting involved in such an activity.

Another central element of the #NatureThanksYou events is the fact that the organizers managed to attract young people through a dedicated music program for them, at the end of the day's activities. Thus, DJs from all over Romania, as well as from abroad, joined this cause and became promoters of Bring Back the Forest themselves. These afterparties aimed to add an essential socializing element and a leisure time option especially for young people, considering that they are the most inclined to participate in such events. A small tradition of the #NatureThanksYou event series has been created, and these events turn a peripheral rural area into an open space for environmental actions, but also for tourists visiting the Mărișel area.

Further information and resources:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/906511996194684/permalink/920713424774541/>

<https://apusenitransilvania.ro/2019/05/02/natura-iti-multumeste/>

<https://apusenitransilvania.ro/2019/05/07/apuseni-impaduriti/>

<https://www.facebook.com/asociatiagal.napocaporolissum/posts/pfbid03nAov6yg9k29RXu4Y7REuBi56ZEdnsAVk7b1d7H7Pf3KFRZLvXpa5tt9Y7oGAZk2I>

<https://www.facebook.com/DupaSkiLawU/posts/pfbid0S6kH7mFCtDFJHDpeXB3NcvRUV6eWEt7kM82zxoQyB4TR5HegPJKWyyvMj3HGcGyNI>

### **Adherence at three main areas of participation:**

At which **level of community engagement** does your case adhere? Take into account that there are three levels, namely:

- **horizontal** (tools for community involvement);
- **vertical** (tools for dialogue with policy makers);
- **transversal actions** (techniques and experiences of awareness raising on climate issues).

Please provide information about the adherence of your case at one or more of these three areas. They can be useful to provide in order to develop the digital toolkit addressed to youth leaders living or operating in peripheral territories

This case study fits all levels of community involvement, as it starts from the involvement of volunteers in the event, but also of Mărișel Village Hall and last but not least it works transversally due to the extensive experience of promoting techniques for awareness of actions aimed at climate change and environmental protection. Regarding community involvement, the leaders of this movement have become much more visible in the community and have managed to arouse the population's interest in issues that concern their own environment. At the level of rural Romania, afforestation actions aimed at compensating for ample deforestation, more or less controlled or legal, have become an imperative of environmental associations, youth associations, activists fighting for climate protection and more. At national level, and mostly in the last years, there have also been protests aimed at drawing attention to these worrying phenomena. That is why, at local level, events like Bring Back the Forest have attracted the active involvement of our community, that from the territory of LAG Napoca Porolissum.

Regarding the vertical level of this movement, it is important to mention the partnership with local decision-makers, but also with private actors in the area. In fact, the partner town halls of LAG Napoca Porolissum are actively involved in community-led movements and respond positively to the invitation to actively contribute to them.

The transversal actions deriving from these movements are educating the population of all ages about environmental activism and actively involved, through volunteering, in protecting the climate, population health, and a healthy lifestyle. The rural and peripheral community of Cluj-Napoca has benefited from the promotion of such movements and is ready to get actively involved in future endeavors.

### **Best practices:**

Which are the **best practices** in Youth engagement and climate action that your case study analyzes?

Please provide some examples of best practices you tested to use in order to increase youth activism to climate change issue.

The best practices deriving from this case study are the involvement of the peripheral rural community in actions to combat climate change, waste thrown into nature inappropriately, unhealthy behaviors towards the environment in general. The involvement of young people in #NatureThanksYou activities demonstrates their interest in protecting the environment, having as an example the fervent activism of the coordinators, Cosmin Zirbo and Gabriel Iepure, young people themselves. The latter operate and live in a peripheral environment, and their passion for rural areas and nature runs deep. Their work is not just about initiating such events, but works beyond them. We can say that they have developed as local actors followed by the community and as an example for youth in rural areas.

Certainly, events like Bring Back the Forest were the basis of other youth-led movements, and the greening actions described in the second case study (which took place more recently) of the YOU PRO CLIMA project were inspired by them. Being a well-connected community where youth is not the majority, the territory of LAG Napoca Porolissum demonstrates solidarity between young people, who know each other closely and share the love for the areas they come from. Thus, another good practice of this case study is that a network of young people who communicate, respond to initiatives to protect the environment and the surrounding nature have been established.

The promotion of #NatureThanksYou events is a quality one in the online environment, but also physically, which has reached an extended target group. Given the presence of young people, especially in social media, in the online environment we can say that the information reached them at a fast pace, and the visual materials present in the online environment following these events were numerous.

#### **Added value of practices:**

Which is the **added value** they bring to the empowerment, connection and engagement of young people from peripheral territories as active practitioners/change makers in climate protection?

Examine benefits and outcomes of relevant practices concerning community engagement. Discuss how these activities may foster youth participation and activism, considering factors like enhancement of their capacities, self-confidence and the creation of opportunities to actively fight climate change in their communities with concrete local initiatives.

Bring back the Forest together with #NatureThanksYou are memorable slogans, designed by young people and meant to be multiplied in the future in other actions to stop climate effects. At the same time, involvement in volunteer actions such as those present in this case study is reflected in increasing young people's interest in concrete actions to protect the environment. In addition to the concern for environmental activism, the fact that young people participate in such events is in itself a contribution to social and community life.

During such events, young people have the opportunity to develop both personally and to communicate and connect with other young people with similar interests. Given their interest in climate, environment, healthy lifestyle, etc., they will be more likely to engage in similar actions in the future. Moreover, these young people will in turn become promoters of similar actions and will bring with them the next generations.

Visual and promotional materials from the organizers:





Translation:

- Plastic bags degrade in 15 to 1000 years.
- Plastic bottles never degrade
- Glass bottles degrade in 1 million years
- Aluminium cans degrade in 80 to 100 years.