



Unlocking Youth Civic Engagement for a Sustainable Future - GreenSpace

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GreenScape Focus Group Report

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Location: Turku/FINLAND

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1. AGENDA AND IMPLEMENTATION

Arrival and Ice-Breaking Activities

The session began with participants arriving and settling into the venue. An ice-breaking activity was conducted to create a relaxed and open environment for dialogue. This was followed by an introduction to the session's objectives and an overview of the GreenScape project.

Key points covered included:

The aim of GreenScape is to promote youth involvement in sustainability initiatives and EU policies.

The importance of their contributions in shaping effective strategies for environmental engagement.

2. DISCUSSION ON SUSTAINABILITY AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

This segment provided an opportunity for participants to share their perspectives on sustainability and its relevance to their communities.

Exploring the Meaning of Sustainability:

Participants shared diverse interpretations of sustainability, ranging from protecting natural resources to fostering environmental awareness in their communities.

Many participants highlighted the importance of sustainability in combating climate change and ensuring a better future for upcoming generations.

Identifying Local Sustainability Initiatives:

Participants discussed various local and community-driven initiatives, such as waste recycling programs, urban gardening projects, and volunteer clean-up campaigns.

While some participants actively contributed to these initiatives, others expressed interest in becoming more involved if opportunities were more accessible.

3. EU POLICIES AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Participants reflected on their awareness and perceptions of EU environmental policies. While some participants demonstrated familiarity with policies like the European Green Deal and EU Climate Action Plan, others admitted limited awareness. A recurring theme was the need for simplified communication of EU policies to make them more relatable and actionable for young individuals. Participants discussed how EU policies could be more visible and impactful at the local level. Suggestions included organizing workshops, supporting grassroots sustainability projects, and fostering youth-led initiatives.

4. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND YOUTH MOTIVATION

This part focused on understanding what drives or hinders young people from engaging in environmental advocacy and civic participation. Participants were motivated by a sense of responsibility toward the planet, peer influence, community pride, and a desire to contribute to a sustainable future. Recognition of efforts, opportunities for leadership, and access to resources were seen as important motivators.

Key challenges included lack of information about opportunities, limited resources, and the perceived complexity of sustainability issues. Participants also mentioned that some young people feel disempowered or believe their efforts may not lead to meaningful change.

5. FEEDBACK ON GREENSCAPE PROJECT ACTIVITIES

A brief overview of GreenScape's planned activities was shared, followed by a feedback session and survey completion.

Key feedback included:

Expanding the scope of activities to include hands-on workshops, community events, and youth-led sustainability campaigns. Making resources more accessible by providing materials in multiple languages and formats suitable for various age groups. Strengthening partnerships with local organizations to enhance outreach and impact.

6. CLOSING REMARKS

The session concluded with Final Reflections: Participants shared additional ideas and reiterated the need for ongoing engagement opportunities. Participants were thanked for their valuable insights, and their contributions were acknowledged as essential to the success of the GreenScape project.

Next Steps:

An outline of how the focus group findings will inform project activities was shared, along with an invitation for participants to stay involved in the GreenScape project.

The focus group successfully highlighted the perspectives of young participants, providing a rich foundation of ideas to guide the GreenScape project. The session underscored the importance of youth-driven initiatives, effective communication of policies, and the need for innovative, interactive approaches to sustainability education. These insights will be integral to refining GreenScape's strategy and ensuring its relevance and effectiveness.