



GEN EUROPE  
GLOBAL  
ECOVILLAGE  
NETWORK

# THE ECOVILLAGE COMPANION TO THE NEW ERASMUS + and ESC PROGRAMMES

2021



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Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



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Erasmus+ KA1 Youth Mobility project 2020-2-IE01-KA105-066093

## Participants:

GEN Europe

Bulgaria - Green School Village Association

Denmark- LØS

Estonia- Väike Jalajälg

Germany- GEN Deutschland

Ireland- Cloughjordan Community Farm

Netherlands- Stichting Liberta Care (NL)

Spain- Red Ibérica de Ecoaldeas

This document explores which actions of the new ERASMUS+ and European Solidarity Corps (ESC) programmes are most suitable for Ecovillages and Ecovillage networks. It contains our views on the impact of the new programme priorities in relation to our work and how we might strengthen and improve our applications. This document has a specific focus on youth participation.

## Who is the target audience?

- People and groups in Ecovillage and Sustainable Communities networks who are new to the ERASMUS + programme.
- Experienced groups in our networks, who are looking to improve applications in line with the new priorities of this programme.



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# Summary

The new Erasmus+ programme for 2021-2027 was launched on 25 March 2021. For this new programming period, Erasmus+ is adapting to the major global challenges by focusing on four horizontal priorities:

- **Inclusivity and diversity**
- **Digital transformation**
- **The Environment and the fight against climate change**
- **Participation in democratic life**

The programme has also aligned with the EU Green Deal and includes cross-cutting actions to support the ecological transition. There are also more options to join with two additional new formats: Youth Participation Projects (KA1) and Small Scale Partnerships (KA2).

This new 'green' Erasmus+ programme has several new opportunities for Ecovillages and projects based in sustainable communities. Some of the core themes this programme is attempting to address focus on our existing strengths: in our Ecovillage communities we already implement:

- training and capacity building in the green and circular economy
- sustainability
- climate action and
- inclusivity

We therefore need to make sure that we highlight our experience in all the above areas and address these elements clearly and simply in our applications.

Based on the feed-back we have received from National Agencies on the first round of applications, it seems that there is now an increased focus on specific, measurable outputs of our projects on daily lives. To support our ability to design our projects with this in mind, several tools on how to measure impact are outlined.

The new programme states that climate change is probably the most significant crisis facing the planet. Projects that contribute to European actions on climate by developing innovative learning methods in both non-formal and formal education to teach about sustainability issues and climate change will be more likely to be funded. It also aims to promote young people's participation in democratic life.

## **DISCLAIMER:**

This is an interpretation of the new programme and how we understood the feedback received from the first round of applications - this will not guarantee a 100% success rate. As the National Agencies of each country

might interpret the priorities differently, please also get in contact with them and gain direct feedback before submitting applications.

## The New ERASMUS programme

### Links:

- [Erasmus+ programme Guide](#)
- [The next Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027](#)
- [E+21-27 Basic Facts](#)
- [What is Erasmus+](#)
- [Factsheet](#)
- [SALTO](#) Youth Resource Centres

### BASIC FACTS:

- Part of 7-year EU budgetary planning
- Total budget: €26.2 billions for the 7-year period  
(almost double that of the previous programme budget)

### SECTORS:

\*Starred are the sectors where Ecovillages and sustainable projects have been more active.

#### ERASMUS+

- Higher Education
- School Education
- Vocational Training
- Adult Education\*
- Youth\*
- Sports

#### EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS

- Volunteering (Individual and Teams)\*
- Solidarity Projects\*
- Humanitarian Aid

## Objectives and Priorities

### GENERAL OBJECTIVES:

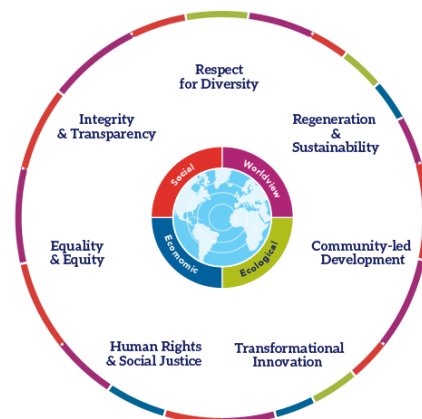
- Contribute to sustainable growth, quality jobs and social cohesion
- Strengthen European identity and active citizenship
- Drive innovation

### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

Promote learning mobility, as well as cooperation, quality, inclusion, creativity and innovation.

### PRIORITIES (as means):

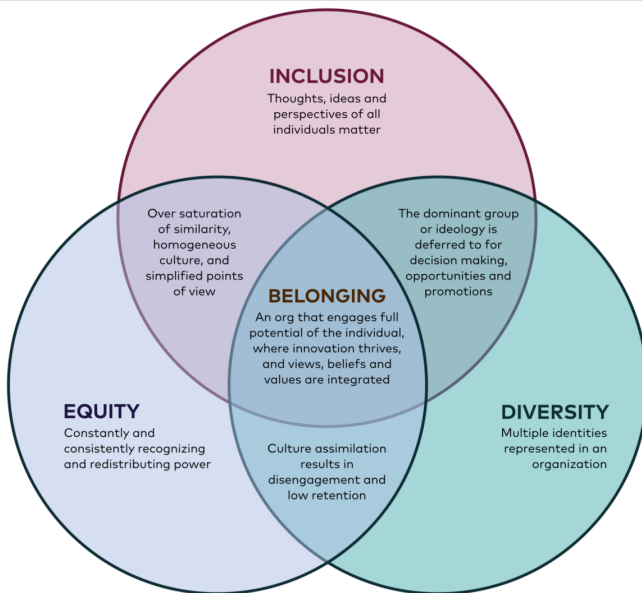
- Inclusion and Diversity



## Inclusion and Diversity

Erasmus + projects are requested to have an inclusive and diverse approach, be accessible for different kinds of groups and people and reach out to participants with fewer opportunities<sup>1</sup>.

Most Ecovillages are created with the intention of providing everyone with equality on many levels. Diversity and inclusion are central themes in Ecovillage life, as the consequences are profound when these values are compromised.



Source of picture:

<https://medium.com/@krysburnette/its-2019-and-we-are-still-talking-about-equity-diversity-and-inclusion-dd00c9a66113>

Some Ecovillages are creating a livelihood from creating a home for people with disabilities, health problems, etc. Many Ecovillages have people from several nationalities and cultures living side by side. Thus it has been essential for the Ecovillages to develop tools for equity, diversity and inclusion. This has been done in a time when society as a whole has been resolving the problems of living together by responding with even more material expansion (creating more space per person/family and even more distance between people). People who live in Ecovillages tend to develop a style of communication which emphasizes being considerate, inclusive and fair without getting personal, engendering closeness and tolerance when living with and amongst other people.

This comparative strength of Ecovillages has great potential to benefit society as a whole, and is a way of living and communicating that we can be proud of. Designing projects to help spread this knowledge to society at large could be a powerful contribution to more equality and inclusion in society as a whole.

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<sup>1</sup> [See Glossary. concepts](#)



In summary, it is important to highlight our extensive experience in this area and to address it in our applications.

## Digital transition

In line with the strategic priorities of the [Digital Education Action Plan \(2021-2027\)](#), this new Erasmus+ Programme aims to support the engagement of learners, educators, youth workers, young people and organisations on their path to digital transformation.

It is evident that digitally skilled people are in high demand – inside and outside Ecovillages.

There is a great opportunity here for Ecovillagers, who are increasingly highly digitally skilled and are used to involving digital technologies in the design, communication and demonstration of our pioneering approaches to more sustainable transitions. The concepts of free and open knowledge and sharing of open source data and hardware have been strongly tied with our Ecovillage networks since their inception. Many of our solutions have made use of such free open source digital tools which are now seen as cutting edge and have in the last decades become as significant as commercial licensed technology.

Some of the online education and collaboration tools that many in the Ecovillage networks already regularly use such as: Miro, Jamboard, Mentimeter, are among the most advanced and productive applications out there for supporting timely and creative outputs, whilst enhancing workflow and decreasing workload. Communications between consortia via SLACK, Zoom and their open source equivalents are part of the wave of the future - and we have led the way there.

This ability of our Ecovillage networks to adopt - and adapt - various tools when designing our projects and pursuing our goals, is an exemplary model of appropriate and balanced use of new and cutting edge technologies, which deserves to be shared with the world.

New concepts such as digital badging systems related to skills and competences, as already implemented among our networks, can lead the way in the future of blended learning and training; similarly with our regular use of digital tools in administration, governance and decision making (e.g. Loomio) - where the use of digital tools can lead to greater understanding and cohesion of approach.

Thus we have an opportunity to both develop digital skills training programmes to convey our messages to the wider world - and also to answer the need for more digital tools training within our own networks i.e. training in the relevant skills required to be able to deliver online training/education/courses, share interactive learning skills and so communicate our more established strengths with regard to environment, climate and inclusiveness on a much larger scale.

## Environment and climate action

Environment and climate action are key priorities for the EU now and in the future....

Ecology and environmental sensitivity are at the core of the Ecovillages, in our core values and in the process of shaping our living environment on our sites and in the regions of the network.

Energy transition and climate activism have been among some of the driving forces behind Ecovillages moving aside from the all too worn tracks of mainstream society, with its aggressively unbalanced models of living, consuming, producing and sharing - and creating new pathways and approaches. Peak oil, natural disasters, deforestation, climate refugees and many other related challenges have constantly been addressed throughout the lifespan of several generations of Ecovillages.

Now is the time for more significant and profound changes, and for a creative holistic shift in the way that the next generation are designing, planning and implementing (and hoping finally to celebrate) a successful adaptation to and mitigation of climate change - so enabling widespread environmental healing. Our approaches:

- Holistic Ecovillage and permaculture design
- Nature based solutions
- Regenerative landscapes
- Transition and holistic management
- Resilience and adaptive cycles

along with other core concepts in more balanced living, are key to unlocking the long term, deeper and wider processes urgently needed for sustainable transformation in Europe and beyond.

Thus it is obvious that Ecovillages are already contributing to a lot of the Green Deal topics in a more interlinked manner than most of the other players on the scene.

We can be a little happier now that sustainability is being named in the new Erasmus+, as we were missing it in the last and previous programmes.

Grounding our project ideas within the fundamentals of our alternative pathways in applications for Erasmus+ funding is crucial for the future development of the farsighted and deeply influential work of our network, amongst the youth and adults who are going to be the carriers of change.

## Participation in democratic life



The Erasmus+ Programme addresses citizens' limited participation in democratic processes and their lack of knowledge about the European Union, and tries to help them overcome the difficulties in actively engaging and participating within their communities or with the Union's political and social life.

Ecovillages have a great strength here, as we have spent the last 40-50 years developing models for active participation in decision making processes. Between us all, there is a lot of experience to draw on. People become bored in meetings about subjects they are not interested in. People become detached when they don't feel they have real influence on the topics that are of relevance and importance to them. Many of the new active participation models such as sociocracy and holacracy, which are on the rise, seek to make sure that people can partake in decisions with regard to issues which are important to them and ensure they don't have to engage in endless irrelevant and distracting side issues. As people feel they have greater influence in one area of interest, they naturally tend to expand their area of interest into larger and larger spheres.

This approach may not be creating the active citizens we hope for in the EU today, but it will certainly contribute to developing more engagement in the long run.

In the field of youth, a Youth Participation Strategy: <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/participation/ypstrategy/> has been designed to provide a common framework and support the use of the Programme to foster youth participation in democratic life.

## What is new and different about this Erasmus+ programme?

- **More focus on the environment** and climate change
- **Special attention to rural development** (sustainable farming, management of natural resources, soil protection, bio agriculture)
- **SDGs are now included** in the final report (form)
- **KA1 Funding mechanism**
- **New KA1 Format: Youth Participation Activities**
  - same funding mechanism as Solidarity Projects, but includes the possibility of funding international partners and associated travel
  - focus on active participation (not only traditional dialogue with decision makers, also community building, activism & participatory processes)

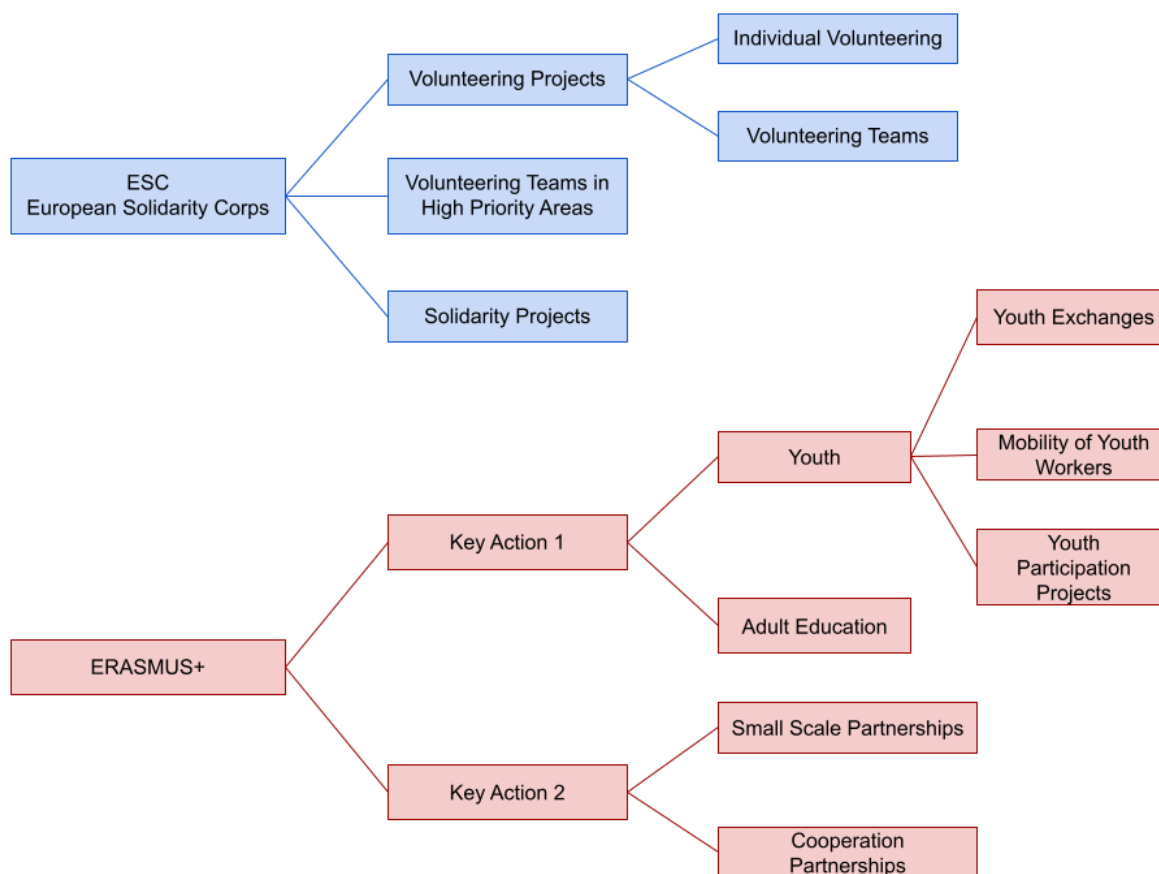
- **KA2 Small Partnerships:** these are more approachable, especially for start-up organisations with lower budgets (€30.000 or €60.000), and have a much simpler application form.
- **Green travel:** there is now more travel time given so that participants can choose an alternative to flying.

## How can we participate and benefit from the new Programmes?

Please consult the latest **Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Guide (ESC) Programme Guides** and **your National Agency** when exploring your options and developing project ideas.

But as an Ecovillage or sustainable community organisation, we also have a unique advantage- the opportunity to benefit from the support of the [Global Ecovillage Network \(GEN\)](#) in developing projects, finding partners and disseminating results. This is a huge resource to be able to take advantage of, both as a start-up and as an experienced organisation.

## Overview of Actions in the Erasmus+ and ESC programmes



<b>European Solidarity Corps (ESC)</b>	<b>1. Volunteering Projects</b>	
	These projects give young people an opportunity to take part in organisations' day-to-day activities – potentially a very enriching experience for volunteers and organisations alike.	
	Volunteering projects are the most common type of project. Organisations taking part must hold an appropriate Quality Label (or Erasmus+ volunteering accreditation).	
	<b>1.1 Individual Volunteering</b>	<b>1.2 Volunteering Teams</b>
	<p>Cross-border or in-country individual volunteering activities involve at least 2 organisations (1 in case of in-country volunteering).</p> <p>The Organisation can host up to certain amount of volunteers per project year, depending on the Quality label.</p> <p>The project duration can be between 2 and 12 months.</p>	<p>This project is about solidarity activities allowing teams of 10 to 40 ESC volunteers from different countries to volunteer together for a period between 2 weeks and 2 months. Team projects usually address environmental and climate change challenges, European cultural heritage topics and the integration of migrants. One organisation is enough to be an applicant.</p> <p>Not recommended for no-experience organisations.</p>
<b>2. Solidarity Projects</b>		
<p>The most simple ESC/E+ project. Must be initiated and implemented by young people, supported by an organisation. No funding to pay people's working time, participants must contribute their time on a volunteer basis, they can be local young people but also (ESC) volunteers.</p>		

Erasmus +	Key Action 1 Learning Mobility of Individuals	Youth		
		Youth Exchanges	Mobility of Youth Workers	Youth Participation Projects
		Non-formal learning mobility of young people. The objective is to engage and empower young people to become active citizens, connect them to the European project as well as to help them acquire and develop competences for life and their professional future.	Professional development of youth workers and of quality youth work at local, regional, national, European and international level, through non-formal and informal learning experiences in mobility activities.	Activities outside formal education and training that encourage, foster and facilitate young people's participation in Europe's democratic life at local, regional, national and European level.
	Adult Education			
	Only few ecovillages or networks have been able to use this format successfully, in the previous programme. NEW: Accreditation is now possible and valid until the end of the current programme in 2027.			
Key Action 2 Cooperation among Organisations and Institutions	Small Scale Partnerships	Cooperation Partnerships		
	A new and more simple format that is really interesting for ecovillages and ecovillage networks, particularly for those with little experience with funded projects. For capacity building of the organisations, increasing the quality of their work (finding inspiration through exchange with international partners!), enabling transformation and change, with a focus on peer learning. Projects can include a mix of international and local activities relating to the same topic.  This is a new format and we still need to collect experience with it.	The goal of Cooperation Partnerships is to allow organisations to increase the quality and relevance of their activities, to develop and reinforce their networks of partners, to increase their capacity to operate jointly at transnational level, boosting internationalisation of their activities and through exchanging or developing new practices and methods as well as sharing and confronting ideas.		

## Most suitable actions for Ecovillage Organisations

Concrete actions from the programmes that we recommend to our networks, particularly for newcomers:

- ESC
  - Individual volunteering
  - Volunteering teams
  - Solidarity projects
- Erasmus+
  - KA1
    - Youth exchanges
  - KA2
    - Small Scale Partnership

Mobilities of Youth Workers and Cooperation Partnerships have also been successfully implemented by many organisations in our networks. If you are a beginner, however, it is probably best to start with something a little simpler.

Some organisations have also used mobility projects in the Adult Education sector, but that does not seem to work well for all. This can be due to not having access to formal adult ed teachers/not having capacity to run adult courses of interest/lack of adult interest in uptake.

**Another good way to get involved if just starting out is - as a Partner Organisation, rather than as an Applicant.**

## How can my organisation qualify for the different opportunities?

### European Solidarity Corps (ESC)

Please read the [European Solidarity Corps Programme Guide](#)

Many Ecovillages and sustainability projects use the European Solidarity Corps and especially Individual Volunteering and Volunteering Teams Service to host national and international volunteers long-term individually, or in short-term groups.

Organisations interested in ESC Volunteering need to apply first for a *\*Quality Label* with their National Agency, and can then get access to the ESC programme. (*\*See Glossary, p.27*)

Under the ESC programme, there is also the opportunity to carry out **Solidarity Projects (see p.15)**  
This is a relatively easy way to acquire funds for smaller projects, whilst engaging young people locally.

Please consult the latest European Solidarity Corps Program Guide for more information:  
[https://europa.eu/youth/sites/default/files/european\\_solidarity\\_corps\\_guide\\_2021.pdf](https://europa.eu/youth/sites/default/files/european_solidarity_corps_guide_2021.pdf)

*Note: Communities do not usually engage in Volunteering in Teams in the High Priority Areas as these mostly deal with relief work in disaster and crisis areas.*

## Individual Volunteering and Volunteering Teams

The basic requirement for qualifying as an ESC organisation for *Individual and Team service* is that your organisation:

- **Is legally established in a programme country:** EU + Iceland, North Macedonia, Turkey
- **Has a mission to advance community solidarity** in some way(see Glossary)
- **Is working with people in the local area**, doing outreach or is connected to the community with its activities
- **Has sufficient staff** (paid or volunteers) who can manage projects and budgets, lead work volunteers full time- 35hrs per week- and offer mentoring.

Some organisations are too small to provide enough of a stable framework for volunteering projects, at least for the long term type. In that case, shorter projects like *\*Volunteering Teams* may be more suitable.

*\*Note that Communities do not usually engage in Volunteering in Teams in the High Priority Areas as these mostly deal with relief work in disaster and crisis areas.*

Your chances are **GOOD** if your organisation:

- **Has or is available to provide (rent) suitable accommodation** for the Volunteers (single/double rooms)
- **Can provide suitable work** and work leading ca 35hrs/week
- **Can offer opportunities for learning by doing** whilst ensuring that the work the Volunteers are doing doesn't substitute for paid labour
- **Is able to provide emotional support/social mentoring** (sharing circles, coaching etc).
- **Is able to develop learning goals** in cooperation with the Volunteers
- **Has the resources to be actively involved** in the introduction, training and support of the Volunteers.

- **Could collaborate with organisations abroad** who would be supporting organisations for Volunteers (*you can find many ESC qualified organisations from the GEN network*)
- **You know how many Volunteers (Individual service or Team service)** you wish to have and can explain exactly why.

**Your chances are VERY GOOD if your organisation:**

- **Is connected to the local community** and Volunteers could be involved in activities related to the wider community
- **You have people with a background in coaching, youth work, therapy etc**, who are able to support the Volunteers, especially those young people with fewer opportunities and/or special needs, with formal mentorship and other appropriate means
- **Recruits Volunteers based upon their motivation**, not on your organisation's needs for skilled labour.

## Solidarity Projects

**Examples of how they have been/can best be implemented:**

- Build a sauna, pizza oven or music studio for your Ecovillage
- Build a terrace for future generations of Volunteers, where they are housed
- Create an edible landscape
- Implement a Volunteer-run Café once week over the summer season as a meeting point for the local community, with some additional cultural events
- Establish a community garden

These projects need to demonstrate a value in bringing together the wider local community (Village, Neighbourhood...) and serve it in some way.

*Note that NAs interpret 'solidarity' and the 'wider community' differently in different countries.*

**You will be likely to be well qualified if you can answer Yes to the following:**

- **You are a group of (a minimum of 5) young people who want to** initiate, develop and implement a non-profit solidarity activity in your local community for a period of 2-12 months
- **You have a clearly identified topic**, which can be translated into concrete daily activities
- **Your project addresses a key challenge within the community** and it should also represent *European added value ie have an element relevant to the wider European context by meeting one of the specific themes in the programme e.g. **inclusion of** marginalised groups such as migrant*



*families/ people with disabilities, or helping improve **the environment** by reducing waste/ creating a green building, or engaging the participants in an online food market (**digital transformation**)*

- **You can describe the planning, preparation, implementation and follow-up** phase of your project.

Your chances are **GOOD** if:

- **You engage a Not for Profit/NGO** organisation to collaborate with you in implementing your project
- **You can demonstrate how your project will benefit** the wider community and empower young people.

Your chances are **VERY GOOD** if your organisation:

- **Engages an expert** who can support the development and implementation of your project.

## ERASMUS +

### KA1 - Youth Exchanges

Many communities have successfully done Youth Exchanges. It is one of the more simple and accessible formats, although in some countries it is harder to get them approved than in others because there may be many applicants. YEs can be done on a wide variety of topics and here are some examples of past projects:

- Community building through sharing in a community based project that will improve connections for people within it
- Social sustainability through an innovative circular economy project e.g making preserves/pickles from locally farmed food
- Digital detox and connection with nature- environment
- Theatre as a tool through which to share values - social and community empowerment
- Zero waste or green building- environment

In some countries successful applications have to demonstrate clearly that the YE and the topic chosen for the YE are the initiative of the young people themselves. It is not a training but rather a collaborative space created by young people. It has the potential to bring energy to and take part in the daily life of the community - as a part of learning by doing.

YE budgets are based on modest venues and on camping standards rather than on staying in formal rooms. Participating youth can take responsibility for cooking and implementing other daily chores as a part of the community experience, in YEs.

### Resources

[Yes to Sustainability](#) (YTS) is an active youth led network that supports YEs in Ecovillages. We encourage communities and other projects to cooperate with *Yes to Sustainability* in developing your YE projects. YTS has a private Facebook group [YTS Young Leaders](#) for youth exchange organisers where you can connect with others for peer exchange, support and to find partner organisations. YTS also organises trainings to develop youth exchanges together- and for those who want to be youth leaders in youth exchanges- and also offers mentoring for beginners. Information on all of these activities is shared in the facebook group, so please join to stay updated.

In the open facebook group [Yes to Sustainability - Youth ERASMUS+ Projects](#) anyone interested in youth exchanges is invited to stay in touch with YTS and a lot of information is shared about youth exchanges and volunteering activities in Ecovillages and other sustainability projects.

If you want to contact the YTS core team directly, please write to: [yestosustainability@gmail.com](mailto:yestosustainability@gmail.com).

## KA1 - Mobility of Youth Workers (MYW)

Mobility of Youth Workers (MYW) are also known as Professional Development Activities (PDA)

Mobility offers an opportunity for communities to host training, workshops and seminars for people involved in or participating in both formal and informal youth work. As Ecovillages are often involved in informal youth work, PDAs have been used to create trainings on:

- Project creation (YEs, KA1, KA2, ESC)
- Sociocracy
- Dragon Dreaming
- Graphic Facilitation
- Permaculture..... and other tools.

Successful project applications need to demonstrate how these events will benefit youth workers' everyday professional activities and develop their organisations.

Additional consideration is given to projects offering innovative tools for youth work and non-formal education and to more structured follow-up and blended learning activities.

The budget for this action, depending on the country and number of participants, generally allows the project to have:

- 2-3 facilitators
- a professional cook or modest catering, and
- accomodation in shared rooms.

We suggest that the organisations interested in participating will start first as Partner Organisations to gain experience, and after that practical hands-on experience they can consider taking a lead role in hosting an event.

We also strongly suggest getting in touch with the [GEN network](#) to find suitable partners and support.

## KA1 - Youth Participation Activities

Youth participation projects are a new activity in the Erasmus+ and we have no previous experience with it.

There is some continuity with the Participation Activities that were contained in the KA3 section in the previous programme and they build upon the youth initiatives that were part of Youth in Action 2007-2013.

However we can see the potential of this measure to be aligned with our activities:

The usual focus put upon youth participation and the direct involvement of young people in all phases of the project are even more relevant for this action.

Youth Participation Projects can also be local and not involve mobilities. These projects should be aimed at building conversations between young people and decision makers in a broader sense. These projects can be, but are not limited to, traditional and representative democracy projects but can also involve activism and learning re. participatory processes, etc.

This measure therefore seems to be very suitable for our Ecovillage type organisations as there is specific mention of community building for this measure in the programme guide.

### **The Applications:**

Applications are relatively simple: the budget could be up to €6000 per year and Mentor involvement is advisable. Some possible projects ideas could be:

- Community-building activities for young people spanning over one school-year and giving them tools of group facilitation, NVC, etc.
- Meetings of young climate activists offering them a platform to engage in transformative and regenerative lifestyles besides/alongside political activism

## Should my Organisation apply for Accreditation?

With the new ERASMUS+ programme, organisations are now able to apply for an Accreditation to host Youth Worker Mobilities, Youth Exchanges and, from 2022, Youth Participation projects also.

*Note: There is another separate accreditation for the Adult Education sector.*

The main advantage of Accreditation: Instead of submitting single application after application, year after year, the organisation fills out a form for Accreditation with a Strategic Plan attached, covering the next 3 to 7 years, and outlining/numbering how many activities you're planning during that period.

To evaluate if this new approach will be useful to your particular organisation, we put together a short list of pros and cons, known as **PMIU**, plus things that are interesting and still developing, or still uncertain.

Plus	Minus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Guaranteed 1+ event/ year</li><li>- Less administration work (reporting is more centralized)</li><li>- You receive planning and therefore budget security for 3 to 7 years</li><li>- Formal recognition of your non-formal youth work</li><li>- You can still be a Partner in other applications</li><li>- You can improve, due to being monitored and rewarded according to past performance</li><li>- No fixed deadline for submitting the Accreditation</li><li>- Allows more freedom and flexibility to develop new directions for projects without need of individual approval</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Can't apply for additional one off projects while holding an accreditation</li><li>- NA can limit your number of projects</li><li>- Lots of work for far off projects and you might resubmit the accreditation application several times, according to some NA feedback</li><li>- Budget requests for Accredited Projects must be submitted in the Spring and hence events can only happen <u>after</u> the Summer of that same year, at the earliest.</li></ul>
Interesting	Uncertain
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Received different responses/ recommendations from NAs- some negative</li><li>- Some NAs have stated they are interested in working with Ecovillages and our networks</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- How complex are the yearly reports?</li><li>- Is it possible within the framework of the Accreditation to repeat the same content every year, or even several times within one year?</li></ul>

**From this list we have the following recommendations:**

- **Ask your NAs** quite directly if they recommend the Accreditation specifically for your organisation
- **Be time aware** - while submitting the accreditation application, keep applying for one off projects i.e. keep up a double strategy until you definitely get the accreditation
- **If you are part of a network in your country, coordinate who is applying for the accreditation** so that you keep the possibility of submitting one off projects through either your organisation, or your network
- **Check the PMIU (list above)** to gain an overview
- **Share feedback within the GEN Europe Network** at appropriate meetings

### KA1 - Adult Education

Only a few Ecovillages or networks have been able to use this format successfully, within the previous programme.

NEW: Accreditation is now possible within Adult Education and is valid until the end of the current programme in 2027. This might prove very useful for those of us who can get it.

### Vocational Education and Training

There is an opportunity for our Ecovillage networks to begin to work and be active in the vocational sector, especially with the stated need for green skills and jobs in the low-carbon transition and in sustainable development. There is a need to create stronger livelihood opportunities in Ecovillages and to exchange ideas on how to develop these strands further.

**Possibly a strategic partnership is needed** to research the entrepreneurial spirit that exists in Ecovillages for the purpose of innovation transfer, and to inform policy makers, NAs, and other actors on the kind of community led entrepreneurial, green economy projects we promote and implement.

See this [section](#) of the Programme Guide for more information on conditions of participation.

### KA2 - Small Scale Partnerships

This new format may prove to be very valuable for our networks. In shifting from KA1 projects to KA2, we need to be aware that the project's focus shifts from Participants to Organizations. Rather than focusing on learning outcomes for the people involved, we need to think about the learning outcomes *at an organizational level*.

For instance, a previous successful project in this type is [Volunteering - Solidarity - Sustainability](#) (VSS), a collaboration of 4 Ecovillages working together to develop their volunteering programmes and to exchange best practices.

This type of KA2 project is for you if:

- You are new to Erasmus+ and/or have a small organisation (most of us do!)
- Your project idea is relatively small
- You want to build capacity for your organisation through peer exchange, maybe with other Ecovillages
- Your project addresses a topic in adult education or the youth sector

This action also allows to combine the international mobilities with local activities.

### KA2 - Cooperation Partnerships

These projects are bigger and more suitable for organisations and people who already have some experience with Erasmus+ or other funding schemes and international collaboration.

- They can differ in size, and are suited to develop high quality outputs.
- A partnership can be in the Youth or Adult Education sector, or it can be cross sector
- There must be considerable benefit to other organisations or stakeholders, not just the partner organisations.

Some examples for this type of project are the two [CLIPS](#) projects, the project that created the [Bridgedale](#) platform and the [Ecogamer](#) project.

Read the [Programme Guide \(here in English\)](#) for more information on conditions of participation.

### Erasmus Young Entrepreneurs Scheme

The Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs scheme helps provide aspiring European entrepreneurs with the skills necessary to start and/or successfully run a small business in Europe.

New entrepreneurs gather and exchange knowledge and business ideas with an experienced entrepreneur, with whom they stay and collaborate for a period of anything from 1 to 6 months.

The main contact for this programme is not your National Agency - in most countries it is coordinated through the Chamber of Commerce.

### Things overall to pay attention to:

Generally speaking **there are differences between the countries NA responses to applications** such as:

- The use in some countries of external freelancers for project application evaluation, causing inconsistencies in responses due to individual differences in understanding
- NAs understanding of requirements (have a look at already approved projects)
- Approval and amount of funds distributed often depends on individual country demand i.e. the number of project applications received
- Political and administrative cultural differences within countries (some NAs give a little to many, some give a lot to just a few)

Being aware of that, always get in contact with your NA about your project ideas and organisational background in order to create successful projects.

Due to the core themes within the new Erasmus+ Programme, some of our Ecovillage strengths are now becoming a programme priority- if we phrase those strengths right. The following subtopics (**Green Deal, Youth Work and Impact: How to measure it**) should help you to emphasize these areas during the application writing process.

## Green Deal

*“The Erasmus+ programme will increase the number of mobility opportunities in green forward-looking fields, which foster the development of competences, enhance career prospects and engage participants in subject areas, which are strategic for the sustainable growth of our planet, with special attention to rural development (sustainable farming, management of natural resources, soil protection, bio-agriculture). Moreover, Erasmus+, with mobility at its core, should strive for carbon-neutrality by promoting sustainable transport modes and more responsible behavior.”*

The European Green Deal Communication 3 is the European new growth strategy which recognises the key role of schools, training institutions and universities to engage with pupils, parents, and the wider community on the changes needed for a successful transition of Europe to become climate neutral by 2050.

Furthermore the EU taxonomy of environmentally sustainable economic activities related to climate mitigation and adaptation investment is an EU regulation currently under review by the European Parliament. It is strongly linked with the EU Green Deal and, when approved and published, will illustrate the next level of grounding EU strategic policies in this field.

Some of the groups of activities considered in the taxonomy are: Sustainable forestry, Agriculture, Manufacturing, Energy production, Water, Sewerage, Waste and remediation, Construction and others.

There can potentially be a very fruitful link between learning, acquiring skills and vocational training around such developments in Ecovillages: many of the assets and technologies already experimentally developed within Ecovillages are excellent demonstrations of such investments.

Ecovillages are the most fully designed and/or equipped test beds of transformative and regenerative solutions, experienced by real communities, which can be further taken up, improved, and more widely adopted. They can therefore actively demonstrate one of the key 4 pillars (together with universities, research centres and clusters of innovative companies) of the next generation of sustainable investments in our countries and regions.

However whilst the programme is quite focused on the ecological part it is not really focused on the holistic view so we should ensure that all the things we are doing and have been doing for years- and which are so inbuilt and automatic as part of basic sustainability that we may not see them as unique- are also included more actively within the project's outline and description. Never assume that the assessors know that we are already doing these simpler, more basic things as part of the larger, more in depth picture. For example:

- recycling practices
- resource saving methods (i.e. LED light bulbs, shared washing machines, community kitchens)

## Youth Work

The new Programme gives a lot of importance to the impact of the professional development activities (also known as Youth Worker Mobilities) in the daily work of the participants with young people.

This is being stressed even more in the feedback coming from some National Agencies, and therefore could be more important in some countries than others, but as this type of project has been very popular within our networks from the past programme, it's probably useful to build a common vision of *what Youth Work is and what it looks like in the Ecovillage context*, ie within Ecovillage and other sustainable projects networks.

The EU recognizes that Youth Work is developed by a very diverse set of actors and may take very different forms, and has developed a [working definition](#) of it:

*"Actions directed towards young people regarding activities where they take part voluntarily, designed for supporting their personal and social development through non-formal and informal learning".*

According to this definition, let's keep in mind that when we involve young people in our activities (volunteering, workshops, experiential learning, etc.) **we are doing Youth Work, and therefore people involved in these activities can qualify as youth workers for Erasmus+.**

Generally speaking, more and more young people are moving to Ecovillages and spending longer or shorter periods of time there, perhaps moving from one Ecovillage to another in search for places where they can contribute and learn the most. In doing this, they create bonds and alliances



with the young people who were born in or grew up in Ecovillages, who can then share their unique experiences with their peers from different backgrounds.

Training people specifically to support these youngsters in navigating the different opportunities and to effectively become Youth Workers who act as Mentors i.e. proposing non-formal learning activities and supporting the young people in recognizing their learnings, could become a natural evolution for some Ecovillages and networks.

Taking full advantage of this opportunity could greatly increase our collective impact upon local communities and future generations; we could be key in developing the evident synergies between Ecovillages and this aspect of the new Erasmus+ Programme which has- finally(!!) - started to adopt some of the priorities that Ecovillages have been pointing to for decades.

*Note: In developing our presence in this field, we should keep in mind that a decisive feature of Youth Work is Youth Protagonism and Youth Participation, and so we need to involve the young people in all phases of the project programme- from design to implementation.*

## Impact: How to measure it:

Even more importance is given by the new Programme to the IMPACT of our projects beyond the participants and the organizations involved.

- There is a [guide published by SALTO](#) about how to maximize your project's impact in the Youth sector. As many of our projects produce mostly intangible outcomes (i.e. learnings as opposed to concrete, visible *things*), it's a matter of **making the invisible visible** and our networks offer lots of opportunities to give them more visibility.
- **Also the Bridgedale (p21) and Yes To Sustainability (pps16,17&26) platforms** can be very good places to share our project results and increase their impact.

In a few ERASMUS KA2 projects which some of our Ecovillage networks are involved in (BLAST, Community Climate Coaches and I-Act) we are using a tool which has recently developed by Tim Strasser for:

**Supporting Capacity through Assessment, Learning & Evaluation for Transformation in 3 Dimensions (SCALE 3D):** Depth= embeddedness - Width= influence - Length= persistence.

Here is a short [introduction to the SCALE 3D Framework](#), in the context of transformative social change initiatives, which articulates the three dimensions of institutional change which can be applied for **impact assessment, evaluation and capacity development**.

A one-page description of the SCALE 3D tool can also be found [here](#):

[Tim developed this framework in his PhD, building upon Transformative Social Innovation Theory ([www.transit-social-innovation.eu](http://www.transit-social-innovation.eu)). The 3D framework is described in this article: <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/11/5/1304> and is further developed through empirical application in this 2nd article <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/12/11/...>  
For any further questions, you can contact: [tim.strasser@maastrichtuniversity.nl](mailto:tim.strasser@maastrichtuniversity.nl)]

## Further Resources for Measuring Impact and Evaluation

For inspiration for evaluating the impact of your project have a look at these [resources](#) for some ideas plus the resources below:

### Theory of Change

A theory of change process encourages us to reflect on our aims and plans, to discuss them with others and to make them explicit. The output from a theory of change process describes how we believe our activities will lead to the outcomes and impacts we want to achieve. Have a look at this [guide](#) to creating your Theory of Change.

## Synergies

In general, it seems that projects are more likely to have a big impact and their results and example will continue to be used by others if they are linked to something bigger than the project itself and which has an ongoing life of its own. Some highly successful examples of that are: **Bridgedale**(p.21), **CLIPS** (p.21) and **Yes to Sustainability** (pps.16,17&26).

So when designing a project, pay attention to how it relates to your and your Partner's other activities.

## Resources in our Networks

### GEN Europe's Capacity Building Programme

The GEN Europe Projects Working Group has created this programme to support the members of our network to build capacity and get trained in various areas that are relevant for our work. The Capacity Building Programme is also an attempt to make it easier for Ecovillages and Ecovillage networks to apply for and implement training under Erasmus+ (Youth Worker Mobilities), to provide more training opportunities. It consists of several aspects:

- The Projects Pool
- The Projects Database
- Recommendations

The [Projects Pool](#) contains a number of trainings that have already been successfully implemented in some countries, and which we want to spread to more Ecovillages because their content is so valuable for so many people in our networks.

The [Projects Database](#) is a resource to find out which other of our organisations are involved in Erasmus+ and ESC projects, there is a list of resource persons who can support others to create successful projects, and an overview of projects that have been implemented by members of our networks. Please help keep it updated and sign up for any projects that you are involved in!

The Projects Working Group has developed a set of [recommendations](#) to provide orientation to those who start implementing their own projects in regard to the distribution of the budget and the different roles and tasks needed for project implementation. The rates are still referring to the old programme, but will be adapted eventually.

**For more information about the Capacity Building Programme and related resources, write to GEN Europe's Project's Officer: [Fanny van Hal](#).**

## Yes to Sustainability

Yes to Sustainability (YTS) connects young people to Ecovillages and other sustainability projects, mainly through youth exchanges in Ecovillages and other interesting sustainability settings. A loose network has formed and is constantly growing its activities:

YTS has a private Facebook group [YTS Young Leaders](#) for Youth Exchange organisers, where you can connect with others for peer exchange, support and to find partner organisations.

In the open facebook group [Yes to Sustainability - Youth ERASMUS+ Projects](#), anyone interested in youth exchanges is invited to stay in touch with YTS and a lot of information is shared about youth exchanges and volunteering activities in Ecovillages and other sustainability projects. Information on all of these activities is shared in the facebook group, please join to stay updated!

YTS also organises training to:

- develop Youth Exchanges together
- for those who want to be youth leaders in Youth Exchanges
- offers mentoring for beginners.

If you want to contact the YTS core team directly, please write to [yestosustainability@gmail.com](mailto:yestosustainability@gmail.com)

# Glossary of Terms & Concepts

## Terms

**NA** National Agency

**ESC** European Solidarity Corps ( [https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity/organisations/about\\_en](https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity/organisations/about_en) )

**YE** Youth Exchange

**YTS** Yes to Sustainability

**NVC** - Nonviolent communication

**GEN:** Global Ecovillage Network

### **Quality Label:**

Any organisation wishing to take part in European Solidarity Corps Volunteering or Traineeships and Jobs projects must have a certification called the Quality Label. This includes signing up to the European Solidarity Corps Charter.

The Quality Label is designed to ensure consistently high standards in Solidarity Corps activities and to help organisations find partners. It is your organisation's gateway to the European Solidarity Corps.

[www.eusolidaritycorps.org.uk/quality-label](http://www.eusolidaritycorps.org.uk/quality-label)

## Concepts

**Youth worker definition according to the guideline:** A professional or a volunteer involved in non-formal learning who supports young people in their personal socio-educational, and professional development

**Solidarity:** The ESC Resource Centre and SALTO developed a participatory process to define what Solidarity is, as they recognised it's a manyfold concept. The results of this debate can be found [here](#).

**People with fewer opportunities:** Disabilities; health problems; barriers linked to training and education systems; cultural differences; social or economic barriers; barriers linked to discrimination; geographical barriers.