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UNGDOMSLEDEDE MILJØPROJEKTER OG BÆREDYGTIG UDVIKLING

En politisk og forskningsramme



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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Youth-led environmental projects have emerged as a critical driver of sustainable development, climate action, and community resilience across Europe. The GreenGEN project investigated how young people engage in environmental initiatives, combining policy review, research analysis, and illustrative case studies to identify enabling factors, barriers, and impacts.

1.1 -KEY FINDINGS

- **Policy Support:** National, local, and European policies provide essential frameworks that enable youth participation. Initiatives such as the Danish Youth Council, Spain's Youth Strategy, and Copenhagen's 2025 Climate Plan demonstrate that formal recognition, funding, mentorship, and integration into decision-making structures significantly enhance engagement. However, gaps remain in program evaluation, consistent coverage across countries, and translating participation into concrete policy influence.
- **Research Insights:** Effective youth engagement combines cognitive, emotional, and behavioral involvement. Structured programs, peer-led initiatives, and education-driven innovation build skills, leadership, and civic agency. Barriers include limited resources, short-term project designs, accessibility challenges, and climate-related anxiety.
- **Case Studies:** Illustrative examples—Fridays for Future Denmark, Youth for Climate Spain, Youth Climate Councils, and University of Copenhagen projects—highlight impacts across four dimensions: individual (skills, confidence, agency), social (peer networks, cohesion), systemic (policy influence), and environmental (direct and indirect sustainability outcomes). Best practices include meaningful power-sharing, collective decision-making, low barriers to entry, and long-term engagement pathways.

1.2 -POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Formalize youth participation without over-controlling, balancing autonomy and institutional support.
- Recognize activism as legitimate civic engagement alongside structured programs.
- Integrate education and practical engagement through schools, universities, and community initiatives.
- Provide flexible resources, mentorship, and funding while accommodating diverse engagement levels.
- Ensure equity and accessibility for youth from varied socioeconomic, geographic, and cultural backgrounds.
- Address emotional and mental health dimensions, providing supportive structures and peer networks.
- Strengthen cross-sector collaboration among youth organizations, educational institutions, and government bodies.



1. RESUMÉ

Ungdomsledede miljøprojekter har vist sig at være en afgørende drivkraft for bæredygtig udvikling, klimaindsats og samfundsmodstandsdygtighed i hele Europa. GreenGEN-projektet undersøgte, hvordan unge mennesker engagerer sig i miljøinitiativer, ved at kombinere politisk gennemgang, forskningsanalyse og illustrative casestudier for at identificere muliggørende faktorer, barrierer og virkninger.

1.1 - VIGTIGSTE RESULTATER

Politisk støtte: Nationale, lokale og europæiske politikker skaber essentielle rammer, der muliggør unges deltagelse. Initiativer som Dansk Ungdomsråd, Spaniens Ungdomsstrategi og Københavns Klimaplan 2025 viser, at formel anerkendelse, finansiering, mentorordninger og integration i beslutningsstrukturer øger engagementet betydeligt. Der er dog fortsat mangler i programevaluering, ensartet dækning på tværs af lande og omsætning af deltagelse til konkret politisk indflydelse.

Forskningsindsigt: Effektiv ungdomsengagement kombinerer kognitiv, følelsesmæssig og adfærdsmæssig involvering. Strukturerede programmer, peer-ledede initiativer og uddannelsesdrevet innovation opbygger færdigheder, lederskab og samfundsmæssig handlekraft. Barrierer omfatter begrænsede ressourcer, kortsigtede projektdesign, tilgængelighedsudfordringer og klimarelateret angst.

- **Casestudier:** Illustrative eksempler – Fridays for Future Denmark, Youth for Climate Spain, Youth Climate Councils og Københavns Universitets projekter – fremhæver virkninger på tværs af fire dimensioner: individuelle (færdigheder, selvtillid, handlekraft), sociale (gensidige netværk, samhørighed), systemiske (politisk indflydelse) og miljømæssige (direkte og indirekte bæredygtighedsresultater). Bedste praksis omfatter meningsfuld magtdeling, kollektiv beslutningstagning, lave

1.2 - POLITISKE ANGEBUD OG ENGAGEMENTSVEJE

- Formaliser unges deltagelse uden overstyring, og balancer autonomi og institutionel støtte.

Anerkend aktivisme som legitimt samfundsengagement sideløbende med strukturerede programmer.

Integrer uddannelse og praktisk engagement gennem skoler, universiteter og lokalsamfundsinitiativer.

Tilbyd fleksible ressourcer, mentorordninger og finansiering, samtidig med at der tages hensyn til forskellige engagementsniveauer.

Sikre lighed og tilgængelighed for unge fra forskellige socioøkonomiske, geografiske og kulturelle baggrunde.

Håndter følelsesmæssige og mentale sundhedsdimensioner, og sørg for støttende strukturer og netværk af ligestillede.

Styrk det tværsektorielle samarbejde mellem ungdomsorganisationer, uddannelsesinstitutioner og offentlige organer.



1.3 -RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER ACTION

- Expand research on long-term impacts, diverse engagement models, and the intersection of climate action and youth mental health.
- Develop scalable initiatives combining structured opportunities, grassroots activism, and experiential learning.
- Foster cross-sector collaboration and integrate youth perspectives into policy and program design.
- Enhance evaluation frameworks for short- and long-term social, systemic, and environmental outcomes.
- Promote capacity-building and inclusive participation with multiple entry points and long-term pathways.

1.4 -CONCLUDING INSIGHTS

Youth-led environmental projects are not marginal activities but essential components of sustainable development, climate governance, and democratic renewal. Supporting these initiatives requires removing barriers, sharing power, and creating durable structures that allow young people's creativity, energy, and leadership to translate into lasting environmental and societal impact.

2. INTRODUCTION

Youth-led environmental projects have become an essential force in advancing sustainable development, climate action, and community resilience across Europe and beyond. Young people are increasingly at the forefront of environmental movements, contributing innovative ideas, promoting behavioural change, and demanding stronger political commitment to address the climate and ecological crises. Their engagement is not only a response to the urgent environmental challenges affecting their present and future, but also an expression of civic responsibility, creativity, and leadership. Empowering youth to participate meaningfully in sustainability initiatives strengthens democratic processes, enhances social cohesion, and accelerates the transition toward greener and more resilient societies.

In this context, the GreenGEN project recognises the critical importance of understanding, supporting, and scaling youth-led environmental action. This document, Youth-Led Environmental Projects and Sustainable Development: A Policy and Research Framework, serves as a shared foundation for analysing how young people engage in environmental initiatives across different European contexts.

It synthesises policy reviews, research findings, and case studies gathered by project partners during Activity 3, following the preparatory methodology designed by People of 2050 and enriched through collaborative workshops and the Mobility event in Copenhagen.



1.3 - ANBEFALINGER TIL YDERLIGERE HANDLING

- Udvid forskningen i langsigtede virkninger, forskellige engagementsmodeller og skæringspunktet mellem klimaindsats og unges mentale sundhed.

Udvikl skalerbare initiativer, der kombinerer strukturerede muligheder, græsrodsaktivisme og erfaringsbaseret læring.

Fremme tværsektorielt samarbejde og integrer unges perspektiver i politik- og programdesign.

Forbedre evalueringsrammer for kort- og langsigtede sociale, systemiske og miljømæssige resultater.

Fremme kapacitetsopbygning og inkluderende deltagelse med flere indgangspunkter og langsigtede veje.

1.4 - AFSLUTTENDE INDSIGTER

Ungdomsledede miljøprojekter er ikke marginale aktiviteter, men essentielle komponenter i bæredygtig udvikling, klimaforvaltning og demokratisk fornyelse. Støtte til disse initiativer kræver fjernelse af barrierer, deling af magt og skabelse af holdbare strukturer, der gør det muligt for unges kreativitet, energi og lederskab at omsættes til varig miljømæssig og samfundsmæssig effekt.

1. 2. INTRODUKTION

Ungdomsledede miljøprojekter er blevet en afgørende kraft i at fremme bæredygtig udvikling, klimaindsats og samfundsmodstandsdygtighed i hele Europa og resten af verden. Unge mennesker er i stigende grad i spidsen for miljøbevægelser, bidrager med innovative ideer, fremmer adfærdsskift og kræver en stærkere politisk forpligtelse til at håndtere klima- og økologiske kriser. Deres engagement er ikke kun et svar på de presserende miljømæssige udfordringer, der påvirker deres nutid og fremtid, men også et udtryk for samfundsansvar, kreativitet og lederskab. At give unge mulighed for at deltage meningsfuldt i bæredygtighedsinitiativer styrker demokratiske processer, forbedrer den sociale samhørighed og fremskynder overgangen til grønnere og mere modstandsdygtige samfund.

I denne sammenhæng anerkender GreenGEN-projektet den afgørende betydning af at forstå, støtte og skalere ungdomsledede miljøindsatser. Dette dokument, Ungdomsledede miljøprojekter og bæredygtig udvikling: En politisk og forskningsramme, fungerer som et fælles grundlag for at analysere, hvordan unge mennesker engagerer sig i miljøinitiativer på tværs af forskellige europæiske kontekster.

Den syntetiserer politiske gennemgange, forskningsresultater og casestudier indsamlet af projektpartnere under Aktivitet 3, i overensstemmelse med den forberedende metode udviklet af People of 2050 og beriget gennem samarbejdsworkshops og Mobility-arrangementet i København.



The purpose of this document is twofold:

- To provide a structured and evidence-based understanding of the motivations, opportunities, challenges, and impacts associated with youth-led environmental projects.
- To inform policymakers, youth organisations, educators, and institutions by offering concrete recommendations to strengthen policy support, improve programme design, and expand youth participation in sustainable development efforts.

The scope of the framework spans European, national, and local levels, reflecting the diversity of approaches and enabling conditions that shape young people's involvement in climate and environmental initiatives. By consolidating insights from all partner countries, this framework offers a comprehensive tool to guide future actions, enhance policy coherence, and ensure that youth voices remain central to Europe's green transition.

3. METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

This section outlines the methodological approach and data collection process used by GreenGEN partners to gather, interpret, and synthesize evidence on youth-led environmental engagement across Europe. Data was collected through policy review, literature analysis, and illustrative case studies from partner countries. While this review did not include primary interviews with youth participants, triangulation across policies, research, and case examples provides a robust foundation for recommendations.

Comparative analysis highlights patterns and enabling conditions across contexts. The methodology ensures coherence, comparability, and analytical depth across countries, enabling the development of an integrated Policy & Research Framework grounded in shared concepts and robust data.

3.1 -METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The research methodology is grounded in the Youth Engagement Process Framework proposed by Riemer et al. (2014), which provides a structured lens for analyzing how young people initiate, participate in, and sustain engagement in environmental action.

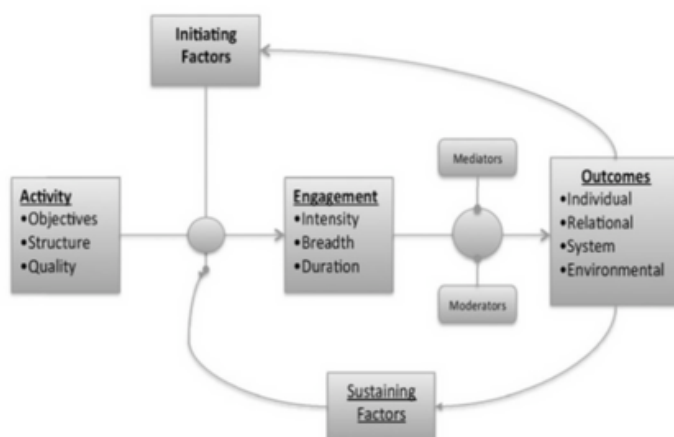


Figure 1. A model for engaging youth in environmental change (Riemer et al. 2014; Rose-Krasnor 2009).

Formålet med dette dokument er dobbelt:

At give en struktureret og evidensbaseret forståelse af motivationerne, mulighederne, udfordringerne og virkningerne forbundet med ungdomsledede miljøprojekter.

At informere politikere, ungdomsorganisationer, undervisere og institutioner ved at tilbyde konkrete anbefalinger til at styrke politisk støtte, forbedre programdesign og udvide unges deltagelse i bæredygtige udviklingsindsatser.

Rammeomfanget spænder over europæisk, nationalt og lokalt niveau og afspejler den mangfoldighed af tilgange og gunstige betingelser, der former unges engagement i klima- og miljøinitiativer. Ved at konsolidere indsigter fra alle partnerlande tilbyder denne ramme et omfattende værktøj til at vejlede fremtidige handlinger, forbedre politisk sammenhæng og sikre, at unges stemmer forbliver centrale for Europas grønne omstilling.

1. 3. METODE OG DATAINDSAMLING

Dette afsnit beskriver den metodologiske tilgang og dataindsamlingsproces, som GreenGEN-partnere bruger til at indsamle, fortolke og syntetisere evidens om ungdomsledet miljøengagement i hele Europa. Data blev indsamlet gennem politisk gennemgang, litteraturanalyse og illustrative casestudier fra partnerlande. Selvom denne gennemgang ikke omfattede primære interviews med unge deltagere, giver triangulering på tværs af politikker, forskning og caseeksempler et robust grundlag for anbefalinger.

Komparativ analyse fremhæver mønstre og gunstige betingelser på tværs af kontekster. Metoden sikrer sammenhæng, sammenlignelighed og analytisk dybde på tværs af lande, hvilket muliggør udviklingen af en integreret politisk og forskningsramme baseret på fælles koncepter og robuste data.

3.1 - METODISK TILGANG

Forskningsmetoden er baseret på Youth Engagement Process Framework foreslået af Riemer et al. (2014), som giver et struktureret perspektiv til at analysere, hvordan unge mennesker initierer, deltager i og opretholder engagement i miljøhandlinger.

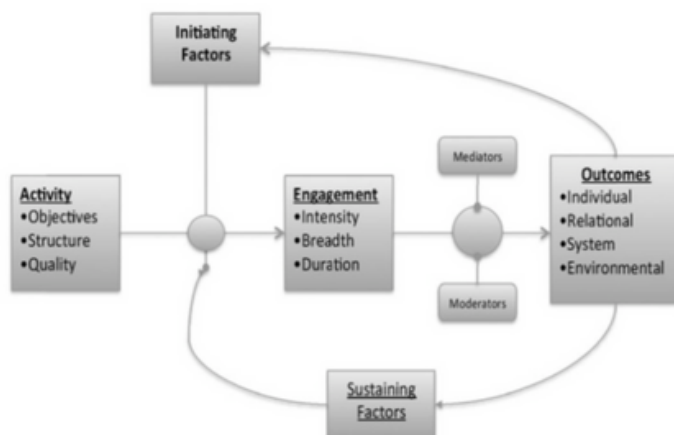


Figure 1. A model for engaging youth in environmental change (Riemer et al. 2014; Rose-Krasnor 2009).

For the GreenGEN project, this framework was adapted (Table 1) to examine youth engagement not only at the activity level but also across policies, research literature, and illustrative case studies.

Table 1 – Adapted Framework for GreenGen

Rierner Dimension	Description (Adapted for Policy/Research Review)
Engagement Activity	Youth-led or supported actions categorized by: • Objectives: Direct environmental action, advocacy, peer learning, creative expression, or innovation. • Structure: Duration (short or long term), frequency, and youth leadership level. • Quality: Meaningfulness of participation, social support, relationship-building, and youth feedback.
Engagement Process	How young people interact with an activity or programme: • Intensity (Frequency and depth of participation; cognitive, emotional, behavioural) • Breadth (Diversity of roles, formats, and experiences offered) • Duration (Consistency and length of engagement opportunities)
Initiating Factors	Motivators, access points, and enabling conditions for youth to start engagement
Sustaining Factors	Structural supports that help maintain youth involvement over time
Barriers to Engagement	Factors limiting or preventing youth participation or reducing quality of experience.
Mediators & Moderators	Equity and inclusion factors (socioeconomic status, gender, geography, cultural norms)
Outcomes	Measurable impacts on individuals, communities, policies, and the environment

The adapted methodology ensures that the research:

- Identifies the core motivations, structures, and barriers influencing youth environmental engagement;
- Captures both qualitative and quantitative dimensions of participation;
- Supports cross-country comparison through standardized definitions and categories;
- Generates evidence-based insights to guide policy, program design, and youth-led action.

Til GreenGEN-projektet blev denne ramme tilpasset (Tabel 1) for at undersøge unges engagement ikke kun på aktivitetsniveau, men også på tværs af politikker, forskningslitteratur og illustrative casestudier.

Tabel 1 – Tilpasset ramme for GreenGen

Riemer Dimension	Description (Adapted for Policy/Research Review)
Engagement Activity	Youth-led or supported actions categorized by: • Objectives: Direct environmental action, advocacy, peer learning, creative expression, or innovation. • Structure: Duration (short or long term), frequency, and youth leadership level. • Quality: Meaningfulness of participation, social support, relationship-building, and youth feedback.
Engagement Process	How young people interact with an activity or programme: • Intensity (Frequency and depth of participation; cognitive, emotional, behavioural) • Breadth (Diversity of roles, formats, and experiences offered) • Duration (Consistency and length of engagement opportunities)
Initiating Factors	Motivators, access points, and enabling conditions for youth to start engagement
Sustaining Factors	Structural supports that help maintain youth involvement over time
Barriers to Engagement	Factors limiting or preventing youth participation or reducing quality of experience.
Mediators & Moderators	Equity and inclusion factors (socioeconomic status, gender, geography, cultural norms)
Outcomes	Measurable impacts on individuals, communities, policies, and the environment

Den tilpassede metode sikrer, at forskningen:

Identificerer de centrale motivationer, strukturer og barrierer, der påvirker unges miljøengagement;
Indfanger både kvalitative og kvantitative dimensioner af deltagelse;
Understøtter sammenligning på tværs af lande gennem standardiserede definitioner og kategorier;
Genererer evidensbaseret indsigt til at vejlede politik, programdesign og ungdomsledede handlinger.

3.2 -DATA SOURCES AND COLLECTION PROCESSES

Data was gathered collaboratively by all GreenGEN partners across three main categories: policy review, research review, and case study documentation. Each partner used a standardized template aligned with the Youth Engagement Framework to enable cross-country comparison.

3.3 -POLICY REVIEW

Partners reviewed policies and programs from local, national, and European levels (Table 2). Each policy was assessed according to its support for youth engagement, factors that initiate, sustain, or hinder participation, inclusion and equity considerations, and expected or demonstrated outcomes:

Table 2 – Overview of the Researched Policies

Policy / Program	Year	Level	Sector	Description
Policy 1: Youth Climate Council	2019	National (Denmark)	Youth, Environment	Provides climate policy recommendations to the Danish Ministry of Climate, Energy and Utilities
Policy 2: Danish Youth Council (DUF) – Meaningful Youth Participation Towards 2030 and Beyond	2019	National (Denmark)	Youth, Democracy, Environment	Provides structures, guidance, and legitimacy for youth organisations to influence decision-making
Policy 3: Plan de Acción de Educación Ambiental para la Sostenibilidad (PAEAS) 2021–2025	2021–2025	National (Spain)	Environment, Education, Youth	Mainstream environmental education and citizen participation.
Policy 4: Spanish Youth Strategy 2022–2030	2022–2030	National (Spain)	Youth, Environment, Education	Promotes youth participation in climate governance and sustainable lifestyles.
Policy 5: Copenhagen 2025 Climate Plan	2021–2025	Local/Regional (Copenhagen)	Environment	Copenhagen’s carbon neutrality plan with citizen and city engagement.
Policy 6: European Green Deal	2019+	European	Environment, Climate, Energy	EU strategy to achieve climate neutrality by 2050.

3.2 - DATAKILDER OG INDSAMLINGSPROCESSER

Data blev indsamlet i fællesskab af alle GreenGEN-partnere på tværs af tre hovedkategorier: politikgennemgang, forskningsgennemgang og casestudiedokumentation. Hver partner brugte en standardiseret skabelon, der var i overensstemmelse med Youth Engagement Framework, for at muliggøre sammenligning på tværs af lande.

3.3 - POLITIKGENNEMGANG

Partnere gennemgik politikker og programmer på lokalt, nationalt og europæisk niveau (Tabel 2). Hver politik blev vurderet i henhold til dens støtte til unges engagement, faktorer, der igangsætter, opretholder eller hæmmer deltagelse, inklusion og lighedshensyn, samt forventede eller påviste resultater:

Tabel 2 - Oversigt over de undersøgte politikker

Policy / Program	Year	Level	Sector	Description
Policy 1: Youth Climate Council	2019	National (Denmark)	Youth, Environment	Provides climate policy recommendations to the Danish Ministry of Climate, Energy and Utilities
Policy 2: Danish Youth Council (DUF) – Meaningful Youth Participation Towards 2030 and Beyond	2019	National (Denmark)	Youth, Democracy, Environment	Provides structures, guidance, and legitimacy for youth organisations to influence decision-making
Policy 3: Plan de Acción de Educación Ambiental para la Sostenibilidad (PAEAS) 2021–2025	2021–2025	National (Spain)	Environment, Education, Youth	Mainstream environmental education and citizen participation.
Policy 4: Spanish Youth Strategy 2022–2030	2022–2030	National (Spain)	Youth, Environment, Education	Promotes youth participation in climate governance and sustainable lifestyles.
Policy 5: Copenhagen 2025 Climate Plan	2021–2025	Local/Regional (Copenhagen)	Environment	Copenhagen's carbon neutrality plan with citizen and city engagement.
Policy 6: European Green Deal	2019+	European	Environment, Climate, Energy	EU strategy to achieve climate neutrality by 2050.

3.4 -RESEARCH REVIEW

As part of the research review, partners analyzed key academic and grey literature studies related to youth participation in environmental and sustainability initiatives. These served as the evidence base for identifying cross-cutting patterns and informing the synthesis presented in Section IV.

The table below summarises the research sources included in the analysis. An important observation is that, since Research 2 and Research 5 were duplicates, only five unique studies were ultimately considered.

Table 3 – Research Sources included in the GreenGen Review

Research	Title	Authors	Year	Focus Area
1	Youth and Climate Action in Europe	European Environmental Agency	2022	Youth engagement in climate and environmental initiatives across Europe
2	Meaningful Youth Participation Towards 2030 and Beyond	Danish Youth Council (DUF)	2019	Youth councils and SDG participation in Denmark
3	Engaging youth in the local environment: Promoting sustainability action competence in Danish high school teaching through citizen social science	Winther & Jørgensen	2023	High-school citizen social science projects in Copenhagen
4	Understanding and Measuring Young People's Sustainability Actions	Oinonen & Paloniemi	2023	Surveying Finnish youth sustainability agency and behaviors
5	Engaging youth in the local environment: Promoting sustainability action competence in Danish high school teaching through citizen social science	Winther & Jørgensen	2023	Participatory, action-oriented environmental projects in schools
6	Empleo y Transición Ecológica: Yacimientos de empleo, transformación laboral y retos formativos	Ministerio de Trabajo & Medio Ambiente	2023	Green jobs and youth employment opportunities in Spain

3.4 - FORSKNINGSGENNEMGANG

Som en del af forskningsgennemgangen analyserede partnerne centrale akademiske og grå litteraturstudier relateret til unges deltagelse i miljø- og bæredygtighedsinitiativer. Disse fungerede som evidensgrundlag for at identificere tværgående mønstre og informere syntesen præsenteret i afsnit IV.

Tabellen nedenfor opsummerer de forskningskilder, der er inkluderet i analysen. En vigtig observation er, at da Forskning 2 og Forskning 5 var dubletter, blev kun fem unikke studier i sidste ende taget i betragtning.

Tabel 3 - Forskningskilder inkluderet i GreenGen-gennemgangen

Research	Title	Authors	Year	Focus Area
1	Youth and Climate Action in Europe	European Environmental Agency	2022	Youth engagement in climate and environmental initiatives across Europe
2	Meaningful Youth Participation Towards 2030 and Beyond	Danish Youth Council (DUF)	2019	Youth councils and SDG participation in Denmark
3	Engaging youth in the local environment: Promoting sustainability action competence in Danish high school teaching through citizen social science	Winther & Jørgensen	2023	High-school citizen social science projects in Copenhagen
4	Understanding and Measuring Young People's Sustainability Actions	Oinonen & Paloniemi	2023	Surveying Finnish youth sustainability agency and behaviors
5	Engaging youth in the local environment: Promoting sustainability action competence in Danish high school teaching through citizen social science	Winther & Jørgensen	2023	Participatory, action-oriented environmental projects in schools
6	Empleo y Transición Ecológica: Yacimientos de empleo, transformación laboral y retos formativos	Ministerio de Trabajo & Medio Ambiente	2023	Green jobs and youth employment opportunities in Spain

3.5 -CASE STUDY DOCUMENTATION

Each partner collected illustrative youth-led environmental initiatives (Table 4) They reviewed such initiatives to examine their structures, engagement mechanisms, and outcomes. Each initiative was assessed for support of youth engagement, factors sustaining or limiting participation, inclusion, and equity considerations. This process highlighted enabling conditions and challenges for youth participation in climate action.

Table 4- Case studies of Youth-Led Environmental Initiatives

Initiative	Location	Type of Activity	Description
Fridays for Future Denmark	Denmark	Community Projects/ Gatherings	Youth mobilize to demand stronger national climate policies and accountability from government and industry.
Youth for Climate Spain (Jóvenes por el Clima)	Spain (national with local chapters)	Activism / Advocacy	Youth-led movement promoting climate awareness, education, and policy engagement.
Youth Climate Toolkit – Youth Climate Councils (YCC)	European	Toolkit / Capacity Building	Supports youth councils to engage in climate policy, advocacy, and skill development.
Students Tackle Climate Distress – University of Copenhagen	Copenhagen	Workshops / Community Projects	Addresses youth climate distress through team-based innovation and community solutions.

3.6 -DATA COMPILATION AND COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

All findings were documented using a shared template to ensure consistency in terminology, categorisation, and reporting styles. This allowed for systematic comparison across partner countries and supported the identification of:

- Cross-cutting patterns (e.g., common barriers such as lack of time or resources);
- Regional differences (e.g., policy support levels or accessibility);
- Effective practices in fostering meaningful youth participation;
- Gaps in current policy frameworks and research coverage.

The standardized approach ensured that the final synthesis would be coherent, comparable, and usable for EU-wide policy recommendations.

3.5 - DOKUMENTATION AF CASESTUDIER

Hver partner indsamlede illustrative miljøinitiativer ledet af unge (Tabel 4). De gennemgik sådanne initiativer for at undersøge deres strukturer, engagementsmekanismer og resultater. Hvert initiativ blev vurderet med hensyn til støtte for unges engagement, faktorer, der opretholder eller begrænser deltagelse, inklusion og lighedshensyn. Denne proces fremhævede muliggørende betingelser og udfordringer for unges deltagelse i klimaindsatsen.

Tabel 4 - Casestudier af ungdomsledede miljøinitiativer

Initiative	Location	Type of Activity	Description
Fridays for Future Denmark	Denmark	Community Projects/ Gatherings	Youth mobilize to demand stronger national climate policies and accountability from government and industry.
Youth for Climate Spain (Jóvenes por el Clima)	Spain (national with local chapters)	Activism / Advocacy	Youth-led movement promoting climate awareness, education, and policy engagement.
Youth Climate Toolkit – Youth Climate Councils (YCC)	European	Toolkit / Capacity Building	Supports youth councils to engage in climate policy, advocacy, and skill development.
Students Tackle Climate Distress – University of Copenhagen	Copenhagen	Workshops / Community Projects	Addresses youth climate distress through team-based innovation and community solutions.

3.6 - DATAINDSAMLING OG SAMMENLIGNENDE ANALYSE

Alle resultater blev dokumenteret ved hjælp af en fælles skabelon for at sikre konsistens i terminologi, kategorisering og rapporteringsstile. Dette muliggjorde systematisk sammenligning på tværs af partnerlande og understøttede identifikationen af:

- Tværgående mønstre (f.eks. fælles barrierer såsom mangel på tid eller ressourcer);
- Regionale forskelle (f.eks. niveauer af politisk støtte eller tilgængelighed);
- Effektive praksisser til at fremme meningsfuld ungdomsdeltagelse;
- Mangler i nuværende politiske rammer og forskningsdækning.

Den standardiserede tilgang sikrede, at den endelige syntese ville være sammenhængende, sammenlignelig og brugbar til EU-dækkende politiske anbefalinger.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The GreenGEN project analyzed youth engagement in environmental and sustainability initiatives across Europe through policy review and academic/grey literature, supplemented by illustrative examples to highlight patterns. This section synthesizes the evidence on structures, motivators, barriers, and impacts of youth-led environmental engagement, with a focus on cross-cutting findings from policy and research.

4.1 -POLICY SUPPORT FOR YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Analysis of local, national, and European policies reveals that formal frameworks play a critical role in enabling youth participation. Policies such as the one promoted by the Danish Youth Council (DUF) demonstrate how mentoring and structured programs create entry points for young people to engage meaningfully in environmental action. Similarly, Spain's Youth Strategy 2022–2030 and PAEAS 2021–2025 highlight national-level commitment to integrating youth in climate governance and promoting sustainable lifestyles through education and participation.

At the European level, the European Green Deal offers broader strategic objectives, such as climate neutrality by 2050, which create indirect pathways for youth participation, particularly through structured youth engagement programs or advisory roles within municipal or national frameworks. Local initiatives, exemplified by Copenhagen's 2025 Climate Plan, integrate citizen engagement and youth councils, showing how regional policies can operationalize European and national objectives.

Across policy documents, key enabling conditions consistently include:

- Formal recognition of youth roles: Policies that clearly define youth participation channels improve access and visibility.
- Resource provision: Funding, mentorship, and training programs sustain engagement and reduce barriers to entry.
- Integration with decision-making structures: Youth advisory councils or embedded consultation mechanisms increase systemic influence.
- Equity considerations: Policies often explicitly address gender, socioeconomic, or geographic inclusion to broaden participation.

Policy review also highlights gaps, such as inconsistent coverage across countries, limited evaluation of program effectiveness, and insufficient mechanisms to translate youth engagement into concrete policy influence. These gaps underscore the need for complementary support from educational and civil society initiatives to maximize impact.

1.4. FORSKNINGSRISULTATER

GreenGEN-projektet analyserede unges engagement i miljø- og bæredygtighedsinitiativer i hele Europa gennem politisk gennemgang og akademisk/grå litteratur, suppleret med illustrative eksempler for at fremhæve mønstre. Dette afsnit syntetiserer evidensen om strukturer, motivatorer, barrierer og virkninger af ungdomsledet miljøengagement med fokus på tværgående resultater fra politik og forskning.

4.1 - POLITISK STØTTE TIL UNGDOMSENGAGEMENT

Analyse af lokale, nationale og europæiske politikker viser, at formelle rammer spiller en afgørende rolle i at muliggøre unges deltagelse. Politikker som den, der fremmes af Dansk Ungdomsråd (DUF), viser, hvordan mentorordninger og strukturerede programmer skaber indgangspunkter for unge til at engagere sig meningsfuldt i miljøindsatsen. Tilsvarende fremhæver Spaniens ungdomsstrategi 2022-2030 og PAEAS 2021-2025 den nationale forpligtelse til at integrere unge i klimaforvaltning og fremme bæredygtige livsstile gennem uddannelse og deltagelse.

På europæisk plan tilbyder den europæiske grønne pagt bredere strategiske mål, såsom klimaneutralitet inden 2050, som skaber indirekte veje til unges deltagelse, især gennem strukturerede programmer for ungdomsengagement eller rådgivende roller inden for kommunale eller nationale rammer. Lokale initiativer, eksemplificeret ved Københavns Klimaplan 2025, integrerer borgerinddragelse og ungdomsråd og viser, hvordan regionale politikker kan operationalisere europæiske og nationale mål.

På tværs af politiske dokumenter omfatter de vigtigste grundbetingelser konsekvent:

Formel anerkendelse af unges roller: Politikker, der klart definerer kanaler for unges deltagelse, forbedrer adgang og synlighed.

Ressourcetilvejebringelse: Finansiering, mentorordninger og træningsprogrammer opretholder engagement og reducerer adgangsbarrierer.

Integration med beslutningsstrukturer: Ungdomsråd eller integrerede konsultationsmekanismer øger systemisk indflydelse.

Ligebehandlingshensyn: Politikker tager ofte eksplicit højde for kønsbaseret, socioøkonomisk eller geografisk inklusion for at udvide deltagelsen.

Politisk gennemgang fremhæver også mangler, såsom inkonsekvent dækning på tværs af lande, begrænset evaluering af programeffektivitet og utilstrækkelige mekanismer til at omsætte unges engagement til konkret politisk indflydelse. Disse mangler understreger behovet for supplerende støtte fra uddannelses- og civilsamfundsinitiativer for at maksimere effekten.

4.2 -RESEARCH INSIGHTS ON YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Academic and grey literature further clarifies the dimensions and impacts of youth participation. Studies such as the European Environmental Agency's *Youth and Climate Action in Europe* (2022) and Winther & Jørgensen's research on Danish high schools (2023) emphasize that youth involvement is most meaningful when it combines cognitive, affective, and behavioral engagement. Young people benefit from learning about sustainability, forming emotional connections to environmental justice, and taking tangible actions such as local projects, campaigns, or advocacy efforts.

Other research, including Oinonen & Paloniemi (2023) and DUF (2019), identifies common enablers for sustained engagement:

- Capacity-building: Training and mentorship increase youth competence, confidence, and leadership skills.
- Structured opportunities for collective action: Participation in councils, workshops, or campaigns enhances social cohesion and peer support.
- Visibility and impact: Youth are motivated when their contributions are recognized and linked to real-world outcomes, whether environmental improvements, policy recommendations, or public awareness.

Research also emphasizes systemic barriers. Limited resources, short-term project design, and lack of policy accessibility can reduce engagement quality. Emotional factors, particularly climate anxiety and stress, are increasingly recognized as important determinants of youth participation. Literature points to the need for supportive structures addressing both practical and psychosocial barriers, ensuring that youth can participate meaningfully without experiencing burnout.

4.3 -CROSS-CUTTING PATTERNS FROM POLICIES AND RESEARCH

A synthesis of policy and research reviews identifies several consistent patterns:

1. Institutionalization enhances impact: Policies that embed youth in advisory or governance roles enable sustained participation and influence on decision-making. Evidence shows that councils or youth advisory boards provide both a structured learning environment and pathways for systemic impact.
2. Integration of education and action: Programs combining learning with practical environmental engagement (e.g., community projects or advocacy campaigns) are more effective in developing knowledge, leadership, and commitment.
3. Collective and peer-led approaches: Both formal and informal initiatives benefit from collective decision-making and peer mobilization, which support inclusion, creativity, and sustained involvement.
4. Equity and accessibility are key enablers: Policies and programs that actively lower barriers, promote inclusivity, and provide resources support participation from youth across diverse socioeconomic, cultural, and geographic backgrounds

4.2 - FORSKNINGSINDSIGT I UNGES ENGAGEMENT

Akademisk og grå litteratur præciserer yderligere dimensionerne og virkningerne af unges deltagelse. Studier som Det Europæiske Miljøagenturs "Ungdom og Klimaindsats i Europa" (2022) og Winther & Jørgensens forskning i danske gymnasier (2023) understreger, at unges engagement er mest meningsfuldt, når det kombinerer kognitivt, affektivt og adfærdsmæssigt engagement. Unge mennesker drager fordel af at lære om bæredygtighed, danne følelsesmæssige forbindelser til miljømæssig retfærdighed og tage håndgribelige handlinger såsom lokale projekter, kampagner eller fortalervirksomhed.

Anden forskning, herunder Oinonen & Paloniemi (2023) og DUF (2019), identificerer fælles faktorer, der muliggør vedvarende engagement:

Kapacitetsopbygning: Træning og mentorordninger øger unges kompetencer, selvtillid og lederevner.

Strukturerede muligheder for kollektiv handling: Deltagelse i råd, workshops eller kampagner styrker social samhørighed og peer-støtte.

Synlighed og effekt: Unge motiveres, når deres bidrag anerkendes og forbindes med resultater i den virkelige verden, hvad enten det drejer sig om miljøforbedringer, politiske anbefalinger eller offentlig bevidsthed.

Forskning understreger også systemiske barrierer. Begrænsede ressourcer, kortsigtet projekt-design og manglende tilgængelighed af politikker kan reducere kvaliteten af engagementet. Følelsesmæssige faktorer, især klimaangst og stress, anerkendes i stigende grad som vigtige faktorer for unges deltagelse. Litteraturen peger på behovet for støttende strukturer, der adresserer både praktiske og psykosociale barrierer, og som sikrer, at unge kan deltage meningsfuldt uden at opleve udbrændthed.

4.3 - TVÆRGÅENDE MØNSTRE FRA POLITIKKER OG FORSKNING

En syntese af politiske og forskningsmæssige gennemgange identificerer flere konsistente mønstre:

Institutionalisering øger effekten: Politikker, der integrerer unge i rådgivende eller styringsroller, muliggør vedvarende deltagelse og indflydelse på beslutningstagning. Det er dokumenteret, at råd eller ungdomsrådgivningsudvalg tilbyder både et struktureret læringsmiljø og veje til systemisk effekt.

Integration af uddannelse og handling: Programmer, der kombinerer læring med praktisk miljøengagement (f.eks. lokalsamfundsprojekter eller fortalerkampagner), er mere effektive til at udvikle viden, lederskab og engagement.

Kollektive og peer-ledede tilgange: Både formelle og uformelle initiativer drager fordel af kollektiv beslutningstagning og peer-mobilisering, hvilket understøtter inklusion, kreativitet og vedvarende engagement.

Ligestilling og tilgængelighed er centrale katalysatorer: Politikker og programmer, der aktivt sænker barrierer, fremmer inklusion og stiller ressourcer til rådighed, understøtter deltagelse fra unge på tværs af forskelligartet socioøkonomisk, kulturel og geografisk baggrund.

5. Scalability and flexibility: Effective initiatives accommodate different levels of engagement, from short-term, intensive experiences to ongoing long-term involvement, allowing youth to enter according to interest, capacity, and prior experience.

Research findings and policy reviews converge on the importance of clear objectives, structural support, and mechanisms for youth agency. For example, national youth strategies and EU-level programs encourage participation in environmental education and climate advocacy, but their effectiveness depends on how well programs translate policy into accessible, practical opportunities for young people.

4.4 -IMPACT HIGHLIGHTED IN RESEARCH AND POLICY

Research and policy analyses consistently report multi-level impacts of youth engagement:

- **Individual:** Participants acquire knowledge, skills, leadership abilities, and civic confidence. Evidence highlights that structured programs, such as school-based citizen science projects in Denmark, improve sustainability literacy and problem-solving capabilities.
- **Social:** Youth engagement strengthens peer networks, encourages intergenerational dialogue, and fosters community cohesion. Participation in campaigns and advisory bodies enhances collaborative skills and civic awareness.
- **Systemic:** Youth can influence local, national, and European policy when engagement is formalized through councils, grants, or advisory roles. Policies that embed youth voices in decision-making increase transparency, accountability, and governance quality.
- **Environmental:** Initiatives often contribute directly or indirectly to sustainability, through clean-ups, climate mitigation actions, or awareness campaigns. Policy frameworks that support and fund these initiatives amplify environmental benefits.

4.5 -KEY TAKEAWAYS

The analysis indicates that successful youth engagement depends on the interplay of policy support, structured opportunities, and enabling conditions. Policies provide legitimacy, resources, and institutional pathways, while research highlights the need for inclusive, meaningful, and flexible engagement. Combining these insights can inform future program design, ensuring youth participation contributes to individual, social, systemic, and environmental outcomes across Europe.

5. CASE STUDIES

The case studies complement the research and policy analysis by illustrating how youth-led environmental engagement unfolds in practice. While research highlights general patterns, case studies show how these dynamics emerge on the ground, under real institutional, cultural, and organisational conditions.

5. Skalerbarhed og fleksibilitet: Effektive initiativer imødekommer forskellige niveauer af engagement, fra kortvarige, intensive oplevelser til løbende langsigtet involvering, hvilket giver unge mulighed for at deltage i henhold til interesse, kapacitet og tidligere erfaring.

Forskningsresultater og politiske gennemgange er enig om vigtigheden af klare mål, strukturel støtte og mekanismer for unges handlekraft. For eksempel opfordrer nationale ungdomsstrategier og programmer på EU-niveau til deltagelse i miljøuddannelse og klimaforkæmpelse, men deres effektivitet afhænger af, hvor godt programmer omsætter politik til tilgængelige, praktiske muligheder for unge.

4.4 - FREMHÆVET EFFEKT I FORSKNING OG POLITIK

Forskning og politiske analyser rapporterer konsekvent om flere niveauer af unges engagement: Individuelt: Deltagerne tilegner sig viden, færdigheder, lederevner og samfundsmæssig selvtillid. Evidens viser, at strukturerede programmer, såsom skolebaserede borgervidenskabelige projekter i Danmark, forbedrer bæredygtighedskompetencer og problemløsningsevner.

Socialt: Ungdomsengagement styrker netværk af ligestillede, tilskynder til dialog på tværs af generationer og fremmer samhørighed i lokalsamfundet. Deltagelse i kampagner og rådgivende organer forbedrer samarbejdsevner og samfundsbevidsthed.

Systemisk: Unge kan påvirke lokal, national og europæisk politik, når engagement formaliseres gennem råd, tilskud eller rådgivende roller. Politikker, der integrerer unges stemmer i beslutningstagningen, øger gennemsigtighed, ansvarlighed og kvalitet i forvaltningen.

- Miljømæssigt: Initiativer bidrager ofte direkte eller indirekte til bæredygtighed gennem oprydninger, klimaforebyggende tiltag eller oplysningskampagner. Politiske rammer, der støtter og finansierer disse initiativer, forstærker miljømæssige fordele.

4.5 - VIGTIGE KONKLUSIONER

Analysen viser, at vellykket engagement af unge afhænger af samspillet mellem politisk støtte, strukturerede muligheder og gunstige betingelser. Politikker giver legitimitet, ressourcer og institutionelle veje, mens forskning fremhæver behovet for inkluderende, meningsfuldt og fleksibelt engagement. Kombinationen af disse indsigter kan informere fremtidig programdesign og sikre, at unges deltagelse bidrager til individuelle, sociale, systemiske og miljømæssige resultater i hele Europa.

1.5. CASESTUDIER

Casestudierne supplerer forskningen og den politiske analyse ved at illustrere, hvordan ungdomsledet miljøengagement udfolder sig i praksis. Mens forskningen fremhæver generelle mønstre, viser casestudierne, hvordan disse dynamikker opstår i praksis under reelle institutionelle, kulturelle og organisatoriske forhold.



5.1 -KEY FINDINGS: IMPACT, POLICY INSPIRATION AND ENGAGEMENT LESSONS

The four GreenGEN case studies—Fridays for Future Denmark, Youth for Climate Spain, Youth Climate Toolkit – Youth Climate Councils (YCC), and Students Tackle Climate Distress (University of Copenhagen)—demonstrate diverse approaches to youth-led environmental engagement. They show that youth action generates impact at individual, social, systemic, and environmental levels while providing design principles that policymakers can adopt to strengthen participation.

These cases form a continuum of engagement, from grassroots mobilisation through institutionalised participation to education-driven innovation, reflecting the GreenGEN framework's dimensions of activity, process, sustaining factors, and outcomes.

5.2 -IMPACT OF YOUTH-LED ENVIRONMENT PROJECTS

Youth engagement consistently generates impact across four interconnected dimensions:

- **Individual:** Participants develop leadership and organisational skills, climate and policy literacy, confidence, agency, and civic identity. Movement-based initiatives (Fridays for Future Denmark, Youth for Climate Spain) cultivate competencies through activism, while structured formats (Youth Climate Councils, university projects) reinforce them via mentorship, training, and interaction with institutions.
- **Social:** The initiatives strengthen peer networks and community cohesion. Decentralised movements build broad youth communities, councils create formal collaborative spaces, and university projects foster interdisciplinary teamwork. Collective engagement is central to sustaining motivation and inclusion.
- **Systemic:** Youth influence occurs through both formal and informal channels. Councils embed youth voices in governance, movements influence policy through public pressure, and educational projects link innovation to policy-relevant solutions. These examples illustrate that youth impact can arise from inside institutions or through external advocacy.
- **Environmental:** Outcomes vary by engagement model. Structured programmes generate direct impacts (e.g., tree planting, restoration), while movements and innovation initiatives produce indirect effects by shaping public behaviour, policy ambition, and long-term engagement capacity. Evaluation frameworks should account for both immediate and long-term environmental contributions.

5.3. - LESSONS LEARNED: BEST PRACTICES FOR YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

- **Meaningful Power and Ownership:** Youth should define priorities, lead activities, and see tangible influence; tokenistic consultation undermines motivation.
- **Collective and Peer-Led Structures:** Peer mobilisation and shared decision-making enhance inclusion and sustainability.
- **Low Barriers, Multiple Entry Points:** Initiatives should accommodate different levels of commitment, making engagement accessible despite time or resource constraints.
- **Support Without Over-Bureaucratisation:** Mentorship and institutional backing are crucial, but excessive administration weakens youth-led dynamics.
- **Long-Term Pathways Matter:** Short-term projects are most effective when connected to longer-term participation routes (e.g., activism → councils; innovation challenges → implementation).



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5.1 - HOVEDRESULTATER: EFFEKT, POLITISK INSPIRATION OG ENGAGEMENTSLÆRDOMMER

De fire GreenGEN-casestudier – Fridays for Future Denmark, Youth for Climate Spain, Youth Climate Toolkit – Youth Climate Councils (YCC) og Students Tackle Climate Distress (Københavns Universitet) – demonstrerer forskellige tilgange til ungdomsledet miljøengagement. De viser, at unges handlinger skaber effekt på individuelt, socialt, systemisk og miljømæssigt niveau, samtidig med at de giver designprincipper, som beslutningstagere kan anvende for at styrke deltagelsen.

Disse cases danner et kontinuum af engagement, fra græsrodsmobilisering over institutionaliseret deltagelse til uddannelsesdrevet innovation, hvilket afspejler GreenGEN-rammens dimensioner af aktivitet, proces, bæredygtige faktorer og resultater.

5.2 - EFFEKT AF UNGDOMSLEDEDE MILJØPROJEKTER

Ungdomsengagement skaber konsekvent effekt på tværs af fire sammenhængende dimensioner:

Individuelt: Deltagerne udvikler lederskabs- og organisationsevner, klima- og politikforståelse, selvtillid, handlekraft og samfundsidentitet. Bevægelsesbaserede initiativer (Fridays for Future Denmark, Youth for Climate Spain) dyrker kompetencer gennem aktivisme, mens strukturerede formater (Ungdomsklimaråd, universitetsprojekter) styrker dem via mentorordninger, træning og interaktion med institutioner.

Socialt: Initiativerne styrker netværk af ligestillede og samhørighed i lokalsamfundet. Decentraliserede bevægelser opbygger brede ungdomsfællesskaber, råd skaber formelle samarbejdsrum, og universitetsprojekter fremmer tværfagligt teamwork. Kollektivt engagement er centralt for at opretholde motivation og inklusion.

Systemisk: Ungdomsindflydelse sker gennem både formelle og uformelle kanaler. Råd integrerer unges stemmer i forvaltningen, bevægelser påvirker politik gennem offentligt pres, og uddannelsesprojekter forbinder innovation med politikrelevante løsninger. Disse eksempler illustrerer, at unges indflydelse kan opstå internt i institutionerne eller gennem ekstern fortalervirksomhed.

Miljømæssigt: Resultaterne varierer afhængigt af engagementsmodellen. Strukturerede programmer genererer direkte virkninger (f.eks. træplantning, restaurering), mens bevægelser og innovationsinitiativer skaber indirekte effekter ved at forme offentlig adfærd, politiske ambitioner og langsigtet engagementskapacitet. Evalueringsrammer bør tage højde for både umiddelbare og langsigtede miljømæssige bidrag.

5.3. - ERFARINGER: BEDSTE PRAKSIS FOR ENGAGEMENT AF UNGE

Meningsfuld magt og ejerskab: Unge bør definere prioriteter, lede aktiviteter og se håndgribelig indflydelse; symbolsk konsultation underminerer motivation.

Kollektive og peer-ledede strukturer: Peer-mobilisering og fælles beslutningstagning styrker inklusion og bæredygtighed.

Lave barrierer, flere indgangspunkter: Initiativer bør imødekomme forskellige niveauer af engagement og gøre engagement tilgængeligt uanset tids- eller ressourcebegrænsninger.

Støtte uden overbureaukratisering: Mentorordninger og institutionel opbakning er afgørende, men overdreven administration svækker den ungdomsledede dynamik.

Langsigtede veje er vigtige: Kortsigtede projekter er mest effektive, når de er forbundet med langsigtede deltagelsesruter (f.eks. aktivisme → råd; innovationsudfordringer → implementering).



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6. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Youth engagement is a multifaceted driver of sustainable development, contributing simultaneously to personal growth, social cohesion, policy influence, and environmental improvement. The GreenGEN research demonstrates that effective youth-led environmental initiatives combine structured programs, grassroots activism, education-driven innovation, and peer-led collaboration. Based on research, policy review, and case studies, the following recommendations guide policymakers at local, regional, and national levels:

1. Formalise youth participation without over-controlling

- Create official entry points for youth in decision-making (e.g., youth councils, advisory roles) while preserving autonomy and leadership.
- Avoid rigid, bureaucratic structures that limit creativity, ownership, and peer-led initiatives.

2. Recognise activism as legitimate civic engagement

- Grassroots movements, such as Fridays for Future, highlight unmet participation needs and function as early-warning systems.
- Policies should value activism alongside institutional participation, treating it as a complementary pathway for influence.

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3. Integrate education and practical engagement

- Use schools and universities as platforms to connect sustainability knowledge, participatory action, and well-being initiatives.
- Embed experiential learning opportunities, such as community projects, citizen science, peer-led initiatives, or advocacy campaigns, to strengthen skills, agency, and collective problem-solving.

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4. Provide flexible support and resources

- Offer funding, mentorship, training, and infrastructure to reduce barriers and enable meaningful participation.
- Accommodate diverse levels of engagement, from short-term activities to long-term leadership pathways.

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5. Ensure equity and accessibility

- Address socioeconomic, geographic, and cultural barriers to participation.
- Promote inclusion and participation from youth across diverse backgrounds.

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6. Address emotional and mental health dimensions

- Recognise climate anxiety and distress as factors that influence sustained engagement.
- Integrate supportive structures, reflective practices, and peer networks to maintain well-being and resilience.

1.6. POLITISKE ANBEFALINGER

Ungdomsengagement er en mangesidet drivkraft for bæredygtig udvikling, der samtidig bidrager til personlig vækst, social samhørighed, politisk indflydelse og miljøforbedring. GreenGEN-forskningen viser, at effektive ungdomsledede miljøinitiativer kombinerer strukturerede programmer, græsrodsaktivisme, uddannelsesdrevet innovation og peer-ledet samarbejde. Baseret på forskning, politisk gennemgang og casestudier vejleder følgende anbefalinger beslutningstagere på lokalt, regionalt og nationalt niveau:

1. Formaliser unges deltagelse uden overstyring

Skab officielle indgangspunkter for unge i beslutningstagningen (f.eks. ungdomsråd, rådgivende roller), samtidig med at autonomi og lederskab bevares.

Undgå rigide, bureaukratiske strukturer, der begrænser kreativitet, ejerskab og peer-ledede initiativer.

2. Anerkend aktivisme som legitimt samfundsengagement

Græsrodsbevægelser, såsom Fridays for Future, fremhæver uopfyldte behov for deltagelse og fungerer som tidlige varslingsystemer.

Politikere bør værdsætte aktivisme sideløbende med institutionel deltagelse og behandle det som en supplerende vej til indflydelse.

3. Integrer uddannelse og praktisk engagement

Brug skoler og universiteter som platforme til at forbinde viden om bæredygtighed, deltagerbaseret handling og trivselsinitiativer.

Integrer erfaringsbaserede læringsmuligheder, såsom lokalsamfundsprojekter, borgerforskning, peer-ledede initiativer eller fortalerkampagner, for at styrke færdigheder, handlekraft og kollektiv problemløsning.

4. Tilbyd fleksibel support og ressourcer

Tilbyd finansiering, mentorordninger, træning og infrastruktur for at reducere barrierer og muliggøre meningsfuld deltagelse.

Imødekomme forskellige niveauer af engagement, fra kortsigtede aktiviteter til langsigtede lederskabsforløb.

5. Sikre lighed og tilgængelighed

Håndter socioøkonomiske, geografiske og kulturelle barrierer for deltagelse.

Fremme inklusion og deltagelse fra unge med forskelligartet baggrund.

6. Håndter følelsesmæssige og mentale sundhedsdimensioner

Anerkend klimaangst og -lid som faktorer, der påvirker vedvarende engagement.

Integrer støttende strukturer, reflekterende praksisser og netværk af ligemænd for at opretholde trivsel og modstandsdygtighed.

7. Strengthen collaboration across sectors

- Foster partnerships between youth organisations, schools, universities, and governmental institutions.
- Encourage intergenerational dialogue, advisory mechanisms, and peer-led decision-making to embed youth voices in policy and program design.
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By implementing these recommendations, policymakers can create durable pathways for youth-led environmental action, ensuring that youth energy translates into lasting impact on sustainable development, democratic participation, and climate governance.

7. CONCLUDING INSIGHTS FOR POLICYMAKERS

The GreenGEN research and case studies demonstrate that youth-led environmental projects are not marginal activities but essential components of effective climate governance and sustainable development. These initiatives generate impact across individual, social, systemic, and environmental dimensions, while fostering democratic renewal, social cohesion, and leadership development.

For policymakers, the key lesson is clear:

“Supporting youth-led environmental action is not about inventing new enthusiasm—but about removing barriers, sharing power, and creating durable structures that allow existing youth energy to translate into lasting impact.”

By integrating grassroots activism, structured programs, and education-driven innovation into policy and practice, governments and institutions can ensure that young people’s creativity, agency, and commitment contribute meaningfully to both immediate and long-term sustainability outcomes.

8. HOW THIS FRAMEWORK IS INTENDED TO BE USED

This framework is designed primarily as a reference and advocacy tool to support policy development, programme design, and cross-sector dialogue on youth-led environmental engagement. It draws on triangulation between policy review, research insights, and illustrative case studies to identify recurring patterns, enabling conditions, and design principles that can inform decision-making across different European contexts.

It is particularly relevant for policymakers, educators, youth organisations, and civil society actors seeking evidence-informed guidance rather than prescriptive or one-size-fits-all models. The framework is intended to support agenda-setting, policy learning, and the strengthening of youth participation ecosystems.

Accordingly, this document is not intended to function as a monitoring or evaluation report, nor as a comparative ranking of countries, policies, or initiatives. Its value lies in synthesising existing knowledge and practice to clarify what supports meaningful, inclusive, and sustainable youth-led environmental action.



7. Styrk samarbejdet på tværs af sektorer

Fremme partnerskaber mellem ungdomsorganisationer, skoler, universiteter og offentlige institutioner.

Fremme dialog på tværs af generationer, rådgivningsmekanismer og peer-ledet beslutningstagning for at integrere unges stemmer i politik- og programdesign.

Ved at implementere disse anbefalinger kan politikere skabe holdbare veje for ungdomsledede miljøhandlinger og sikre, at unges energi omsættes til en varig effekt på bæredygtig udvikling, demokratisk deltagelse og klimaforvaltning.

1.7. AFSLUTTENDE INDSIGTER FOR BESLUTNINGSTAGERE

GreenGEN-forskningen og casestudierne viser, at ungdomsledede miljøprojekter ikke er marginale aktiviteter, men essentielle komponenter i effektiv klimaforvaltning og bæredygtig udvikling. Disse initiativer skaber effekt på tværs af individuelle, sociale, systemiske og miljømæssige dimensioner, samtidig med at de fremmer demokratisk fornyelse, social samhørighed og lederskabsudvikling.

For politikere er den vigtigste lektie klar:

"At støtte ungdomsledede miljøindsatser handler ikke om at opfinde ny entusiasme – men om at fjerne barrierer, dele magt og skabe holdbare strukturer, der gør det muligt for eksisterende ungdomsenergi at omsættes til varig effekt."

Ved at integrere græsrodsaktivisme, strukturerede programmer og uddannelsesdrevet innovation i politik og praksis kan regeringer og institutioner sikre, at unges kreativitet, handlekraft og engagement bidrager meningsfuldt til både umiddelbare og langsigtede bæredygtighedsresultater.

8. HVORDAN DETTE RAMMEVÆRK ER TILTÆNKT AT BLIVE BRUGT

Denne ramme er primært udformet som et reference- og fortalerværktøj til at understøtte politikudvikling, programdesign og tværsektoriel dialog om ungdomsledet miljøengagement. Den trækker på triangulering mellem politikgennemgang, forskningsindsigt og illustrative casestudier for at identificere tilbagevendende mønstre, muliggørende betingelser og designprincipper, der kan informere beslutningstagning på tværs af forskellige europæiske kontekster.

Det er særligt relevant for politikere, undervisere, ungdomsorganisationer og civilsamfundsaktører, der søger evidensbaseret vejledning frem for præskriptive eller universelle modeller. Rammerne har til formål at understøtte dagsordensfastsættelse, politisk læring og styrkelse af økosystemer for unges deltagelse.

Derfor er dette dokument ikke beregnet til at fungere som en overvågnings- eller evalueringsrapport eller som en sammenlignende rangordning af lande, politikker eller initiativer. Dets værdi ligger i at syntetisere eksisterende viden og praksis for at afklare, hvad der understøtter meningsfuld, inkluderende og bæredygtig ungdomsledet miljøindsats.



9. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER ACTION

To build on the insights from GreenGEN and strengthen youth-led environmental engagement, the following actions are recommended for future research, initiatives, and collaboration:

1. Expand and diversify research
 - Conduct longitudinal studies to track long-term impacts of youth-led initiatives on policy, social cohesion, and environmental outcomes.
 - Investigate the effectiveness of different engagement models across diverse cultural, socioeconomic, and geographic contexts.
 - Explore the intersection of climate action and youth mental health to design supportive, resilience-building frameworks.
2. Develop scalable youth engagement initiatives
 - Create programs that combine structured opportunities, grassroots activism, and educational platforms to maximize participation and impact.
 - Support innovation challenges, citizen science projects, and community-based initiatives that allow youth to apply knowledge in practical contexts.
3. Strengthen cross-sector collaboration
 - Encourage partnerships among youth organisations, schools, universities, local governments, and civil society to foster knowledge exchange, mentorship, and intergenerational dialogue.
 - Integrate youth perspectives into the design, implementation, and evaluation of sustainability policies and programs.
4. Enhance policy integration and evaluation
 - Develop frameworks that systematically embed youth participation in environmental decision-making at local, regional, and national levels.
 - Establish evaluation mechanisms to measure both short-term and long-term outcomes, including social, systemic, and environmental impacts.
5. Promote capacity-building and inclusive participation
 - Offer training, mentorship, and resources to lower barriers for youth from diverse backgrounds.
 - Ensure multiple entry points for engagement, allowing both occasional participation and long-term leadership pathways.

By taking these steps, stakeholders can ensure that youth-led initiatives are not only supported but also amplified, creating lasting contributions to sustainable development, climate governance, and community resilience.



1.9. ANBEFALINGER TIL YDERLIGERE HANDLING

For at bygge videre på indsigterne fra GreenGEN og styrke ungdomsledet miljøengagement anbefales følgende handlinger til fremtidig forskning, initiativer og samarbejde:

Udvid og diversificer forskningen

Udfør longitudinelle studier for at spore de langsigtede virkninger af ungdomsledede initiativer på politik, social samhørighed og miljømæssige resultater.

Undersøg effektiviteten af forskellige engagementsmodeller på tværs af forskellige kulturelle, socioøkonomiske og geografiske kontekster.

Udforsk krydsfeltet mellem klimaindsats og unges mentale sundhed for at designe støttende, modstandsdygtighedsopbyggende rammer.

2. Udvikle skalerbare initiativer til engagement af unge

Skab programmer, der kombinerer strukturerede muligheder, græsrodsaktivisme og uddannelsesplatforme for at maksimere deltagelse og effekt.

Støt innovationsudfordringer, borgervidenskabelige projekter og lokalsamfundsbaseerede initiativer, der giver unge mulighed for at anvende viden i praktiske sammenhænge.

Styrk samarbejdet på tværs af sektorer

Tilskynde partnerskaber mellem ungdomsorganisationer, skoler, universiteter, lokale myndigheder og civilsamfundet for at fremme videnudveksling, mentorskab og dialog mellem generationer.

Integrer unges perspektiver i design, implementering og evaluering af bæredygtighedspolitikker og -programmer.

4. Forbedre politikintegration og -evaluering

Udvikle rammer, der systematisk integrerer unges deltagelse i miljøbeslutningstagning på lokalt, regionalt og nationalt niveau.

Etablere evalueringsmekanismer til at måle både kortsigtede og langsigtede resultater, herunder sociale, systemiske og miljømæssige påvirkninger.

5. Fremme kapacitetsopbygning og inkluderende deltagelse

Tilbyd træning, mentorordninger og ressourcer for at mindske barrierer for unge fra forskellige baggrunde.

Sørg for flere indgangspunkter for engagement, der tillader både lejlighedsvis deltagelse og langsigtede lederskabsforløb.

Ved at tage disse skridt kan interessenter sikre, at ungdomsledede initiativer ikke blot støttes, men også forstærkes, hvilket skaber varige bidrag til bæredygtig udvikling, klimaforvaltning og samfundsmodstandsdygtighed.



10. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Methodology and Research & Policy Review Guide

Prepared by People of 2050 (Erasmus+ GreenGEN Project, KA210-YOU-4CA2288B).

Outlines the methodology for applying the Youth Engagement Framework and provides guidance for reviewing policies, programs, and research.

Appendix B – GreenGEN Policy and Research Data Collection Template

GreenGEN Policy & Research Data Collection Template used by all partners to document policies, research, and youth-led initiatives.

Appendix C – Partner Research Submissions

- C1 – People of 2050
- C2 – 2030 Builders
- C3 – Diemal

Each partner submitted research and case study data using the template (Appendix B). Full documents are included as separate attachments.



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1.10. BILAG

Bilag A – Vejledning til metode og forskning og politikgennemgang udarbejdet af People of 2050 (Erasmus+ GreenGEN-projekt, KA210-YOU-4CA2288B).

Skitserer metoden til anvendelse af rammen for ungdomsengagement og giver vejledning til gennemgang af politikker, programmer og forskning.

Bilag B – Skabelon til indsamling af GreenGEN-politik og forskningsdata Skabelon til indsamling af GreenGEN-politik og forskningsdata, der bruges af alle partnere til at dokumentere politikker, forskning og ungdomsledede initiativer.

Bilag C – Indsendelser fra partnerforskning

C1 – Mennesker i 2050

C2 – 2030 Bygherrer

C3 – Diemal

- Hver partner indsendte forsknings- og casestudiedata ved hjælp af skabelonen (bilag B). De fulde dokumenter er vedlagt som separate vedhæftede filer.



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