

Final Report

Final external evaluation of the European project
“Mindchangers: Regions and Youth for Planet and People”
(CSO-LA/2020/415-010)

February 28th, 2025

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Executive summary

Introduction

The "*Mindchangers: Regions and Youth for Planet and People*" project was designed to address the pressing global challenges of climate change and migration by engaging young people as active agents of change. Implemented across six European regions under the DEAR Programme (CfP 2018) and led by the Piedmont Region in collaboration with eight European partners, the Action aimed to strengthen youth engagement, enhance the capacity of Local Authorities and Civil Society Organizations, and increase public awareness of sustainability issues.

This final external evaluation, conducted by PuntoSud, provides an in-depth assessment of the Action's impact, effectiveness, and sustainability. By analysing Action implementation, stakeholder involvement, and key outcomes, this evaluation identifies both achievements and areas for improvement, offering strategic insights for future initiatives in youth engagement and sustainable development.

Key components of the evaluation report

This report is structured into four key sections, each offering a comprehensive yet accessible analysis of the Action's implementation and results.

- A. Introduction** – This section provides essential background on the Action, outlining its objectives, target groups, and strategic framework. It also introduces the evaluation approach, detailing the methodologies used to assess the project's impact and effectiveness.
- B. Project main outcomes** – A deep dive into the core structure of Mindchangers and its key achievements. This part highlights how the Action was implemented across the six regions, the strategic approaches employed, and the main concrete outputs, identifying main challenges faced and the adaptive strategies implemented to ensure project success.
- C. Findings – Core evaluation insights** – This section presents an analytical overview of the Action's alignment with broader policy objectives, its effectiveness in fostering partnerships, and its transformative impact on stakeholders.
- D. Conclusions and key recommendations** – The final section synthesizes the key takeaways from the evaluation and presents strategic recommendations to inform future initiatives.

Main findings

One of Mindchangers' greatest strengths was its ability to evolve and adapt to the dynamic landscape of sustainability and global challenges. The Action remained highly relevant to EU policy objectives and aligned with sustainability goals, ensuring a lasting impact beyond its immediate beneficiaries.

Collaboration was a key driver of success. Strong partnerships between LAs and CSOs fostered innovation, facilitated best practice sharing, and supported the implementation of strategic policies for youth engagement. These synergies enhanced organizations' capacity to mobilize young people and promote meaningful participation.

Mindchangers' impact extended beyond numbers, it transformed organizations, communities, and young individuals. Youth engagement was not just an objective but a tangible reality, with thousands of young people actively participating in sustainability initiatives, acquiring new skills, and driving change. Organizations also adapted their operational approaches, embedding youth participation into their strategies and establishing long-term frameworks for continued engagement.

Despite challenges, as outlined in this report, the Action's significant results remained unaffected. On the contrary, these challenges were addressed and often seen as opportunities for growth and improvement.

Mindchangers successfully mobilized youth, strengthened organizational capacities, and fostered a culture of active citizenship. While the Action officially concludes, its legacy endures through empowered networks and sustained local actions. Future initiatives should build on these achievements to further institutionalize youth participation and expand collaborative frameworks for global sustainability efforts.

Key recommendations

To build on the successes of Mindchangers and ensure a lasting impact, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Strengthen LA-CSO collaboration.** Mindchangers fostered strong partnerships between LAs and CSOs, demonstrating how collaboration enhances impact and sustainability. Future initiatives should build on this by creating permanent working groups and structured platforms for knowledge exchange to ensure youth engagement remains a priority beyond the Action timeline.
- **Institutionalize youth participation.** Mindchangers actively promoted youth involvement in decision-making processes by experimenting with innovative engagement methods. To build on this momentum, governments and institutions should integrate youth perspectives into policy development by strengthening mechanisms such as youth councils, advisory boards, and participatory budgeting, ensuring that young people have a formal seat at the decision-making table.
- **Improve impact measurement.** Mindchangers identified challenges in data collection and reporting among grantees. Future projects should build on this experience by developing a clear, standardized framework with user-friendly indicators and data collection tools that align with grantees' capacities. Additionally, targeted training should be provided to enhance reporting accuracy and empower local organizations to track and effectively showcase their results.
- **Leverage scientific research.** Mindchangers progressively integrated scientific insights into its interventions, reinforcing the importance of data-driven approaches. Future projects should build on this by fostering collaborations with universities and research institutions, ensuring that youth-led initiatives are evidence-based and aligned with sustainable development goals.
- **Embed sustainability strategies.** Mindchangers' experience highlighted the value of embedding sustainability from the outset, including securing alternative funding sources and maintaining stakeholder networks, despite the challenges involved. Future initiatives should integrate these strategies by establishing clear roadmaps for ongoing activities and leveraging digital platforms to sustain engagement over time.
- **Manage staff turnover proactively.** Mindchangers faced challenges due to staff changes, which at times impacted project continuity for some partners. Future initiatives should implement structured handover procedures, internal documentation protocols, and mentorship systems to preserve institutional knowledge and mitigate disruptions, as well as potential weaknesses in stakeholder relationships.

A. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the key findings and conclusions from the evaluation exercise conducted by PuntoSud, the external evaluator for “*Mindchangers: Regions and Youth for Planet and People*”².

The Action, promoted by the Piedmont Region³ in collaboration with eight European partners, operates within the framework of the DEAR⁴ Programme (CfP 2018). As the third and final phase of a comprehensive evaluation process, this report follows an initial assessment of the overall initiative, completed in December 2022, and a second evaluation focusing on the sub-granting component, finalized in June 2023. Consistent with previous evaluations, this assessment employs a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, detailed in paragraph A.2 *Evaluation*.

These methods were carefully coordinated with the Lead partner⁵ to align the evaluation process with the Action's evolving needs, ensuring flexibility and relevance throughout implementation. The approach aimed to provide a rigorous yet participatory evaluation, generating valuable insights for all stakeholders.

This report serves both the implementing organizations and the donor, offering a comprehensive analysis of Mindchangers' outcomes and actionable recommendations to inform future initiatives and partnerships.

A.1 Background of the project

Mindchangers, launched on October 1st, 2020, engaged nine⁶ partners across six EU regions⁷, ensuring a strong local presence in each territory. This was made possible by the active role of partner organizations in representing and engaging with their respective communities.

The initiative targeted young Europeans (aged 15-35) as key drivers of change in sustainable development, migration, and climate action. It aimed to enhance youth awareness and capacity by providing tools and opportunities for engagement, fostering connections with active organizations and peers, facilitating access to collaborative networks, and, most importantly, empowering young people to mobilize their peers and drive meaningful change.

By engaging youth and strengthening the strategies of Local authorities and Civil Society Organizations⁸, the Action promoted active citizenship and a shared sense of global responsibility, interdependence, and solidarity for a sustainable future. The Action implementation underscored also the critical synergy between engagement and communication activities in achieving these objectives.

Key outputs

The Action was structured around three main objectives:

1. *Empowering young changemakers* → Engage over 300,000 young people, with 10,000 actively participating in sustainability and global cooperation initiatives⁹.
2. *Strengthening local engagement* → Equip 500 LAs and CSOs with enhanced strategies and skills to involve youth in active citizenship and communicate key sustainability issues effectively¹⁰.
3. *Expanding awareness across the EU* → Reach more than 3 million EU citizens, including 700,000 young people, through an extensive awareness campaign, inspiring action on global challenges¹¹.

² Hereinafter referred to as 'Mindchangers' or the 'Action', or the 'project'.

³ Hereinafter referred to as 'PR'.

⁴ Development Education Awareness Raising. Hereinafter referred to as 'DEAR'.

⁵ i.e. Piedmont Region. Hereinafter referred to as 'PR'.

⁶ i.e. CONGD CAR; COP – Consorzio ONG Piemontesi; Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles; Gobierno de La Rioja; Land/Region of Baden-Württemberg; Piedmont Region; Pleiadi; RESACOOP (Réseau Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes de la coopération internationale); Stiftung Entwicklungs-Zusammenarbeit Baden-Württemberg (SEZ)

⁷ The 6 EU regions involved in the Action are: Piedmont Region – IT, Baden-Württemberg - DE, Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles - BE, RESACOOP - FR, La Rioja – ES, Dolj County-RO.

⁸ Hereinafter referred to as 'LAs' and 'CSOs'.

⁹ Logframe Oc1.

¹⁰ Logframe iOc1.

¹¹ Logframe Oc2.

In summary, the Action's strategic approach centred around three key elements described in the following table.

The strategic Approach	
1. Empowering youth	→ Providing young people with the skills and opportunities to drive change.
2. Strengthening local engagement	→ Enhancing the capacity of organizations to involve youth and communicate sustainability challenges effectively.
3. Expanding awareness	→ Reaching millions across the EU to inspire action on global issues.

Table 1. The strategic approach

To achieve these objectives, Mindchangers implemented a dynamic communication campaign, leveraging social media, major events, and collaborative materials to inform and engage the public. Additionally, capacity-building activities were designed to support the development of innovative, youth-led strategies, ensuring long-term engagement and contributing to the 2030 Agenda goals.

Fostering collaboration between LAs and CSOs

From the outset, the partnership structure encouraged collaboration and dialogue between CSOs and LAs. Wherever possible, each participating region included both an LA and a third-sector organization, fostering cooperation to strengthen youth leadership on the project's key themes. This regional partnership model was a defining feature of Mindchangers, ensuring that youth engagement remained deeply rooted in local communities while contributing to broader European sustainability and development goals.

A.1.1 Quick overview of the target groups and key stakeholders involved

Target Groups

The primary target groups of the project were young people aged 15 to 35, as well as small and medium-sized CSOs and LAs. By the conclusion of the Action, a total of 327,410 young individuals had participated in funded projects, reaching and surpassing the target of 300,000 (+9%). Among them, 18,903 were directly engaged in project activities¹², exceeding the forecasted 10,000 participants by almost 90%.

In absolute terms, the highest number of individuals were engaged in Piemonte, Auvergne Rhone Alpes and Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, where 77 sub-grant projects were implemented with direct youth involvement.

A key strength of the project was its ability to attract young

People involved and engaged within Mindchangers' activities
Reached vs target

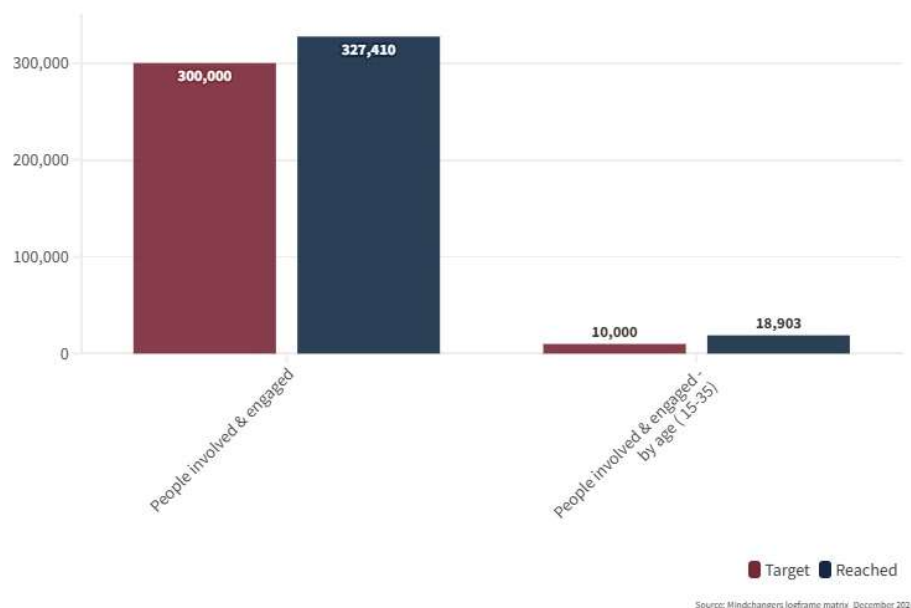
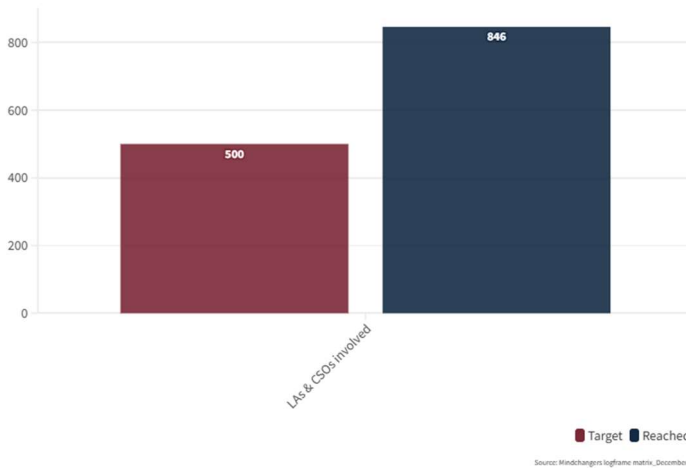


Figure 1. People involved and engaged within Mindchangers' activities

¹² These numbers take into consideration also people involved and engaged online.

people, reflecting the focus of the sub-granting initiatives and the support from various organizations. Participants included: students, researchers, and educators, workers, activists, and influencers; journalists, artists, and communicators; members of sustainable development associations; youth from Global South countries; political representatives and environmental advocates. This diversity ensured a broad and inclusive reach, strengthening the Action's impact.

LAs/CSOs benefitted from subgranting /participating in CB activities
Reached vs target



For LAs and small-to-medium-sized CSOs, significant progress was made in fostering their participation through capacity building and mutual learning activities.

While the initial target was to engage 500 entities, a total of 846 organizations took part in the subgranting and/or the capacity-building process, exceeding the original goal by almost 70%.

The strong participation of LAs and CSOs highlights their increasing role in fostering youth engagement. These entities actively collaborated with young people, contributing to the project's broader objectives through various forms of participation.

Figure 2. LAs/CSOs benefitted from subgranting /participating in capacity building activities

The communication campaign reached 16,601,947 EU citizens, more than quintupling the original target of 3 million. This outcome highlights the significant expansion of digital communication tools since the project's inception, alongside the Action's growing capacity. Over time, the initiative strengthened its reach and effectiveness, revealing an initial underestimation based on the knowledge available at the time regarding communication channels, tools, and audience engagement.

The campaign effectively promoted reflection on global citizenship, fostering active participation in a shared global society.

Proportionally, among the total beneficiaries, 3,710,625 were young people aged 15 to 35, far exceeding the initial target of 700,000.

EU citizens reached by the campaign and informed
Reached vs target

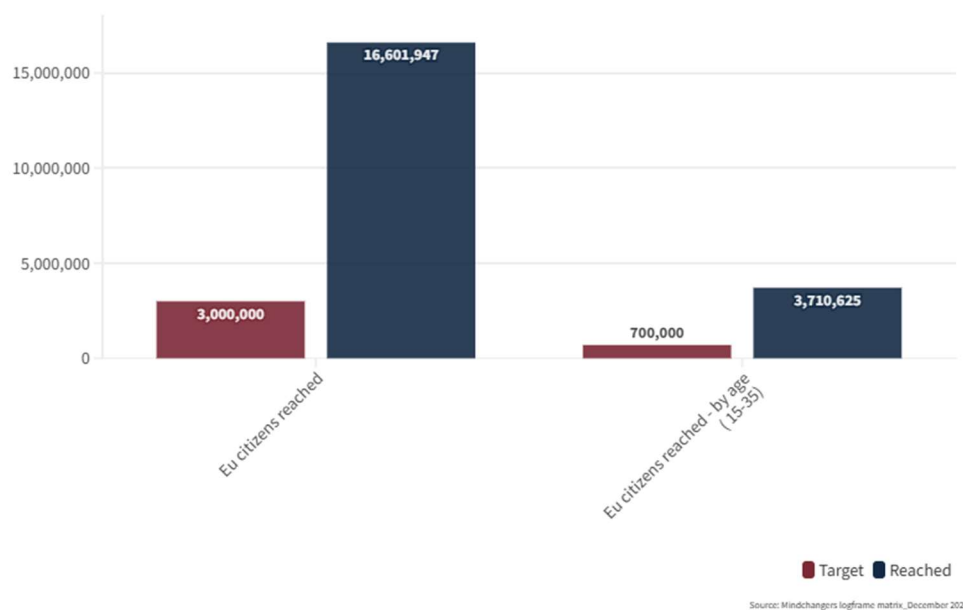


Figure 3. EU citizens reached by the campaign and informed

Key stakeholders

Several partners and stakeholders played a crucial role in the project’s success.

Associates:

- *Co.Co.Pa.* (Coordinamento Comuni per la Pace) (35 LAs). Supported dissemination, particularly among LAs, and was part of the Piedmont Region Steering Committee.
- *Associazione Stampa Subalpina*. Represented journalists and media professionals in the Steering Committee.
- *Municipality of Chambéry* (Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes). Participation in RESACOOOP regional steering committee. Also facilitated Mindchangers' participation in the 2023 Lafi Bala Festival, promoting decentralized cooperation with Ouahigouya (Burkina Faso).
- *Municipality of Clermont-Ferrand*. Participation in RESACOOOP regional steering committee. Also strengthened ties with the Europa Vox Music Festival, ensuring Mindchangers' presence in 2024. It also supported participation in the World Cultures Festival.

Other key stakeholders¹³:

- *Members of regional networks*. COP-Piedmont (32 CSOs in Piedmont Region), RESACOOOP (28 organizations, public and private engaged in international cooperation), and CONGD CAR (32 CSOs in La Rioja)
- *Decision-makers from LAs and CSOs* of the 6 EU Regions, committed to youth mobilization on climate change, migration, and sustainability.
- *LAs’ networks and other CSOs’ networks*.
- *EU and regional political representatives, youth associations, influencers, and media professionals* involved in project activities.
- *LAs and CSOs from the Global South* engaged in decentralized cooperation.
- *Universities, researchers, and experts* in youth education and sustainable development.

A.2 Evaluation

A.2.1 Objectives of the evaluation

This evaluation focused on the final phase of Action implementation, providing a comprehensive assessment of overall outcomes. Its primary objective was to consolidate results and inform future actions for two key groups: the Action implementers, particularly the Lead partner, Piedmont Region, and the DEAR Programme managers.

The evaluation was conducted within the framework of strategic convergence between these actors, considered the main added value of the cooperation between the European Commission¹⁴ and national stakeholders.

Building on this premise, the evaluation examined both the quality and quantity of results, assessing the extent to which the Action has met its objectives, outcomes, and outputs. It evaluated achievements against planned goals and timelines, identified challenges encountered, and reviews adaptation measures taken. Additionally, it analysed managerial aspects, including consortium management, the Lead partner’s role, and the Action’s impact on partners, highlighting benefits, changes, and new perspectives.

Objectives of the Final evaluation

Assess project objectives	→ Evaluate the extent to which project objectives were achieved, focusing on the quality and relevance of delivered products and outcomes.
Review activity implementation	→ Provide a comprehensive assessment of activity execution, final results, and the effectiveness of mitigation and adaptation measures.

¹³ The detailed list of stakeholders involved can be found in the interim reports produced by Mindchangers.

¹⁴ Hereinafter referred to as ‘EC’.

Evaluate partnership and management	→ Analyse the effectiveness of the partnership, budget management, and adherence to project deadlines.
Report on risks and strategies	→ Identify risks and assess the efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of mitigation strategies.
Provide findings and recommendations	→ Offer key insights, conclusions, and recommendations to guide future project design, particularly in response to earlier evaluations.
Analyse project impact	→ Assess the project's impact on participating organizations, identifying emerging perspectives, developments, and relationships.

Table 2. Objective of the Final evaluation

During this final phase, the evaluation applied DAC/OECD criteria, with a particular focus on *efficiency* and *effectiveness* in relation to achieved results. At this stage, impact and sustainability gained greater significance, as they are critical for assessing the project's long-term effects on participating organizations (partners and grantees, including CSOs and LAs). Understanding the mechanisms activated by Mindchangers has been essential to ensuring sustained benefits, long-term activity continuation, and the potential for replication or scaling. *Coherence* and *relevance* remained fundamental in verifying the Action's alignment with its objectives and its broader added value for the EU. This evaluation build on analytical work conducted during two previous exercises, which included an initial assessment of overall project implementation and an in-depth review of sub-granting activities. It also incorporated insights from inception meetings with the Action's Technical Coordinator¹⁵, refining key evaluation parameters. A combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods underpins this final assessment. Further details on the evaluation approach and methodology can be found in subsequent paragraph *A.2.3 Evaluation approach and Methodology* (p.10) and *A.2.4 Data collection methods* (p.12). The findings of this report will contribute to the final submission to the EC.

A.2.2 Key stakeholders participating in the evaluation exercise

The table below lists the key stakeholders involved in this Final evaluation exercise, along with their roles and levels of participation, as agreed upon by the Lead partner and the TC. Their involvement aimed to gather data, insights, and reflections for a comprehensive assessment of the Action's implementation. For many participants in the evaluation exercise, this was their third engagement with the external evaluator, providing a valuable opportunity to analyse how perceptions and opinions evolved over time. This continuity strengthened the reliability of the findings and enriched the overall evaluation. Given the changes in project roles, the external evaluator sought input from both original project contacts and those currently involved; the availability of former partners' project coordinators¹⁶ allowed the evaluator to integrate their perspectives with those of active representatives, offering a more comprehensive understanding of each partner's experience. Finally, this process also served as a meaningful opportunity for reflection and internal review for the interviewees, including the TC. Overall, this approach aligns with the agreed evaluation objectives, ensuring a well-rounded and insightful analysis.

Partners / stakeholders	Country	Role in the organization	Involvement
Piedmont Region	Italy	- Responsible for management <i>(Piedmont Region executive)</i> - Responsible for administration <i>(Piedmont Region officer)</i>	Semi-structured interview, completion of the partner questionnaire

¹⁵ Hereinafter referred to as 'TC'.

¹⁶ i.e. National Grant Managers. Hereinafter referred as 'NGM'.

Universitatea din Craiova	Romania	- Researcher (<i>Senior lecturer</i>) - Researcher (<i>Associate professor</i>)	Semi-structured interview, completion of the partner questionnaire, cooperation in providing materials for desk study
CONGD CAR	Spain	- National Grant Manager	Semi-structured interview, completion of partner questionnaire, Support in identifying local CSOs to be interviewed
COP – Consorzio ONG Piemontesi	Italy	- Technical coordinator	Inception meeting, <i>Deviation from plan</i> , semi-structured interview, completion of the partner questionnaire, <i>ad hoc</i> interview, cooperation in providing materials for desk study
COP – Consorzio ONG Piemontesi	Italy	- National Grant Manager - Communication Manager	Semi-structured interview, completion of the partner questionnaire, Support in identifying local CSOs to be interviewed
Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles	Belgium	- National Grant Manager - Previous NGM	Semi-structured interview, completion of the partner questionnaire, Support in identifying local CSOs to be interviewed
Gobierno de La Rioja	Spain	- New National Grant Manager	Semi-structured interview, completion of the partner questionnaire, Support in identifying local CSOs to be interviewed
Land/Region of Baden-Württemberg	Germany	- National Grant Manager - Previous NGM	Semi-structured interview, completion of the partner questionnaire, Support in identifying local CSOs to be interviewed
Stiftung Entwicklungs-Zusammenarbeit Baden-Württemberg	Germany	- National Grant Manager - SEZ Finances, Project Funding & IT	Semi-structured interview, completion of the partner questionnaire, Support in identifying local CSOs to be interviewed
RESACOOOP (Réseau Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes de la coopération internationale)	France	- National Grant Manager - RESACOOOP Director	Semi-structured interview, completion of the partner questionnaire, Support in identifying local CSOs to be interviewed
Representatives of the selected CSOs	Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Romania, Spain	No. 12 people for no. 11 CSOs represented. All 6 partner regions are represented ¹⁷	Semi-structured interview

Table 3. Stakeholders involved within the evaluation exercise

A.2.3 Evaluation approach and methodology

The evaluation exercise adopted a theory-based approach, aligned with the requirements outlined in the Terms of Reference (ToR). It primarily relied on qualitative methods, complemented by quantitative analysis, to assess both strengths and areas requiring attention within the Action. The methodology was guided by OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, with the additional inclusion of the European added value criterion, given the Action's specific nature and in line with standard practice for this type of intervention. The matrix below outlines the primary research hypotheses (HP), refined according to DAC criteria, as detailed in the Inception report.

¹⁷ The list of the organisations interviewed are listed below: funded project '*Speed Up!*'. Associazione Cultura e Sviluppo – IT; funded project '*Idea: Act locally, change globally*'. Cooperativa Orso – IT; funded project '*GAIA - Green Action Involvement Awareness*'. ActiveEurope – RO; funded project '*Yes Green*'. Comunitati Pentru Tineret – RO; funded project '*Notre planète notre avenir*'. Peuples solidaires Monts du Lyonnais / Action Aid – FR; funded project '*ImpActes – les jeunes en action*'. Solidarité Afrique – FR; funded project '*Climate Stories*'. Fairventures Worldwide gGmbH – DE; funded project '*Klimakrise vor der Haustür und Lösungen für Morgen*'. Freundeskreis Nationalpark Schwarzwald e.V. – DE; funded project '*Le son qui dérange*'. Oxfam-Magasins du monde_BE; funded project '*Enraizando*'. Asur – ES; funded project '*GENERACIÓN 1.5. Tú tienes la palabra*'. Color – ES.

RELEVANCE	COHERENCE	EFFICIENCY	EFFECTIVENESS	IMPACT	SUSTAINABILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •HP1. The initiative contributes to achieving the strategic objectives of the EU and the DEAR program, while aligning with stakeholder needs and adapting to emerging needs during its implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •HP2. The initiative adds value, aligns with the mission of the Piedmont Region and partners, and avoids duplication with other interventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •HP3. The management structure and the tools used are appropriate and allowed the performing of the project according to plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •HP4. The initiative shows evidence of effectively achieving its specific objective, with LAs and CSOs now more capable of acting efficiently and effectively toward youth engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •HP5. There are positive project achievements promoting increased awareness and engagement of European citizens in the 6 target regions on SDGs and sustainable development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •HP6. The intervention gathers durable organisational changes regarding topics covered by the initiative, that are likely to continue

Table 4. Primary research hypothesis specified according to DAC criteria

To enhance the reliability of findings and strengthen recommendations, data and information were triangulated from multiple sources. English was the primary language used for communication with project partners and stakeholders, as well as for all evaluation-related documentation.

The evaluation process fostered a participatory approach, ensuring that learning expectations were collaboratively discussed with the Lead partner and TC, and integrated into evaluation questions and data collection tools.

As in the previous phase, close coordination with the TC during the inception phase allowed for optimal use of existing materials and data. This approach aimed to minimize additional demands on project partners, addressing concerns about *'monitoring fatigue'* during the final phase of the Action.

Based on discussions with the TC and partners during the inception phase, two key methodological adjustments to the evaluation plan presented were made to stakeholder and target group engagement. These adaptations, suggested by the Commitment, aimed to prevent *'monitoring fatigue'* while ensuring the achievement of the expected results:

- *Assessment of funded organizations*

Instead of the initially proposed broad survey targeting all funded organizations, the evaluation adopted a case study approach based on semi-structured in-depth interviews. Mindchangers' partners selected representative organizations to participate. While this sample was not statistically representative of all subgrantees, it provided high-quality, in-depth insights, with recurring themes emerging across interviews.

- *Youth impact analysis*

The initial evaluation plan to assess youth engagement through a direct survey by PuntoSud was revised. Instead, findings were to be drawn from the ongoing research on youth engagement conducted by the University of Craiova¹⁸. However, as the study's results were not yet available at the time of this final report's drafting (February 2025), they could not be incorporated into the present analysis. Nevertheless, the results will be published in an upcoming volume, edited by the University of Craiova in collaboration with various universities from Europe and beyond.

The evaluation results were designed primarily for learning purposes within the implementing organizations. Recommendations were formulated to inform future actions of a similar nature. The purpose of the evaluation was clearly communicated to all participants through the TC, and a brief presentation was shared to ensure a common understanding of its scope and objectives.

¹⁸ The investigation into youth engagement has been primarily led by the partner, the University of Craiova, during this period. This phase involved administering a second questionnaire to young people to evaluate and identify the conditions and characteristics that foster youth engagement. For further details, see the following paragraph A.2.4 *Data collection methods*.

A.2.4 Data collection methods

As previously mentioned, the evaluation primarily relied on qualitative research methods, complemented by quantitative data to ensure a well-rounded and robust assessment of the initiative. To enhance reliability, information was gathered from multiple sources and carefully triangulated.

In collaboration with the Lead partner and the TC, the evaluation sought to make the most of existing monitoring tools within internal processes.

This approach helped engage participants more effectively while avoiding additional strain on partners, who were already managing an intense phase of implementation¹⁹.

The priority was to maximize available resources while maintaining the quality and depth of insights.

Data and information were collected using the following investigative methods.

- *Documentary analysis*

A thorough review of project documents was conducted to gather key evidence for the evaluation and to analyse overall project implementation. This included official documents and insights from monitoring activities, such as project monitoring interim reports for Y1, Y2, Y3, and the final draft of Y4; the partners' process monitoring tool; the logical framework; articles and other related surveys.

- *Deviation from plan analysis*

This method involved reconstructing critically the project's 'actual' implementation in comparison to the original plan. The aim was to:

- identify gaps between planned and achieved results;
- assess efficiency at the activity level and effectiveness in reaching objectives;
- understand the reasons behind any major deviations while recognizing key achievements.

This process was structured around a matrix derived from the latest version of the logical framework and included discussions with the TC during a dedicated working session.

- *Survey*

An online short questionnaire was distributed to all project partners to test research hypotheses and gather feedback on the project's impact and effectiveness from their perspective. The survey, designed in English, included primarily multiple-choice questions to capture structured insights, along with a few open-ended questions for more detailed reflections.

It was structured into four key sections: i) The organization's profile and its alignment with the Action's mission, vision, and expectations; ii) Project management efficiency; iii) Impact of the Action on the organization, and iv) Final achievements, synergies, and networking reflections.

Each partner organization was asked to submit a single response, ensuring a coherent organizational perspective. In some cases, multiple representatives collaborated on completing the questionnaire to provide a more comprehensive internal viewpoint. A total of 9 questionnaires were collected, with key findings further explored through semi-structured interviews with all partners.

- *Semi-structured interviews*²⁰

Between November and December 2024, 10 semi-structured interviews were conducted with 17 participants from Action's partner organizations, using various communication methods²¹. All regions and organizations were represented. In some cases, multiple representatives from the same organization took part in the interviews, much like in the questionnaire completion process.

This approach ensured a continuous perspective on the project, spanning from its inception to completion²².

The interviews primarily aimed to gather partners' reflections and perceptions of the Action and to discuss the main findings from the questionnaire. While most interviews were conducted online, some (no. 3) took place in person during the visit to Turin, which was specifically organized to facilitate interviews, deviation-from-plan analyses, and case studies, taking advantage of the evaluator's presence in Italy, in the neighbouring region²³.

¹⁹ The evaluation exercise took place in the final phase of project implementation, alongside the ongoing Action closure and final reporting phase.

²⁰ See par. A.2.2 *Key stakeholders participating in the evaluation exercise*, p.9, for a list of interviews conducted with partners.

²¹ The interviews were held both in presence and online. Online interviews were conducted through on-line platforms.

²² For instance, former project managers participated to provide insights into the project's evolution, while others contributed their expertise on specific aspects where they had played a key role

²³ The evaluator's office is located in the Lombardy Region, a region adjacent to the Piedmont Region (Italy).

To ensure structured and focused discussions, each interviewee received a summary matrix outlining the key interview topics a few days in advance. On average, each session lasted about two hours. Following a SWOT analysis approach, the interviews explored key cross-cutting themes relevant to the evaluation. The table below summarizes the main topics covered.

Value added <i>(For the partner organization and context)</i>	Mindchangers <i>(Action implementation conditions)</i>	Transformational change <i>(Tangible improvements and empowered environment & organizations -partners + grantees)</i>	Legacy <i>(Empowered environment & continuation of positive effects)</i>	Overall management
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Table 5. Partners' interview macro-themes

A set of common questions was posed to all partners, with slight variations depending on their specific roles. This ensured a systematic collection of perspectives, allowing for a comprehensive and comparative analysis within the available timeframe.

- *In-depth interviews on grantees case-studies*²⁴

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, in response to a request from the partnership, it was decided to replace the originally planned short survey for all grant beneficiaries with a more in-depth case study analysis. This decision was made to avoid excessive workload on former grantees, given that their projects had already been completed some time ago, while also ensuring the collection of valuable insights.

Each country selected two case studies, chosen by project partners, to explore the lasting impact of the experience, not just in terms of participation, but also in organizational learning, internal changes, new forms of collaboration, and future opportunities.

The in-depth interviews took place in December 2024, involving 12 participants from 11 funded organizations.

All regions, except FW-B_BE, were represented by two organizations. While most interviews were conducted online, the Italian grant beneficiaries were interviewed in person during the evaluator's visit to the Piedmont Region headquarters in December 2024. One Belgian organization, unable to attend the scheduled session due to unforeseen circumstances, provided written responses to ensure their perspectives were included.

To facilitate discussions, each interviewee received a summary matrix outlining the key topics ahead of the meeting. Like the partner interviews, each session lasted approximately two hours.

The table below summarizes the key themes explored in these in-depth interviews:

Path to Mindchangers <i>(Initial expectations, objectives, and starting point of the org.)</i>	Conditions for success <i>(Success and challenging factors impacting the outcomes)</i>	Impact of the experience <i>(In terms of understanding, org. changes, collab. prospects, relationships, etc.)</i>	Significant change <i>(Organizations' most significant change in engaging young people)</i>
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Table 6. Grantees' in-depth interview questions

- *(additional) In-depth interviews and discussions.*

Beyond the planned interviews, in-depth discussions were held with the TC during the inception phase, ensuring alignment on evaluation objectives. Additionally, regular follow-up meetings were conducted as needed to explore emerging issues beyond the original scope, such as deviations identified in the questionnaire response.

²⁴ See par. A.2.2 Key stakeholders participating in the evaluation exercise, p.9, for a list of interviews conducted with the grantees.

A.2.5 Methodological limits and general observations

(possible) Risks and limits	Containment and adaptation measures
<p>Limited stakeholder participation</p> <p><i>Low stakeholder engagement in the evaluation process could impact the quality and reliability of collected data, leading to poor representativeness and limited accuracy of evidence</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Close coordination with the Lead partner and project partners ensured that all relevant stakeholders were fully informed about the evaluation process, including its purpose, methodology, and expected outcomes. This helped foster collaboration and engagement. → Evaluation tools were carefully designed to include only essential information elements, maximizing the relevance and usability of collected data. Whenever possible, existing data collection tools used within the Action were leveraged to reinforce their value. → Interactive participation methods were prioritized to encourage engagement and structured responses. These included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Semi-structured and in-depth interviews conducted with two beneficiary organizations at a time to foster dynamic discussions - Closed-ended questionnaires to streamline data analysis - Advance distribution of interview topic outlines, allowing participants to prepare and share insightful contributions. <p>These strategies facilitated stakeholder involvement and enhanced the quality of collected information.</p>
<p>Biased or limited perspectives from key informants</p> <p><i>Some key informants might hold polarized views or be unable to provide insights on all key elements of the evaluation, potentially skewing results</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → During the inception phase, stakeholders were carefully selected to ensure diverse and balanced representation across all relevant groups. → Initial discussions led to adjustments in stakeholder engagement methods, particularly for funded organizations and youth, ensuring that the most relevant voices were included. → Ongoing cross-verification of data ensured that collected perspectives were well-rounded and reflective of the broader stakeholder experience.
<p>Participation ‘fatigue’, particularly in virtual discussions</p> <p><i>Long and repetitive virtual meetings risked reducing stakeholder engagement and compromising discussion quality</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Interactive formats were prioritized, even in online settings, to maintain engagement and active participation. → Sessions were structured to be concise, focused, and interactive, encouraging meaningful contributions while minimizing fatigue.
<p>Limited or incomplete data from the internal monitoring system</p> <p><i>Gaps in available information from the internal monitoring and evaluation system could hinder a comprehensive assessment</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Throughout the inception phase and beyond, data sources and internal monitoring outputs were thoroughly analysed. Any gaps were proactively addressed in consultation with the TC. → Evaluation questions were refined based on the realistically available data, ensuring feasibility and alignment with the scope and timeline of the evaluation process. <p>These measures ensured that the evaluation remained credible, data-driven, and aligned with project realities.</p>

Table 7. Limits and adaptation measures

As anticipated, the evaluation exercise was conducted before the Final internal monitoring report was completed (expected in March 2025). As a result, some updated data and final project information may only be consolidated after the evaluation process concludes.

To mitigate this, regular progress update meetings were held with the Technical Coordinator (TC), ensuring a comprehensive understanding of ongoing project developments throughout the evaluation period.

B. PROJECT MAIN OUTCOMES

The following chapter provides an overview of the project's overall achievements. It is structured as follows:

- *Introduction*: outlining the Action's main outcomes and the intervention framework underlying the Action.
- *Logframe updating*: assessing progress toward key targets defined in the logframe.
- *Outcome results*: detailing the achievements across the project's three main outcome areas.

The third section, dedicated to the three main outcomes, goes beyond a general summary of final results. It provides a deeper analysis of the final achievements, highlighting strengths, benefits for partners and grantees, and the main challenges identified throughout the evaluation process for the core components of the Actions. As outlined in the previous section, this assessment is based on stakeholder consultations, deviation analyses, interviews, and a thorough review of project documentation (e.g., narrative reports, logframe updates, etc.). However, at the time of writing, some documents were still being finalized in accordance with the project timeline. Further details on individual outcomes can be found in the Final narrative report prepared by the Lead partner, Piedmont Region, for the EC.

B.1 Design of the Action

The Mindchangers project was designed to strengthen the engagement of young EU citizens and raise public awareness on key 2030 Agenda themes, particularly climate change and migration, through communication campaigns, educational activities, and capacity-building initiatives for LAs and small-to-medium CSOs.

Its primary goal was to empower young people as agents of change across six EU regions²⁵, mobilizing them through direct actions while supporting LAs and CSOs in innovating strategies to effectively engage youth in sustainable development and international cooperation efforts. By enhancing interdependency, personal responsibility, and solidarity between European and Global South countries, the Action aimed to foster active citizenship and drive collective action for a sustainable future.

'A potential Mindchangers 2.0 project should ideally include both an Associative Network and a Regional Authority in each region, as they are key pillars for its success'.

— Mindchangers' partner

A strategic partnership approach

The project was implemented in a coordinated manner across the six participating regions. From the outset, the partnership was structured, wherever possible, to ensure a strong local presence by combining:

- an implementing partner with deep connections to local realities²⁶;
- a LA, responsible for managing grants and providing political, public, and operational support.

This dual structure aimed to strengthen synergies, maximize outreach, and enhance the strategic collaboration between key stakeholders. In regions where partnerships existed between regional governments and CSO networks²⁷, significant territorial progress was observed²⁸. The collaboration, in fact enabled CSO networks to compensate for the 'limitations' of public entities, while public institutions provided recognition and legitimacy and led to greater co-responsibility and joint decision-making, strengthening local impact. However, a clear definition of roles and budget allocation remains essential for ensuring long-term sustainability.

This partnership model was identified as a key success factor, fostering effective collaboration, long-term impact, and strong territorial presence. Interestingly, it was not initially conceived as a strategic choice but emerged organically from the desire to leverage existing networks, a decision that ultimately proved highly effective²⁹.

²⁵ Piedmont Region - IT, Baden-Württemberg - DE, Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles - BE, RESACOOOP - FR, La Rioja – ES, Dolj County-RO.

²⁶ e.g., COP in Italy and its territorial network.

²⁷ e.g. PR and COP in Italy; SEZ and BW in Germany, CONGD CAR and GLR La Rioja in Spain.

²⁸ e.g. Between BW and SEZ, a new workstream has been established. COP is a partner in a CfP 2022 funded project within the DEAR Programme, 'Connect for Global Change,' co-financed by Regione Piemonte.

²⁹ For in-depth insights see the paragraphs about Mindchangers' partnership (C.2.1 A valuable and interesting partnership - p.38).

B.1.1 Project structure and key outcomes

To achieve its objectives, the project was structured around three closely interconnected components, described in the following sections:

- Outcome 1: Empowering young people as agents of change
- Intermediate Outcome 1: Strengthening LAs and CSOs
- Outcome 2: Raising Public Awareness on Global Issues.

Outcome 1³⁰: Empowering young people as agents of change³¹

Oc1's activity	
Oc1	Activity 1.1.1: Designing guidelines, criteria and assessment process for subgranting
	Activity 1.1.2: Organising 12 launch seminars for potential applicants
	Activity 1.1.3: Counselling of potential third parties
	Activity 1.1.4: Assessment of applications
	Activity 1.1.5: Organising 12 start-up seminars
	Activity 1.1.6: Implementation of the subgranted projects by the grantees
	Activity 1.1.7: Organising 2 international 'Mindchangers Youth Meetings'

Table 8. Outcome 1's list of activities

Oc1 focused on mobilizing youth at both local and international levels, encouraging active citizenship and engagement in climate change and migration issues, through:

- the funding of at least 100 projects through LAs and CSOs, fostering especially youth active participation;
- the organisation of two international gathering of engaged young people;
- the promotion of youth engagement aligned with the European Consensus on Development ('Planet' and 'People' pillars).

Intermediate Outcome1³²: Strengthening LAs and CSOs³³

iOc1's activity	
i.Oc1	Activity i.1.1.1: Preparing the Terms of Reference of a Research on how to shift from 'awareness' to 'active engagement'
	Activity i.1.1.2: Realising the Research on how to shift from 'awareness' to 'active engagement' and a Practical guide on youth engagement
	Activity i.1.1.3: Special Partner meeting to share the results of the research and plan the capacity building strategy
	Activity i.1.1.4: Implementing capacity building on youth engagement for LAs and CSOs

Table 9. Intermediate Outcome 1's list of activities

iOc1 aimed to enhance the capacity and strategies of (at least) 500 LAs and CSOs across six EU countries to improve youth engagement methodologies, through:

- development of innovative policies and strategies related to SDGs, climate change, and migration;

³⁰ Hereinafter referred to as 'Oc1'.

³¹ Oc1: European youth is actively engaged in actions for change, in the perspective of SDGs. Target: At least 300.000 youths (aged 15-35) involved in Action, of which 10.000 actively engaged.

³² ³² Hereinafter referred to as 'i.Oc1'.

³³ iOc1: Intermediary Outcome. Target: Improved capacities and strategies of 500 LAs/CSOs in 6 EU Countries.

- the conduction of a research and capacity-building activities, promoting knowledge-sharing and best practices.

By strengthening institutional capabilities, the project wanted to foster a shift from awareness to active participation, increasing the commitment of young citizens.

Outcome 2³⁴: Raising public awareness on global issues³⁵





	OC2's activity
Oc2	Activity 2.1: Designing of the Mindchangers campaign
	Activity 2.1.2: Creating the project website
	Activity 2.1.3: Implementation of the Mindchangers campaign
	Activity 2.1.4: Realization of 3 Mindchangers social media contests
	Activity 2.1.5: Organisation of 12 Regional events
	Activity 2.1.6: Production of 2 videos
	Activity 2.1.7: International closing event in Brussels

Table 10. Outcome 2's list of activities

Oc2 focused on increasing citizens' awareness of their individual role in global challenges, such as climate change and migration, through:

- the reach of 3 million EU citizens through awareness campaigns;
- of whom 700,000 young people (aged 15-35);
- a pan-European, youth-oriented communication campaign co-developed with young people and communication experts;
- the dissemination of joint communication materials through events, social media, outdoor media, and media supplements.

B.2 Logframe updating

Results chain	Indicators	Final value 31/12/2024	Targets at the end of the project	Achievement
Oc1: EUROPEAN YOUTH IS ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN ACTIONS FOR CHANGE, IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF SDGs	No. of youths (aged 15-35) involved in Action (also country data)	327.410	At least 300.000 youths (aged 15-35) involved in Action	
	No. of which actively engaged (also country data)	18.903	of which 10.000 actively engaged	
	% of increase of youth engagement at regional level	80%	At least an increase of youth engagement of 5 % at regional level	
	% of increase of female engagement at regional level	80,5%	At least an increase of female engagement of 10 % at regional level	

³⁴ Hereinafter referred to as 'Oc2'.

³⁵ Oc2: European citizens are more informed and aware about SDGs and sustainable development. Target: At least 3 million EU citizens informed about project activities and more aware of personal role and impact in global issues, of which, at least 700.000 aged 15-35








iOc1: CSOs AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES IMPLEMENT INNOVATIVE, INCLUSIVE AND EFFECTIVE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES FOR YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN SDGs	No. of the LAs and CSOs participating to the capacity building activities	472	500 LAs and CSOs participating in the Action, including the subgranting activity	
	% of which are able to identify positive changes in the way they communicate and engage youths about SDGs	94%	At least 50% of which are able to identify positive changes in the way they communicate and engage youths about SDGs	
	% of increase of policies and programmes for engaging Youth on SDGs at regional level	152% ³⁶	Increase of 10% at regional level	
	No. of new youth groups/CSOs created/reinforced and engaged with SDGs on Migration and Climate Change topics in each region	515	At least 5 new youth groups/CSOs created/reinforced and engaged with SDGs on Migration and Climate Change topics in each region	
Oc2: EUROPEAN CITIZENS ARE MORE INFORMED AND AWARE ABOUT SDGs AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	No. of citizens informed about the project activities	16.601.947	At least 3 million EU citizens informed about the project activities	
	No. of which aged 15-35	3.710.625	Of which at least 700.000 aged 15-35	
	No. of persons who affirm to change personal behaviour to reduce impact on global issues in the 6 regions	84%	At least 10% of scrutinized persons affirm to change personal behaviour to reduce impact on global issues in the 6 regions	

Table 11. Updated logframe matrix (outcomes)

As evident from the table above, the Action not only met but significantly exceeded its expected outcome targets, except for one indicator that fell slightly short³⁷.

This reinforces the positive trend already observed in the first evaluation exercise conducted in December 2022 on the project's overall implementation.

As later sections will illustrate, the Action took place during a period of unprecedented digital expansion, where social media and digital tools became essential for informing and engaging audiences.

This shift contributed to a fivefold increase in results, not likely due to an initial underestimation of targets, but rather as a direct consequence of a global transformation in communication and outreach strategies, one that continues to reshape engagement worldwide.

This exceptional high performance placed the Action in an ideal position to prioritize quality, internal learning, and the practical application of lessons learned.

Beyond merely achieving its objectives, the initiative capitalized on this momentum to reach beyond already engaged audiences, amplify marginalized voices, and lay the foundation for lasting, sustainable relationships and systemic change across all levels of intervention.

B.3 Outcome results: overview from main components

This section analyses the three key outcomes, providing an overview of their final achievements while highlighting core strengths and the main challenges that emerged in relation to each specific outcome.

³⁶ Baseline no. 94 – Endline no. 237, referring to policies and programs for engaging youth on SDGs at the regional level. This increase is likely due not only to growing attention towards youth across various sectors but also to an enhanced ability of the partners to identify and report new policies in their respective regions.

³⁷ i.e. Indicator related of LAs and CSOs participating to the capacity building activities.

B.3.1 Outcome 1

Oc1	European youth is actively engaged in actions for change, in the perspective of SDGs
	<i>The intervention allocated resources to finance at least 100/150 projects to as many Local Authorities and Civil Society Organizations able to involve young people with active citizenship actions and innovative communication activities</i>










Results chain	Indicators	Final value 31/12/2024	Targets at the end of the project	Achievement
Output 1.1 CONCRETE OPPORTUNITIES AND TOOLS OF ENGAGEMENT AT COMMUNITY LEVEL ARE AVAILABLE FOR YOUTH	No. of subgranted projects are realized (total and in each country)	114 ³⁸	At least 100 projects have been funded (at least 24 in IT, 22 in FR, 10 in ES, 18 in BE, 22 in DE, 4 in RO)	
	Amount of disbursed funds (total and per country)	3,792,926	3,792,926Euro total (1.069.328,89€ in IT, 909.504,89€ in FR, 152,146.33€ in ES, 713,957.33€ in BE, 856,653.28€ in DE, 91,335.34€ in RO)	
	No. of media products about SDGs issued through the subgranting	2051	At least 100 media products about SDGs are issued (type of action/coverage/qualitative analysis of the products)	
	No. of projects including Southern voices	76	At least 30 projects including Southern voices	
	No. of projects addressing migration	18* ³⁹	At least 30 projects addressing migration	
	No. of projects addressing Climate change	50	At least 30 projects addressing climate change	
	No. of projects addressing Climate change in combination with migration	45	At least 30 projects addressing climate change in combination with migration	
	No. of young people involved in granted projects	327,410	At least 200.000 young people involved in the action	
	No. of young people directly engaged in granted projects	18.903	At least 10,000 young people engaged in the granted projects	
	% of participation/engagement of youth with migrant background	2.686	At least 30% of participation/engagement of youth with migrant background	n.a.

Table 12. Updated logframe matrix (Oc1_outputs)

³⁸ One project in La Rioja (Spain) withdrew in the final stage, near the end of the implementation year. Therefore, the final number of projects that successfully completed implementation and were funded is 113, despite 114 having been funded initially.

³⁹For an explanation of this result, which is below the target, please refer to the short paragraph on page 21 titled 'Focus on climate change, migration, and the inclusion of Southern Voices'.

Final achievement of Oc1

The activities under Oc1, the structuring and promotion of FSTP activities and the organization of youth international events, form the core of the project and its primary intervention strategy.

FSTP activities

The second quarter of Y4 marked the conclusion of the subgranting phase. The funding and implementation of more subgrant projects than initially targeted (114⁴⁰ instead of at least 100) led to a probably near-full utilization of the available budget⁴¹.

Subgranting saw strong engagement, with five out of six regions meeting expected participation levels, ensuring efficient resource allocation.

A total of 213 applications were submitted across the two subgranting rounds, revealing significant disparities in proposal submissions between territories. These variations reflect differences in the physical and demographic characteristics of intervention areas, as well as distinct local challenges. Some regions received a limited number of applications from the outset, underscoring existing difficulties in engagement and participation⁴². In fact, despite overall positive results, one region⁴³ underperformed, with funding utilization falling below projections due to a lower number of proposals.

This shortfall reflects also local challenges related to specific area management issues and external factors such as political shifts that altered regional priorities concerning the 2030 Agenda objectives.

More specifically for FSTP activities, the following aspects have been taken into account:

- Focus on climate change, migration, and the inclusion of Southern Voices;
- Activation of territories and youth engagement;
- Effective communication;
- Recognition of the value and diversity of territorial experiences;
- The delicate yet essential involvement of LAs.

Funded projects by Region

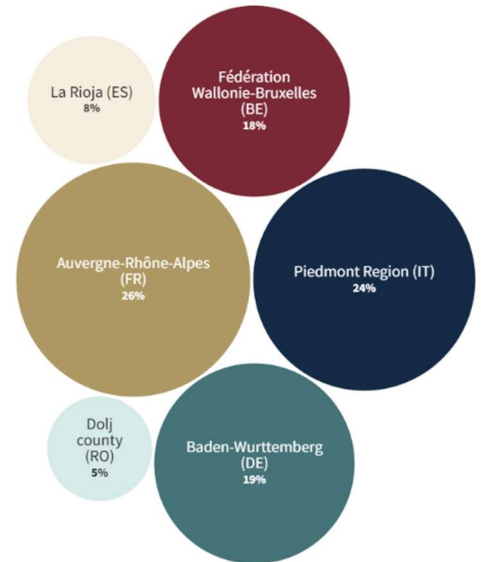
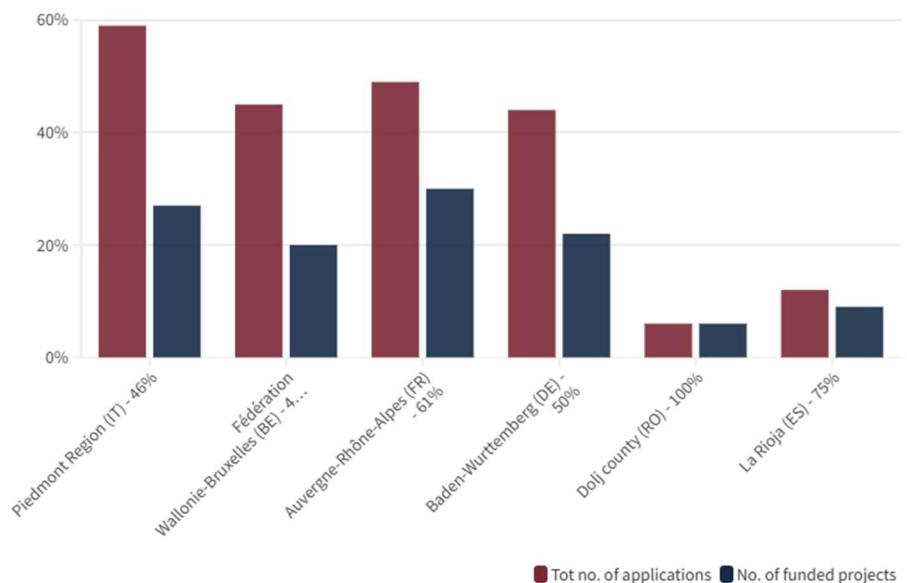


Figure 4. Funded projects by Region

Funded projects vs no. of applications By Region



Source: Mindchangers logframe matrix, December 2024

⁴⁰ See footnote n.38.

⁴¹ At the time of the finalization of this report (end of February/beginning of March 2025), the final expense accounts had not yet been completed. However, based on the indications provided by the TC, the grant amount available should have been almost entirely utilized. The total amount of disbursed funds at 31/12/2024 has been of 3,792,926 Euro over the 4,042,460 Euro total to be disbursed.

⁴² i.e. in Dolj County (Ro) and in La Rioja (ES).

⁴³ i.e. in La Rioja region in Spain.

Figure 5. Funded projects vs no. Of applications received – by Region

▪ **Focus on climate change, migration, and the inclusion of Southern Voices**

This outcome delivered strong results, exceeding initial estimates by nearly 15% in funded projects and effectively addressing key issues such as migration and climate change.

Mindchangers required all funded projects to focus on migration and/or climate change while actively including Southern Voices. Subgranting guidelines and criteria⁴⁴, agreed upon by all partners, emphasized these themes alongside sustainable development and gender equality as critical cross-cutting priorities. Southern Voices were integrated through subgranting, events, and communication efforts. However, restrictions on fund allocation outside Europe limited direct collaboration with Global South organizations, while smaller grantees faced challenges in establishing international connections⁴⁵. Despite these challenges, the funded projects actively promoted inclusion by fostering synergies with local and regional initiatives, strategically involving Southern representatives, and, in some cases, allocating additional resources to support direct participation. Among the 114^{*46} funded projects, 76 adopted an inclusive approach to Southern Voices, and 50 focused solely on climate change. A total of 45 addressed both climate change and migration, whereas only 18 primarily focused on migration. This distribution reflects a shift in social priorities compared to the project's initial design, where migration was more central. The growing prominence of climate change, driven by youth movements like Fridays for Future and reinforced by international institutions such as the EC, has strengthened the link between climate change and migration as an emerging issue.

Fact sheet
Key points on the involvement of Southern Voices

- **Global perspective.** Collaborations with Southern Countries expanded project scope, emphasizing international cooperation.
- **Youth engagement.** Exchanges with youth from the Global South fostered mutual understanding and knowledge-sharing on climate change and migration.
- **Language facilitation.** English served as a common language, overcoming language barriers for effective communication.
- **Expert contributions:** Involvement of journalists and experts from Southern Countries enriched project narratives and analysis.
- **Diverse interaction methods.** Remote engagement was effective in ensuring active participation.
- **Local collaborations.** Cooperation with youth associations strengthened local networks.
- **Cross-country exchanges.** Initiatives promoted youth engagement across regions.
- **Sustainable partnerships.** Positive collaborations set the foundation for future joint initiatives and partnerships.

Fact sheet 1. Key points on Southern Voices' involvement

▪ **Activation of territories and youth engagement**

Engaging local communities and fostering strong partnerships among LAs and CSOs, young citizens, and other stakeholders were key priorities in the sub-granting process. The guidelines provided clear directives, emphasizing the importance of partnership formation and defining both the required composition and possible forms of collaboration. To ensure regional connections and youth engagement, each region required that applicants had a minimum of 30 active members, supporters, or volunteers to strengthen grassroots involvement. Mindchangers partners actively facilitated these partnerships by connecting grantees with relevant entities through various support measures. The diverse range of activities implemented by grantees allowed for the engagement of various youth subgroups, offering different levels of commitment while maintaining the overarching goal of fostering a fairer and more sustainable world. Mindchangers provided broad and inclusive engagement opportunities. Significant results were achieved in youth engagement, in

⁴⁴ To enhance international cooperation and amplify Southern Voices, subgrantees were required to: a. Clearly define how their project would engage young people in discussions on migration and/or climate change, b. Actively involve actors from the Global South to provide a broader perspective and deepen youth understanding; c. Demonstrate expertise in development cooperation, awareness-raising, and global citizenship, either as LAs or CSOs.

⁴⁵ Participation in regional and international events varied depending on partnerships and logistical constraints, with initial engagement primarily remote due to the pandemic. Each partner adapted communication strategies based on capacity and local context.

⁴⁶ See Footnote n.39.

some cases exceeding initial targets⁴⁷. Beyond quantitative success, young people found concrete opportunities for participation, recognition, and activation within the projects. This availability of engagement tools and community-level initiatives reinforced their role in shaping local actions. However, a notable shift emerged in participation modes, with digital engagement gaining prominence over traditional in-person involvement, a factor not fully anticipated during the design phase. Additionally, interviews suggested that challenges in accurately tracking engagement data may have led to an underestimation of actual results.

▪ **Effective communication**

Communication played a critical role in Mindchangers-funded projects, focusing on maximizing outreach and engagement among grant holders, partners, and the communication agency. By leveraging project outputs, the initiative strengthened its overall communication strategy, fostering stakeholder involvement and a shared sense of ownership. Whenever possible, grantee materials were disseminated through partners' channels and Mindchangers' platforms to highlight the initiative's European dimension. Partners also developed promotional content for sub-granting actions and reviewed beneficiaries' communication materials to ensure compliance with project and EU visibility regulations. These materials were shared with Pleiadi International Srl, the subcontracted communication agency that supported the lead organisation, for publication in the EU-wide newsletter and social media. Collective communication efforts significantly boosted the visibility of sub-grant projects and engagement levels aligned with project objectives. Over time, communication strategies improved, likely due to stronger collaboration between partners and Pleiadi, increased support to grantees, and the implementation of diversified communication activities.

Notably, the production of communication materials on the SDGs through the sub-granting process far exceeded expectations, with 2,051 media products issued - surpassing the initial goal of 100⁴⁸.

▪ **Recognition of the value and diversity of territorial experiences**

A crucial aspect that emerged was the varying levels of experience and capacity about FSTP across different regions⁴⁹. This disparity influenced performance and response capacity, particularly during the first sub-granting round.

Mindchangers demonstrated the effectiveness of subgranting in reinforcing local engagement and supporting grassroots organizations. Project partners acknowledged the long-term value of this approach and the opportunity to further embed it into local contexts, strengthening networks and territorial connections. Additionally, positive changes in organizational practices, attitudes, and knowledge regarding youth engagement were observed among funded entities. Despite some region-specific challenges, any partners gained valuable expertise in FSTP and almost all intend to continue applying this knowledge in future projects⁵⁰.

'Subgranting proved to be the most effective way to reach local communities'.
— Mindchangers' partner

The last important aspect that has been taken into consideration regarding FSTP activities is:

▪ **The delicate yet essential involvement of LAs**

Despite partners successfully reaching a significant number of applicants in both sub-granting rounds, LAs involvement remained relatively limited compared to CSOs participation. While CSOs engaged extensively, LAs were less frequently lead applicants in funding rounds⁵¹. This trend, observed in both subgranting rounds, may be linked to LAs' lower participation in calls for proposals and related activities, as well as constraints such as limited skilled staff and available time. Although LAs had a reduced role as lead applicants, they were actively involved in supporting roles⁵² within project activities, as partners or associates, underscoring CSO-

⁴⁷ i.e. 327,410 are the young individuals involved in the project, reaching and surpassing the target of 300,000; and also 18,903 youth were directly engaged in granted projects, exceeding the expected 10,000.

⁴⁸ The experiences of Mindchangers' grantees are documented and accessible on the project's website and its social media platforms, where activities and testimonials have been regularly shared. Additionally, during Y4, Mindchangers created an online repository of tools developed by grantees to support youth engagement activities.

⁴⁹ In some areas, such as, for example, Piedmont Region, subgranting was well-established, and Mindchangers contributed to further strengthening existing technical capacities and territorial relationships. Conversely, in other regions, subgranting was a relatively new practice, with fewer historical funding opportunities and a still-developing skill set among stakeholders.

⁵⁰ See last chapter of the present report C. *FINDINGS- CORE EVALUATION INSIGHTS*.

⁵¹ The total number of LAs involved as lead applicants in the two subgranting rounds was 22, compared to the number of CSOs as lead applicants, which was 193. The total number of LAs involved in granted projects (as Lead, Co-applicant, and Associate) is 114.

⁵² i.e. Not as lead-applicants or co-applicants, but as associates or supporting projects in a not necessarily formally recognised manner.

led efforts to foster collaboration. The established partnerships in fact, including lead applicants, associates, and supporting stakeholders, demonstrated strong local ties and diversity.

In response to these challenges, partners intensified outreach efforts between the first and second sub-granting rounds to boost LAs participation⁵³. Notably, the second sub-granting round saw a significant increase in LAs involvement, highlighting the effectiveness of refined engagement strategies based on lessons learned.

The following scheme outlines key factors that influenced LAs participation, as identified during the intermediate evaluation process.

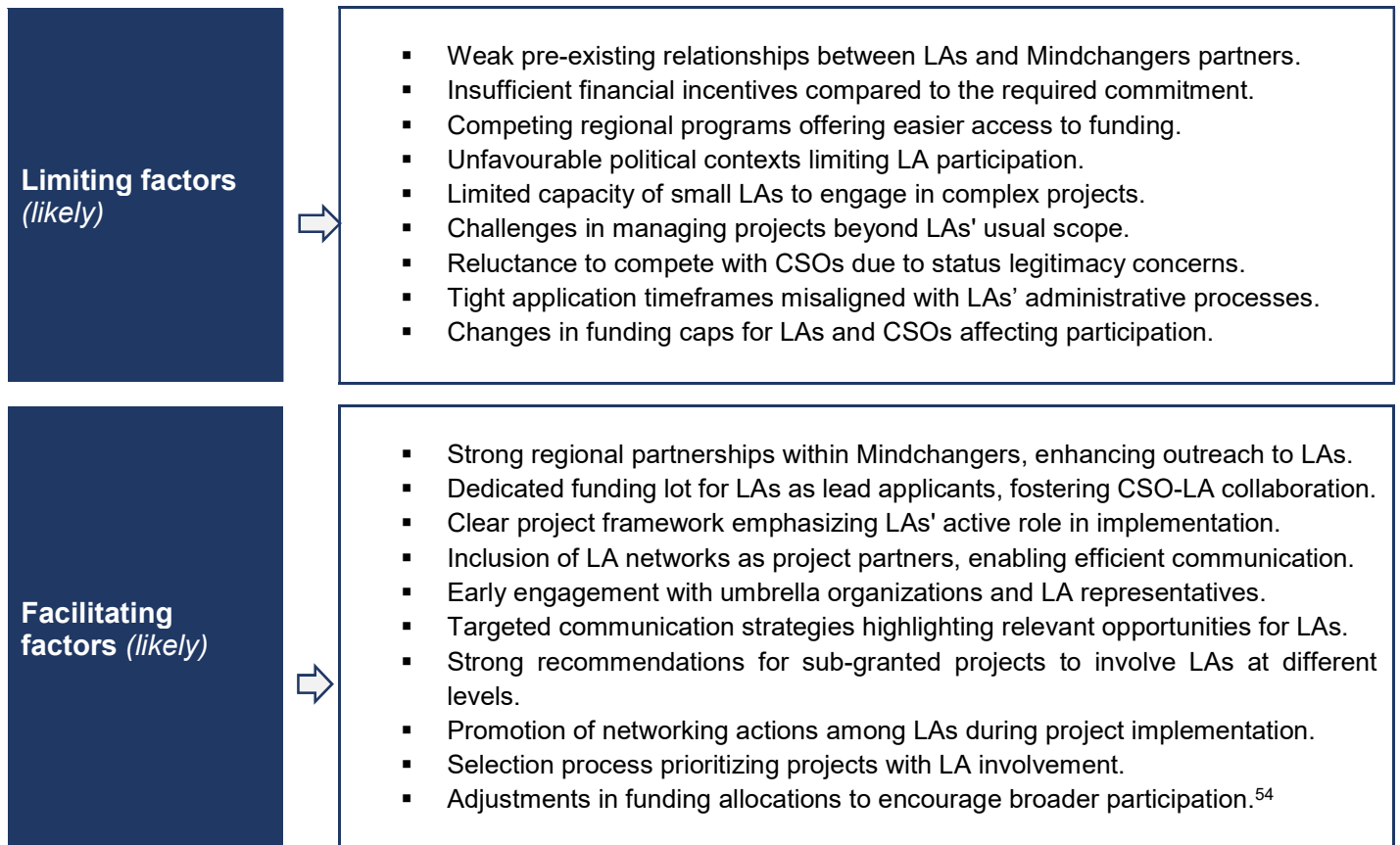


Table 8. Updated logframe matrix (Oc1_outputs)

International Mindchangers youth meetings

Oc1 also included two International Mindchangers Youth meetings⁵⁵, which provided valuable opportunities for partners to receive direct feedback from target groups, including suggestions, ideas, and testimonials. These events served as platforms for experience-sharing, collaboration, and networking, ultimately empowering participants through diverse activities. The meetings were highly appreciated, particularly by youth, as they reinforced a sense of belonging to a European community united by shared concerns, values, and a strong commitment to global citizenship. Both events took place in Y3, with preparations beginning in the previous year. Specifically, IYM 2022 was held in Turin in October 2022 and IYM 2023 took place in Stuttgart in September 2023. Together, these events gathered 460 participants, including speakers and guests from the Global South.

Key outputs included:

⁵³ For instance, in Y2, COP organized a technical meeting exclusively for LAs, in collaboration with CoCoPa and ANCI Piemonte.

⁵⁴ In some countries, (e.g. in PR_IT and in DC_RO), the maximum amount was reduced because it was found to be too high in relation to the duration of the projects, or because it had caused difficulties for the CSOs involved in terms of co-financing; in the other countries, the maximum amount remained unchanged or almost unchanged (LR_ES; BW_DE; AuRA_FR; FW-B_BE).

⁵⁵ Hereafter, IYM.

- IYM 2022: *Toolkit for young changemakers and activists: Change is Nothing Without You(th)*, a collection of ideas for small local projects addressing challenges related to migration and climate change.
- IYM 2023: *The Mindchangers Youth Declaration*⁵⁶, a policy document compiled by participants, outlining recommendations to remove barriers to youth engagement.

The Mindchangers Youth Declaration proved particularly relevant, influencing the work of some partners and young CSOs. It was translated into six languages, made available online, and widely disseminated through project communication channels in Y4. As a key resource for partners, grantees, and external organizations, the Declaration provided concrete policy proposals to enhance youth engagement strategies, and the most relevant recommendations were integrated and promoted by partners in their own context.

Strengths of Oc1

The following points describe the key strengths of Outcome Oc1, as identified through the evaluation exercise.

- **Continuous support**

Ongoing training and tailored guidance played a crucial role in overcoming challenges, particularly in financial reporting. The flexibility of the process, active listening, and opportunities for iterative improvement between the first and second sub-granting cycles made procedures more accessible for grantees. Capacity building activities and continuous monitoring enabled real-time adjustments, enhancing the overall impact of projects. Participants highly valued these training sessions, as they helped bridge the gap between call requirements and practical implementation. The consistent engagement of partners was a key factor in ensuring project success.

- **Openness to dialogue**

The project fostered an open and collaborative environment through structured capacity building sessions, follow-ups, and continuous monitoring. This approach encouraged constructive dialogue between partners and grantees, facilitating the refinement and improvement of project activities. The willingness to engage in ongoing discussions strengthened relationships and improved the overall quality of the initiatives.

- **Flexibility in the call for proposals.**

The flexible framework of the call for proposals allowed partners to tailor activities to the specific needs of their local contexts. This adaptability enabled collaboration with small and medium-sized local actors, such as municipalities and community-based organizations, ensuring that interventions remained relevant and impactful. The ability to customize activities contributed to a more targeted and effective approach to engagement.

- **European added value**

Being part of a European initiative brought prestige and additional value to the project, offering tangible opportunities for cross-border collaboration. Participation in international events reinforced the sense of belonging to a broader European framework⁵⁷, expanding perspectives beyond local boundaries. This European dimension not only enriched the grantees' experiences but also strengthened networks at both local and international levels.

- **Strong local partnerships**

Effectively engaging young people required building strategic territorial partnerships. These collaborations allowed grantees to better address the call's requirements by integrating different educational approaches. Partnerships provided an added value by helping organizations recognize their own strengths and limitations, leveraging structured collaborations for greater impact. The project underscored that no entity operates in isolation, strong local connections were essential to success.

- **Deep integration with local communities**

⁵⁶ Available in 6 languages (DE, FR, EN, ES, IT, RO), the Mindchangers Youth Declaration can be found on the Action's website. It was distributed utilizing channels such as newsletters, social media campaigns, the DEAR website, and events organized by the partners.

⁵⁷ e.g., DEAR, EU cooperation programs.

The project successfully fostered strong territorial connections, both among grantees, through dedicated networking events, and among young people, via international and local exchange opportunities. Partners also benefited from these interconnections, expanding their stakeholder networks and strengthening institutional collaborations. This impact extended beyond the project itself, influencing broader institutional activities⁵⁸.

Fact sheet

Success factors and main challenges encountered by subgrantees

Grantees of the Mindchangers project identified several key success factors that contributed to the effectiveness of their initiatives and the main challenges they faced during their project implementation.

Success factors

- **Strong networks and partnerships.** Leveraging existing networks (e.g., UNESCO, schools, local and international organizations) and building strong partnerships expanded reach and impact.
- **Enhanced credibility.** EU funding increased project legitimacy, credibility and attracted additional support.
- **Inclusive and diverse engagement.** Actively involving diverse groups, including youth from different backgrounds and people with disabilities, enriched project outcomes and dynamics.
- **Innovative engagement tools and methods.** Use of creative formats (e.g., podcasts, arts-based methods) effectively captured youth interest.
- **Practical training and empowerment.** Providing hands-on training and capacity-building workshops equipped youth with advocacy skills and strategic tools.
- **Visibility and outreach.** Strong communication strategies, social media presence, and participation in local and international events (e.g., Stuttgart, Brussels) increased project exposure.
- **Volunteer and stakeholder involvement.** Strong commitment from volunteers and youth organizations facilitated project success.
- **Co-designed youth activities.** Structured participation activities co-created with young people increased engagement.
- **Flexibility and adaptability.** Ability to tailor and adjust projects to evolving needs, while maintaining a core focus on climate change and migration ensured relevance.
- **Support from Mindchangers and from the partnerships.** Financial and structural backing from the program enabled growth, collaboration, and expanded networks and also partnerships provided essential financial and management expertise.

Challenges

- **Finding the right influencers.** Difficulty in identifying and engaging influencers with the right motivation.
- **Resource limitations.** Budget constraints sometimes affected key initiatives and slowed some initiatives
- **Stakeholder alignment.** Achieving consensus among diverse partners sometimes posed challenges.
- **Youth engagement and retention.** Sustaining long-term youth participation required continuous effort.
- **Limited local support:** In some cases, minimal involvement from universities or local stakeholders reduced outreach opportunities.
- **Complex project administration.** First-time EU grantees faced challenges in reporting and administrative processes, though this was a valuable learning experience.
- **Technical adaptation.** Transitioning to new digital tools and methods required flexibility, especially post-pandemic.
- **Sponsorship and funding challenges.** Securing additional financial support outside of Mindchangers was difficult.
- **Varying stakeholder commitment.** Engagement levels differed across organizations, impacting project consistency.

⁵⁸ See par. C.3 Transformational change: Mindchangers' lasting impact (p.45).

Fact sheet 2. Success factors and main challenges encountered by subgrantees

Key challenges of Oc1

While the project delivered significant results, it also encountered several challenges, particularly during the first subgranting cycle. These difficulties, however, provided valuable learning opportunities that contributed to refining processes and strengthening partnerships.

Working with subgrantees

One of the main challenges was *engaging youth audiences*. Young people’s participation was sometimes inconsistent, requiring continuous adaptation. Some organizations, especially those without prior experience in youth engagement, underestimated the complexity of maintaining their involvement. This necessitated the development of targeted strategies to ensure sustained participation. Despite these obstacles, the Action achieved meaningful outcomes, with several young participants continuing their engagement through civic service, joining organizations, or even pursuing political roles, such as municipal council positions.

Grant management also presented difficulties, particularly for subgrantees who lacked experience with European funding mechanisms. Many required additional support from project partners, which increased the workload, particularly in follow-up activities. Managing FSTP further underscored the need for simplified procedures to reduce administrative burdens and improve financial reporting efficiency.

Monitoring activities proved challenging as well. Tracking impact and assessing the effectiveness of outreach efforts, such as events and surveys, was not always straightforward. The process of aggregating and interpreting data was sometimes complicated by inconsistencies in reporting formats and timelines. Additionally, some initial misunderstandings regarding the application of the Engagement Pyramid likely led to an underestimation of participation levels, highlighting the need for clearer guidelines and better alignment in data collection methods.

Challenges for Mindchangers partners

The Action also faced challenges at the partnership level.

High staff turnover within some partner organizations disrupted strategic planning and continuity. In contrast, organizations with stable, well-integrated personnel were better positioned to adopt a long-term, sustainable approach⁵⁹.

Another key issue was how to *leverage the connections established through subgranting* to ensure continued engagement beyond the project’s duration. These discussions led to promising reflections on sustainability and future collaboration⁶⁰.

Additionally, partners had to navigate *differences in expectations* and methodologies between EU-funded initiatives and projects supported by other donors, requiring them to adapt their approaches accordingly.

Finally, in Romania, logistical barriers, due to the absence of a local CSO partner and the grant being managed directly from Italy by COP, added complexity to implementation in some cases.

B.3.2 Intermediary Outcome 1

iOc1	Civil society organisations and local authorities implement innovative, inclusive and effective policies and strategies for youth engagement in SDGs
	<i>In order to increase LAs and CSOs knowledge and skills in young people involvement and, in the ability to communicate effectively messages and results, research and training activities are carried out. Thanks to the greater involvement of young people and the improved capacity of LAs and CSOs, an increased engagement and commitment of the young citizens is expected.</i>

⁵⁹ See par. C.2. *Partnership and management: key pillars of success* in chapter C. *Findings – Core evaluation insights*.

⁶⁰ See par. C.3. *Transformational change: Mindchangers’ lasting impact* in chapter C. *Findings – Core evaluation insights*.






Results chain	Indicators	Final value 31/12/2024	Targets at the end of the project	Achievement
Output i.1.1 CAPACITIES OF CSOs AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN DEVELOPING POLICIES, FINANCIAL TOOLS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT YOUTH ENGAGEMENT ON SDGs ARE INCREASED	No. of LAs and CSOs which have benefited from subgranting and/or participated to capacity building and mutual learning activities	846	At least 500 LAs and CSOs involved	
	% of LAs/CSOs subgranted which participated to capacity building and mutual learning activities	80,3%	At least 80% of LAs/CSOs subgranted participated in the capacity building and mutual learning activities	
	No. of capacity building and mutual learning events realized	78	At least 40 capacity building and mutual learning events organized	
	No. of persons who attended the capacity building and mutual learning events (% of women) disaggregated by gender, age range, type of entity (CSO/LA)	1,867	At least 1.000 people participating to capacity building and mutual learning events	
	% of trained LAs/CSOs which effectively increased their capacity of shifting from awareness to engagement	95%	At least 60% of trained LAs/CSOs effectively increased their capacity of shifting from awareness to engagement	

Table 9. Updated logframe matrix (iOc1_outputs)

Final achievement of iOc1

The project's second pillar (iOC1), aimed at innovating strategies and strengthening the capacities of LAs and CSOs to engage young people, particularly on climate change and migration, achieved significant results. Activities were informed by an in-depth study on youth engagement across the six participating regions, which served as a foundation for designing and implementing capacity building initiatives. The ultimate goal was to support the transition from awareness to sustained and meaningful youth participation.

Despite some deviations from the original plan, the outcomes exceeded expectations. Participation in subgranting and/or capacity building activities was significantly higher than projected, and 95% of trained LAs and CSOs demonstrated improved ability to move from simple awareness-raising to active youth engagement, far surpassing the initial target of 60%.

Additionally, thanks to the NCE⁶¹ and available budget surpluses, several partners were able to expand capacity building initiatives for grantees, further amplifying the project's impact.

*Research*⁶²

Coordinated by the UCV, research was among the first project activities and proved highly effective. It involved local researchers and academic institutions, fostering interdisciplinary and international collaboration. The study highlighted the importance of comparing regional differences, the value of evidence-based funding, and the need for universities to play an active role in such initiatives.

The research not only strengthened partnerships among academic institutions but also contributed to sustainable development and youth engagement⁶³.

⁶¹ A no cost extension was approved in July 25th, 2024, giving the Initiative 3 more months for finalizing the implementation.

⁶² The Action's website hosts the content, with distribution carried out through newsletters and promotion led by UCV, which was responsible for the research activity. The distribution targeted a specialized audience in GCE and education in general.

⁶³ For example, the UCV introduced a new scholarship program rewarding students' volunteering work, an initiative directly influenced by the Action. Other outcomes included synergy with local and national projects and international recognition, such as participation in the UNESCO Chair Conference at the University of La Rioja.

A key focus was analysing best practices for transitioning from awareness to active youth engagement, which informed the *Practical Guide*, a resource that several organizations⁶⁴ now use in their daily work. Despite some initial delays⁶⁵, the research successfully:

- provided a practical reference tool for capacity-building activities;
- strengthened project coherence by grounding subsequent actions in solid analytical foundations;
- fostered long-term international collaboration among researchers.

However, most partners agreed that having access to the finalized research and guide by the end of the first year, before launching capacity building activities, would have been more beneficial.

*Practical Guide*⁶⁶

Building on the research findings, the Practical Guide quickly became a widely used and adaptable resource. Shared across multiple platforms, including interactive formats like Instagram, carousels and stories, it also found its way into university courses and training programs.

Several organizations integrated it into their grant calls and educational initiatives, while the Piedmont Region included it in materials for new funding opportunities. Others used its recommendations to shape social media campaigns, boosting youth awareness and engagement.

Despite its broad adoption, tracking its actual use remained challenging, with most feedback coming informally from grantees and partners. Beyond its initial focus on climate change and migration, the guide has proven versatile, with potential applications in other areas, such as gender issues. Its growing relevance in academic settings⁶⁷ indicates its long-term relevance.

Capacity-building activities

The capacity building activities were designed with thematic and organizational flexibility, ensuring they could adapt to the specific needs of different regions and grantees. While participation varied across territories, the hands-on approach, featuring practical exercises tied to grantees' projects, was particularly well received, driving strong engagement and skill development. As a result, both participation rates and learning outcomes exceeded expectations. Throughout the program, 78 capacity building sessions were delivered across several themes⁶⁸. Thanks to the NCE and strategic resource optimization, in Y4 partners expanded training offerings, adding 5 additional sessions, well beyond the initial forecast of three per region. A key takeaway was the balance between flexibility and engagement. Customizing activities to local needs proved valuable but sometimes made consistent participation challenging. Additionally, some sessions evolved into mentoring or project management support rather than structured training, effectively addressing grantees needs but requiring additional monitoring. Despite these challenges, the adaptable model strengthened relationships between partners and grantees, fostering a participatory and sustainable approach. It also helped build trust between project partners and organizations, laying the groundwork for long-term collaboration.

Strengths of iOc1

The following points describe the key strengths of iOc1, as identified through the evaluation exercise.

⁶⁴ The Mindchangers Practical Guide formed the basis of the toolkit "Meaningful Engagement" developed within the new DEAR project "Connect for Global Change", funded within the DEAR Call for Proposals 2022 where COP and RESACOOP are partners in the project.

⁶⁵ The research results promoted by the University of Craiova were intended as preliminary for structuring capacity-building activities within the subgranting process. The research timeline aligned with the objectives and feasibility, concluding only at the end of the second year, between the first and second subgranting rounds. To address this, draft results for each region were provided before the start of the second year's capacity-building activities, ensuring useful insights for the regions.

⁶⁶ The content, available in 6 languages (DE, FR, EN, ES, IT, RO) on the Action's website, was distributed through newsletters, social media campaigns, the DEAR website, and at the DEAR Hub. Printed versions of the guide were also distributed at numerous events organized by partners, with RP, RESACOOP, and SEZ responsible for producing the copies.

⁶⁷ For example in BW_DE or in the Piedmont Region (Italy), a researcher from the University of Torino, who took part in the research activities in Year 1, presented the Guide during the *Festival of educational communities* in Turin, as part of the session 'Growing sustainable generations: skills for inhabiting the planet'.

⁶⁸ E.g., effective communication, youth engagement - often using the Practical guide as one of the references, in-depth training on migration and climate change

- **Flexibility**

The ability to tailor topics, trainers, and schedules was key to the success of capacity building activities. Some partners implemented capacity building at the start of each grant cycle, allowing for immediate application of new knowledge, positively impacting project execution. Other partners retained the flexibility to introduce capacity building at their preferred stage.

- **Inclusive approach**

Free participation and travel reimbursements made training more accessible, fostering broad engagement and uniting diverse stakeholders around a shared objective.

- **University involvement**

Collaboration with the UCV and the other Universities involved in the research enhanced the project’s impact, with several researchers involved as trainers in the capacity building.

- **Collaboration and learning among sub-granting cycles**

The iterative approach between the first and second grant cycles led to improvements in tools, methodologies, and strategies, particularly in capacity building activities. This adaptive learning process strengthened the project’s ability to refine and optimize its implementation.

Key challenges of iOc1

In the implementation of iOc1, which falls within the broader Oc1 framework, some challenges emerged, reflecting those already discussed in the previous chapter.

As previously noted, many grantees, particularly during the first cycle and in less experienced regions, *struggled with European fund management*, requiring significant partner support but ultimately improving in the second cycle.

Data collection also proved complex in some cases, with delays and inconsistencies in self-assessment reports necessitating additional efforts to standardize information.

While some analyses provided valuable insights, in some cases methodological gaps could have affected some grantees’ data reliability, as reported by partners.

However, it is important to emphasise that in general informal discussions with grantees offered useful qualitative feedback, even if integrating this into the formal evaluation framework remained challenging.














Similarly, the *delay in having the finalised version of the Practical Guide* reduced their usefulness, particularly in the first capacity building cycle, as noted by some partners.

An additional challenge specific to iOc1 was *sometimes communication and engagement between partners and grantees*. Maintaining consistent participation, especially among younger grantees, proved difficult at times.

While capacity building activities were designed to be flexible and responsive to local needs, in some regions, partners struggled to sustain engagement, exposing organizational weaknesses.

B.3.3 Outcome 2

Oc2	European citizens are more informed and aware about SDGs and sustainable development
	<i>A pan-European awareness-raising campaign is developed and proposed by communication experts and young people, on-line and in the territories, in order to enable European citizens to be better informed and more aware of sustainable development issues and challenges</i>

Results chain	Indicators	Final value 31/12/2024	Targets at the end of the project	Achievement
Output 1.1 CONCRETE OPPORTUNITIES AND TOOLS OF ENGAGEMENT AT COMMUNITY LEVEL ARE AVAILABLE FOR YOUTH	No. of EU citizens reached by the Campaign and informed about the project activities	4,851,447	At least 2 million EU citizens reached and informed about the project activities	
	No. of young people reached by the Campaign and informed about the project activities	1,341,535	At least 700.000 young people reached by the Campaign and informed about the project activities	
	No. of website visits (+ specific communication IOVs detailed in the C&V Plan such as: pages viewed, Number of unique visitors, Time on the website, Direct traffic, Organic Traffic coming from search engines, Number of downloads of contents / quality of contents downloaded)	14,821(*) ⁶⁹	At least 100.000 visits/year	
	No. of followers-subscribers on social media (FB/Inst/TW/YouTube) of the project	3,097(*)	At least 50.000 followers-subscribers on project's channels (FB/Inst/TW/YouTube)	
	No. of posts published on social media (FB/Inst/TW/YouTube) of the project	1,005(*)	At least 50 posts published per month on social media	
	No. of contacts reached (impressions-likes, shares) on social media (FB/Inst/TW/YouTube) of the project	531,358(*)	At least 100.000 contacts/month reached by posts published on social media project's channels	
	No. of contacts reached by its own web/social media of partner and grantee regarding the project	6,124,689	At least 1.000.000 contacts/year reached by web/social media channels of partners and grantees	
	No. of press releases on project/country each year	67(*)	At least 10 press releases/year on project/country	
	No. of media issues on project/country (tv, radio, hard or soft press) each year	4,245	At least 30 media issues/year on project/country	
	No. of estimated audience reached by media releases on project (tv, radio, hard or soft press) in the 6 Regions	2,934,404	At least 2.000.000 people reached by media releases on project in the 6 Regions	
	No. of participants in the Social media Contests / country	2,384	At least 1000 participants in the Social media contests/country	
	No. of Regional Events realized	17	At least 12 Regional Events	
	No. of participants in the regional events	3,302	At least 1.500 participants	

⁶⁹ (*) Some communication results fell short of initial projections, and they could be likely due also to the following factors. First, at the time of writing the proposal, the organization, as a public entity, did not have a specialized communication partner for the topic. This led to an initial misjudgment in the evaluation.

Second, the communication landscape evolved rapidly between the application phase and the project launch, making it challenging to adapt. This was particularly difficult for a local authority, which had to navigate bureaucratic and administrative constraints.

Nonetheless, lower-than-expected results in some areas were balanced by stronger engagement on social channels better aligned with the target group.







	% of attendees aged 15-35	73%	At least 50% aged 15-35	
	% female attendees in regional events	65%	At least 50 % female attendees	
	% of female speakers in regional events	58%	At least 50 % female speakers	
	No. of diaspora and Global South speakers in regional events	17(**) ⁷⁰	At least 50 diaspora/Global South speakers	
	No. of International Events realized (2 Youth Exchange Meetings in Turin and Stuttgart and 1 Closing Event in Brussels)	3	At least 3 International Events organized (2 in Turin and Stuttgart and 1 in Brussels)	
	No. of participants in international events	460	At least 500 participants	

Table 10. Updated logframe matrix (Oc2_outputs)

Final achievement of Oc2

Considering the significant progress in communication, dissemination, and engagement activities, the Mindchangers project has successfully achieved the key objectives of OC2. Despite some challenges, these efforts have strengthened the Action’s impact and reach.

Mindchangers campaign

As part of Oc2, the Mindchangers project achieved significant communication and dissemination results, often exceeding expectations despite initial operational challenges. The campaign's launch was delayed due to bureaucratic issues in appointing the communication agency. Managing a diverse team, including subcontracted agency staff, Regione Piemonte’s Communication Department, and various partners, added complexity. However, once workflows were established, collaboration and transparency facilitated steady progress. Despite this, some partners reported ongoing difficulties with the subcontracted agency in final interviews⁷¹.

‘I believe it would have made more sense to have an in-house partner responsible for communication in a large EU project of this magnitude, as this is their area of expertise. It’s also more sensitive and attuned to project developments. We felt there was a discrepancy in understanding regarding what we were doing, who we were addressing, and what the ultimate objective of communication was.’

— Mindchangers’ partner

Officially launched in September 2022, the campaign ran throughout Y2. Partners actively contributed content to Mindchangers' platforms and their own, engaging grantees in dissemination and local media outreach. Targeted initiatives⁷² complemented the main campaign. The communication strategy, rooted in co-design, balanced EC visibility guidelines with the distinct approaches of public institutions and third-sector organizations. By the Action's second half, Mindchangers had become a recognized brand associated with sustainability, civic engagement, and aligned programs. The website, launched in October 2021, provided visibility for the project, partners, and subgranting actions, while the proposing entities remained the primary platforms for publishing calls.

A core element of the communication strategy was integrating tools, products, and content developed by grantees, fostering collective awareness and engagement. Grantee-generated materials were shared across campaign platforms, the website, social media, and newsletters. While some audience engagement targets

⁷⁰ (**) The evaluation suggests that this lower-than-expected result may also be due to how some partners adapted regional events. To better engage a broader audience, they moved away from the standard conference format with keynote speakers. However, this change meant that the event did not include speakers representing Southern voices.

⁷¹ Despite the resolution of major issues over time, collaboration with the subcontracted communication agency yielded mixed results. In final interviews, some partners expressed dissatisfaction, citing the agency’s limited ability to create engaging content for target groups, provide consistently useful materials, and adapt messaging to regional contexts.

⁷² Such as International Women’s Day and the release of the Practical Guide.

were not fully met⁷³, partly due to shifts in communication strategy and changing digital habits among younger users⁷⁴, the campaign adapted effectively and the project adapted effectively, achieving strong results in materials, posts, outreach, and communication actions.

Collaboration between regional institutions and third-sector organizations amplified the campaign's impact, extending its reach beyond initial estimates. While some data, such as total audience reach, may be underestimated due to tracking challenges, overall results highlight:

- *Broad engagement*: increased content production, audience reach, and communication actions, reinforced through strategic partnerships.
- *Sustainability focus*: a transition from printed materials to digital formats, aligning with environmental responsibility goals.
- *Grantee capacity-building*: exposure to expert support and innovative tools enhanced grantees' communication skills.
- *Youth-led initiatives*: some activities promoted⁷⁵ concretely aimed at giving youth a voice, allowing young people to manage communication channels and shape narratives, with the support of communication experts, making a significant local impact.
- *Strategic partnerships*: collaborations with external actors broadened outreach and strengthened impact, ensuring effective dissemination of project results.

Other key activities

Beyond the campaign, Oc2 included:

- *Video briefs*. Two video briefs were produced by a subgroup of the communication working group, showcasing co-design and collaboration within the project. These were provided to the subcontracted agency that produced the official videos of the projects based on these briefs. Once ready, the videos were.
- *Social media contests*. Three contests targeted young people (18-35) across the EU, generating communication materials that highlighted subgranting outcomes. 2,384 participants contributed to these initiatives.
- *Regional events*. A total of 17 events attracted 3,302 participants, exceeding initial projections of 12 regional events with at least 1,500 participants. Aligned with major public events, these gatherings boosted visibility, fostered connections among youth and grantees, and strengthened local stakeholder relationships. Partners tailored their events to local contexts, ensuring effective community engagement.
- *Final events*. In addition to the international closing event in Brussels, attended by partners, institutional figures, newly funded DEAR projects (CfP 2022), and external CSOs, several regional closing events were organized. Though not originally planned, these events helped reconnect stakeholders, ensuring the project's legacy for future collaborations.

Strengths of Oc2

The following points describe the key strengths of Oc2, as identified through the evaluation exercise.

▪ **Adaptability and sustainability**

The project's flexibility in implementing activities and its commitment to reducing printed promotional materials demonstrated strong alignment with its environmental values.

⁷³ e.g., Number of website visits: 14,821 out of the expected 100,000; number of followers/subscribers on social media (FB/Inst/TW/YouTube): 3,097 out of the expected 50,000, etc.

⁷⁴ i.e. From traditional press releases to social media (e.g., Instagram and LinkedIn)

⁷⁵ e.g., Initiatives like Mindchangers Reporters, promoted by COP, involved young people in the production of communication materials (videos, interviews, articles, reels) in the occasion of events with high attendance (Environmental Film Festival 2022, Turin International Book Fair 2023, Flowers Music Festival 2024, European Youth Week 2024). The content was then used on Mindchangers and partners' communication channels. Two Mindchangers Reporters were also invited to the DEAR Exchange Hub on Migrations, Climate Change and Youth Engagement in 2022.

- **Female participation**

Female engagement exceeded expectations, highlighting a positive trend. However, lower male participation raised the need for reflection on achieving gender balance in these initiatives.

- **Collaborative approach**

The extensive network of involved organizations, combined with adaptability and a willingness to learn from processes, contributed to significant results despite initial challenges.

- **Innovative communication**

The project effectively leveraged both local and European experiences, showcasing diverse forms of engagement and the importance of fostering social media with positive, research-backed content. The maintenance of the website until 2025 should ensure ongoing dissemination of results, relevance and continued access to project materials even after the end of Mindchangers.

Key challenges of Oc2

The *lack of strong specific communication skills* among the partners posed a sometimes a challenge. To address this, in the application the partnership included the subcontracting of an an agency to cross-promote the campaign; once the project started it was also established a reallocation of some budget to each partner to strengthen local communication activities. While an external agency was contracted to manage the campaign, it was selected with limited input from target groups and lacked strong experience in cooperation-related themes. Combined with *staff turnover*, this led to delays in strategic planning and the need to restart visual concepts in some cases, affecting initial workflow and consistency. In the case of the grantees, some of them also faced operational difficulties, particularly in *meeting EU visibility requirements*. Despite their strong local impact, *systematic data collection and communication management* proved time-consuming and complex. Additionally, *shifts in digital habits* and growing youth scepticism toward social media required adjustments to the project's communication strategy. The project preferred to focus only on Facebook and Instagram, the former too distant from young audiences (and in the last years from audiences interested in sustainable development, social and climate just, inclusion), the latter requiring too much work for the production of content. These adaptations highlight the importance of flexibility in an evolving digital landscape.

C. FINDINGS- Core Evaluation Insights

This chapter forms the core of the evaluation report, offering a detailed assessment based on the DAC criteria. Building on the significant results achieved and the key challenges outlined in the previous chapter, it examines how the initiative has maintained its *relevance* and *coherence* with its original design and objectives over time (C.1).

Particular focus is given to the critical success factors that shaped the *partnership and overall management* (C.2), elements that played a pivotal role and were widely recognized by all partners in ensuring the initiative's effectiveness, while also highlighting some of the challenging internal and external factors.

Finally, the chapter's last section emphasizes the project's impact, showcasing the *tangible improvements it brought to key stakeholders and target groups*, particularly the partners and CSOs/LAs involved in the FSTP activities (C.3).

C.1 Alignment and integration: how Mindchangers ensured the Action's relevance and coherence

Although the criteria of coherence and relevance were not the primary focus of this final evaluation phase, it was important to assess how these aspects were consistently addressed throughout the project's implementation.

From the initial evaluation, it was clear that the project continued to contribute to achieving the strategic objectives of the EU and the DEAR Programme, aligning with stakeholder needs and adapting to emerging requirements as the project progressed. At the same time, the initiative increasingly rooted itself within the partners' missions and connected with other ongoing or planned interventions, avoiding duplication.

C.1.1 Mindchangers' relevance sustained through a strategic and adaptive approach

The structured approach of the Mindchangers project ensured its sustained relevance throughout implementation, as confirmed by both intermediate and final evaluations.

Its Theory of Change effectively guided actions across three key intervention axes, striking a balance between a centralized framework and the flexibility needed at the regional level, an aspect consistently appreciated by stakeholders.

The project was structured over four years (plus 3 months under the NCE) with a phased approach:

- *Year 1* focused on co-planning, knowledge-sharing and production, and partnership strengthening, establishing a solid framework within which each partner could define its role.
- *Years 2 and 3* followed an iterative model, allowing for periodic reflection and adjustments. Key macro-actions, such as capacity building activities, subgranting schemes, and international events, were repeated, enabling continuous learning, refinement, and optimization. This process not only ensured the project met its objectives but also enhanced the quality of implementation and maximized impact.
- *Year 4*, including the NCE period, provided space for finalizing activities, analysis, reflection, and knowledge-sharing, supported by a well-structured communication strategy that amplified the project's results and long-term influence.

The Action's strategic planning, adaptability, and stakeholder engagement reinforced its alignment with evolving priorities and challenges.

Additionally, the partnership demonstrated that working at the European level provided further relevance and perspective on the topics. Through this transnational approach, Mindchangers enhanced its contribution to EU policy discussions (*EU Added Value*), particularly within the DEAR Programme.

Fact sheet
Key factors driving long-term relevance

- **Strategic planning and adaptability.**

A structured yet flexible work plan allowed for continuous learning and refinement, ensuring consistency with objectives while adapting to stakeholder needs and external challenges⁷⁶.

- **Alignment with EU Priorities and DEAR Programme / SDGs objectives.**

The initiative directly contributed to EU strategic goals, including the European Consensus on Development, the DEAR Programme, and the SDGs. Its well-designed methodology effectively addressed priorities such as youth engagement, climate change, migration, and inter-partner collaboration, while integrating cross-cutting principles like gender equality⁷⁷, intersectionality⁷⁸, and the '*leave no one behind*' principle. Active participation in EU-led cooperation efforts (e.g., exchange and learning hubs⁷⁹, DEAR MEL Guide) strengthened its MEL approach, integrating indications and recommendations in the implementation of the action. Mindchangers was also invited as a '*buddy project*' to share best practices on subgranting and communication with newly funded DEAR initiatives⁸⁰.

- **Youth-centred approach.**

By making EU priorities tangible at the local level offering meaningful opportunities for engagement, Mindchangers, through '*transcability*'⁸¹ empowered young people to see the global impact of local actions and engage meaningfully in initiatives, while strengthening connections between EU policies and grassroots initiatives

- **Stakeholder engagement and co-participation.**

The multi-stakeholder structure fostered collaboration among LAs, CSOs, and youth. Despite some challenges in engaging external actors⁸² due to time constraints⁸³, evaluation findings revealed that the initiative successfully fostered cooperation between public and non-profit actors and also high levels of satisfaction among key stakeholders, particularly youth beneficiaries, LAs, and CSOs.

- **Research-driven actions.**

Although the integration of research findings into capacity-building efforts faced initial delays, the project ultimately leveraged academic research to enhance the credibility and impact of training activities.

- **Capacity building and organizational support.**

Tailored capacity building activities provided LAs and CSOs with essential skills for youth engagement and EU funding mechanisms. While subgranting processes were initially resource-intensive, they generated long-term benefits by strengthening local capacity and fostering a lasting impact.

- **Robust MEL framework & technical support.**

A well-structured MEL system played a critical role, particularly in the project's early phases. While some challenges emerged in collecting monitoring data, the framework helped ensure coherence across partners and a shared understanding of the project's logical framework and objectives.

Fact sheet 3. Key factors driving long-term relevance

⁷⁶ e.g., COVID-19, evolving EU priorities, staff turnover, grantee inexperience, etc.

⁷⁷ Through the Action, several partners have been able to raise awareness and build relationships on the theme of gender equality. A notable example is RESACOOOP, which has established a promising and already fruitful new partnership with the leading French NGO, Equipop.

⁷⁸ Throughout the course of the Action, there has been an increasing focus on intersectionality, such as linking climate change to migration and gender issues. It is important to recognize the role of young people in this context, as they are advocates for an intersectional perspective that helps better understand complex issues and identify the various causes of inequalities

⁷⁹ DEAR L&D Hub on Youth Engagement and Peer Learning (Brussels, 29-31 March 2022); DEAR Exchange Hub on Migrations, Climate Change and Youth Engagement (Tallinn, 28-30 September 2022).

⁸⁰ i.e., Kick of meeting of the CfP 2022 of the New DEAR program, Bruxelles (March 12-14, 2024)

⁸¹ The '*transcability*' concept was mentioned by a member of the partnership during the interviews conducted for the first interim evaluation report.

⁸² The initiative promoted in the planning phase tools for the involvement of other actors outside those already directly involved in the partnership (e.g. steering committee at regional level)

⁸³ The structured tools and modalities for stakeholder involvement showed weaknesses in implementation, with varying participation and achievement of objectives across the partnership.

C.1.2 Mindchangers: a catalyst for coherence

Mindchangers has not only met but exceeded expectations in terms of coherence, establishing itself as a key driver of collaboration and innovation. By bridging regional, national, and international interventions, the initiative reinforced existing networks while creating new opportunities for synergy.

Rather than duplicating efforts, it built on established guidelines and initiatives, amplifying their impact and strengthening its strategic role in the field. The initiative largely fulfilled partner expectations, with eight out of nine partners providing (very) positive feedback. It must be mentioned that the one “negative” answer refers to the own capacity of a partner to take advantage of the potentiality and opportunities led by Mindchangers. Survey results confirm this alignment: at the project’s conclusion, 56% of partners stated that Mindchangers fully matched their vision and mission, while 44% indicated moderate alignment.

Similarly, nearly all partners (eight out of nine) recognized the Action’s contribution to their strategic priorities, with only one partner facing internal shifts that led to a reduced focus on the initiative despite its initial perceived potential.

Throughout its implementation, Mindchangers effectively advanced partners’ priorities, strengthening youth engagement, fostering partnerships, and empowering local actors in sustainable development and climate action.

It provided crucial financial and strategic support to small and medium-sized organizations, enhancing their professionalization, accountability, and collaboration at local and European levels.

Fulfillment of the expectations
Partners

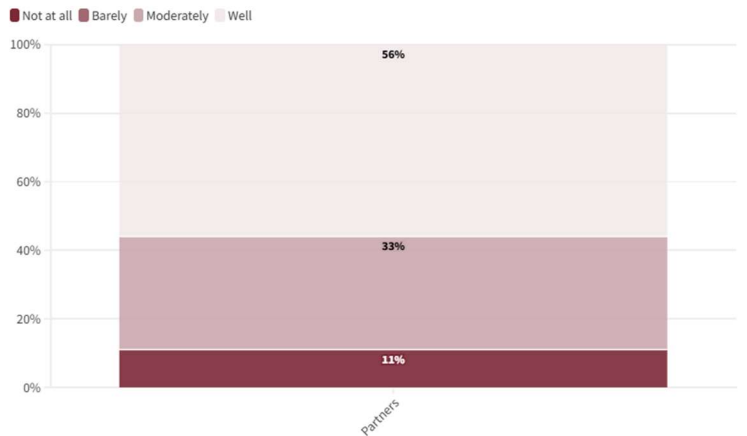


Figure 6. Fulfillment of partners’ expectations

Mindchangers’ alignment with the mission and vision
Partners

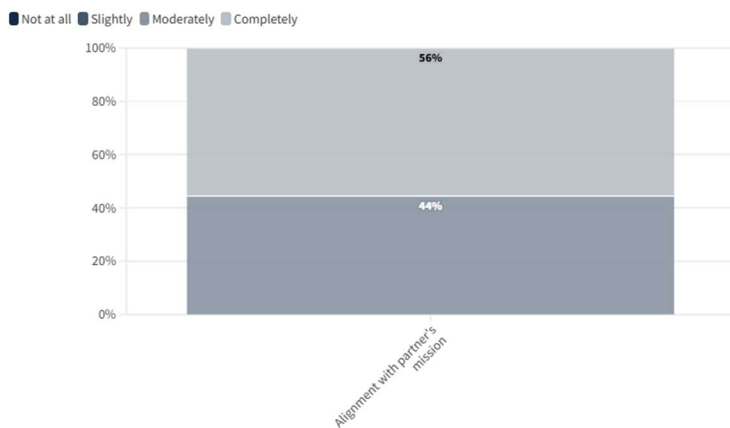


Figure 7. Mindchangers’ alignment with partners’ mission and vision

By mobilizing young people as agents of change and integrating them into decision-making processes, the Action not only aligned with partners’ strategic goals but also amplified their long-term impact.

As previously noted, Mindchangers built upon existing efforts in youth engagement, climate action, and migration, key priorities for many partners, and strengthened cooperation between LAs and CSOs. Importantly, it did not just reinforce ongoing projects but also catalysed new initiatives.

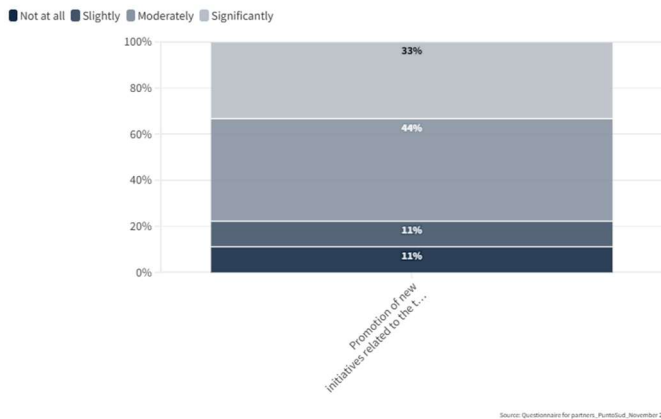
Seven out of nine partners reported *launching new initiatives* on related topics due to Mindchangers, with three citing a significant impact and four noting a moderate effect on their ability to develop new actions.

Additionally, 80% of partners confirmed that the project effectively aligned with their other interventions⁸⁴, avoiding duplication while

enhancing synergies and deepening the impact of past efforts.

⁸⁴ Mindchangers initiative fostered a wide range of projects across multiple territories, many of which will continue beyond the project’s lifecycle. Its structured approach has strengthened youth engagement, international cooperation, and sustainable development. Here it follows a list of main key synergies developed by partners collected through partner interviews and reports’ analysis. PR and COP, integrated Mindchangers tools and research into two AICS-funded projects (2023), influencing methodologies and knowledge-sharing; engaged with an international cooperation project in Senegal and Piemonte, applying research insights; hosted Ecoality (Regione Toscana) and Gear Up! (Regione Marche) at the local closing event, strengthening

Partners' promotion of new initiatives related to the topic
Thanks to Mindchangers



Alignment of Mindchangers with partners' other initiatives
Partners

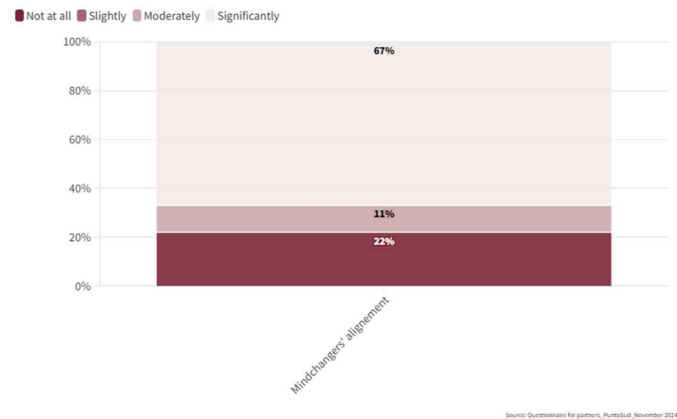


Figure 8. Partners' promotion of new initiatives related to the topic

Figure 9. Alignment of Mindchangers with partners' other initiatives

By refining methodologies, broadening outreach, and fostering long-term initiatives in global citizenship and sustainable development, Mindchangers proved to be a catalyst for meaningful change. It fostered strong interconnections between regional, national, and international interventions, ensuring complementarity rather than redundancy.

C.2 Partnership and management: key pillars of success

The following paragraph focuses on the critical success factors that shaped the partnership and overall management, key elements widely recognized for their pivotal role in ensuring the initiative's effectiveness. A strong and well-structured partnership, supported by effective governance and collaboration, enabled an in-depth analysis and reflective approach that led to a meaningful transformative impact. This impact extended across all actors involved, from partners and key stakeholders to target groups, ultimately highlighting, as explored in the final paragraph of this chapter, how Mindchangers stands out as a particularly valuable experience, not only for its immediate outcomes but also for its lasting influence on the territory and its capacity to drive change.

C.2.1 A valuable and interesting partnership

The Mindchangers partnership, composed of nine diverse partners, was built on pre-existing collaborations and shared objectives, with a strong foundation in GCE experiences from the Piedmont Region.

regional DEAR project connections. Additionally, COP has led impactful projects such as Generazione Cooperazione, Regione 4.7, Reti al Lavoro, and Connect for Global Change, focusing on youth empowerment and global citizenship. UCV, developed long-term partnerships with local NGOs, schools, and environmental programs, maintaining engagement beyond the project; linked with Erasmus+ Digital Womanist, presenting Action results and the Practical Guide; engaged in youth-focused events with Dincolo de Azi and the DOORS project. GLR and CONGD CAR, partnered with PAEAS for climate education, expanding school and educator networks; strengthened ties within the Coordinadora Estatal de ONGD, increasing visibility on GCE in EU projects; supported the "Pop the Vote!" EU elections campaign, enhancing mutual dissemination. Through capacity-building efforts and regional EU election events, CONGD CAR reinforced connections with NGOs and Eurodesk collaborations. LBW and SEZ, collaborated with finep (EU DEAR People & Planet project), co-organizing Young Congress and a youth engagement workshop; presented Mindchangers at Baden-Württemberg partner meetings and connected with new DEAR projects (Rural Voices 2030, Global Districts, NOPLANETB); strengthened ties with the Young Network for One World Baden-Württemberg. LBW has further engaged youth through EPOLLK, Young Congress, and the Fair-Trade Fair, while enhancing stakeholder awareness through the MC Youth Declaration and Practical Guide. SEZ will continue its impact through initiatives like Future Fashion, expanding its influence beyond sustainable consumption. FWB, engaged in Erasmus+ Democracy Reloading and DEAR projects Climate of Change and Climate Game On; developed partnerships with Enabel and Fondation Roi Baudouin on sustainability and climate action. RESACOOOP, built a strong partnership with DRAJES, collaborating on youth engagement, mobility, and solidarity initiatives; integrated into the national "Place aux jeunes" project (Coordination Sud); coordinated Récital, collaborating on events promoting SDG engagement (Welcome Volunteers! & Les ODD tu connais?). RESACOOOP has also supported long-term initiatives like ISI, Connect for Global Change, and the Festival des Solidarités, alongside Soliway, a major event focused on international cooperation careers.

It successfully balanced LAs and CSOs across most regions⁸⁵, ensuring a comprehensive territorial perspective.

While differences in size, ranging from large regions like Piedmont (around 4.5 million inhabitants) to smaller ones like La Rioja (around 350,000 inhabitants), led to variations in expectations and administrative capacity, they also created opportunities for learning and future collaboration.

Among the partners, the UCV played a particularly distinctive role within the consortium. Initially focused on producing the research and the practical guide, the University went beyond its original scope, remaining actively involved throughout the project, strengthening relationships with all partners even after its core research activities had concluded.

‘Being a member of this partnership has been key in achieving the success’.
— Mindchangers’ partner

A key strength of the partnership was its ability to collaborate effectively despite organizational and structural differences, leveraging diverse expertise in youth engagement, European project management, and FSTP. However, challenges emerged, particularly for LAs, which faced administrative complexities due to differing financial management procedures.

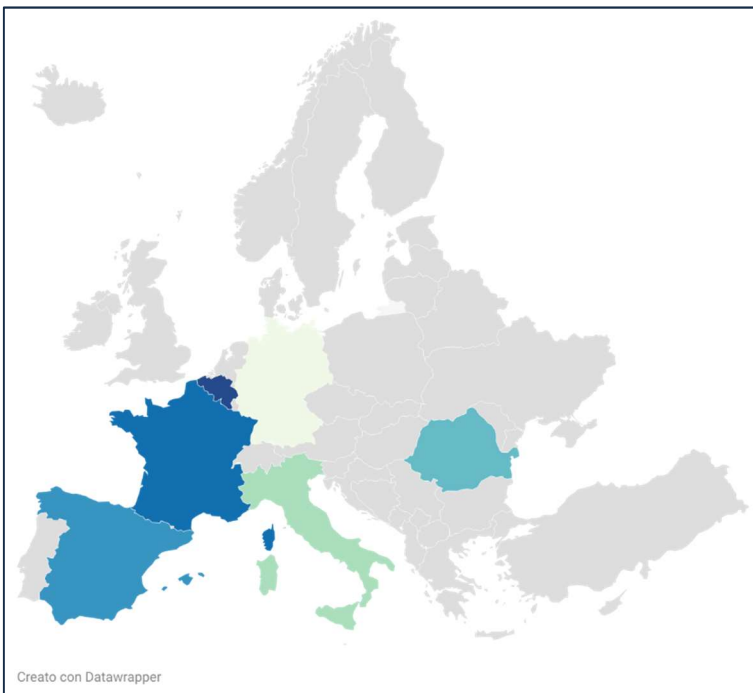


Figure 10. Regions involved in Mindchangers

These complexities, however, did not compromise the Action’s success.

However, in some cases, especially within LAs that had designated

‘The time spent with the other partners has been... amazing’.
— Mindchangers’ partner

staff for project management and implementation, the absence of institutional personnel with deep knowledge of EU procedures and strategic continuity led sometimes to difficulties, highlighting the need for long-term internal capacity building.

Despite initial challenges, such as some partners’ limited experience with EU-funded projects and underestimating the time and coordination

‘The collaborative way of working, which included moments of high stress, maintained a pleasant atmosphere. While this is not the project’s primary objective, it reflects the care ethic in Mindchangers. It is possible to work well, even on large, ambitious projects, and still maintain a positive environment’.
— Mindchangers’ partner

required, the partnership demonstrated remarkable adaptability.

Many partners adopted new coordination mechanisms, gradually refining their knowledge management and monitoring processes. The experience proved transformative, shaping organizational perspectives, capacities, and working methodologies. Crucially, the partnership fostered an exceptionally positive and collaborative environment. Almost the totality of partners expressed great satisfaction not only with the project’s outcomes but also with the lasting impact it created⁸⁶. A defining feature of the collaboration was its strong relational climate, trust, mutual support, and open dialogue ensured that even high-pressure moments were handled with professionalism and care.

The importance of recognizing and valuing regional differences as an asset for successful collaboration was consistently emphasized. A key outcome was the sustained engagement and commitment demonstrated by all partners. Many have already extended their collaborations beyond Mindchangers, exploring further joint

⁸⁵ In all regions, except Dolj County, FW-B_BE and AuRA_FR, project management was well-balanced between the LA and the implementing CSO partner.

⁸⁶ A specific instance of dissatisfaction with the project’s progress was reported within one partner organization, though it did not reflect a broader trend. This was largely due to a significant strategic shift at the project’s outset, which diminished its perceived importance and role within the organization. As a result, several challenges arose, including internal and external communication issues, bureaucratic hurdles, resource constraints, staff turnover, and a lack of clear internal positioning regarding the project’s strategic relevance. Despite these difficulties, particularly in project reporting, the organization acknowledged several positive local outcomes. The Action fostered unity, strengthened the organization and its network, and reinforced a strong project identity. It also had a notable impact on youth engagement, with young people actively participating and building connections with local schools. However, the lack of a clear plan to sustain these relationships beyond the project’s completion meant that, as the initiative was not fully embraced by all members of the organization, no follow-up actions were pursued after its conclusion.

initiatives, including potential Erasmus+ projects. Although an initial attempt to secure follow-up funding under the DEAR Programme was unsuccessful, strategic discussions on future cooperation emerged as a widely shared priority.

Ultimately, Mindchangers left a lasting impact.

Beyond its tangible results, its greatest legacy lies in the shared working ethos, the strong commitment of all partners, and the recognition that even ambitious and demanding projects can be implemented in a positive and engaging way. The experience reinforced the value of regional diversity as a strength, laying the foundation for future joint initiatives.

C.2.2 Effectiveness of the coordination and management mechanism

The structure and the overall management

Specifically, regarding structure and overall management, certain distinctive features of the system have emerged and are briefly described below:

- A well-structured yet flexible management approach
- Strong leadership and effective communication
- A well-managed administrative and financial framework
- A lasting legacy of strong coordination and collaboration.

- **A well-structured yet flexible management approach.**

Mindchangers was built on a strong yet adaptable management framework, ensuring methodological consistency while allowing room for flexibility. At its core was a well-defined superstructure⁸⁷, supported by an experienced lead organization that played a crucial role in maintaining cohesion.

This structured approach not only facilitated smooth project implementation but also reinforced the quality of the intervention over time.

From the outset, coordination mechanisms were carefully designed to align with the Action’s objectives and timeline. The structure balanced centralized coordination by the Lead partner and TC with the autonomy of partners, enabling each to bring its expertise and resources to the initiative. This equilibrium, between a solid management framework and the flexibility to adapt, proved to be a key strength.

Partners were given the space to shape activities in a way that best addressed local priorities, ensuring that formats and events remained relevant and impactful.

One of the defining characteristics of the project’s management was in fact its ability to accommodate the diverse realities of the partnership. Bringing together CSOs, LAs, and an academic institution, the management team demonstrated a strong commitment to inclusivity and adaptability.

Partners widely acknowledged the leadership’s responsiveness, emphasizing how the structure allowed them to implement activities in line with their regional contexts while maintaining alignment with the broader project vision.

Although certain aspects of management followed a more structured, top-down approach, particularly in areas such as communication, monitoring & evaluation, and partner coordination, this was necessary to ensure focus and efficiency. The demanding nature of the project, with its intensive timeline and multiple stakeholders, required clear direction. Nonetheless, partners appreciated that this approach did not stifle their autonomy but rather provided a necessary framework to maintain consistency and quality.

The leadership team was consistently praised for its professionalism and organizational strength. Despite the complexity of managing a long-term, multi-regional project, the Lead partner succeeded in keeping all partners

‘The Italian team gave me this impression of stability, which is important in a project like this. I always felt that no matter what problem we encountered, they made us feel that we could solve it together. This is, again, very important’.

— Mindchangers’ partner

⁸⁷ During the first year, the efforts were given priority in the construction of an intervention structure, solid, clear and shared within the partnership, as foreseen by the logical framework but also thanks to a slight remodulation of the initial activities given by the pandemic situation still ongoing, which resulted in a slight delay immediately offset by a greater investment in the organization of the structure. Much time and resources have been devoted to make the partnership understand the importance of being part of a single framework, with a centralized presence at the management level, thus leaving ample space for expression and enhancement of the experience of each partner.

aligned, demonstrating remarkable consistency over the project's four-year duration. The ability to maintain focus and direction over such a lengthy period was considered particularly impressive.

▪ **Strong leadership and effective communication**

Beyond structure and coordination, the project's management was distinguished by its highly supportive and communicative leadership. Availability, responsiveness, and problem-solving capacity were repeatedly highlighted as key strengths.

The management team was not only proactive in addressing challenges but also encouraged dialogue, ensuring that partners felt heard and supported throughout the Action's lifecycle.

Clear and detailed communication played a vital role in this process. Regular updates, comprehensive guidelines, and transparent discussions kept all stakeholders well-informed.

Partners appreciated the accessibility of the lead team, who consistently provided the necessary guidance while fostering a collaborative and constructive atmosphere.

The balance between leadership and partnership was key, while direction was provided when needed, there was always space for dialogue and shared decision-making.

▪ **A well-managed administrative and financial framework**

The effectiveness of the Action's administrative and financial management was another aspect that contributed to its success.

From the very beginning, financial guidelines were carefully prepared and shared with partners, ensuring clarity and transparency. The administrative team provided continuous support, promptly addressing concerns through bilateral meetings and direct communication channels.

Stability within the management team was particularly valued, as it ensured consistency and cohesion throughout the project's duration.

Partners also highlighted the reliability of the Italian team, whose problem-solving skills and deep understanding of EU regulations played a key role in navigating complex administrative procedures.

Another key strength of the management was its extensive knowledge of EC rules and procedures.

This expertise allowed the team to effectively adapt project implementation in response to EC requests while ensuring smooth communication with EU officials. The strong relationship established with the EC task manager facilitated the dissemination of project outcomes at local and regional levels and helped align the intervention with broader EU strategies.

'The fact that the management team gave us this sense of stability, along with the assurance of answers and solutions to all problems, was invaluable. From that perspective, we felt relaxed.'

— Mindchangers' partner

▪ **A lasting legacy of strong coordination and collaboration**

Despite the complexities involved in managing a large-scale initiative with multiple stakeholders, the Action's coordination remained highly effective.

Partners consistently praised the collaborative environment, highlighting the constructive working relationships that had been fostered over the years.

Risks and challenges were addressed proactively, ensuring that the intervention stayed on track. The Action's positive and inclusive coordination style played a crucial role in maintaining momentum, even when faced with logistical or administrative hurdles.

The collaboration between the Lead partner and partners, the joint management tools, and the atmosphere in partner meetings all contributed to a well-functioning and supportive system.

Ultimately, the Mindchangers project left behind more than just tangible results, it created a lasting model of effective collaboration.

The ability to maintain a structured yet adaptable management approach, to foster open communication, and to navigate complex administrative processes with competence and professionalism set a benchmark for future initiatives.

Even as the project came to an end, the relationships built, and the working methods established will continue to shape future partnerships and interventions.

Fact sheet
Key features of Mindchangers management structure

▪ **Tools**

A set of structured tools was developed to ensure synergy, coherence, and mutual influence across all regions, while allowing flexibility for regional adaptations. These tools enabled partners to coordinate activities effectively, meet deadlines, and address challenges throughout the project. Shared reporting mechanisms facilitated the exchange of best practices and lessons learned, although some partners noted that the tools did not always fully capture region-specific complexities.

‘I greatly appreciated, for instance, the management of the project. The bi-weekly meetings with partners over the course of four years were extremely useful. Knowing that we would meet every two weeks was great and helped keep us united’.

— Mindchangers’ partner

▪ **Structured coordination and partner meetings**

From the start, structured dialogue and coordination mechanisms were implemented, including regular bi-weekly online meetings that became a key feature of the project. These meetings were highly participatory, well-organized, and essential for knowledge exchange, coordination, and community-building among partners. While online interactions had limitations, they proved invaluable, particularly during the early stages of the project, when pandemic-related restrictions prevented in-person gatherings, playing a crucial role in maintaining project momentum and cohesion. Over the four-year period, these consistent touchpoints helped foster unity among partners, providing a stable platform for coordination and problem-solving.

As conditions allowed, in-person partner meetings were reinstated into the project structure⁸⁸. These meetings held when it has been possible in conjunction with major international events to optimize costs and minimize environmental impact⁸⁹, were instrumental in strengthening relationships and improving collaboration. Partners highlighted that the first in-person meeting marked a turning point in group cohesion, significantly enhancing mutual understanding and project alignment.

‘I was already quite impressed by how the situation and group cohesion radically changed after our first in-person partner meeting. The first year was difficult because we didn’t really know where we were going, and it was still in the middle of COVID. It took a while to plan that first in-person meeting, but once it happened, something clicked. After that, things improved. It wasn’t perfect, but overall, it was a good collaboration. I believe many of the contacts we established will endure, which is quite positive. At least, we’ll stay in touch, and in the best case, we may partner again on other initiatives. So, that’s really nice

— Mindchangers’ partner

▪ **Coordination bodies**

To ensure smooth implementation and facilitate continuous learning, some internal coordination bodies⁹⁰ were established from the outset. Besides, general partner meetings, these included specialized working groups⁹¹ for specific activities, which met online according to the project schedule.

In the initial project phase, these structures played a crucial role in partnership-building, particularly given the challenges posed by the pandemic. However, as the Action progressed, their influence diminished. Some partners suggested that maintaining certain working groups, such as the MEL team, throughout the project would have been beneficial, particularly in managing staff turnover and sustaining support mechanisms. A notable example of effective internal coordination was the regional Steering Committee⁹², which, despite variations in implementation across territories, successfully fostered local engagement and strengthened connections with stakeholders.

▪ **Internal communication system**

The internal communication system was widely regarded as smooth and efficient. Regularly scheduled partner meetings, additional *ad-hoc* meetings when needed, and prompt responses from the lead team ensured a strong flow of information. Partners appreciated the open and trust-based cooperation, where questions and implementation challenges could be addressed transparently and collaboratively.

Fact sheet 4. Key features of Mindchangers management structure

⁸⁸ Partner meetings were held in person throughout the duration of the Action, except for the first one, which was organized online due to the restrictions imposed by COVID-19.

⁸⁹ i.e. Three partner meetings were scheduled immediately after international events, when all staff members were already present.

⁹⁰ ‘Coordination bodies’ planned and not planned from the beginning.

⁹¹ i.e. Communication working group, monitoring working group, social media contest working group, repository working group, and video briefing working group.

⁹² For example, as mentioned in the first intermediate report, in Y1, the creation of regional steering committees was supported by tools provided by Regione Piemonte for stakeholder analysis, conducted independently by each partner. Implementation varied based on the local context, with key activities including project information sharing, dissemination within members’ networks, and, in some cases, participation in the grantee selection process. The most effective example was the REZ in Baden-Württemberg, which ensured continuous monitoring, visibility, and networking. Some partners faced challenges in maintaining engagement, which were addressed through online meetings, shared minutes, and broader agendas. Despite this, even where committees were not fully active until Y4, members remained informed and participated in some events.

Challenges and key issues in the management system

During the evaluation process, partners identified two key challenges in project implementation, which have been referenced in previous sections of this report:

- The MEL system;
- The involvement of an external agency (Plaiadi International srl) for the Mindchangers campaign.

A brief description of the main aspects and challenges of the MEL system is provided below. Regarding the second point, the involvement of the external agency is already discussed in section 'B.3.1 Outcome 1' (p.20) and in the previous evaluation reports.

The MEL System

Between the first and second year, the project successfully developed a well-structured and shared MEL system through targeted training, ongoing support, and a participatory co-construction process. This system, established under the guidance of a MEL expert contracted by COP, was designed to align knowledge, ensure coherence, and provide effective monitoring tools across multiple levels of intervention and among partners with varying M&E expertise. A preliminary assessment helped tailor the MEL framework to partners' needs, followed by structured training at two levels: strengthening MEL competencies and adapting tools for grantees. Personalized support was widely recognized as a key success factor. A dedicated monitoring group, comprising the MEL expert, the TC, and at least one staff member per partner, played a crucial role in maintaining consistency, fostering learning, and facilitating adaptation, especially in managing staff turnover. Developed through a participatory approach, the MEL system resulted in a comprehensive MEL plan and guide with clearly defined indicators⁹³. Tools were continuously refined to balance standardization with flexibility across diverse regional contexts. Additionally, qualitative monitoring methods were integrated to enhance data interpretation and drive improvements.

A key achievement was the system's alignment with the revised EU DEAR guidelines, with the MEL expert actively contributing to EU working groups to ensure coherence⁹⁴. Regular refinements, including systematic indicator reviews and debriefing sessions, further strengthened the system's effectiveness. A final review was planned in the third year to consolidate improvements.

Overall, the MEL system effectively structured monitoring processes, supported evidence-based decision-making, and ensured consistency while allowing for local adaptation.

However, challenges emerged in the later stages, particularly after the MEL expert's support ended. Some partners struggled to fully implement certain monitoring tools due to limited prior experience, staff turnover, and early delays caused by the pandemic.

The absence of a dedicated monitoring group in the later phases further impacted consistency. While the MEL plan was well-defined from the outset, regular reassessments were limited, leading to a more gradual integration of tools. Without sustained follow-up, some partners found the MEL tools complex rather than strategic assets. Some key takeaways for future initiatives are that these should prioritize continuous MEL support throughout the project. Ongoing guidance ensures adaptability and strengthens the connection between monitoring and evaluation. Long-term technical support and dedicated MEL expertise are crucial for effective implementation and consistency.

Despite these challenges, the strong collaboration among partners and the project's ability to adapt played a crucial role in overcoming difficulties, reinforcing a good success of the MEL system⁹⁵.

⁹³ The MEL expert, the technical coordinator and one representative of COP participated in the preparation of the document "Guide for DEAR project implementers", published in February 2022.

⁹⁴ From the perspective of overall management, the difficulties stemmed from introducing new elements into an ongoing project, such as the addition of ten indicators in April 2020 under the EC request (letter Ref ARES (2019) 06146161, dated 04/10/2019), OPSYS, and the requirement to incorporate the DEAR core indicators listed in the 'Guide for DEAR Project Implementers'.

⁹⁵ In general, almost all partners gave a positive assessment of both the ability of the Internal M&E system to successfully collect both qualitative and quantitative data, measure impact, and participant engagement, as well as its support for their organization and the entire partnership in implementing activities. Regarding the MEL system's capability, 63% considered it moderately capable, while 25% deemed it significantly capable of collecting meaningful and useful information, with only one partner (13%) reporting limited capacity. Similarly, all partners expressed positive feedback regarding the support the M&E system provided to the partners, with 75% considering it moderately capable and 25% significantly capable. Additionally, the capacity of the Lead Partner regarding the Internal M&E system was rated positively by all respondents, with 88% considering it moderately adequate and 13% significantly adequate. It is important to note that the questions related to the Lead partner were not answered by the Lead partner itself.

Other challenging factors of affecting the overall management system

Below are the main internal and external challenges that have emerged, impacting or posing challenges to the overall management system of Mindchangers.

Internal challenging factors

- **High staff turnover (among partners)**

The project experienced unexpectedly high staff turnover⁹⁶, creating challenges in human resource management. Turnover was sometimes underestimated, particularly in terms of its time-consuming nature and financial impact. Frequent personnel changes among partners disrupted continuity and strained budgets. While turnover occasionally brought positive changes, greater attention was needed to bridge the gap between the proposal and commitment phases to prevent misaligned expectations and strategic direction.

Despite these difficulties, personal resilience and professionalism helped mitigate their impact. Where present, having multiple dedicated team members contributed to project stability. To address these challenges, the management team actively supported partners facing staff shortages. Structured handover processes were implemented at both project and leadership levels, though they remained time-intensive.

- **Limitations of contracted staff**

Short-term contracted staff often struggled to take on strategic roles from the outset. This was evident in areas such as engaging with local CSOs and sustaining partnerships beyond the project timeline. These challenges were less pronounced when involving permanent staff or ensuring clear strategic guidelines during transitions.

- **Time estimation issues**

Aligning different calendars, grantees, partners, and project schedules, proved sometimes challenging for partners.

- **Project needs vs. organizational rigidity.**

Some institutional partners lacked flexibility, making it difficult sometimes to align internal processes with project needs.

External challenging factors

- **Economic conditions**

Grantees often faced increasing financial constraints, affecting their ability to sustain activities.

- **Staff turnover (among grantees)**

High turnover among grantees further complicated activities implementation.

- **Managing time issues**

Grantees sometimes overestimated the time they could dedicate to the project while underestimating associated costs.

- **Impact of COVID-19**

COVID-19 required continuous adaptability. While initial delays were later recovered, significant time was spent on restructuring. The crisis helped prepare the project for future operational challenges, fostering a proactive approach to adaptation.

The pandemic also reshaped priorities within partner organizations, particularly among CSOs and LAs, forcing them to transform to survive. Additionally, unexpected post-COVID costs emerged, such as difficulties in organizing the first in-person meeting.

⁹⁶ Since the beginning, turnover has been influenced by parental leave, job/career changes, resignations, and retirements. It is also noted that, even in Y4, several partners faced turnover and managed staff changes within the Action, e.g., FWB, RESACOOOP, LBW, GLR, and CONGDGAR.

- **Higher expectations and methodologies in EU-funded projects**

Differences in expectations and methodologies between EU-funded projects and those financed by other donors became evident, particularly in financial reporting and auditing requirements, which grantees found significantly more demanding.

- **Shift in communication strategies**

Communication evolved from traditional press releases to digital channels. The project adapted to technological changes choosing, whenever possible, more appealing social media channels for the target audience and also by incorporating new tools to reach diverse audiences.

- **Elections and political changes**

Elections and shifts in political leadership occasionally affected some partners' ability to implement activities, as changing political priorities introduced additional challenges to development policies and project execution.

C.3 Transformational change: Mindchangers' lasting impact

One of the most significant outcomes revealed by the evaluation exercise appears to be the transformation it has triggered within organizations, both among stakeholders and project partners. Beyond immediate results, many organizations have undergone structural and cultural changes, adopting more inclusive and participatory methodologies, strengthening local and international networks, and refining their focus on climate action and youth engagement. For many, the Action served as a catalyst for change, broadening their vision and encouraging them to *'think bigger and in new ways'*⁹⁷.

Participants not only gained practical skills in project management, advocacy, and sustainability but also experienced a fundamental mindset shift, seeing themselves as active agents of change rather than mere project implementers. Some redefined their role within their communities by integrating young people more meaningfully into decision-making processes, while others leveraged the initiative to foster new collaborations between CSOs and LAs or to establish dialogue with policymakers.

More than just a funding mechanism, Mindchangers sparked a movement, providing organizations and individuals with the tools, knowledge, and networks to drive social and environmental change beyond the project's duration. By integrating these changes into their long-term strategies, both partners and grant beneficiaries involved in FSTP activities are now better equipped to lead systemic progress in global education, climate action, and youth participation.

The following sections outline the most significant long-term effects observed among both partner organizations and grantees, indirectly highlighting the opportunities for transformative change experienced by young people involved⁹⁸.

As will be seen, these transformations often share common characteristics, aligning with Mindchangers' core objective of fostering structural and enduring change at all levels, from individual organizations to the broader ecosystem of partnerships and youth engagement.

Given the limited opportunity at this final stage to conduct an in-depth exploration of youth engagement, in addition to various references throughout the different sections, this paragraph includes a brief reflection on the transformative changes experienced by young participants (Fact sheet n.6)⁹⁹.

These findings are based on a triangulation of data collected through document analysis, questionnaires, and interviews conducted in this final phase with partners, as well as follow-up interviews with selected CSOs identified by partners as case studies.

⁹⁷ Quote from an interviewed funded CSO.

⁹⁸ As anticipated in the par. A.2 *Evaluation* in chapter A. *Introduction* (p.8), since it was not possible to conduct an in-depth exploration of the lasting impact on youth engagement during the evaluation exercise, a specific paragraph on long-term changes among young people is not included. However, these changes clearly emerge both in the analysis of the outcomes and in highlighting the lasting impact that the Mindchangers project has had on partners and the organizations involved.

⁹⁹ For further details, see par. A.2 *Evaluation*, in the chapter A. *Introduction* (p.8).

C.3.1 The transformational change on partners and stakeholders

Building expertise and strengthening capacities

Partners

The project enhanced partner organizations' competencies, reinforcing their expertise to manage multi-stakeholder European projects and support larger, more ambitious initiatives with greater impact. It reinforced their capacity for EU project design, FSTP, and cash flow management, leading some to establish dedicated roles for European project coordination. Additionally, partners gained valuable experience in subgranting, differentiating methodologies between EU-funded and other donor-funded projects. The Action also fostered methodological advancements, particularly in the development and application of tools such as the engagement pyramid, digital toolkits, and sustainability-focused strategies. Communication skills were strengthened through the organization of regional events that effectively combined strong SDGs-related content with youth engagement. Many of the resources and approaches developed during the project have been retained and integrated into other initiatives, ensuring long-term applicability¹⁰⁰. Furthermore, Mindchangers expanded partners' thematic focus, particularly in climate and migration, increasing awareness and concrete application of sustainability principles. Ultimately, it contributed to a deeper understanding of the SDGs and a more strategic, structured approach to working with them.

'We personally developed a lot.'
— Mindchangers' partner

Partners' adoption of new practices from learned insights
Thanks to Mindchangers

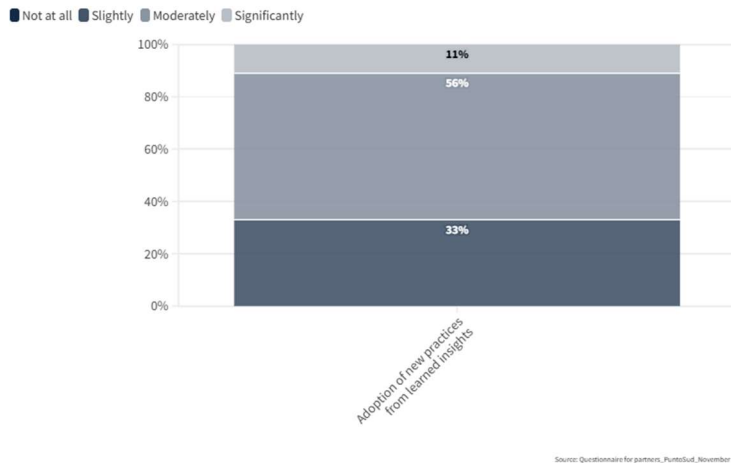


Figure 11. Partners' adoption of new practices from learned insights

European projects and support larger, more ambitious initiatives with greater impact. It reinforced their capacity for EU project design, FSTP, and cash flow management, leading some to establish dedicated roles for European project coordination. Additionally, partners gained valuable experience in subgranting, differentiating methodologies between EU-funded and other donor-funded projects. The Action also fostered methodological advancements, particularly in the development and application of tools such as the engagement pyramid, digital toolkits, and sustainability-focused strategies. Communication skills were strengthened through the organization of regional events that effectively combined strong SDGs-related content with youth engagement. Many of the resources and approaches developed during the project have been retained and integrated into other initiatives, ensuring long-term applicability¹⁰⁰. Furthermore, Mindchangers expanded partners' thematic focus, particularly in climate and migration, increasing awareness and concrete application of sustainability principles. Ultimately, it contributed to a deeper understanding of the SDGs and a more strategic, structured approach to working with them.

Enhancement of other interventions by partners
Thanks to Mindchangers

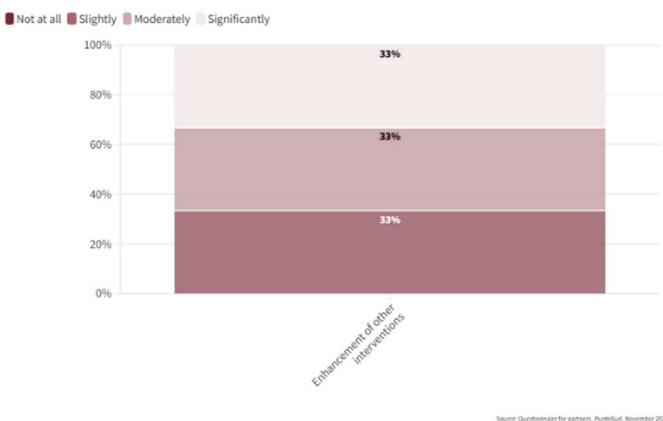


Figure 12. Enhancement of other interventions by partners

Partners' knowledge enhancement on topics addressed by the initiative
Thanks to Mindchangers

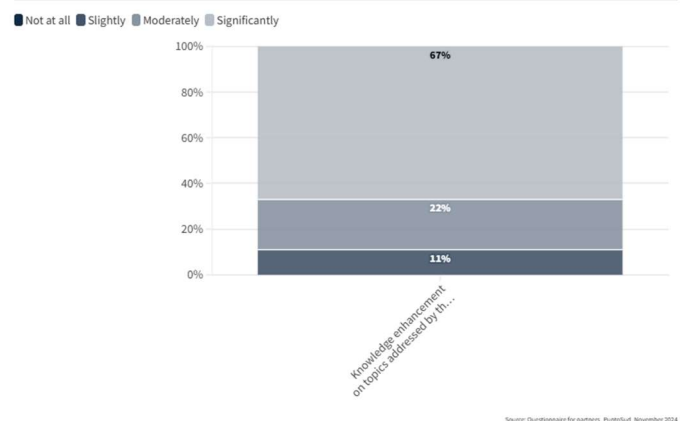


Figure 13. Partner's knowledge enhancement on topics addressed by the initiative

¹⁰⁰ For example, the project's key publications, The Research, The Practical Guide, and The Mindchangers Youth Declaration, have served and will likely continue to serve as valuable references for future youth engagement policies and initiatives involving LAs and CSOs. The Practical Guide has become a foundational resource that can be used as a starting point and adapted to different contexts, while the Youth Declaration is already in use and planned for future policy proposals. Another example is the homepage and knowledge hub created in the BW region, which continues to provide resources for youth on global issues, with ongoing efforts to adapt these tools to different contexts, including climate change and migration.

Grantees

Similarly, grantees, though at a different scale based on their experience within Mindchangers as a funded project, gained valuable thematic expertise in global education, climate action, and community engagement, deepening their understanding of global challenges and the interconnections between the SDGs, particularly the link between international solidarity and youth participation.

Through hands-on projects and international events, they moved beyond theoretical learning, gaining direct experience in sustainability practices at local level (and sometimes also at global one). This practical engagement enabled funded organizations to implement concrete initiatives¹⁰¹ for sustainable development. Mindchangers served as a dynamic platform for learning and action, equipping funded organizations with the tools and awareness needed to drive meaningful change in education, climate initiatives, and sustainable development.

The Action also strengthened for grantees administrative, project management, and communication skills, enhancing financial accountability, strategic planning, and overall project execution. While participating in an EU program posed administrative and financial challenges, particularly for the smaller organizations, this experience became a catalyst for growth, contributing to the professionalization of the third sector in European planning and funding, an area where small-sized local organizations often lack specialized training. Additionally, gaining knowledge of EU funding programs proved crucial for regional development, with several grantees now seeking funding for initiatives beyond their original project scope.

Finally, some organizations reported improved collaboration with political institutions, strengthening dialogue with policymakers and organizing high-level events¹⁰².

Expanding collaboration and local connections

Partners

The project drove a transformational shift in how partner organizations engage with networks, stakeholders¹⁰³, and collaborative ecosystems, strengthening already existing connections (or creating new ones) while enhancing alignment and cooperation. It significantly broadened their reach, enabling engagement with a more diverse range of CSOs, LAs, networks, and previously untapped organizations beyond their usual collaborators. Within Mindchangers in fact they fostered strategic collaborations with institutions beyond the NGO sector, facilitating peer learning, the exchange of best practices, and more effective implementation strategies, while testing local responses to the project's key themes.

'Mindchangers allowed us to support local actors involved in international cooperation by helping them gain skills in youth engagement, SDGs, and climate change. It also attracted local actors from the youth and/or environment sectors and facilitated the development of new and enriched partnerships and synergies.

— Mindchangers' partner

It has been highlighted that a more strategic level of collaboration was in general reached with the territory, where participating organizations (grantees) were no longer just recipients but assumed a more active role in project development and future implementation. While partners interactions with local authorities yielded mixed results, some securing strong partnerships, others facing challenges, partners underscored the need for sustained engagement with public institutions and youth departments to promote global education and development. Additionally, for umbrella organizations¹⁰⁴, the initiative reinforced internal cohesion, increased visibility, and attracted potential new members. Finally, regarding relationships among project partners, the initiative not only consolidated existing collaborations but also laid the groundwork for future strategic partnerships¹⁰⁵, creating a structured network of connections that organizations can leverage for future opportunities¹⁰⁶.

¹⁰¹ Such as eco-friendly mobility solutions and responsible resource management.

¹⁰² Such as the 'Youth Meets Politics' workshop in Baden-Württemberg (Germany).

¹⁰³ Partnership between Mindchangers and the Federal Youth Council, highlighting its success in fostering innovation and peer-to-peer learning (BW_DE)

¹⁰⁴ e.g., CONGDCAR in Spain, COP in Italy.

¹⁰⁵ i.e. Important collaborations between the State Ministry and SEZ were a key success factor, enabling effective cooperation and strengthening SEZ. SEZ plans to continue working closely with the State Ministry, with potential future projects already under consideration.

¹⁰⁶ As mentioned earlier, partners have already attempted to secure new funding by participating in the DEAR Call for Proposals 2022. Furthermore, a meeting was organized among former partners to discuss funding opportunities and potential actions on youth engagement in the years following the conclusion of the Action.

Grantees

Participation in Mindchangers fostered new collaborations not only among funded organizations but also across sectors, bringing together LAs and CSOs. The project provided a supportive environment for experimenting with partnerships, exchanging best practices, and strengthening peer learning. Capacity building sessions, meetings, and events facilitated meaningful exchanges, some of which evolved into concrete cooperation projects. This cross-sectoral approach helped break down institutional barriers, creating more interconnected ecosystems for youth engagement and social innovation. Additionally, networking activities promoted through capacity building sessions and events helped organizations establish new connections, some of which led to long-term collaborations.

Reaching young people

Partners and grantees

The project transformed youth engagement from a secondary consideration to a strategic priority for both partners and grantees. For many of these entities (LAs and CSOs), as well as for the partners, involving young people as key actors was a challenge that required a shift in approach.

A broader mindset shift emerged, with partners recognizing the need for a more participatory and inclusive approach. Rather than designing activities for youth, organizations embraced collaboration with them, acknowledging their unique competencies.

This shift was particularly transformative for public institutions, where hierarchical structures often pose challenges to participatory engagement, but also for many grantees, who initially focused on specific thematic areas.

Many grantees in fact began seeking funding for broader, interdisciplinary projects, adopting a more comprehensive and long-term vision of the issues at hand.

Mindchangers fostered a lasting evolution, prompting organizations to rethink their relationship with youth.

Through more accessible communication, engagement in major events, and non-formal education, partners activated young people as ambassadors of change. In the funded projects, young people were not simply beneficiaries, but active protagonists in the design and implementation of initiatives.

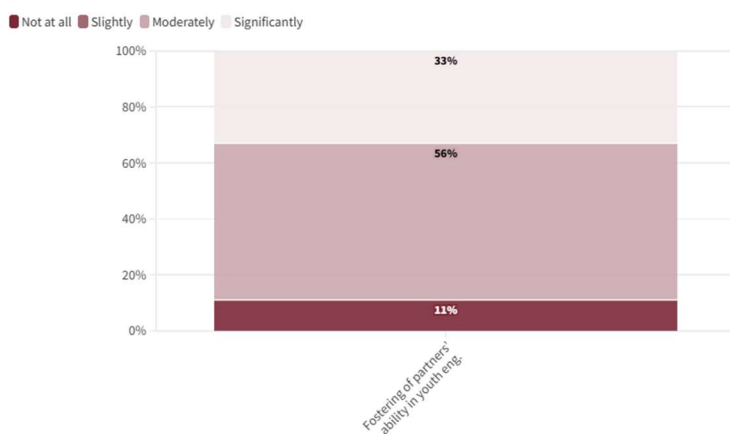
The overall goal of these actions was to strengthen youth role not only as participants but also as leaders capable of transforming their communities and forging deeper connections with them.

Many organizations improved their engagement strategies, increasing visibility and effectively integrating young people into their initiatives, recognizing their value as bearers of unique skills rather than as passive recipients.

Although some partners and organizations faced structural challenges in engaging youth, they recognized the need to institutionalize participation through dedicated roles, such as youth promoters for climate action and political debates.

Moreover, in several cases, the Action reinforced youth representation in decision-making processes, integrating their voices into political debates.

Fostering of partners' ability in youth engagement
Thanks to Mindchangers



Source: Questionnaire for partners, PuntoSud, November 2024

Figure 14. Fostering of partners' ability in youth engagement

Innovative strategies, such as linking youth activities to major public events, further expanded participation. Mindchangers also highlighted the importance of sustained engagement through mentorship, volunteering, and long-term participation pathways.

This experience underscored the importance of organizations trusting youth, integrating them into their networks, and providing spaces for them to stay informed and engage in relevant discussions. It also

emphasized the need for a more personal approach, considering their emotional responses to global challenges such as climate change.

The initiative created opportunities for dialogue between young people from different countries, strengthening personal connections that inspired discussions and actions. Individual stories and the relationships built proved to be essential tools for mobilizing young people around climate issues.

Fact sheet	
The Most Significant Change	
<i>Answers from the in-depth interviews with grantees</i>	
How has your organization transformed its approach to engaging young people thanks to Mindchangers?	
<p>From traditional outreach to true youth engagement</p>	<p>⇒ We no longer just involve young people in projects, we co-create with them. Our approach has shifted from a top-down model to a participatory, youth-led process where their voices shape decisions and actions.</p>
<p>Reaching and mobilizing new youth groups</p>	<p>⇒ Mindchangers pushed us to step outside our usual networks and engage young people we had never reached before, making our initiatives more diverse, inclusive, and impactful.</p>
<p>Turning young people into changemakers</p>	<p>⇒ We now focus on equipping young people with the skills and confidence to identify problems in their communities and drive meaningful change, rather than just raising awareness.</p>
<p>Transforming climate awareness into climate action</p>	<p>⇒ Our work no longer stops at education, we actively support young people in developing solutions for climate issues, helping them move from learning to real impact.</p>
<p>Creating a culture of youth-led innovation</p>	<p>⇒ Instead of simply inviting young people to participate, we empower them to lead. Seeing them take ownership of projects and propose solutions has been one of the most significant transformations for our organization.</p>
<p>Making young people the heart of social and environmental change</p>	<p>⇒ We now prioritize youth leadership in our initiatives, integrating their perspectives at every stage and ensuring they play an active role in shaping sustainable and social actions.</p>
<p>Designing projects with young people, not for them</p>	<p>⇒ Our projects now start with listening. We actively involve young people from the beginning, ensuring their concerns, ideas, and aspirations drive the initiatives we develop.</p>
<p>From top-down planning to community-driven action</p>	<p>⇒ We've abandoned the old model of designing projects first and finding participants later. Now, we map local needs, engage stakeholders early on, and build initiatives based on real community interests.</p>
<p>Shaping youth policies through collaboration</p>	<p>⇒ MINDCHANGERS changed how we approach youth policies, we now work closely with young people and stakeholders to co-design strategies that are more inclusive, relevant, and impactful.</p>

Fact sheet 5. The Most Significant Change for the interviewed grantees

Innovation in engagement methods

Grantees

Particularly grantees within they funded projects adopted innovative approaches to engage young audiences on key topics such as climate change and sustainability. Moving beyond traditional educational methods, they integrated arts, digital media, and interactive tools, such as podcasts, dance, and visual storytelling, to make complex themes more accessible and compelling. These creative techniques led to greater participation and enthusiasm among youth. By supporting experimentation in both formal and non-formal education,

Mindchangers encouraged granted organizations to refine their methodologies and explore new engagement strategies. It provided a structured environment for testing partnerships, tools, and approaches, particularly in education, strengthening grantees' capacities for future initiatives.

Exposure to experts and innovative practices further expanded their competencies, with some grantees later engaging trainers for continued collaboration, demonstrating how self-awareness and a commitment to improvement translated into concrete opportunities.

Additionally, interviews revealed that, thanks to the success of these new interaction methods, some organizations are planning to sustain and expand them beyond the project¹⁰⁷.

Fact sheet

Empowering youth: from awareness to action

Mindchangers had an important lasting impact on young people involved, expanding their opportunities for participation and hands-on experience at both local and international levels. Through international meetings and intercultural exchanges, it fostered meaningful dialogue, strengthened cross-cultural communication, and reinforced a sense of belonging to a broader movement for social and environmental change.

Key achievements and insights from the project:

- *From awareness to action.* Mindchangers moved young people from passive awareness to active engagement, creating structured yet flexible spaces for participation and ensuring their voices were heard in decision-making.
- *Relevance and meaningful involvement.* The project addressed key topics such as climate action, sustainability, and social justice, providing young people with concrete opportunities to contribute.
- *Empowerment and ownership.* Many participants, for the first time, felt empowered to take ownership of initiatives and saw their input translated into real action.
- *Skill development.* Mindchangers strengthened critical thinking skills, particularly in evaluating information sources, challenging misinformation, and engaging in informed discussions.
- *Media and narrative building.* Territorial initiatives provided hands-on media production experience, enabling youth to contribute original, research-backed content and shape project narratives.
- *Challenges in participation.* Disparities in engagement levels and resource access highlighted the need for more inclusive participation strategies. Sustaining involvement beyond the project's duration also proved challenging.
- *Inclusivity and outreach.* While the project built strong networks of like-minded peers, reaching and integrating those less familiar with advocacy or international collaboration remained a challenge.
- *Lasting impact.* Despite challenges, Mindchangers laid the foundation for lasting youth empowerment through non-formal education, strengthened stakeholder connections, and adaptable participation models.

Fact sheet 6. Empowering youth: from awareness to action

Redefining roles and strengthening institutional capacity and visibility

Partners

The project played a pivotal role in strengthening the role of several partner organizations, shifting them from being seen solely as granting authorities to actively supporting and accompanying beneficiaries.

This renewed approach strengthened trust between administrations and organizations, particularly through the capacity building cycle, which emphasized tailored support and responsiveness to stakeholders' needs.

'The main improvements have to do with the sense of community, the sense of agency that we feel both within grantees and engaged youth'.
— Mindchangers' partner

¹⁰⁷ e.g., During the interview some organizations discussed the success of their podcast project with young people, which they plan to continue. They also introduced a new model for bringing young people from their region and Western Africa together on Zoom Meetings to discuss climate change. This model has led to new partnerships and is being developed further. They are considering a new project involving the co-creation of a comic strip or book on climate change by young people from both regions.

At the organizational level, the project reinforced the positioning of several partners as key players in youth engagement, migration, climate change, and global citizenship education.

It reactivated internal initiatives, improved management processes, and, in some cases, enhanced capacity for EU project design¹⁰⁸.

Also, for some partners it led to the formation of dedicated teams¹⁰⁹ specializing in global citizenship education (GCE) and FSTP, ensuring long-term sustainability beyond the project's conclusion.

Additionally, the initiative, fostered stronger horizontal collaboration¹¹⁰ across departments and regional ministries, particularly for LAs. It provided credibility for engaging in internal dialogues and integrating global themes, aligned with 2030 Agenda and sustainable development strategies, into broader policy discussions. Despite the challenges¹¹¹, the project highlighted the necessity of a multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral approach¹¹² to effectively address SDGs, cooperation, and youth engagement, reinforcing partnerships with departments possessing greater thematic expertise in areas such as climate change and international cooperation.

Grantees

Also, for grantees, participation in the Action enhanced the credibility and visibility of organizations at the local level and, in some cases, even at the national and EU levels.

Mindchangers was the opportunity for several of them to strengthen their reputation and trustworthiness, positioning grantees as more recognized key players in youth engagement and sustainability.

Through their involvement in events, policy discussions, and collaborations, these organizations gained broader recognition, allowing them to reach wider audiences. Several grantees received invitations to join new partnerships, advisory roles, and policymaking discussions, further expanding their influence in these fields.

Advancing global education (GCE)

Partners

Especially for partners it is recognized that the initiative served as a catalyst for expanding global education efforts, encouraging several partners to reassess their role within their strategies and encouraging internal reflection on its importance.

It facilitated dialogue between organizations and public institutions, increasing recognition of GCE's importance at regional and national levels.

By improving collaboration with non-formal education actors and integrating global education more prominently into organizational priorities, the project elevated its visibility and long-term sustainability.

¹⁰⁸ For example, in CONGD CAR, a specific figure was introduced, strengthening both competencies and knowledge while also structuring the area. This helped create a more professionalized team and provided learning opportunities about the EU and EU funding.

¹⁰⁹ e.g., RESACOOOP.

¹¹⁰ Piedmont Region involved several departments in the Action, including those on international relations and equal opportunities. PR also presented the project to the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation. RESACOOOP strengthened ties with DRAJES in Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, focusing on youth engagement and SDGs, becoming a key partner. FWB maintained strong connections with key ministers, especially in Youth and Culture, ensuring cross-departmental collaboration despite government changes. They also supported sustainability through capacity-building and sub-granting. In Baden-Württemberg, LBW and SEZ shared Mindchangers' activities with the Interministerial working group, while the State Ministry's long-standing collaboration with SEZ was enhanced. GLR strengthened relationships across councils and departments, establishing future collaborations, such as with the PAEAS program in La Rioja's schools. The capacity-building activities also fostered stronger connections among CSOs and stakeholders.

¹¹¹ e.g., FW-B encountered challenges in establishing closer ties with the Youth Department, initially facing misunderstandings and frustration. However, positive relationships gradually developed. Additionally, concerns were raised about the ongoing competition between departments and the need for higher management to foster a more human-centered organizational approach.

¹¹² In 2020, PR approved the first regional strategy for sustainable development promoted by the Environment department, which also involved youth, with Mindchangers contributing to this initiative. This led to strengthen the collaboration between the international relations and cooperation department, in charge of the implementation of Mindchangers, and the Environmental department.

Evolving relationships

Partners and grantees

Finally, the relationship between partners and grantees evolved significantly in several cases, shifting from a primarily administrative role to a more consultative and supportive dynamic.

Efforts to foster a sense of community among grantees further strengthened engagement and collaboration, ensuring a lasting impact beyond the project's duration.

'For the organizations involved, Mindchangers was more than just a grant, it meant being part of a community, a shared movement beyond financial support.'

— Mindchangers' partner

Grantees

Beyond institutional partnerships, Mindchangers has been the opportunity for grantees to foster deep personal and professional connections among participants, young people, and community members.

Grantees also underscored the value of personal relationships, especially with young people from the Global South, with whom participants worked closely and learned from. These connections not only contributed to the projects' success but also fostered ongoing communication and collaboration.

For many organizations, Mindchangers was more than just a funding opportunity, it was about belonging to a shared movement that extended beyond financial support.

This strong sense of community and identity even led some grantees to continue using the '*Mindchangers*' name in their ongoing initiatives even after the project ended¹¹³.

Deepened commitment to inclusivity

Grantees

In general, funded organizations developed a stronger awareness of inclusivity, learning to engage diverse groups more effectively. Mindchangers helped them recognize the importance of accessibility and representation, ensuring that different perspectives were meaningfully integrated into their projects.

In some cases, organizations reported a clear shift in mindset, now viewing inclusivity as an opportunity for collaboration and networking rather than a challenge. Thanks to their experience with Mindchangers, they were able to create more inclusive, positive environments that foster engagement and participation for all.

Tackling organizational ageing, promoting Intergenerational exchange and reinforcing decentralization

Grantees

For years, youth involvement in international cooperation and solidarity has been declining, leading to a lack of generational turnover. Many organizations are now 'aging', which threatens their continuity and long-term sustainability.

This generational shift is a common challenge, and the absence of collaboration between generations can hinder knowledge transfer and limit the integration of new ideas.

Mindchangers emerged as an opportunity, particularly in regions with more pronounced demographic challenges, to raise awareness of organizational aging and provide tools to address it.

By fostering youth involvement and cross-generational collaboration, the Action helped organizations build continuity and adapt to demographic changes. In some cases, it facilitated generational transitions, supporting long-term sustainability. This was especially evident in smaller, peripheral organizations, which gained increased visibility and influence, allowing CSOs to rejuvenate internally, renew leadership boards, and promote intergenerational change.

¹¹³ 'The sense of community and belonging fostered by Mindchangers was so impactful that some grantees continued to use the name '*Mindchangers*' for their projects even after the grant ended', cit. from a partner.

In some countries¹¹⁴, Mindchangers also strengthened the presence of peripheral branches within larger organizations. By distributing grants across regions rather than focusing on major cities, the initiative promoted local development and empowered decentralized branches to take on more active roles. However, some regions, particularly rural areas, remained underserved. Some partners¹¹⁵ emphasized the need for future initiatives to expand their reach beyond regional capitals to ensure a more balanced territorial approach.

¹¹⁴ E.g in Piedmont Region in Italy.

¹¹⁵ E.g. GLR-Spain.

D. CONCLUSIONS

Mindchangers has proven to be a valuable and transformative initiative, leaving a lasting impact on partners and communities.

Over the course of its evaluation, it has demonstrated a remarkable ability to drive meaningful change. Its legacy is already taking shape and is poised to grow even further. While challenges arose along the way, one of its greatest strengths has been its adaptability, continuously reflecting, learning, and improving.

From its inception, and reaffirmed throughout the evaluation, the Action has stood out for its strong collaboration and stakeholders' willingness to evolve.

This openness to learning ensured that operational demands never overshadowed strategic reflection, fostering ongoing refinement.

Beyond strengthening its impact, Mindchangers cultivated a shared learning environment where insights and experiences shaped the intervention itself. Its well-structured methodology, effective coordination, and committed leadership enabled flexibility and inclusivity, allowing diverse initiatives to thrive at all levels.

The Action has left a lasting mark on youth engagement, organizational development, and cross-sector collaboration.

More than just achieving immediate results, it has sparked deeper structural and cultural shifts, encouraging a more inclusive, participatory approach to sustainability, European cooperation, and youth involvement. It has also strengthened local and international networks, equipping stakeholders with the skills to manage large-scale initiatives and integrate young people into decision-making processes more effectively.

Key achievements highlighted in the evaluation include:

- Strengthened organizational capacity in EU project management and financial accountability.
- Enhanced strategic cooperation between LAs and CSOs.
- Developed innovative engagement methodologies beyond traditional education models.
- Expanded expertise, particularly in climate action and migration.
- Empowered young people as active changemakers, emphasizing the need to institutionalize youth participation in policy and project design.

Beyond these tangible results, Mindchangers has fostered a collective vision, inspiring participants to embrace shared responsibility for addressing global challenges.

The Action encouraged partners to look beyond their immediate contexts and recognize themselves as part of a larger movement dedicated to youth engagement.

This perspective aligns with a world where climate change, migration, and inclusivity are urgent priorities, shaping a vision that is not only shared but actively pursued.

Over the past four years, a Mindchangers community has in fact taken shape.

Many partners now see it as their responsibility to sustain and strengthen this network, ensuring it continues to grow despite increasing resistance to the issues it advocates. In a landscape where opposition is well-resourced and strategic, Mindchangers stand as a counterforce, fostering resilience, innovation, and collective action.

Despite its challenges, Mindchangers has dedicated significant effort, particularly in its final years, to creating spaces that empower young people. By continuously refining its approach, the Action has gone beyond conventional frameworks, cultivating a dynamic and engaged community.

A commitment to inclusivity has been central to this effort, ensuring that no one is left behind while expanding its reach.

Ultimately, Mindchangers has provided invaluable learning experiences for grantees, event participants, and partners alike. These experiences have contributed to a broader cultural shift within CSOs and LAs, fostering environments that engage young people as key drivers of change.

Although the project has officially concluded, its influence endures. The seeds it has planted will likely continue to grow, fuelling new collaborations, commitments, and tangible actions that will carry forward the spirit of Mindchangers.

Building on this foundation, a series of recommendations and takeaways has been developed from the evaluation process. Addressing these areas will be essential for future initiatives seeking to expand on the legacy of Mindchangers.

D.1 Key Recommendations

Based on the findings of this evaluation, the following recommendations are proposed to inform the development of future projects and enhance their impact:

Strengthening strategic collaboration between LAs and CSOs

Justification

One of the key strengths of Mindchangers was its ability to bring together LAs and CSOs to work towards a shared goal at multiple levels, both within partnerships and across territories.

This dual collaboration significantly enhanced the Action's impact and sustainability, ensuring that initiatives were embedded in institutional frameworks while remaining community-driven and dynamic.

As seen in Mindchangers, CSOs played a crucial role in compensating for the limitations and rigidity of public institutions, while LAs provided greater recognition and stability to the initiatives.

However, differences in operational approaches, institutional constraints, and levels of flexibility between public and private entities sometimes posed challenges, slowing implementation and limiting adaptability. Recognizing and addressing these differences at the project design stage and integrating strategies to navigate them is crucial to mitigating risks and ensuring smoother implementation, keeping the liveliness of the actions implemented.

Recommendation

Future initiatives should embed mechanisms to facilitate LA-CSO collaboration from the outset, ensuring a structured yet adaptable partnership framework. Special attention should be given to the structural and operational differences between public and non-profit actors.

Early-stage planning should anticipate potential bureaucratic constraints and mitigate their impact through adaptive governance models, clearly defined roles, and flexible operational mechanisms. Joint strategic planning, shared partnerships structures, and co-created funding opportunities should be prioritized to enhance synergy, maximize long-term territorial impact and ensure a multidimensional approach to youth engagement.

Institutionalizing youth participation for meaningful decision-making

Justification

Mindchangers demonstrated that meaningful youth participation goes beyond consultation, it requires creating spaces where young people can actively influence decision-making processes. While the project evolved over time to enhance youth inclusion, continuously thinking outside the box, remaining flexible, and exploring alternative engagement methods, further efforts are needed to make participation more structured, consistent, and institutionalized.

This approach not only ensures that young people are active contributors in shaping the policies and programs that affect them but also brings local policies closer to the realities they aim to improve.

Recommendation

Future projects should facilitate the institutionalization of youth engagement by embedding it into organizational and institutional frameworks. This can be achieved by establishing youth advisory boards, appointing youth engagement officers, and ensuring youth representation in governance bodies.

Additionally, long-term mentorship programs should be established to provide young people with leadership training and project management skills. Involving young people at all stages of project development, design, implementation, and evaluation, will ensure sustainable and transformative participation.

Develop clearer metrics for measuring impact

Justification

While Mindchangers achieved significant results, project partners identified challenges in data collection and impact measurement among grantees.

In some cases, subgrantees struggled with complex reporting requirements, potentially underestimate the broader effects of their activities, leading sometimes to underreported outcomes and limited the opportunities to showcase transformative results. Improving the way data is collected, analysed, and used is essential for accurately assessing impact and informing future strategies.

Recommendation

Future projects should develop a comprehensive yet accessible monitoring and evaluation framework from the outset, aligned with project objectives.

This framework should include clearly defined, standardized indicators tailored to grantee capacities, user-friendly data collection tools, and targeted training sessions to enhance reporting accuracy, and ensuring that evaluation tools are practical and adaptable.

It is important to bear in mind that this effort requires an investment of time and resources that should not be underestimated.

Investing time and resources in capacity-building for impact assessment among grantees will not only improve reporting accuracy but also empower local organizations to track progress effectively and use data-driven insights to refine their approaches.

Beyond capacity-building: strengthening networks for long-term sustainability

Justification

Mindchangers played a crucial role in strengthening local capacities and fostering cross-sector collaboration even at the territorial level, enriching local ecosystems in a continuous and evolving manner throughout the project's duration.

To maximize long-term impact, projects must go beyond individual capacity-building and focus on reinforcing networks that sustain engagement over time.

Embedding initiatives within existing structures and creating new avenues for collaboration can ensure that engagement continues even after project funding ends.

Recommendation

Some positive experiences demonstrated that integrating sustainability strategies from the start, such as identifying alternative funding sources, developing clear roadmaps for sustaining project activities, can help local organizations access resources and engagement opportunities.

Additionally, maintaining consistent and structured relationships with stakeholders engaged during the project is essential for ensuring long-term impact.

To foster sustained engagement, projects should try to establish platforms for continuous learning and exchange, such as knowledge-sharing networks, joint training programs, and institutionalized collaboration mechanisms.

Strengthening multi-level networks, locally, nationally, and internationally, helps initiatives remain active even after external support ends, fostering long-term ownership and continuous development.

Encouraging ongoing cooperation between CSOs, LAs, and youth networks will sustain momentum, deepen impact, and create lasting mechanisms for engagement and collaboration.

Addressing staff turnover to ensure continuity and stability

Justification

Staff turnover is a common challenge in long-term projects and can disrupt implementation if not managed effectively. Changes in personnel can lead to knowledge loss, inconsistencies in execution, weakened relationships with stakeholders, and reduced overall effectiveness. While turnover is sometimes unavoidable, strategic planning can mitigate its negative impact. Mindchangers, personnel changes at times risked weakening the project's strategic role within organizations, making it challenging to maintain continuity and maximize its transformative potential.

Recommendation

Future projects should prepare knowledge-transfer processes¹¹⁶ and documents to respond to turnover of the staff. Establishing internal documentation ensuring overlapping roles, and in some cases, pairing two partners per territory, where possible can help maintain continuity. Additionally, partners should select key project personnel who are more likely to stay throughout the project duration and fostering a supportive work environment can further reduce turnover risks. Strengthening institutional knowledge retention will also enhance the project's long-term strategic value for participating organizations.

Grounding actions in scientific research and data-driven approaches

Justification

In an era where misinformation and rapidly changing global contexts pose challenges, ensuring that project actions are guided by reliable data and scientific research is crucial. Mindchangers underscored and recognized the importance of grounding project activities in scientific research, and, over time, incorporated scientific insights into its interventions. However, integrating research-driven approaches from the beginning can further enhance credibility and effectiveness.

Recommendation

Future projects should establish collaborations with research institutions and experts to ground their interventions in evidence-based methodologies, prioritizing the collaboration with academic institutions, research centres, and data-driven initiatives. This includes collecting and analysing relevant data, translating scientific findings into actionable strategies, and fostering dialogue between researchers and practitioners. Ensuring that scientific knowledge informs policy-making and implementation not only strengthens project outcomes but also contributes to broader societal learning and adaptation and to broader knowledge-sharing efforts.

¹¹⁶ e.g. Procedural handbooks and shared repositories to streamline transitions.

E. Annexes

1. List of acronyms used in the report
2. List of sources and documentation reviewed

List of acronyms used in the report

BW_DE	Region of Baden-Württemberg (area)
BW	Land/Region of Baden-Württemberg (organization)
Co.Co.Pa.	Coordinamento Comuni per la Pace
CONGDCAR	Coordinadora de Organizaciones No Gubernamentales para el Desarrollo de la Comunidad Autónoma de La Rioja
COP	Piedmont NGOs Consortium
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DC_RO	Dolj County (area)
DEAR	Development Education Awareness Raising
EC	European Commission
FW-B_BE	Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles (area)
FW-B	Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles (organization)
GCE	Global Citizenship Education
IE	International events
IYM	International youth meeting
LAs	Local Authorities
LR	Gobierno de La Rioja
LR_ES	La Rioja (area)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning
NCE	No-cost Extension
NGM	National Grant Manager
Oc1, iOc1, Oc2	Outcome 1; intermediate Outcome 1; Outcome 2
PR_IT	Piedmont Region (area)
PR	Piedmont Region (organization)
RESACOOOP	Réseau Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes de la coopération internationale
AuRA_FR	Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes (area)
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEZ	Stiftung Entwicklungs- Zusammenarbeit Baden- Württemberg
TC	Technical coordinator
UCV	Universitatea din Craiova (University of Craiova)
Y1,Y2..	Year 1, Year 2...

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List of sources and documentation reviewed

Call for Proposals guidelines
Case studies
Deviation from plan matrix
Full application
Interim report Y1,
Interim report Y2
Interim report Y3
Interim report Y4 (draft)
Partners' interviews notes
In-depth case studies' notes
Logframe matrix
Logical framework - review proposal
MEL plan & Annexes
Monitoring tools
Previous evaluation reports
Questionnaires' results (partners)

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