

RESISTANCE  
QUALE  
SAREBBE  
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IDEALE?  
VIENI A  
SCOPRIRE  
IL NOSTRO

# THE RESISTANCE EXPERIENCE 2024

## Youth workers Feedback document

Rural EmanCipation STANCE (ReCiStance) is an italo-french Erasmus+ Youth Participation Project (KA154-YOU-66163FD8).



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union







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# 01



## Introducing RECIstance

The RECIstance project follows on from an initial collaboration between Collectif Parasites and Contratto Sociale: the RECOS project, which simultaneously addressed the issues of rural attractiveness, the situation of European rural youth, and the important role of cultural structures in the eco-citizen transition of the countryside. Our two associations, both driven by youth work and the development of rural areas, wanted to work together again to put the fruits of their first collaboration to work for the benefit of young people in the countryside.

The aim of this new project? To enable twenty or so young people in rural areas to take part in an awareness-raising and civic engagement program, by producing and promoting audiovisual productions on the subject of the place of young people in rural areas, with an advocacy role.

Audiovisual production is a pretext for in-depth work to gather and amplify the voices of young people in our regions: what do they dream of? What are their needs? Their obstacles? Their joys?

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The aim of the RECISance project was to enable young people not only to put into words their experience of rural life, but also to compare it with other realities, and with the challenges of local, regional, national and European policies. Last but not least, the project aimed to provide a first intercultural experience for the young people involved in the project, as rural young people are more remote from

mobility opportunities than their urban peers.

The general goal was to develop a sense of Europe and the power to act as a citizen among the participants. We also hoped to produce interesting, analytical and comprehensive audiovisual content that could be of use to decision-makers at various levels.

**Our goals were summarized as follows:**

### **THROUGH THE PRODUCTION OF A SHORT FILM, TO AWAKEN AND EMPOWER RURAL TEENAGERS**

- Diversify the gateways to civic engagement in our regions
- Enable reflection, then creative expression of the expectations, needs and hopes of rural teenagers: relationship to the territory, age group, contemporary social issues...
- Develop a constructive critical eye and the ability to argue, through an introduction to advocacy and its defense before local, regional and European institutions.

### **DEVELOP A SENSE OF EUROPE AMONG RURAL YOUTH**

- Provide a first intercultural and multilingual experience
- Discover the decision-making levels, from local to European Union institutions.
- Combating discrimination and prejudice by sharing experiences through local, regional and international encounters

Two national groups were set up to carry out the project. In Italy, although the project financed the participation of 8 young people, in the end 10 were mobilized around the RECISance project. Aged between 16 and 18, these young people were very good students from two high schools in Penne. In France, the group was made up of 12 young people aged between 15 and 19. Much more heterogeneous in terms of age, skills, language and socio-economic situation, the young people were virtually all enrolled in Landrecies, in training from 3ème SEGPA to BTS commerce.

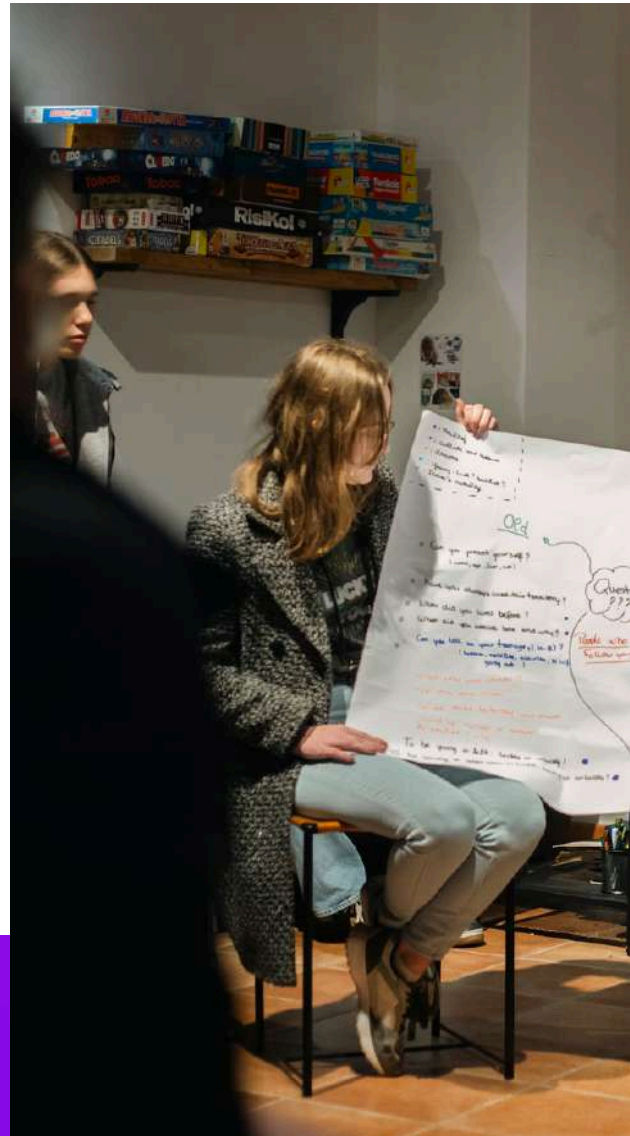




# 02 Project framework

**The two national groups followed similar, but not quite identical, parallel paths.**

Each group was mobilized on a regular basis to produce their documentary/film. In France, the rhythm was one meeting on a Wednesday afternoon per month (approximately), plus 3 days of “stage tournage” during each school vacations (January, March, April). In Italy, the young people met every Wednesday afternoon between March 10 and July 1. These collective times enabled them to make progress on their audiovisual projects: general reflections, script writing, analysis, formulation of questions, viewing, de-rushing, editing...



Throughout the entire project (January to September), “official” activities, i.e. those submitted and financed within the framework of the RECistance project, punctuated the audiovisual work, nourished the thinking processes, and accompanied the wording of common observations and demands.

- **2 international mobilities** (Italy, France/Belgium)
- **1 local mobility** (Avesnois to Paris)
- **3 participation events** (1 Italian, 1 French, 1 mixed).

# RECIStance activities



## MARCH 3-10TH

### International Mobility : Italy

Montebello di Bertona. 21 teens, 5 youth workers.

Key words : rural development, intercultural meeting, english, ideal village, comparison, public spaces, autonomy, local politics

## APRIL 26TH

### Local mobility (FR) : Lille

Lille. 12 rural teens, 5 urban teens, 2 youth workers.

Key words : urban/rural teenagehood, schooling, opportunities, cultural openness, autonomy

## JUNE 1-2ND

### Participation Event (IT) : Election Days

Montebello di Bertona. 9 teens, 110 locals, 3 youth workers.

Key words : local elections, youth policy, fast fashion, ecology, youth dialogue, public participation, community-building

## JULY 7-14TH

### International Mobility : France

Avesnois. 22 teens, 6 youth workers.

Key words : European institutions, advocacy, rural development, international meeting, local youth participation, comparison

## JULY 11TH

### Participation Event : RECIStance at the cinema

Avesnes-sur-Helpe. 60 teens, 40 locals, 6 youth workers.

Key words : local politics, youth dialogue, youth participation, advocacy, projection, project presentation

## SEPTEMBER 7-8TH

### Local Mobility (FR) : Paris

Paris. 11 teens, 2 youth workers.

Key words : national politics, cultural accessibility, national events, opportunities, autonomy.



## International mobilities

We wanted to offer our groups two international trips (to Italy and France), to enable them to discover each other, but above all to observe the situation of their foreign peers: are our ruralities similar? What are the strengths of this one for its young people, and that one for its cultural life? These mobilities were an opportunity to forge intercultural links, exchange ideas in English, discover a way of life that was both similar and very different, and obtain content for audiovisual productions (if desired!).

## Local mobility

A national mobility program was also submitted: "Ôde à la Citoyenneté: Paris". The aim was to enable young French people to discover the capital, the place where political power is centralized in France, but also to disseminate their achievements and exchange views with national elected representatives. This mobility took place on September 7 and 8, 2024 in Paris (11 young people, 2 accompanying adults).

## Participation events

The first was a planned event in Thiérache, organized and run by the French youth group. Unfortunately, the social center that was to host the group cancelled their visit a few days before the event scheduled for April 26. The French group therefore decided to organize an emergency day of meetings and filming in Lille, not to compare the experiences of young people from different rural areas of France, but to compare those of young urbans with their own.

The second "Election Days" event was held on June 1 and 2, 2024 in Montebello di Bertona. Over two days, the young people and Contratto Sociale organized a live debate between 4 candidates for the municipal elections, on subjects linked to the concerns of young people, as well as a "swap party" and a convivial evening. The political interviews were entirely conducted and hosted by the teens, and broadcast online (over 3,000 views).

"Recistance at the cinema" was a day organized by young people, during which the French and Italians led workshops for 50 other young people (accompanied by various social partners: France Travail, local Social Centers, local Missions) to come up with '10 proposals from rural youth'. These 10 proposals were then presented to two local elected representatives in the afternoon. At the end of the day, the young people organized and hosted an evening screening of their audiovisual creations in front of 75 people.

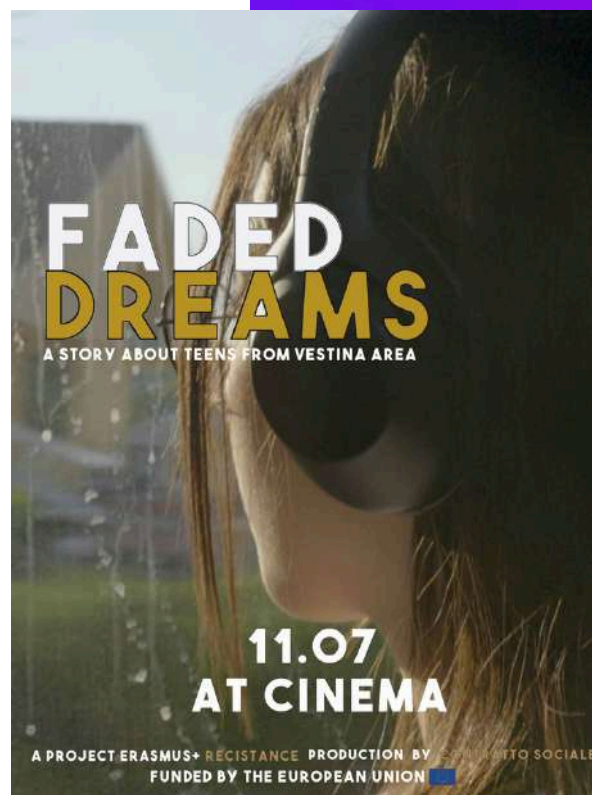




# 03 Results

The two audiovisual productions are the first outcomes of the project, which we aimed to widely disseminate. Beyond the quality of their production, we are convinced that together they form exciting tools for discussing the role of youth in our regions, their needs, and the efforts needed to support their growth locally. Furthermore, these films are also very meaningful examples for young people, useful in showing the importance of expression, speaking up, and personal experience as a legitimate reference.

Other results include a “Rural youth poem”, an Ideal village poster, and 10 proposals for rural youth, all accessible on the Erasmus+ results platform.



## FADED DREAMS 15'

**"Faded Dreams"** is a 15-minute Italian fiction film featuring Alice, a 16-year-old high school student living in Montebello di Bertona. Viewers are invited to follow this young girl as she pursues her dream of creating a youth hub in an abandoned building in her village.

Alice's challenging journey toward achieving her goal reveals the numerous barriers rural youth face daily: limited mobility, strong dependency, and a persistent lack of consideration.





## L'AVESNOIS LE MONDE ET MOI 3X15'

"L'Avesnois, le Monde, et moi" is a three-episode documentary series, produced by the French team, which explores the lives of rural youth. Through interviews, self-interviews, and street surveys, young people question their relationship with the area, their daily lives, and their sometimes limited autonomy, highlighting their dreams, the opportunities available to them, and the obstacles they face. Do they need to leave to thrive? Somewhere between a road movie and journalistic investigation, the series offers a touching portrayal of these 12 young people from Avesnois, each seeking a way to express themselves.

- **EP.1** : "Being a rural teenager"
- **EP.2** : "To leave or not to leave?"
- **EP.3** : "Listen.up"



# 04 Methodology(ies)

***Both associations are invested and experienced with informal education methods. We believe people learn by doing, and therefore orient our projects around empowering individuals.***

As the first long-term project with a teenage audience and one with an intra- and international mobility dimension, RECIStance was a real learning challenge for both our associations. We had to overcome unexpected difficulties and demonstrate adaptability, both in terms of objectives and in terms of logistics and methods - a real pleasure to learn from. The following section outlines the methods we used to mobilise and support young people throughout the project.

## MOBILIZATION

Engaging young people, particularly adolescents, often presents a challenge. Unlike children, who are relatively easy to attract to extracurricular activities, teenagers tend to be absorbed in their own interests, social circles, and growing independence. Their developing social skills and autonomy often distance them from socio-cultural spaces,

especially given the limited leisure options available for their age group in our territories. When it comes to a long-term commitment, intimidation and reluctance are common. The question then arises:

***How can we motivate, engage, and ensure their commitment?***



## ***“Finding youngsters where they spend most of their time : school.”***

Both organisations were left free to mobilize their groups in whatever way they wished. Both ended up using similar strategies : finding youngsters where they spend most of their time : school. Although this option is the easiest way to access youngsters, we must note that it automatically excludes non-scholarised kids from these recruitment practices.

In France, where few adolescents were naturally connected to the association, the challenge was to attract them. Environmental awareness workshops were conducted in local middle and high schools by Collectif Parasites were a great pretext to discuss and present the project. Interested teenagers were then invited to an informational meeting, during which the project and expectations were discussed in a fun and detailed manner, paving the way for voluntary registration.



### ***Good practice !*** **Italy's PTCO as an enabler**

In Italy, the absence of direct entry points to reach adolescents required the establishment of partnerships. By collaborating with high schools through administrative channels, the project was integrated into educational programs via the **Percorsi per le Competenze Trasversali e l'Orientamento (PCTO)**, a mandatory practical training program for all Italian high school students. As a host structure for the PCTO, the Contratto Sociale association established

partnerships with two high schools in Penne.

Although this integration into the school program added complexity to the project and required adjustments to align with school constraints, it also enriched the experience for the participating youth, and broadened Contratto Sociale's skillset. By integrating the project directly into the local teens' schooling, the association was able to position itself as an official alternative learning space, build strong relationships, and guarantee long-term involvement and interest.



## FILM MAKING

The two associations supported the groups of teenagers in their audiovisual projects in a similar way, applying an active pedagogy focused on practice. Their approach was to create horizontal frameworks in which the young people were not simply participants, but actors in their own right, making decisions and guiding the production throughout the whole process. The differences between the methods of the two structures are linked to the specific requirements of each film format, which imply different roles and preparations.

Key stages in the creative process :

1. *Brainstorming, writing*
2. *Shooting prep*
3. *Filming*
4. *Post-production*

### Inspiration , writing, preparation

The young people were exposed to several formats (documentary, fiction, series, webzine) to draw inspiration and collectively choose the one that best suited their project.

- In **Italy**, the key thematic decisions were taken fairly quickly, as the chosen format was a short fiction film. Most of the preparatory work focused on writing the script, creating the storyboard and organising the shooting.
- In **France**, the project began earlier in the year, with the young people taking part in workshops exploring various issues, questions and themes, enabling them to analyse the situation and lay the foundations for their documentary. As the documentary process involves a constant back-and-forth between filming and writing, the young people were quick to embark on their first interviews.

### Roles and organization

Each young person chose a role according to his or her interests, which helped them to take ownership and develop their own expertise. This distribution reinforced autonomy, as well as communication and team spirit, as each group had to coordinate with the others. The mentors, who were present throughout the production, provided technical guidance to the young people, encouraging them to discover their skills and ask themselves relevant questions.



**Italian teams :** scriptwriters, actors, sound and video technicians, stage management and set design

**French teams :** investigators (research and interviews), technicians (sound and video), post-production and communications/management



## Editing and finalisation

Although the editing required more extensive technical input from the mentors, the young people were able to choose the shots and extracts they wanted to include. In this way, they played an active part in the final stages, despite the technical complexity of the editing.

Most of all, both organizations were adamant about the teenagers being the ones to promote the film and talk about their process, both online and during offline screenings. This empowered them, helping them put into words the whole experience, their learning journey, and fostered an important sense of pride.



### Good practice ! Making editing collective and accessible

To facilitate the youngsters' participation in post-production, Collectif Parasites experimented with a **big paper participative storyboard**.

In groups, teens were asked to watch over all their content, select the best moments and create photo-notes with them. This helped re-watch and question all the content, but mostly create over 60 "vignettes" that could be selected, placed, moved around, adjusted to visualise and create the documentary' story arc.



## VOICING OPINIONS

Erasmus+ youth participation projects aim to foster young people's expression on topics that matter to them, as well as dialogue between young Europeans and elected officials. Often unheard, young people have much to say and bring well-constructed perspectives on their reality and the world around them.

**With guidance in stepping back and articulating their ideas, their experiences can lead to powerfully political discourse.**



Various steps allowed young participants to make their voices heard through this project. The films they produced are key, serving as an advocacy tool for rural youth and providing an open portrayal of teenage life in rural Europe. Italian youth chose to depict a fictional witness story, highlighting systemic, ongoing challenges. The French youth took a documentary approach, offering direct testimonials of their experiences. This genuine content invites reflection and insight from viewers, especially adult mentors (school leaders, teachers, parents, youth workers). Other activities focused on exploring shared experiences despite geographical distance:

- **Posters of My Territory:** Each group created a poster of their territory to present to others, highlighting challenges like limited mobility and social opportunities, as well as a strong connection to local heritage and traditions.
- **Sensitive Mapping:** Participants drew maps of their villages, including the places they frequent and those they avoid, and imagined services they wished to have. This activity sparked discussions on spaces available or restricted for youth – what do we do, where are we welcome, where don't we feel comfortable ?
- **Ideal Village:** They envisioned a village that would fully meet teenagers' needs, identifying what's lacking and the responsible actors (state, municipality, intercommunal associations), helping teens understand how territorial management is organized.
- **Election and Formulation of Common Claims:** The workshops allowed us to collect an initial list of 100 ideas, which were then narrowed down to 50 key proposals. These 50 proposals were organized into themes and categories (transport, social and cultural life, civic engagement, education, health, etc.). Each thematic group was assigned specific research tasks to enrich their topic with concrete data: statistics, notable facts, and other indicators about the situation of European youth in their focus area. The groups created explanatory posters and prepared short animations (5 to 10 minutes) to engage other young people in discussions around these issues. These workshops, presented during "RECISTance at the Cinema," were a great success, making it easier for young people of all ages to express themselves and boosting the confidence of the participating teens in their ability to speak up and guide group reflection.

## Speaking to elected officials

During informal meeting times with elected officials, teenagers were left to express their experience freely. In Brussels, young participants presented their claims to European officials through **postcards**. During RECISTance at the Cinema, the **Pechakucha** workshop helped structure their speeches into concise steps: context, proposal, implementation, and conclusion, with ten images projected over three minutes and twenty seconds. This dynamic exercise improved the impact and clarity of their speeches.



***These activities truly empowered young people to build confidence in themselves, legitimize their voices, and strengthen their communication skills.***



## FOLLOW-UP AND EVALUATION

Evaluation and following up on the teens was a key part of the project's success. Throughout the project, both groups of young participants were supported by the same facilitators, fostering a trusting environment for open exchanges and informal reflection. Many spontaneous discussions occurred—during car rides, train journeys, filming preparations, or while waiting for pickups. This close contact allowed facilitators to observe participants' progress and adapt their guidance. Over time, they noted a significant transformation in the participants, especially regarding self-confidence and initiative, leading to greater autonomy and awareness of their capacity for action.

To structure reflections, systematic reviews were held at the end of each day for both French and Italian groups, using various methods. Participants shared “one thing they liked,” “one thing they liked less,” or “one thing that surprised them,” encouraging them to express their thoughts and reflect on daily experiences.

During mobility trips, closer monitoring ensured activities met participants' expectations and well-being. Daily large group reviews and smaller sessions provided personalized support. At the week's end, a collective evaluation helped participants identify their learning through tools like posters or positioning games, fostering self-assessment.

After the trips, fun debriefing sessions (ex. hiking) allowed participants to discuss successes, areas for improvement, personal achievements, surprises, helping them verbalize experiences and build confidence. The YouthPass tool was essential in helping participants recognize their skills and progress. This approach aimed to cultivate a learning-positive mindset.

Finally, a Google Forms evaluation survey was created at the project's end to gather feedback on language, local connections, and overall engagement. Erasmus+ forms also assessed specific skills, such as interest in politics and European issues, providing a comprehensive overview of the project's impact on participants' growth.

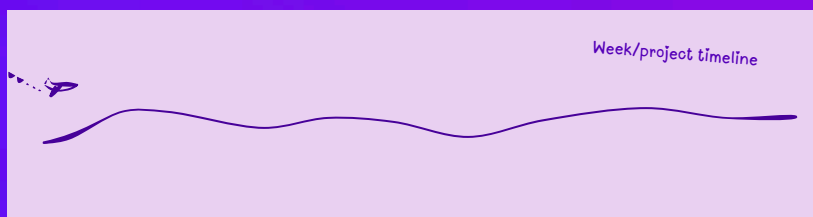
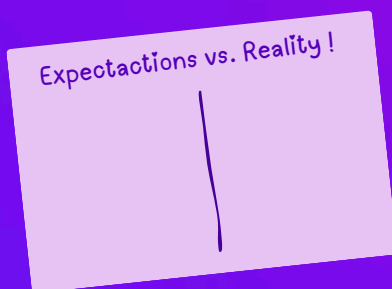


## Good practice ! Adjourning evaluation meditation

Evaluation and adjourning are always an important part of group projects management ! With teenagers, these steps seem extra important, providing a place to put into words their experience. In a project like this one, where multiple moments were intense in terms of energy, socializing, self-awareness, communication (...), it's important to take a proper moment to acknowledge all that has been done and learnt, both individually and as a group.

**This evaluation method works wonders to create a smooth, emotionally relieving, relaxing, beautiful end-of-project.**

Before the group arrives, prepare numerous different posters, and hang them on the walls around the room, place them on tables, such as the participants must wander around to focus on different places. Distribute pens and markers around the room so participants can help themselves. Have fun, be creative with the proposals ! A few examples are down below.



Before the group enters the room, dim the lights and put some meditative music on. As the group arrives at the door, explain these rules :

1. This is an evaluation process, the goal is for us as a group to take a step back on what we have experienced together.
2. No obligation to contribute to everything if you wish not to.
3. Everyone must remain silent during the time they chose to spend inside. You may leave when you wish

**Let them in, give it time, and watch the magic unfold !**



# 05 Challenges & solutions

## *Finding participants*

The first challenge we met was mobilizing teenagers. We have already spoken about this theme earlier in the feedback document, so won't develop much, but the **PCTO** in Italy was the solution we found - ability to integrate the project to a schooling curriculum, therefore sparking interest, involvement and most of all, an excuse to come into contact with youngsters in school !

## *Heterogenous groups*

Another major problem was the heterogeneity of the groups. In France, the group was formed on a "first come, first served" basis, after a presentation at a lycée in Landrecies, with no selection criteria other than commitment. In Italy, young people were selected via a motivational questionnaire, as the PCTO counted for part of the school credits, and ultimately led to the selection of the best students. This led to a notable difference: in France, the group was made up of young people from a **wide variety of backgrounds**, socio-economic situations and educational levels, whereas in Italy, the group was much more homogeneous. These disparities, coupled with culture shock,



made it difficult for the young people to really get to know each other during their first international mobility experience. To remedy this, the organizers encouraged **informal moments** outside the strict framework of the project, while adapting the activities to ensure that everyone could participate according to their abilities. Therefore, whereas some felt at ease working on conceptual matters together, some only were comfortable socializing with the other group through manual / play activities, such as **cooking, hiking, games...** As we learnt this, we made sure to include both types of activities throughout the whole project.

## Language barrier

The language barrier also posed a greater challenge than expected. Levels of English were very disparate: some young people could converse easily, while others struggled to introduce themselves. By using translations and **adjusting the modalities** of interaction, we were able to overcome this obstacle. Even those who had difficulty in English were able to make connections and participate actively, for example, sharing their ideas through **drawings** or jokes.

## Mobilizing elected officials

Finally, mobilizing elected representatives proved more difficult than expected. While local elected representatives were present at events such as “RECISTance at the cinema” and “Election Days”, national and European representatives were less available, partly due to the **political context** (European elections and dissolution of the National Assembly in France).

To make up for the absence of these representatives, and to make sure the teenagers still had the opportunity to discover different political levels and voice their ideas, we brought them to visit to the « Assemblée nationale » in France, the European Parliament in Brussels, and organized meetings with european youth organizations such as EYCA and the Youth Forum. The films were also screened in Paris, in front of AG2R La Mondiale Foundation (involved in youth work) managers, a way to exchange and debate with **other types of stakeholders.**







# 06 Conclusion

This project stands as a beacon for what youth engagement can achieve when provided with the right environment, guidance, and trust. Rooted in the idea that youth only needs attention to grow, it became an ideal model of involvement, uniting diverse forms of learning—from critical thinking and language skills to hands-on audiovisual production. It was also immensely enjoyable and fulfilling for everyone involved, bringing about a deep sense of pride and accomplishment.

Through this experience, we gained invaluable insights into adolescence, understanding that true empowerment for young people emerges through gradual responsibility and active listening. By fostering a horizontal, trust-based structure, we encouraged youth to take ownership of their journey, even when it meant adjusting timelines to better align with their aspirations. This flexible approach proved vital in nurturing meaningful youth engagement, ultimately strengthening their roles as creators and decision-makers.

The project not only enriched our associations' expertise but also deepened our ties with the local educational, institutional, and associative networks, earning recognition and enabling us to work continuously alongside adolescents. We are now more equipped to carry forward impactful projects that offer continuity, scale, and, most importantly, empowerment for youth.

Looking forward, we aim to share these youth-created films on a broader platform, expanding their reach to give voice to the issues, dreams, and ideas of the next generation. This project has shown that when we meet young people where they are, listen to their voices, and support their growth, we open doors to new possibilities—for them and for our communities.

When we meet young people where they are [...] **we open doors to new possibilities** – for them and for our communities



