



YouthMetre as a tool supporting e-democracy and effective advocacy

How YouthMetre contributes to democracy

YouthMetre can be classified as an eParticipation tool, as it enables its users to be informed, inspired, connected and empowered. YouthMetre promotes dialogue and sharing of best practices. By using it, people can get new knowledge, but also skills that can help them to easily and actively participate in the public sphere.

YouthMetre contributes to fostering an informed and active civic society, which is very important for sustainability and the effectiveness of democracy:

- Informed citizens are more resistant to populism and more sensitive to corruption, oligarchical and non-democratic practices;
- Active citizens can check and give feedback to politicians, who are then more careful and responsible towards society.

How people can use YouthMetre and maximise their impact

YouthMetre is an interactive and up to date tool that allows you to:

- **be informed** – to get insight into EU statistics and see the impact of local/national authorities policies on priorities laid down in the EU Youth Strategy.
- **be inspired** – if you check the Good Practices map and will see what's happening in your area and all over the EU - many best practices could be used to help in solving your local issues as well;
- **be connected** – if you post your ideas or projects on the map "My idea for my community" and include your contact data, you will become part of the YM network. Through it you can find like-minded people and advocate for your idea that is solving issue on local, national and EU level.
- **be empowered** – once you have developed and shared your local needs/ideas, during YouthMetre training you will learn how to effectively address authorities and thus have an impact on shaping EU youth strategy and its implementation at local, regional and national levels.

How young people can give feedback? On the map "*My idea for my community*" everyone can share ideas and projects. The author can then print a summary and present it to public authorities as a proof of importance of the idea/project.

How public authorities can analyse it? Public authorities can be proactive and take a look at the maps mentioned, database of Good Practices and "*My idea for my community*". In an ideal case, public authorities could also create new policies on the basis of feedback/findings received through YouthMetre.



Effective advocacy online

In order to express your rights, to ameliorate your conditions, to activate your community, or simply to advance your ideas, you should be an active advocate, both for your community and yourself. However, how to become an *effective* advocate? You should use the right tools and methodologies to carry out successful advocacy campaign. Indeed, the question here is not if you should advocate or not, but *HOW*.

YouthMetre puts forward a set of information and resources, freely accessible and downloadable, in order to provide you with some basic knowledge on how to realize strategic advocacy activities in the youth field, both on-line and off-line.

Moreover, after having elaborated data collected from young citizens from 15 EU States, YouthMetre provides a picture of how European youth relate to youth decision takers and policy makers.

Such an overview could provide some useful insights and be crucial to help conduct successful advocacy activities. On the one hand it reveals the weaknesses in the relationships between youngsters and policy-makers. On the other hand, it highlights which types of advocacy, or solutions, young Europeans would like to implement. Finally, it analyses the opinions of youngsters concerning a general idea of advocacy and participation.

How to create effective advocacy

Researching, monitoring and accountability: the basis of successful advocacy

1. Policy Monitoring and Public Accountability

Almost all effective policy-related advocacy efforts start with observation and monitoring of the implementation and effectiveness of policies already in place.¹ High profile ICT policy monitoring can, on its own, improve policy implementation and effectiveness by highlighting public policy targets and drawing public attention to under performance or to policy failure. **How?** Governments and public bodies, especially in democratic societies, are sensitive to critical reports, and more so when these are based on robust evidence and analysis, come from a credible source, and are widely published and disseminated.

¹ For more information on online advocacy, visit: <https://www.apc.org/en/node/9456>.



2. Keep calm and continue to advocate: advocacy and campaigning rarely achieve rapid results

Advocacy and Campaigning require patience, tenacity, courage and conviction. There is no blueprint for success, but there are some common denominators to almost all successful advocacy campaigns. It is essential, for instance, to maintain clarity in communications: goals should be clear and achievable; messages should be compelling for those to whom they are intended; calls to action should be specific and concise. Good planning and organisation must combine with the ability to mobilise broad coalitions of public and political support towards a common goal.

3. Are the goals of your advocacy achievable?

Policy campaigning is goal-oriented advocacy in which civil society groups and coalitions aim to set the policy agenda rather than simply to monitor or respond to government policy making. It involves taking action and initiative. It can be exciting and empowering for those involved, but it can also be hard work, frustrating, and ultimately unsuccessful. Before adopting a campaigning orientation it is worth asking whether the goals could be better achieved by dialogue or quiet negotiation. Campaigns for policy change draw on a wide range of tools and tactics, including public demonstrations, protests, letter writing, lobbying, use of media and the Internet, and legal action. Campaigning is often confrontational in nature. After all, a campaign would not be needed if the government or private company was receptive to the policies being advocated.

4. Using the YouthMetre e-portal

As has been shown, advocacy is strongly linked to monitoring and research. In order to be an effective advocate in the youth field, it is necessary to gain reliable data and know how to use it.

To help you gain a broad overview of data concerning the situation of European youth in relation to the 8 Key Areas identified by the EU Youth Strategy (2010-2018), YouthMetre developed a series of interactive graphics allowing you to select data related to the 28 EU States and easily visualize it. In this regard, the objectives of the YouthMetre are as follows:

- Enhance knowledge and understanding of the evolution of Research and Campaigning + Key challenges
- Increase the ability to think critically and analytically
- Develop certain practical skills to research in the field of youth policy.