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SCALE UP CYCLING

ACTIVE YOUTH EMPOWERED AS AMBASSADORS

PR3: Community building through upcycling training modules

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Advocacy	Public support for an idea, plan, or way of doing something.
Advocate	to speak for, support, or represent a person or group of people who may need extra help or protection or to support or suggest an idea, development, or way of doing something.
Climate Justice	the idea that the rich countries of the world must take responsibility for climate change and the damage it causes, and help countries and people because they have not caused most of the problem and are the worst affected.
Conflict resolution	the informal or formal process that two or more parties use to find a peaceful solution to their dispute.
Declaration	an announcement, often one that is written and official, an official, public, usually written statement.
National agencies (NAs)	based in EU Member States and associated third countries play a key role in Erasmus+ by providing information, selecting and monitoring projects, supporting applicants, collaborating with other National Agencies and the EU, promoting the program, and sharing success stories.
Non-formal learning	an addition, alternative and/or a complement to formal education within the process of the lifelong learning of individuals.
Policy	a set of ideas or a plan of what to do in particular situations that has been agreed to officially by a group of people, a business organization, a government, or a political party.
Policymaker	a member of a government department, legislature, or other organisation who is responsible for making new rules, laws, etc.
Stakeholder	a group of people or agencies who are directly or indirectly interested in or concerned about something. They may include local agencies, leaders, funders, employees, customers, or citizens who are involved with an organisation, society, etc. and therefore have responsibilities towards it and interest in its success.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the forth module of the European project "ScaleUpcycling".



In this module, we will explore active participation, youth initiatives, and empowerment in today's world with a special focus on the Erasmus+ programme. You will be able to delve deeper into the global youth statement, check out Erasmus and other European initiatives for youth and discover what it means to be an ambassador. You will learn how to promote your work and share your story. Together, we will find inspiration and identify your strengths and the strengths of others. We will wrap up with some conclusions, a glossary, and a short assessment.

Let's jump in!

1. ACTIVE YOUTH



Getting involved in a cause that matters to you is possible through volunteering. It's an excellent way to make a positive impact in your community. For young people, studying abroad can also provide valuable experiences and skill-building opportunities. Immersing oneself in different cultures and languages can lead to academic enrichment and open up new learning paths. Being a leader doesn't require age or formal authority. Early exposure to leadership skills can help young people contribute to improving the world on a larger scale.

There are many ways to be active as a European and global citizen. Let's get to know some of them!

EUROPEAN YOUTH FORUM

The European Youth Forum envisions itself as the advocate for young people in Europe, striving for their equality and empowerment to become active global citizens. It is the largest platform of youth organizations in Europe, comprising over 100 such organizations and uniting millions of young individuals from across the continent. The forum's primary goals are to enable young people to engage in society actively, enhance their well-being, and advocate for their rights. Through these efforts, the Youth Forum aims to promote youth participation, turning young people into agents of positive change and creators of innovative solutions for Europe's issues (European Youth Forum, 2023).

The European Youth Forum's annual plan for 2023:
https://indd.adobe.com/view/69836c57-b981-465c-9d5a-3049098b2f0a

EU YOUTH DIALOGUE

The EU Youth Dialogue is a continuous forum for young people and youth organizations, policy and decision-makers, experts, researchers, and civil society actors to reflect and consult on the priorities, implementation, and follow-up of European cooperation in the field of youth. It is a way to ensure that the opinions, views, and needs of young people and youth organisations are taken into account when defining the EU's youth policies. It is organised into 18-month work cycles, each focusing on a different thematic priority set by the Council of Youth Ministers. The current (from 2022 to mid-2023) priority is "A Sustainable and Green Europe'' (European Youth Portal, n.d.).

To join, you can contact your national working group and take part in the activities they organise.

Click here to know more

National working groups bring together:

- Representatives of youth ministries and other ministries,
- National youth councils,
- Local and regional youth councils,
- Youth organisations,
- Representatives of the National Agency for Erasmus+ Youth in Action,
- Young people from diverse backgrounds,
- Youth information providers, and
- Youth researchers.

EU Youth Dialogue activities are compiled, analyzed, and discussed at EU Youth Conferences twice a year. Youth representatives and policymakers work together to present a joint message to the EU, and the conclusions are presented to the Council of the European Union (European Youth Portal, n.d.).

Know the European Youth Goals

Click here to know more



1. Connecting EU with Youth

Encouraging youth involvement in the European project, bridging the EU-youth gap for increased trust and participation.



2. Equality of All Genders

Promoting gender equality and incorporating gender-sensitive approaches across all aspects of young people's lives.



3. Inclusive Societies

Facilitating and guaranteeing the involvement of all youth in society.



4. Information & Constructive Dialogue

Enhancing youth access to reliable information, supporting critical evaluation skills, and encouraging participatory dialogue.



5. Mental Health & Wellbeing

Improving mental well-being, eliminating mental health stigma and fostering social inclusion for all youth.



6. Moving Rural Youth Forward

Establishing an environment that empowers young individuals to realise their potential in rural areas.



7. Quality Employment for All

Ensuring an inclusive job market with opportunities that result in quality employment for every young person.



8. Quality Learning

Enhancing diverse learning for youths to navigate 21st-century challenges



9. Space and Participation for All

Empowering youth democratic participation and autonomy, and establishing dedicated spaces across society.



10. Sustainable Green Europe

Fostering a society where every young person is environmentally active, educated, and capable of making a difference in their daily lives.



11. Youth Organisations & European Programmes

Promoting equal access to youth organizations and European programs for all young people, fostering a society rooted in European values and identity (Youth Goals, n.d.).

2. EMPOWERING YOUTH AMBASSADORS

YOUTH AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

It appears that many young people in Europe are disconnected from formal political institutions and leaders, and may lack trust in democratic processes. However, this is not the full picture. Today's young people are actively involved in a wide range of civic and voluntary associations, protests, and social movements, demonstrating their commitment to shaping the world around them. Europe's youth have been at the forefront of some of the most important political and social changes in Europe's recent past.

In academia, social movements are normally defined by the following key characteristics:

1. ''Group or collaborative activities,
2. Actions that occur outside established institutions or are unconventional,
3. Objectives or demands focused on instigating change,
4. Specific targets for these demands such as governments, the general public, businesses, particular political factions, cultural norms, etc.
5. A level of organization,
6. A certain duration of existence,
7. Degree of common unity or shared identity among participants'' (Council of Europe European Union, 2023).



Youth are far from being passive, cynical, and uninterested, and are passionate about the state of the world and the future. Beyond social change and achieving a better future for all, as activists, young people may be seeking a sense of belonging or group status and exploring new ways of self-expression.

Today's youth are mostly active not in traditional but in autonomous social movements. The basic ideas of the latter date back to the late 20th century:

The first is that our personal lives are intertwined with political issues (slogan: ''personal is political'') and to truly make a change, we must change our way of life. Secondly, for society to reach its full potential, all citizens must have equal participation and incorporation. Thirdly, social movements require autonomy and free space to develop their strategies and critiques, without being controlled by dominant power structures. Finally, we cannot wait for a future revolution to improve things; we must take action and start building a better future today.

When we look at how young people get involved in politics outside of traditional channels, the social movements in Europe today show that many young Europeans are very active in political activities. (Council of Europe, European Union, 2023).

Who is a youth ambassador?

A Youth Ambassador is a young person who is a representative, spokesperson, or advocate for a charitable organisation. These ambassadors are appointed to encourage cooperation, promote goodwill, or share information and knowledge. They volunteer their time to raise awareness and support and play an important role in furthering the mission of the organisation.

What does it mean to be a Youth Ambassador?

- You are between 18 and 30 years old,
- You have previous experience participating in non-formal learning (NFL) activities,
- You have experience in non-formal activities at local and/or international level,
- You are willing and motivated to explain and share your personal stories and how the NFL affected your life, career and opportunities,
- You are willing to be an inspiring role model for young people participating in their activities,
- You have the set of needed skills and competencies and you are willing to work on their development,
- You are connected with other youth ambassadors at local and international levels (Youth Ambassadors of non-formal learning, n.d.).



Youth ambassador skillset checklist

- ☐ Brain activity
- ☐ Communication
- ☐ Compassion
- ☐ Conflict resolution
- ☐ Creativity
- ☐ Determination
- ☐ Digital skills
- ☐ Empathy
- ☐ Entrepreneurial skills
- ☐ Flexibility
- ☐ Healthy lifestyle
- ☐ Honesty
- ☐ Humour
- ☐ Inclusive mindset
- ☐ Innovative
- ☐ Inspiration
- ☐ Integrity
- ☐ Kindness
- ☐ Knowledge of non-formal learning (also in terms of regulations, laws, etc.)
- ☐ Leadership
- ☐ Media literacy
- ☐ Motivation
- ☐ Multitasking
- ☐ Patience
- ☐ Planning
- ☐ Practical mindset
- ☐ Reliability
- ☐ Resourcefulness
- ☐ Responsibility
- ☐ Self-confidence
- ☐ Stress management
- ☐ Sustainable development
- ☐ Team leadership
- ☐ Time management
- ☐ Visionary

Meet Robbie, an example of a youth ambassador:



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ACTIVE STORY-TELLING

In today's rapidly evolving world, the ability to effectively promote your work and share your story as a youth ambassador is a powerful skill. As a young individual driven by passion and a desire for positive change, you have a unique perspective to offer. Active storytelling can serve as a compelling tool to not only attract fellow youth but also inspire them to join you in your mission. In this module, we'll explore various ways to promote and share your work with other young people while engaging in meaningful social action.

How to use storytelling?

Steps to use storytelling as a youth ambassador for promoting your work and sharing your story with other young people while engaging in social action:

1. Self-reflection and story development
    a. Define your message and purpose: What are your passions and values, what is your message?
    b. Create your personal story: Write a relatable and emotionally engaging narrative sharing your journey.
2. Choosing your platform
    a. Research the platforms and create your profile on a chosen platform (TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, Twitch, Patreon, WordPress...).
3. Content creation and branding
    a. Develop content and define your own visual style and messaging guidelines.
4. Outreach and collaboration
    a. Find people who share your mission or target audience and reach out to them for potential collaborations.
    b. Engage in collaborative projects such as campaigns, interviews, or events to broaden your reach.
5. Interactive activities and engagement
    a. Develop fun and rewarding interactive initiatives for your audience.
    b. Engage with your audience to build a community.
6. Measuring impact
    a. Track the performance using online platform analytics to identify what resonates with your audience.
7. Gathering feedback
    a. Seek feedback from your audience through surveys (such as on Instagram).

Extra: Storytelling workshops and empowerment
-Organise workshops for other youth in your community or online.
-Empower others to use their voices and stories for positive change.

Extra: Cultivate empathy and inclusivity
-Promote empathy by encouraging others to listen to others' stories. Emphasise different voices and perspectives.
-Advocate for inclusivity making sure your storytelling is inclusive and respectful of all backgrounds and identities.

Keep going!

Effective storytelling is an ongoing process. By mastering the art of active storytelling, you not only promote your work but also inspire others to become agents of positive change. As a youth ambassador, your journey is not just about personal growth; it is about the collective impact of an entire generation. Use your voice, your passion, and your stories to light the way for others, and together, we can create a brighter future for all.

3. PARTICIPATION & YOUTH

After this module, surely you are willing to know the Programs, activities, and actions where you can participate.

Let's continue with the last part of the module to go deeper on this.

YOUNGO

YOUNGO is a platform for individuals under 35 and youth NGOs.

YOUNGO is a platform for individuals under 35 and youth NGOs.
Established in 2009, it represents young voices in UN climate negotiations, promoting action, awareness, knowledge-sharing, capacity-building, cooperation, and advocating for strong climate policies to create a sustainable and just future.

Focus areas of YOUNGO:

1. Awareness, Knowledge, and Capacity Building
2. collaboration, Cooperation, and Network
3. policy, Lobby, and Advocacy
4. Youth Action

Bodies of YOUNGO:

- Working Groups: teams working on and advocating for a particular thematic topic (such as Education, Intergenerational Equity, Agriculture…). There are approximately 20 active WGs currently, where membership is defined by the interest of the individual.
- YOUNGO Policy Team: supports the mission of "Policy, Lobby and Advocacy", working together with the different WGs and actively collaborating in the draft of the annual Global Youth Statement that is later presented at COP (Conference of Youth (COY), n.d.).

How to join YOUNGO?

YOUNGO welcomes everyone under the age of 35 who is interested or engaged in climate action and advocacy

Application form

UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE OF YOUTH (COY)

The UN Climate Change Youth Conference (COY) is an annual event organised by YOUNGO, the official youth group of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

COY is the largest and longest-running youth event, taking place just before and alongside the annual UN Climate Change Conference (COP). It provides young people with training and knowledge on climate policies to prepare them for the COP. At COY, young people can participate in the development of international climate policies under the UNFCCC.

This year (2023), COY or COY18 will take place in the United Arab Emirates in November. Every year, any young person can apply to be a delegate (Conference of Youth (COY), n.d.).

Want to organise a COY in your local area?

You can apply for mentorship as a Local Conference of Youth or LCOY organiser.
LCOYs play a key role in involving young people in the international debate on climate change. They bring together young people from each country to collaborate, exchange ideas, and develop concise policy proposals. These events are the initial stage leading to regional COYs, global COYs, and ultimately to the involvement of young people in official COP meetings (YOUNGO, 2023).

More info

THE GLOBAL YOUTH STATEMENT

The Global Youth Statement represents the collective demands of children and youth worldwide through YOUNGO, the UNFCCC's official youth group. It calls on leaders to take meaningful action at the COP. This declaration is the result of consultations with young people from more than 150 countries and is presented at COY.

It includes crucial policy requests across 15 themes, addressing issues like climate, finance, energy, and justice. There is an emphasis on inclusive climate governance, recognizing the disproportionate impact of the climate crisis on our communities and the necessity for systemic change (COY17, n.d.).

COP27 Global Youth Statement or Declaration for Climate Justice from COY17 in 2022 is available here

More info

Youth in the EU



The EU defines youth as anyone between and including the ages of 13 and 29.

ERASMUS+

Erasmus+ is the EU's programme that aims to promote education, training, youth, and sport while fostering cooperation, mobility, and the development of skills and knowledge across Europe and beyond.

There is a lot that fits under Erasmus+. It is divided into three Key Actions, each serving different purposes. There are KA1 - Mobility of Individuals, KA2 - Cooperation among Organisations and Institutions, and KA3 - Support to Policy Development and Cooperation

This time, we'll only focus on the following specific actions the youth can work on and actively participate in:

Youth Exchanges:

Youth exchanges provide an opportunity for young people from different countries to come together, live together, and collaborate on shared projects for a short period outside of school. These exchanges include various activities such as workshops, exercises, debates, role-plays, outdoor activities, and more.

Youth exchanges (YEs) are for individuals between the ages of 13 and 30 and typically last between 5 and 21 days. These exchanges are run by youth organizations, informal groups of young people, or other organizations. Attendees receive financial support through an EU grant, and travel costs are reimbursed up to a specific amount,

You can apply for a youth exchange through a sending/organizing organization or through The National Agency in your country. Applications must be made by an organization or a group of young people who can then select who will participate in the exchange (European Commission, n.d.).

Training Courses (training for youth workers):

The training activities focus on European or international issues and are non-profit. These activities are aimed at youth workers who wish to develop their competencies further in order to work more effectively with young people, share experiences, and potentially collaborate on future projects.

The duration of youth workers' mobility is between 2 days and 2 months, excluding traveling time. To go abroad as a youth worker under Erasmus+, your organization must participate in a youth mobility project with another institution or organization.

Financial support is available through an EU grant, which covers travel expenses and practical and activity-related costs. Applications must be made by organizations, in turn, involve youth workers in the project (European Commission, n.d.). Training course opportunities are listed in the European Training Calendar on SALTO webpage (mentioned in this module).

Youth Participation Activities:

This action aims to support youth participation in Europe's democratic life through activities beyond formal education. The objectives include encouraging civic engagement, raising awareness of European values, enhancing digital competences, and facilitating dialogue between young people and decision-makers. Aligned with the EU Youth Strategy, the action contributes to achieving Youth Goals and thematic priorities through transnational or national youth participation activities. These activities, emphasizing non-formal learning, aim to empower young people, strengthen their competences, and enable them to actively contribute to democratic processes, civic society, and social change. The emphasis is on inclusivity, innovation, and utilizing digital platforms to broaden youth participation across various sectors (European Commission, n.d.).

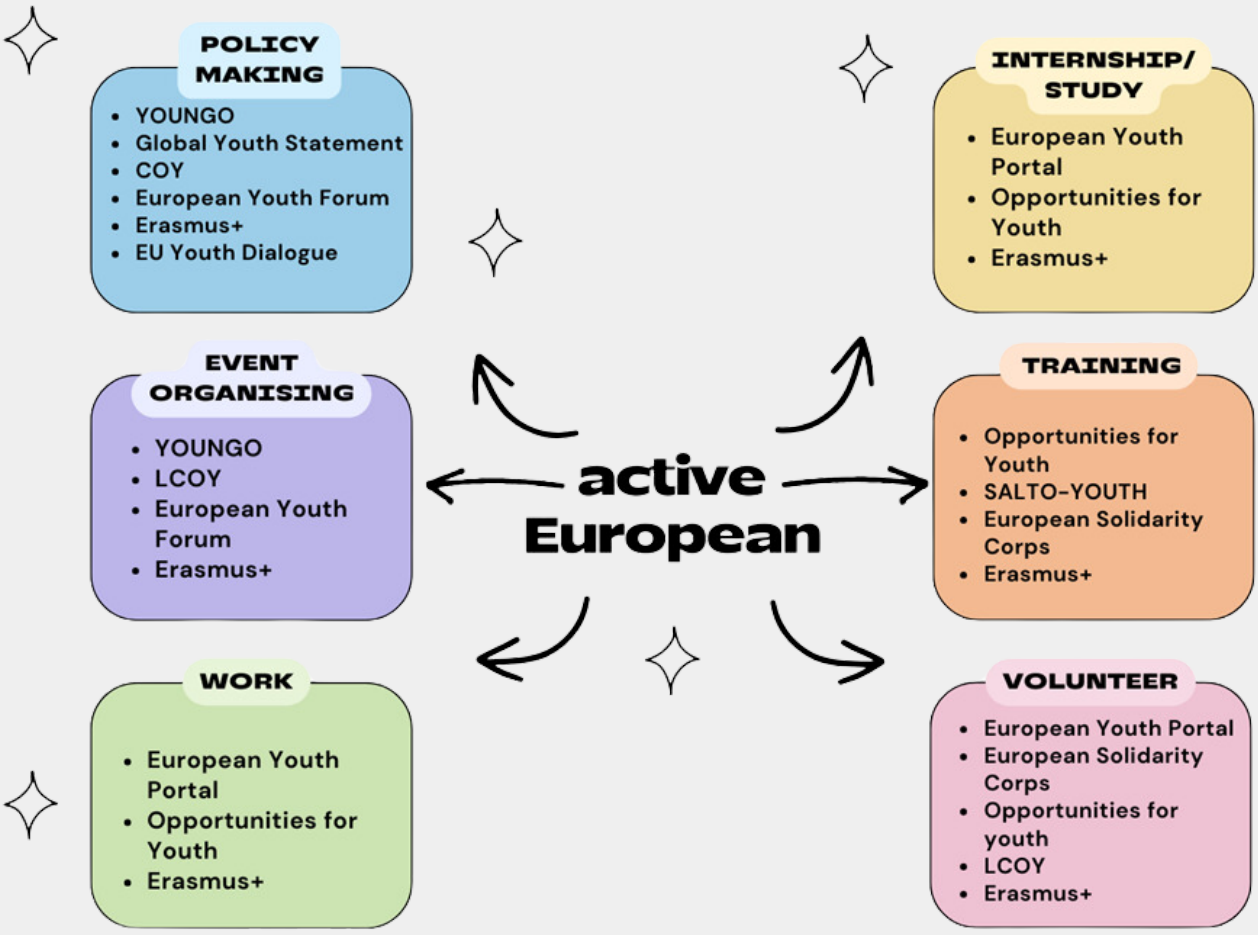
Action of Solidarity Projects (European Solidarity Corps):

The European Solidarity Corps (ESC) offers young people aged 18 to 30 the opportunity to contribute to community projects in Europe and beyond.

Through funding and support, the Corps facilitates volunteering, traineeships, jobs, local Solidarity Projects, and humanitarian aid volunteering in various fields. Although traineeships and jobs are discontinued in the new program (2021-2027), they are still running for the current year under the previous budget. The Corps operates through grants to organizations via calls for proposals. To participate, young individuals register on the European Solidarity Corps portal, which serves as a platform for both young people and grant-holding organizations to connect and implement activities (European Youth Portal, 2023).

ACTIVE EUROPEAN MINDMAP

At the end of this chapter, we have created a mind map that visually represents all the opportunities we have discussed so far. See it below.



PRACTICAL EXERCISE 1

An important part of being an ambassador is finding inspiration, forming your idea, and bringing it to life. Try the Initiatives Tool to think of a scenario for an event in your local area. Use it to publish your idea here: https://scaleupcycling.eu/?page=initiatives-tool

PRACTICAL EXERCISE 2

My best self: Write a commercial pitch about why someone should hire you. Include all the personal characteristics, traits, goals, interests, and passions you believe play an important part in who you are. Keep it in a safe spot to read it again in the future.

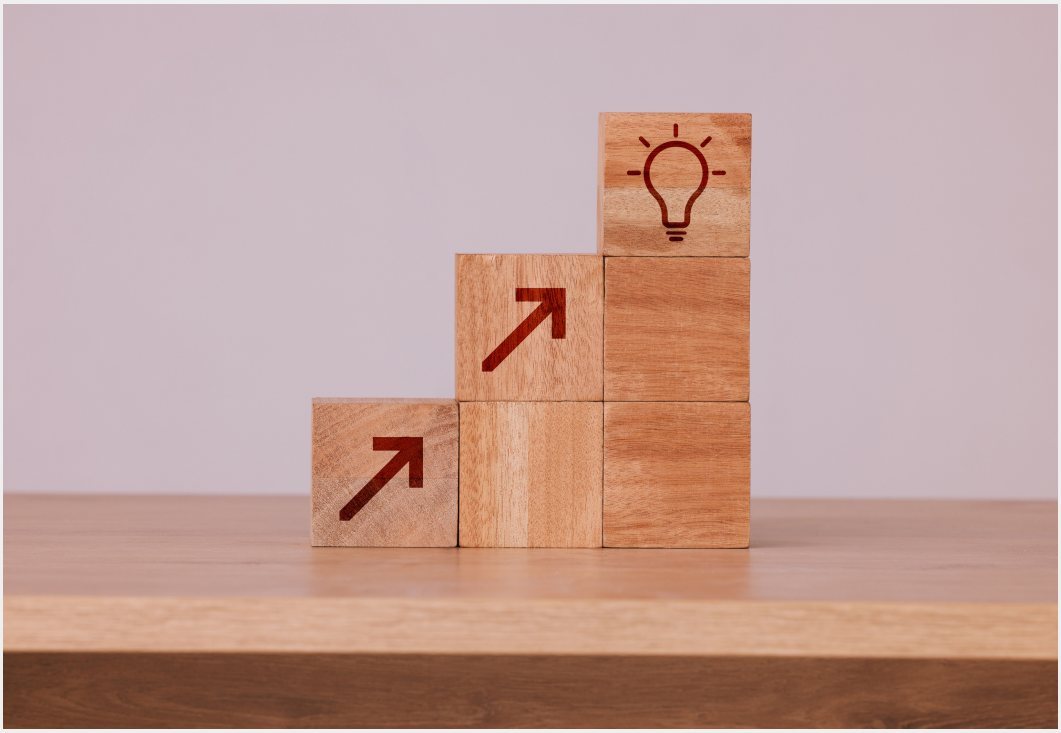
Finding inspiration: Use Instagram, TikTok, or Twitch to find three youth climate ambassadors you like. Write down 3 characteristics you recognise and value about each. Some famous young ambassadors of our days are Greta Thunberg from Sweden, Autumn Peltier from Canada, and Boyana Tomova from Bulgaria.

CONCLUSION

In this module, we explored the active participation of young people, the role of youth ambassadors, and the power of storytelling. We have learned about global and European initiatives that empower young individuals and the skills needed to be effective youth ambassadors. We also discussed the importance of self-confidence, volunteering, and leadership in creating positive change.

Active storytelling has proven to be a powerful tool for youth ambassadors, offering steps to success. Finally, we have recognised young people's active participation in social movements, which shows their commitment to shaping the world.

As you continue your journey as a youth ambassador, remember the collective impact of your generation. Use your voice and passion to inspire others and create a brighter future. Go and start!



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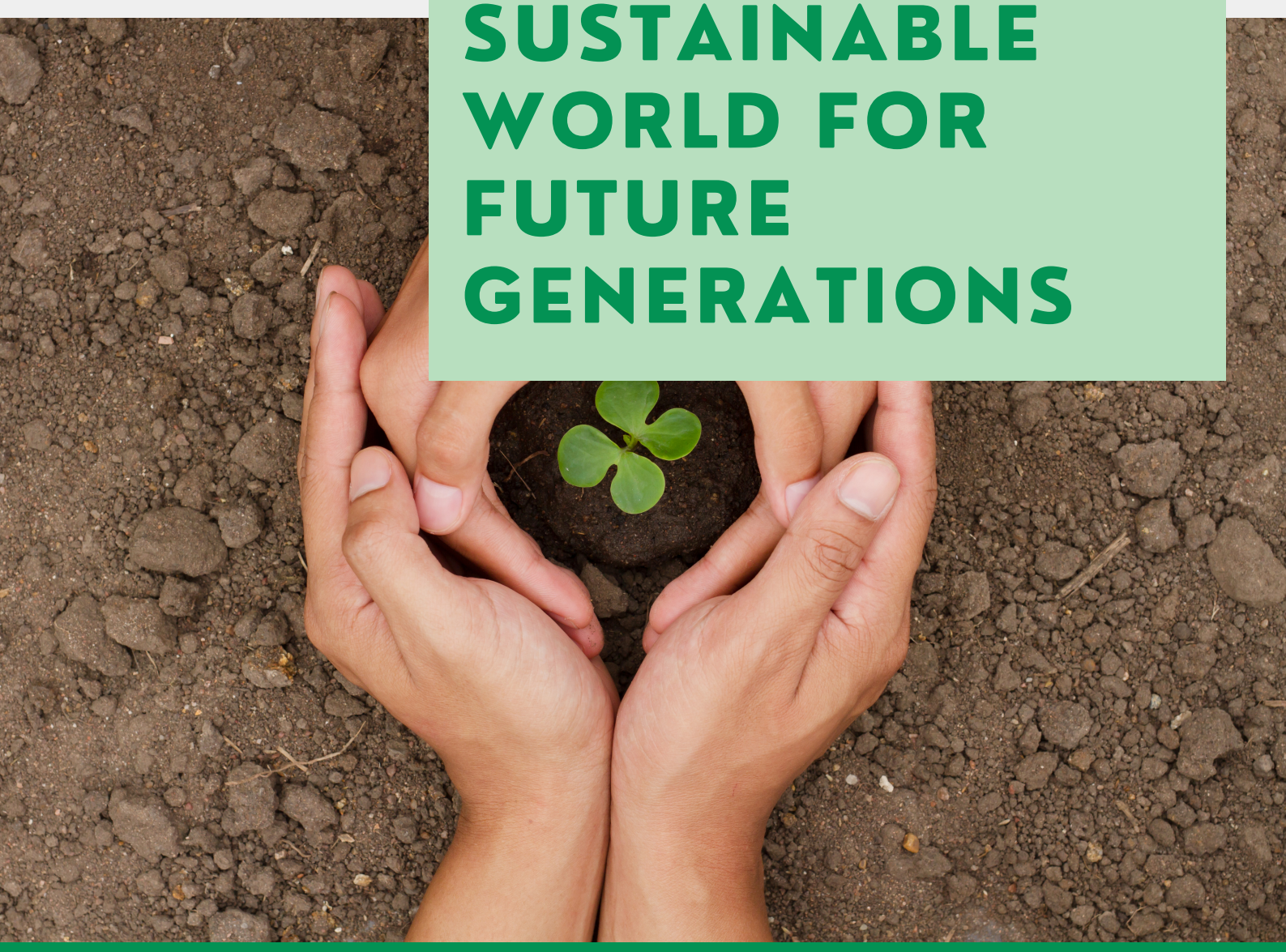
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