



#2 Let's talk about youth. A meeting with local youth

Evaluation report



Photo: A group photo of the participants at the meeting with local youth

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Table of contents

Information on the event and survey.....	3
European Youth Capital 2023.....	5
Young people’s needs	7
Young people’s engagement.....	10
Current engagement of the event participants	10
How to support young people’s engagement	12
Assessment of knowledge in the field of youth activities and social skills	14
Assessment of social skills.....	14
Assessment of knowledge regarding the entities and activities addressed to young people	16
Students’ Council	17
Expectations regarding school.....	19
Planning the activities which could be implemented by Students’ Councils	21
Assessment of the event	25
Summary	27
List of figures:	29



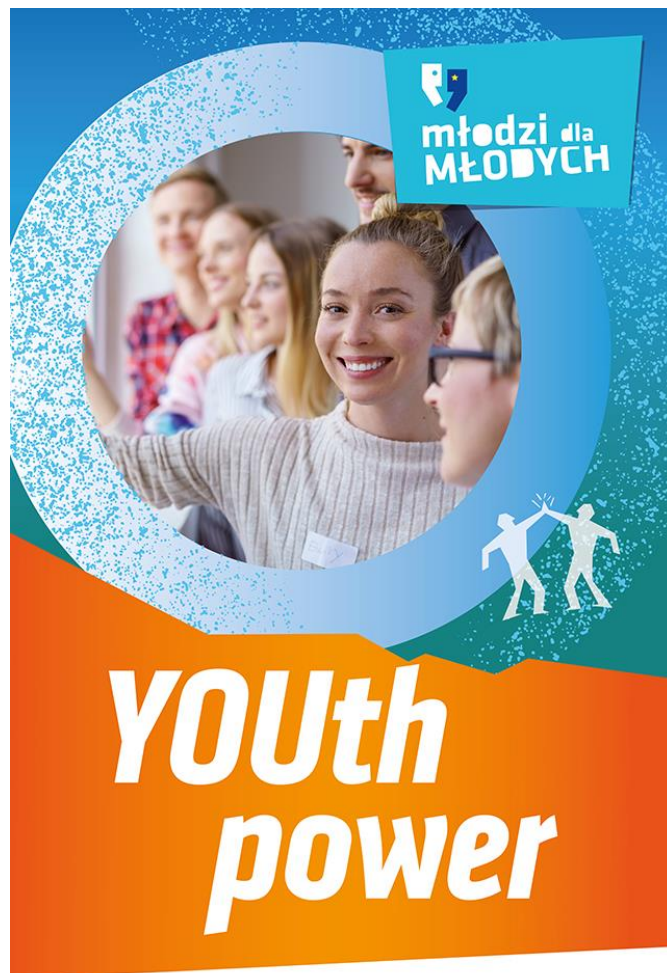
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Information on the event and survey

#2 Let's talk about youth was the first local event held as part of the project called "Youth for the Young – the Activities of Lublin's Youth to Integrate Youth Circles", co-financed by the European Union under the Erasmus+ programme.

As part of the event, a range of discussion panels were organised on 22 March 2023 at the Lublin Conference Centre. It all started with an introductory panel discussion – "Youth SU-per Panel. Lublin Is Our City", presenting Lublin as a city of youth. The panel served as a vehicle for outlining the activities of the Youth City Council of Lublin and Students' Councils, while during another panel – "What can we do as young people? Youth activities of the City of Lublin and the European Union", the opportunities for youth activities, including as part of the European Youth Capital Lublin 2023 and the European Union, were presented.

The ultimate points on the event's agenda were participant integration, group debates about young people's needs ("What do young people want?") and workshop activities devoted to planning the events that could be implemented by young people in their circles.



The event was evaluated using the following survey techniques: participant observation, online questionnaires completed at the end of the meeting, and analysis of the content displayed on the boards created during the Students' Council events planning workshop.



The participants filled in 71 questionnaires (out of over 100 participants present). The average age of the participants was 16. Most participants were aged 17 (22% of the surveyed), followed by those aged 14 (18%), 15 (16%) or 18 (15%).

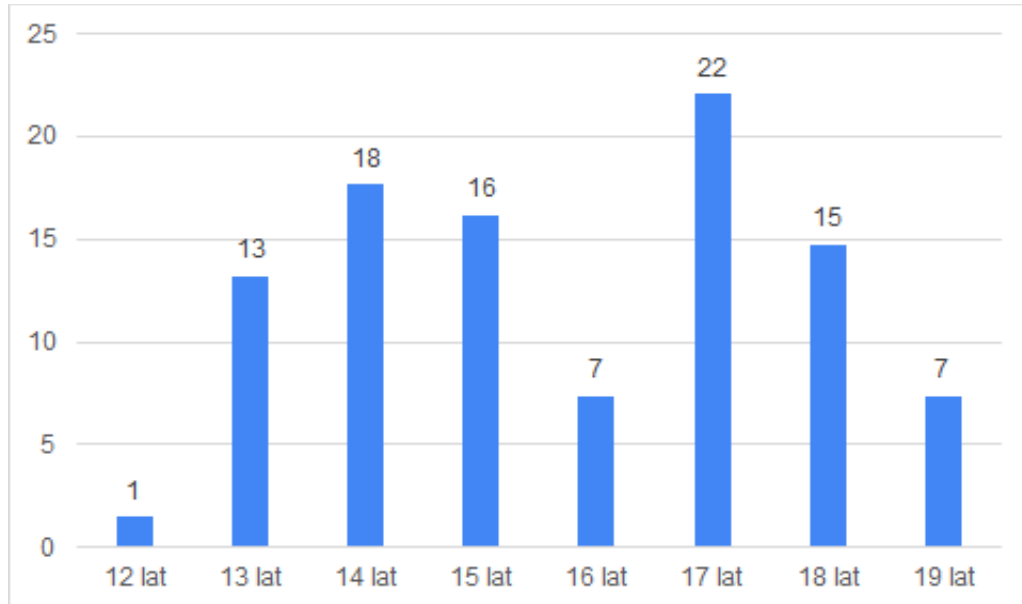


Figure 1. Age distribution in % (N=68)



Photo: The participants taking their seats in the room.



Photo: The participants at the meeting with local youth.

European Youth Capital 2023 (EYC)

The survey included questions about the connotations with the European Youth Capital Lublin 2023. The responses provided indicate that the EYC is mainly about young people who are active and who create it themselves, for instance, as members of the Youth City Council of Lublin.

A group of young people acting for the benefit of Lublin.

(a questionnaire answer)

A great job we have done.

(a questionnaire answer)

Some people associate the EYC Lublin 2023 with an organisation or project (bearing a huge potential).

An organisation that brings young people together to take action and a slogan that shows young people that their voice is important.

(a questionnaire answer)



According to the surveyed, the EYC activities provide a great opportunity for young people to meet other people (also on an international level), to implement their goals and ideas, or simply to express themselves.

A place to support young people and their ideas related to the city.

(a questionnaire answer)

The EYC is also seen as an opportunity to make a difference in the city and to close the existing gaps, as the municipal authorities are now more inclined to listen to what young people say (and to act on their ideas and needs). In this way, the EYC provides an chance for young people's demands to be taken into account in the decisions regarding the future. An opinion was also expressed that, thanks to the EYC, a youth policy could be developed in Lublin.

Collaboration with youth for youth

(a questionnaire answer)

An opportunity for us, young people, to express our opinions/share ideas about the city, and to say what we think.

(a questionnaire answer)

The EYC is an opportunity for Lublin to become a youth-friendly city and to finally develop a formal youth policy document for the city in collaboration with and for the benefit of young people.

(a questionnaire answer)

A youth city is a place where young people can feel safe and at ease, and where they can develop, have fun and do voluntary work. Above all, it is a youth-friendly place. The EYC supports young people's interests, letting them create interesting activities themselves.

It's a series of projects aimed at supporting young people and making the city more responsive to their needs.

(a questionnaire answer)

Definitely something cool. Young people have a go and can do cool things!

(a questionnaire answer)



Photo: The panellists meeting local youth.

Young people's needs

What are young people's needs? This open-ended question gave young people the opportunity to share their opinions on the directions that appear crucial to making life in Lublin better tailored to their expectations.

As regards young people's needs, most respondents mentioned the need to create spaces in Lublin accessible to young people. Such spaces are important as they would allow young people to meet their peers, get to know one another, and integrate. Spaces for young people should also fulfil relaxation, recreation, educational and entertaining functions, and enable them to develop their passions. Spaces dedicated to young people should be interesting and should create an atmosphere making all young people feel welcome regardless of their skin colour. "Hej!" was indicated as one of such spaces which, according to those surveyed, would be worth opening in other places in the city. A need for establishing open-air spaces serving similar functions was also expressed.

More places where we could just sit down.

(a questionnaire answer)



Photo: The participants at the meeting

A relatively large number of respondents referred to needs connected with education, more specifically the need to improve conditions in schools – to make them better organised and to provide more attractive teaching methods, including through project-based learning.

Another challenge for young people is to create opportunities for networking and the exchange of ideas to create a space for discussions for Students' Councils and other active groups.

Young people expect Lublin to support the opportunities to develop their interests, also by implementing their own ideas. According to those surveyed, the range of workshops on offer, as well as themed meetings, events, competitions and contests, could be helpful in this respect. Young people claim that the development of shared interests also performs an integrating function.

Young people need to have their voices heard. This, according to the surveyed, implies increased cooperation between them and the authorities. The need for greater openness towards young people, understanding and tolerance was also indicated.



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Photo: The panellists during the panel discussion: "What can we do as young people? Youth activities of the City of Lublin and the European Union"

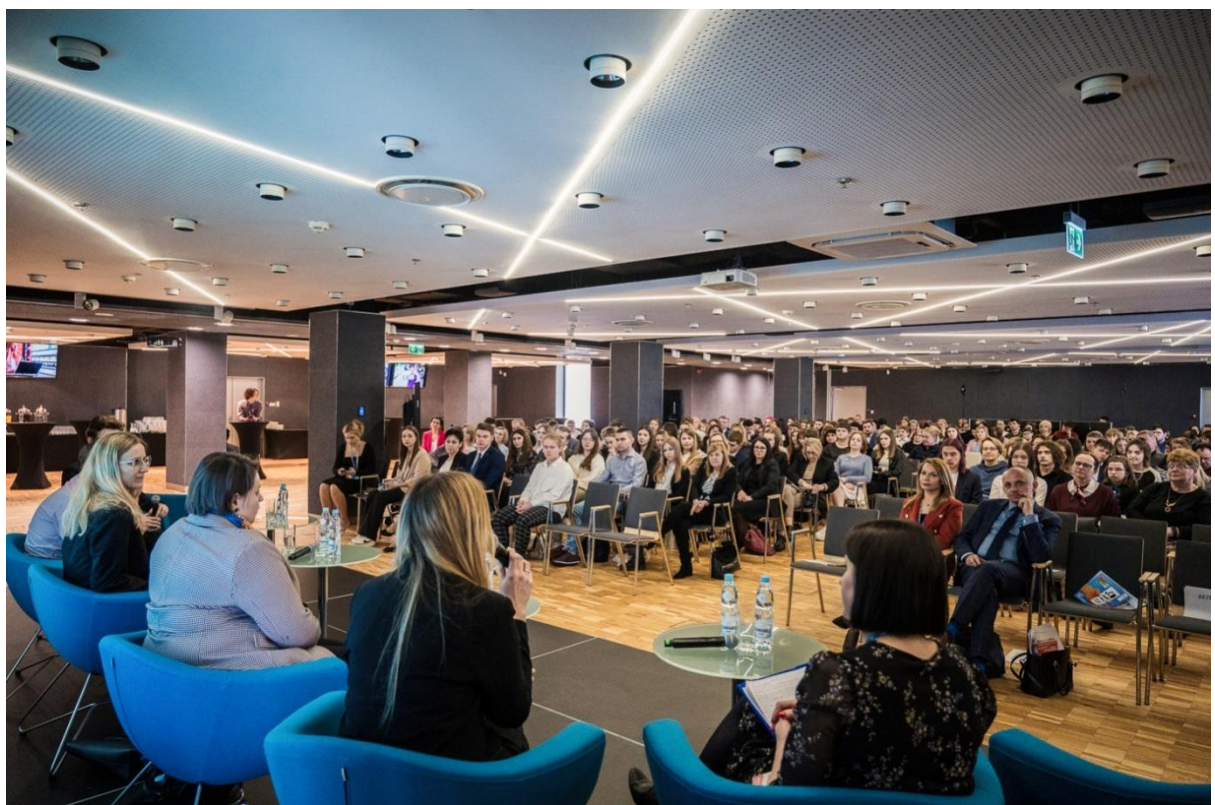


Photo: The panellists and the audience at the meeting



Young people's needs presented by category:

- **Spaces for young people:** more places to gather, meet new people, spend time with peers, relax and learn, more parks;
- **Education:** educational workshops, the need to improve learning conditions in schools, prompting project-based learning in schools as a form of practical lessons or passing a given course, lighter backpacks, higher education establishments offering a wider range of educational services;
- **Networking:** networking opportunities involving active young people and students' councils, creating a forum/platform for discussion between students' councils;
- **Interests:** pursuing one's passions and ideas, organising events and different gatherings to foster the development of shared interests, inclusive workshops;
- **Collaboration with youth:** increased openness towards young people, cooperation, understanding and tolerance, being respected by the city authorities, being listened to, being given a chance to express opinions;
- **Support in the development process:** assistance in the development process, new experiences;
- **Integration:** general integration, inter-school integration;
- **Finance:** money, increasing the municipal budget and decreasing the city's debt;
- **Entertainment:** events, attractions, entertainment;
- **Social engagement:** more opportunities to easily engage in the city's activities and the Youth City Council of Lublin;
- **Safety:** more safe spaces;
- **Work:** prospects of work for young people;
- **Psychological support:** increased support from psychologists;
- **Communication:** better communication between residential districts, public transport to suburban areas.

Young people's engagement

Current engagement of the event participants

Those attending the event and filling in the questionnaire were asked about their current and prospective activities.

In relation to plans for the future, 86% of those surveyed indicated that they wanted to be active in the near future (e.g., in students' councils, volunteering, organising matches or events, or in other ways). 13% of the participants marked the response "I don't know" and 1% claimed that they did not intend to undertake such types of activities.



Figure 2. Distribution of responses to the following question: "Do you want to be active in the near future, e.g., by organising matches or events as part of the Students' Councils, volunteering or in other ways?", in %, N-71 (blue: yes; red: no, orange: I don't know)



Photo: The workshop participants



How to support young people's engagement

Through the questionnaire, young people provided suggestions on how they should be supported on their way to becoming more engaged. The categories of support that were indicated are summarised below:

- Support by reducing the amount of school duties, approving, appreciating and respecting young people's activities, letting them be active, and ensuring that active young people are not demoralised or hindered from being active:

Eliminating the unnecessary duties, giving them time to develop in the direction they want.

(a questionnaire answer)

- Creating an open atmosphere at school, fostering discussions on diverse topic, including challenging (taboo) one, and striving for integration:

By making their voices heard and giving them an opportunity to express their opinions.

(a questionnaire answer)

- Identifying and responding to young people's needs, listening to young people, supporting them, acting on young people's ideas:

It is best to ask them about their needs and try to actively respond to them. Above all, listen to what young people might expect/want.

(a questionnaire answer)

- Financial support: funding, grants, logistic support in the implementation process.
- Educational and inspirational support: workshops, training sessions, lesson content, showing the way and the opportunities, sharing experience and advice, presenting the activities in which young people can get involved, outlining the benefits of being active, creating interest circles, sharing inspiration and ideas, organising meetings



with people who are active and can encourage young people to act, organising events related to certain activities, as well as fostering the integration of young people which would make it easier for them to act:

Organising workshops where young people can learn about projects they can take part in.

Make them aware that they can be active and draw benefits from it.

Inspire them, create opportunities and advertise new events in a more visible way.

Encourage them through workshops, inform them about such events, be open to ideas, establish a platform where young people could give their opinions about current events.

(questionnaire answers)

- Treating young people as partners: supporting their ideas, encouraging action, talking to them, promoting their activities and giving them publicity, being together in activities, creating space for them to act independently:

By giving them a free hand and supporting them in their decisions.

By listening to them and giving them advice based on previous experience.

(questionnaire answers)

- Engaging in school activities: interesting projects, collaboration, joint measures.
- Support from the city: creating spaces where young people could pursue their passions, creating a good (relaxed) atmosphere in the relationship between the city and young people, providing additional funding for schools, taking care of students' council supervisors, with young people selected for this position.

The following quote summarises all the support options identified above:



Make room for the creation of new projects, show how to plan projects and create a harmonious team, give the opportunity to contact experienced animators/persons who will help the students' council to operate and work with the team accordingly. Organise more free-of-charge and comprehensive projects which will foster the development of young people's skills for the future.

(a questionnaire answer)



Photo: The workshop participants

Assessment of knowledge in the field of youth activities and social skills

Assessment of social skills

The surveyed persons rated their teamwork skills best (68%), their ability to effectively search for and select information (61%), their communication skills (59%), and their creative skills (59%), while expressing the need to strengthen their public speaking skills (18% of the surveyed persons considered these skills to be low), assertive skills (17%), time management skills (14%), and barrier-breaking skills (13%).

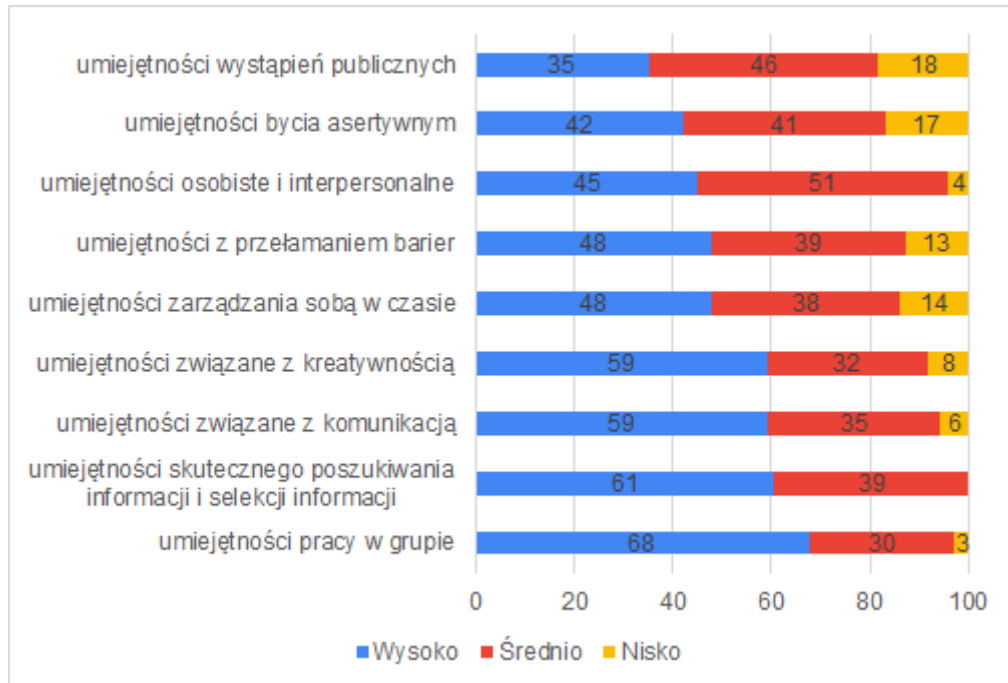


Figure 3. Distribution of responses to the question regarding the assessed level of skills, in %, N-71 (blue: high; red: moderate; yellow: low; [skills listed, top-down:] Public speaking skills, Assertive skills, Personal and interpersonal skills, Barrier-breaking skills, Time management skills, Creative skills, Communication skills, Ability to effectively search for and select information, Team work skills)



Photo: The workshop participants



Assessment of knowledge regarding the entities and activities addressed to young people

From among the areas included in that question, the respondents rated their knowledge of Students' Council's activities best (61% rated their level of knowledge as high). The knowledge of voluntary work was rated as high by 38% of the respondents, and every fourth person (25% of the surveyed) rated their knowledge of the European Youth Capital Lublin 2023 as very highly, while a similar proportion declared a low level of knowledge of the EYC. The respondents claimed to have the lowest level of knowledge about the activities of the Youth City Council of Lublin (only 19% assessed it as high) and about the activities of NGOs (11%).

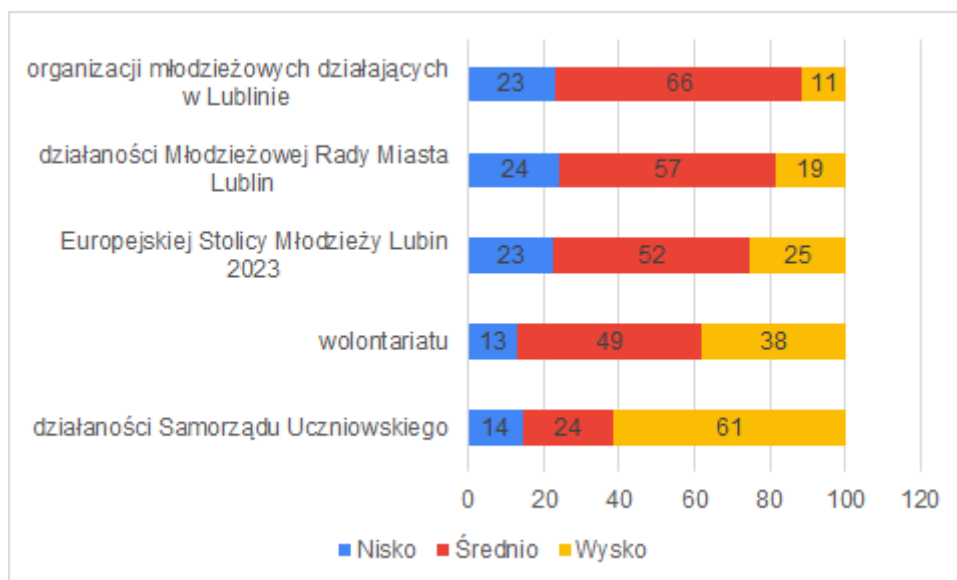


Figure 4. Distribution of responses to the question regarding the level of knowledge of a given activity/entity, in %, N-71

(blue: low; red: moderate; yellow: high; [options listed, top-down:] Youth organisations operating in Lublin, Activities of Youth City Council of Lublin, European Youth Capital Lublin 2023, Voluntary work, Students' Council's activities



Photo: The workshop participants during an icebreaker game.

Students' Council

According to the meeting participants, the Students' Council should, first and foremost, be open to other people, i.e., not only listen to them but also be responsive to their needs and ideas. Importantly, this openness should include cooperation with others, being friendly and tolerant.

It should be responsive to the needs of all students, i.e., it must also have good communication with people.

(a questionnaire answer)

The term "openness" was often combined with additional terms describing an open attitude to different ideas and suggestions.

Open to new proposals, and full of energy and willingness to do something "different".

(a questionnaire answer)



Other common opinions concerning the Students' Council implied that it should be active and involved in the life of the school (but also that outside school), i.e., it should be active, lively, hard-working, actively making improvements to the school, involved in the school community, willing to do things, and taking a truly active approach.

Other suggestions made by the respondents were that the Students' Council should be integrated, organised and responsible. It was often indicated that the role of the Students' Council is to be supportive, i.e., it should support and assist students in having their needs satisfied.

Involved, subjective, organised, in the lead of the school community, the Students' Council should be a true leader and advocate for the school community, and it should develop students' competences, collaborate and establish contacts outside school.

(a questionnaire answer)

The following expressions were used to describe what the Students' Council should be like:

- open;
- communicative (empathetic);
- creative/inventive;
- flexible;
- helpful;
- active;
- responsible;
- integrated;
- organised;
- honest;
- conversant with the applicable requirements;
- refined;
- independent and assertive;
- efficient.



Photo: The workshop participants

Expectations regarding school

The respondents expect the school to be better organised, to have a good atmosphere (based on mutual understanding, kindness and tolerance), to be open to students' ideas and, generally, to support them in various areas, including organisational and psychological. They also expect a good flow of information as well as increased support for the Students' Council's activities and various events, including icebreaking ones.

The responses regarding expectations for school activities are presented below, grouped in the following categories:

- atmosphere: change in the atmosphere, nice atmosphere, relaxed atmosphere;
- organisation: better organised school, increased organisation, better timetable and classrooms; access to classrooms, paper in toilets, fixed toilets;
- support in project implementation: approval of student projects, assistance with project implementation, openness to ideas;
- support in pursuing one's passions and interests,
- support for the Students' Council: better organisation and more powers vested in the Students' Council, financial support and more opportunities to act; engagement in and support for the Students' Council's activities;



- events: more thematic events, more activities for young people, more variety in school activities and thematic days, more actions, many charitable and inclusive actions;
- communication: creating effective communication between "school bodies", no bureaucracy hindering communication, no withholding of information from students, and transparency in the head teacher's and teaching staff's activities;
- integration: integration of the school community, integration with students, inclusive actions;
- support: mental support and assistance, helping students to fulfil their dreams;
- support in development: the learning process, change of teachers, practical preparation for future life (studies, work).

Individual opinions relating to the attitudes which the teaching staff should demonstrate:

- commitment;
- kindness;
- interest in students' affairs;
- forbearance;
- understanding;
- more tolerance;
- openness to differences;
- fairness;
- giving more freedom;
- respect for students' rights and listening to students;
- forbearance.



Photo: The workshop participants working on their project

Planning the activities which could be implemented

As part of the event, young people had a chance to participate in the workshops in which they developed ideas for various activities. These mostly concerned one-off events which could be implemented at school by the students' council, including discos, competitions or inclusive events.

The proposals from all groups are listed below:

a) Group 1.

- (the event) will take place in the gym,
- sound system: school-based,
- day one – elimination, with 10 people going further,
- day two – elimination, with 5 people going further,
- day two – finals,
- prize: voucher tailored to one's interests,
- jury: 1 teacher, 2 students,



b) Group 2. A night at school

- event date: 1 June 2023, Children's Day, at midnight, return home: 2 June, at noon,
- venue: school gym,
- grades: 4 to 8
- funding: Parents' Council,
- catering – arranged individually by students of different grades,
- students' own equipment: sleeping bags, pillows, clothes, hygienic accessories,
- night-time activities: cinema, karaoke, hide-and-seek around the school, escape room,
- care-takers: teachers indicated by the Students' Council,

c) Group 3. Valentine's Day party

On 14 February 2023, a Valentine's Day party will be held in the gym, between 5.00 pm and 9.37 pm. At the end of the event, voting for the King and Queen of the party will be held. The event will be subsidised by the Youth City Council of Lublin.

Organiser: Students' Council.

d) Group 4. Music Picnic

- competition categories: Polish music, foreign music, dancing
- special guests, e.g., Sanah,
- cakes made by students.

e) Group 5. Games corner

- head teacher's permission,
- venue: 1st floor, corridor
- date of the event
- funding; what source? what purpose?

f) Group 6. Picnic Party

- making new friends,
- team games,
- eating together,
- various competitions,



- having fun together,
- school performances (optional),
- teachers competing against students,

g) Group 7. Oscar Disco

- 1 April 2023
- grades 1-3, from 4.00 pm to 6.00 pm
- grades 4-8, from 7.00 pm to 10.15 pm
- award ceremony:
 - best styling,
 - best role play,
 - best voice imitation,
 - best choreography,
 - best props,
 - best dialogue,
- bringing sweets for children in need instead of entry tickets

h) Group 8. I've Got Talent

- applications to be collected from 23.03 to 28.03 by the Students' Council,
- awards: jigsaw puzzle with the school logo, behaviour rated as excellent, praise,

i) Group 9. Film Hero Day

- date: first day of school after the Oscars ceremony,
- debate to select favourite films (giving suggestions),
- selecting films for individual grades (through drawing of lots),
- presentation of characters from individual films,
- quizzes, puns,
- choosing the winners in various categories (best film, best costume, best music, etc.),
- viewing of the selected film together,

j) Group 10. Pet Day

- objectives:



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- student integration,
- presentation of various pets,
- making school days more attractive,
- animal talent show,
- providing information on how to take care of animals,
- every pet is welcome,
- cooperation between secondary and primary schools on the occasion of the Children's Day,
- date: 01.06.2023,
- admission conditional on bringing some sweets – preparing boxes for the hospice,

k) Group 11. Integration tournament

- purpose: establishing and strengthening inter-grade relationships, improving the overall school atmosphere, developing interpersonal skills, raising funds,
- process: organising a sports/science tournament,
- voluntary work,
- fund-raising for school development,
- a fair – collaboration in the preparation process,
- outdoor activities involving different school grades.





Photo: Presentation of the workshop results of one of the groups.

Assessment of the event

The event attendees were satisfied with their participation (91% of the responses).

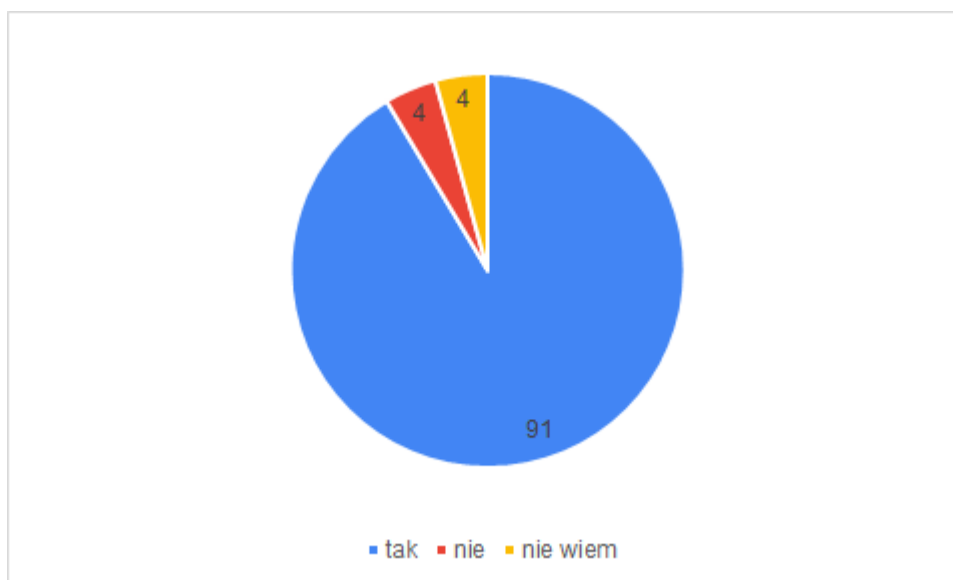


Figure 5. Distribution of responses to the following question: "Are you satisfied with your participation in the event?", in %, N=70 (blue: yes; red: no; orange: I don't know)

The most important things that young people learned at the event:

- new ideas, e.g., what could be done;
- learning about the activities (projects) organised in Lublin;
- learning about the activities organised with schools in mind;
- learning about youth organisations in Lublin;
- learning about new places for young people;
- learning about the activities of the City Youth Council of Lublin;
- learning about the activities of Students' Councils,
- becoming familiar with students' rights;
- learning about the European Youth Capital 2023;
- learning about voluntary work.



In addition to learning about different organisations and projects, the respondents claim to have acquired skills and knowledge regarding their social competences such as:

- the ability to plan events under time pressure;
- knowledge of how to gain new experience;
- knowledge of how they can make their school different;
- team work and cooperation skills;
- a sense of the importance of youth activities for the city;
- integration with peers;
- being open to new people and their ideas;
- meeting other active people.

People were mostly encouraged to attend the event by the fact that they could meet new people (79% of the respondents), develop their skills (76%), and get more socially engaged (73%). In addition, people attending the event wanted to learn more about the “Youth for the Young” project (44%), and to share their knowledge and experience with others (39%). Every fourth person was encouraged by someone else to attend the event (27%), and one in ten found themselves here by chance (13%).

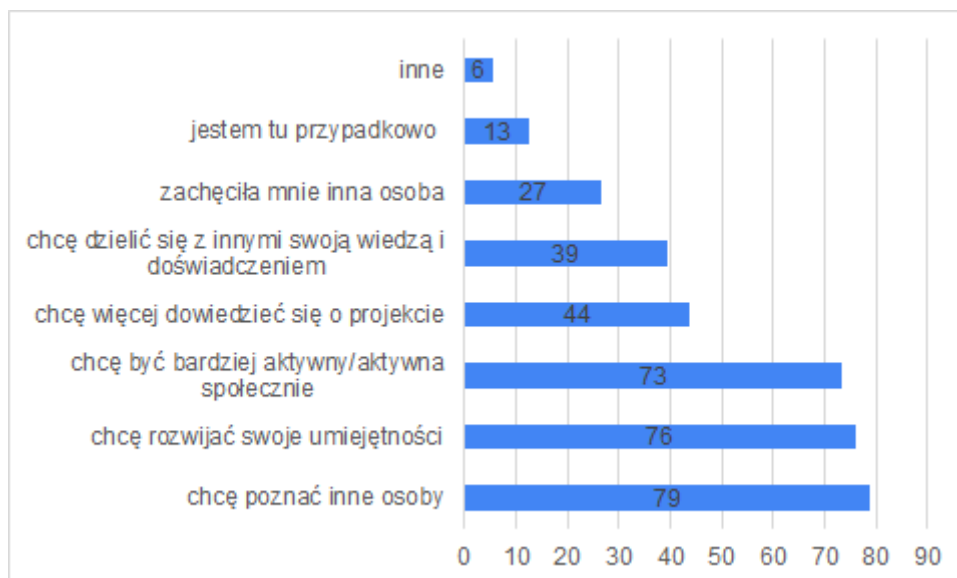


Figure 6. Distribution of responses to the following question: “What encouraged you to attend this event?”, in %, N-70 ([options listed top-down:] Other reason, I’m here by chance, I was encouraged by someone else, I want to share my knowledge and experience with others, I want to learn about the project, I want to get more socially engaged, I want to develop my skills, I want to meet new people)



Photo: A group photo of the workshop participants.

Summary

The event was attended by young people from Lublin schools who had little experience of social engagement, most often connected with the Students' Council's activities or voluntary work. The vast majority of the participants claimed that they would like to continue and develop their activities. The respondents assessed their level of competence based on which the following areas were identified as those requiring further improvement: public speaking skills, assertive skills, time management skills, and barrier-breaking skills. As regards entities acting for the youth, the participants reported having little knowledge of the Youth City Council of Lublin and activities of NGOs.

Based on the opinions concerning the support for the Students' Council's activities, it is recommended to take measures mainly aimed at developing the following competences:

- empathetic (open) communication;
- team building and cooperation with others (commitment and organisation);
- implementation of ideas (from initiative to action);
- creativity;
- support (assistance) in different situations or needs.

The vast majority of the attendees were satisfied with their participation in the event. Those who participated in the event indicated in the survey that their motivation to participate was to meet new people, develop skills and get more engaged. Moreover, in the open-ended questions, young people provided some important insights about their needs,



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support for engagement, perceptions of the Students' Council, and the needs related to school.



Photo: A group photo of the workshop participants.



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List of figures

Figure 1. Age distribution in % (N-68)	4
Figure 2. Distribution of responses to the following question: "Do you want to be active in the near future, e.g., by organising matches or events as part of the Students' Councils, volunteering or in other ways?", in %, N-71	11
Figure 3. Distribution of responses to the question regarding the assessed level of skills, in %, N-71	15
Figure 4. Distribution of responses to the question regarding the level of knowledge of a given activity/entity, in %, N-71	16
Figure 5. Distribution of responses to the following question: "Are you satisfied with your participation in the event?", in %, N-70	25
Figure 6. Distribution of responses to the following question: "What encouraged you to attend this event?", in %, N-70	26