How can the SDGs enhance youth led active citizenship?
Think Global

“Learning for a just and sustainable world”

• Training and resources
• Research and advocacy
• Programmes – like Start the Change
• Membership

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union
Q: Why are the SDGs important for global learning and active citizenship?

A: They provide a clear framework to enable discussion of key global issues.
What does this look like in practice?

**Start the Change!**

“Preventing violent radicalization and promoting democratic values, fundamental rights, intercultural understanding and active citizenship.”

- Focusing on citizenship and fostering knowledge, understanding and ownership of democratic values and human rights
- Supporting teachers in handling conflicts and dealing with diversity
- Encouraging youth participation in social and civic life and developing inclusion and outreach practices to reach young people.
What is Start the Change?

• ERASMUS+

• Two-year programme of funding

• It’s not part of the government’s Prevent agenda, or part of the Global Learning Programme: but it does relate to both
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**Research and training**
- Workshops with students and teachers
- Insights
- Research report
- CPD
- Communication of young people’s views

**Active citizenship and volunteering in school**
- Facilitated by staff
- Led by students
- Not prescriptive
- Building relationships and communication

**Celebration, self-confidence, achievement**
- Creative competition
- Conferences
- Project film
- Policy recommendations

Start the change!
Start the Change meets the SDGs

• The project model is based on a successful programme in Croatia
• Think Global introduced the SDG Framework as a tool for learning and taking action
• The SDG framework provides a global perspective to the issues identified by young people
• Understanding of the key issues of identity, diversity, inclusion and democracy are enhanced by the global perspective of the SDGs
• Young people can relate their local projects to the global goals
Start the Change Research

“... research aimed to build an understanding of young people’s ideas of diversity, identity and extremism as well as how schools and young people can be better supported to promote *social cohesion* and engage in *active citizenship* opportunities.”
Research and methodology

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**Research and methodology**

- **Lit review**
- **10 workshops** (86 participants)
- **17 teacher interviews**
- **Online survey** (316 responses)

**Group discussion**

**Structured activities**

**Creativity:** objects, reflection

**Worksheets**

3 co-educational Secondaries in rural /semi-rural north-east England: predominantly White British & of no religion; KS3

Three major terror attacks during the research

4 secondary and 1 sixth form in London; 1 all boys, 4 co-educational, 4 inner-city schools and one in outer London: highly mixed ethnic origin & mixed religious backgrounds; predominantly Christian or Muslim; KS3/5
Who did we listen to?
Selected stats

Workshops

Survey

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What did we find?

**Young people are highly motivated to tackle discrimination**

- opportunity to support schools to develop active citizenship initiatives that empower young people to tackle discrimination and build social cohesion.

**Young people do not readily contextualise extremism in wider geo-political issues... suggesting they have limited understanding of such attacks as ideologically or politically motivated.**

- the ‘disconnects’... suggest more needs to be done to help young people understand such events and form their own views.
- need to ensure teachers can help students recognise that extremism has context, so they can think critically and foster resilience to prejudice.
Schools are a safe space for discussion of sensitive topics such as extreme political or religious views, but there is scope for improvement.

- Teachers identify the need for more training on how to facilitate discussion of sensitive topics and extreme views, both in the formal timetable and through active citizenship.

Young people would benefit from more opportunities for facilitated discussion.

- There is a need to create space for young people to generate ideas about what they want to change and how; schools can play a vital role in developing young people as active citizens.
The role of social media must be given serious consideration

Teachers are unsure what they need for their schools to be able to further support students to engage in active citizenship activities

... initiatives targeted at developing critical thinking skills and fostering active citizenship, especially if focused on tackling discrimination and building social cohesion, should integrate social media

... opportunity and a need to support students and teachers to explore ideas in collaboration and more clearly identify how they can develop active citizenship
How do these findings link to the SDGs, and what are the implications for teacher training?
Implications for teacher training?

- **New pedagogies**: Facilitation techniques for discussing sensitive topics in a safe space across all staff.

- **Support**: Development of active citizenship pedagogy and ideas – a global learning framework based on the SDGs.

- **Knowledge**: Key content areas: discrimination and unconscious bias, tackling extreme views and media and social media literacy. Utilising the SDG framework to understand global issues.

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What’s next?

The active citizenship phase..

• Developed and led by young people
• Supported by teachers and experience StC project staff
• Connection to European action through partners
• Connection to global learning and action through the SDGs

What’s the added value to young people, teachers, policy makers, teacher trainers of linking the SDGs to this project?