



Youth education, employment and participation in the Eastern Partnership

EU4YOUTH
Achievements Report 2025

#EU4Youth

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

The [EU4Youth programme](#) is the European Union's (EU) largest initiative since 2018 for supporting young people across the Eastern Partnership (EaP) region, covering Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Its impact is significant and is attributed to the vast network spanning programme implementing partners and grantees, European institutions, several national line ministries and state agencies, youth networks, civil society organisations, universities, and social innovation initiatives across the region. Each year, the results of these collaborations are monitored and recorded in public reports – with this year's edition titled “Youth education, employment and participation in the Eastern Partnership.”

EU4Youth works across three core areas:



Education and Employability

Strengthening the employability of young people in the region through the targeted development of skills. This pillar includes capacity building of both local and regional stakeholders to foster education and employment opportunities and to strengthen young people's competence, development and employability.



Entrepreneurship and Employment

Increasing the entrepreneurial, green and digital skills of young people by promoting (social) entrepreneurship among youth and youth employment stakeholders in the region. Understanding what young people need to secure employment and improving youth policy design through evidence-based policy recommendations, are key elements of this pillar.



Engagement and Empowerment

Enhancing young people's participation in society by increasing youth awareness in terms of national policy developments. This pillar aims to contribute to improvements in youth policy design and help to strengthen young people's capacity in terms of civic participation.

This report summarises the programme's accomplishments over the course of 2025. Given the scale of the programme and the influence of its stakeholders on youth policies and their implementation in the respective countries, this report is a one-of-a-kind regional overview of wider developments in reducing youth unemployment, strengthening active citizenship and expanding opportunities for young people in the EaP. As the current EU4Youth phase approaches its conclusion at the end of May 2026, the report also serves as a comprehensive wrap-up of the initiative. It builds on previous achievement reports by placing a stronger focus on the EU4Youth programme's long-term impact and sustainability.



The EU's long-term investment in young people across the region remains central to promote democratic values, political stability and sustainable economic development. By engaging in decision-making processes, young people contribute to democratic transformation, counter authoritarian pressures and strengthen societal resilience.

Economically, investing in youth enhances employability, supports innovation and fosters social entrepreneurship. These dynamics help stimulate local economies and open new avenues for cooperation between the EaP region and the EU. Socially, empowering young people promotes cohesion, inclusion and stronger, more adaptable communities.

The wider achievements of the EU4Youth programme reflected in this report have taken place in the context of ongoing conflict, uncertainty and political challenges in the region. These factors continue to shape policies and the everyday lives of young people. Against this backdrop, EU support to youth in the region plays the role of a stabilising force, nurturing innovative potential, strengthening civic engagement and ensuring that young people remain equipped to face regional and global challenges.

At the same time, the Eastern Partnership has been hit hard by the full-scale war in Ukraine and a global funding squeeze, driven in part by deep cuts to US foreign assistance and wider re-prioritisation and re-allocation of funding among traditional donors. Youth-focused programmes, already structurally underfunded, have seen international resources shrink, putting pressure on youth organisations, local youth infrastructures and youth programming in general. The role of EU funding for youth becomes, under these circumstances, even more critical in sustaining capacities, safeguarding existing gains, and ensuring continued support to young people across the region.

Even in the evolving political landscape of 2025, EU4Youth and the many organisations it unites have once again demonstrated resilience and adaptability. Looking ahead, the legacy of the current EU4Youth phase will continue through the systems, skills and relationships it has helped establish across the Eastern Partnership. The programme leaves behind stronger youth organisations, more capable public institutions, and a generation of young people equipped with the competences, confidence and networks to sustain civic participation, employment pathways and community-driven initiatives.

Many of the mechanisms introduced, such as Youth Policy Labs, strengthened youth councils, improved career-guidance tools, and inclusive youth spaces, are now embedded in local structures and can continue to operate beyond the programme's lifetime. The accumulated evidence, practices and partnerships developed through EU4Youth provide a durable foundation for ongoing youth empowerment, ensuring that the programme's impact extends well beyond 2025 and remains a reference point for future youth-focused efforts in the region.

The report is structured into four main chapters. Chapter 1 provides **Main insights and an overview of the EU4Youth programme**. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 focus respectively on **Education and Employability, Entrepreneurship and Employment**, and **Engagement and Empowerment**, presenting the programme's key activities and achievements throughout 2025.

The information presented in this report is drawn from programme-wide monitoring data collected throughout 2025 under the EU4Youth framework. Quantitative figures are primarily based on official EU4Youth progress reports, data submissions from implementing partners, and records from the EU4Youth central monitoring database. These sources are further complemented by thematic reporting produced under the Coordination and Policy Support project, as well as project-level results frameworks, event reports, and grant implementation reports.

Qualitative evidence, including examples of impact and success stories, is sourced from published stories on EU Neighbours East and partner platforms.





MAIN INSIGHTS AND EU4YOUTH OVERVIEW

In 2025, the Eastern Partnership region exhibited increasingly divergent political trajectories, with Moldova, Ukraine and Armenia continuing to advance in their EU integration efforts despite ongoing instability and external pressures by Russia affecting their national contexts. Ukraine's progress was particularly notable: even while facing the realities of a full-scale war, the country improved its overall [Eastern Partnership Index score](#), reflecting remarkable resilience and a sustained commitment to EU-aligned reforms across multiple sectors. This determination to uphold democratic and institutional progress under severe strain underscores Ukraine's continued orientation toward a European future.

In stark contrast, Georgia experienced pronounced democratic backsliding during the same period. Georgia experienced measurable declines in media freedom, judicial independence and anti-corruption performance, alongside tightened control over civic freedoms and increasing constraints on freedom of assembly and expression. These developments marked a clear departure from earlier reform progress and raised serious concerns about the country's political direction and its alignment with democratic norms.

Young people across the Eastern Partnership were directly affected by these shifting political and societal landscapes. According to the [Eastern Partnership Index 2025](#), youth faced shrinking civic space, the consequences of conflict and instability, and increasingly limited avenues for meaningful participation and empowerment, making 2025 a particularly challenging year for youth engagement and prospects across the region.

Against this backdrop, EU4Youth played an important role. Despite deteriorating political and security conditions, the programme continued to advance youth participation, skills development and empowerment initiatives, demonstrating adaptability and resilience. As part of its 2025 efforts, the [EU4Youth: Youth Engagement and Empowerment Small Grants Scheme](#), implemented by GIZ, expanded opportunities for youth organisations in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, enabling them to pilot innovative projects focused on youth inclusion, civic participation and community-level engagement. Through these actions, EU4Youth helped to sustain spaces for youth leadership and civic participation, working against the odds of challenging political realities.

EU4Youth ongoing and past projects

EU4Youth promotes the active participation of young people in society and the economy in the Eastern Partnership countries, providing capacity building and policy support to national stakeholders in the fields of youth work, education and employment. In line with its objective to strengthen youth participation and policy development across the EaP region, EU4Youth has implemented a series of projects:



EU4Youth Coordination and Support - EY 2018-2023

Ensured the smooth coordination of the overall EU4Youth programme, by supporting the monitoring, communication and visibility of the programme.



EU4Youth Youth Engagement Roadmaps - GOPA 2019-2023

Completed in 2023, the project has promoted youth participation, youth employment partnerships and youth social entrepreneurship. It has advanced the development of evidence-based policy responses to the challenges faced by young people, and promoted their involvement in policy discussions, using roundtables and policy labs in the region to facilitate youth engagement in policy making.



EU4Youth Coordination and Policy Support – EY 2023-2026

- ✓ **120 Alumni**
- ✓ **30+ facilitators trained**
- ✓ **3,000+ young people reached**

Provides coordination and policy support for the programme in alignment with EU and national policy priorities, supporting strategic partnerships, programme monitoring and communication across the Eastern Partnership region. The project also coordinates the EU4Youth Alumni Network, provides sectoral expertise to strengthen alignment with relevant policies and initiatives, and supports the design, rollout and methodological consolidation of EU4Youth Youth Policy Labs as participatory tools for youth-inclusive policymaking. In addition, it supports key thematic activities addressing young people.



EU4Youth - Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship – CPVA 2021-2026

- ✓ **2,600+ PSE staff trained**
- ✓ **10,500 young people trained**
- ✓ **117 social enterprises established**

Co-financed by Lithuania and implemented by the Central Project Management Agency (CPVA), the project promotes the active participation of youth in both democratic life and labour markets. Building the structural capacities of key institutions, activities cover partnerships among public employment services and other stakeholders to address youth employment issues, promoting youth involvement and facilitating knowledge transfer and exchange with the EU experience on the Youth Guarantee.



EU4Youth - Youth Engagement and Empowerment – GIZ 2023-2026

- ✓ **510+ Events**
- ✓ **112 policy recommendations developed**
- ✓ **365 organisations strengthened**

Implemented by GIZ, with co-financing from Germany, the project builds on the work of previous project phases to actively involve young people in policy dialogue and decision-making processes. It does so by strengthening the ability of youth organisations and public institutions to engage in participatory and structured policy dialogue at local, regional, and national level, while also improving the quality and outreach of youth work in the region.

EU4Youth grants

The EU4Youth programme has also supported a range of targeted grant schemes designed to strengthen the work of local organisations active in the youth sector.

Small grants

In 2024, [a small grants scheme was launched](#) under the EU4Youth: Youth Engagement and Empowerment project, implemented by GIZ, to support innovative pilot initiatives at the local level. The scheme invited youth organisations in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine to propose activities addressing climate change and environmental issues, the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities, and country-specific priorities such as strengthening youth participation in Moldova and supporting young people's role in Ukraine's recovery. Most of these projects were implemented throughout 2025, with 33 youth organisations awarded small grants to carry out their initiatives across the region.

Regional grants

In two phases between 2018 and 2023, EU4Youth provided grants to ten large regional projects focused on increasing the employability, (social) entrepreneurship and participation of young people in society. Since 2023, seven regional grant projects have been implemented under the Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship project, focusing on supporting youth employment and entrepreneurship in the green and digital economies.

Direct grants to Ukraine ('Ukraine Window')

Since 2023, the EU4Youth programme has been directly supporting locally driven initiatives in Ukraine to help mitigate the impacts of the war. These grants are designed to strengthen both societal and economic resilience, focusing on practical needs within affected communities. Activities include assistance for youth centres, targeted support for persons with disabilities, rehabilitation services for young veterans, and investments in post-conflict education and broader recovery efforts.



EU4Youth scholarships and fellowships

To support young leaders from the Eastern Partnership countries in becoming future changemakers and to promote cultural exchange and learning, EU4Youth: Employment and Entrepreneurship, implemented by CPVA, offers scholarships and fellowships at the College of Europe Natolin campus.

College of Europe (Natolin Campus - Poland) scholarships

Increases the understanding of EaP youth about European politics and governance and fosters multi-cultural learning through scholarships for the College of Europe in Natolin.

Natolin Fellowship Programme

Since 2024, EU4Youth has extended its partnership with the College of Europe Natolin Campus to offer a unique fellowship programme to young professionals from EaP countries.

Most effective approaches



Alignment with national policies >

ensured ownership and sustainability



Building on existing experience and systems >

avoided duplication and accelerated implementation



Expanded partnerships >

enabled access to wider expertise and target groups



Flexible and adaptive delivery >

allowed reaching vulnerable groups in different contexts

Key highlights for 2025

January

- EU4Youth supported the Women's League NGO in launching the [Girls Empowerment Academy 1.0](#), strengthening leadership skills and civic participation of young girls to influence decision-making in their communities across Ukraine.
- EU4Youth supports '[YELI initiative](#)' empowering young leaders in Southern Moldova.



February

- EU4Youth Alumni gather for [IdeaLab event in Chisinau](#).



March

- EU4Youth supports training for public officials and a [policy lab in Kyiv](#).
- EU4Youth supports a [youth leaders' camp in Zolotonosha, Ukraine](#), inspiring young participants to strengthen civic engagement and develop community-driven actions under the guidance of the Youth Development Centre NGO.



April

- EU4Youth supports a two-day workshop in Lviv that brought together [eight national youth councils](#) to strengthen coordination and influence the development of state youth policy in Ukraine.
- The EU-supported [Natolin Fellowship Programme](#) successfully concluded after eight months, equipping 11 Fellows from Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia with knowledge and skills to advance European integration.
- EU4Youth: Youth Engagement and Empowerment project launches [Youth Policy Labs in Georgia](#).



May

- EU4Youth: over 500 young people help shape [Armenia's Youth Policy Law](#) with EU support.
- Youth Policy Labs launched in [15 communities across Armenia](#).
- EU4Youth [study visit to Armenia](#) fosters high-impact exchange on youth participation in policymaking.
- The [EU4Youth initiative organised a study visit to Armenia](#) from 5-7 May.



June

- EU4Youth organises [study visit to Poland](#).
- EU4Youth supports a [two-day training empowering young Ukrainian women](#) with leadership and political career skills.



July

- Under the EU4Youth programme, an [international conference in Chişinău](#) brought together over 150 participants from Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine to showcase and strengthen youth-led social student enterprises.
- With EU4Youth support, the [Ukrainian Youth Councils Association held a final forum in Kyiv](#) bringing together youth councils and stakeholders to reflect on achievements and shape the future of youth political education in Ukraine.



August

- To harmonise the implementation of Youth Policy Labs (YPL) across the Eastern Partnership, the EU4Youth Coordination and Policy Support project has developed a [comprehensive toolkit](#). This document is now available as a resource for any organisation interested in planning and implementing an impactful policy lab in accordance with EU guidelines.



September

- With EU4Youth support, the [National Ukrainian Youth Association held an inclusivity training](#) that strengthened member organisations' skills in accessibility, human rights, and barrier-free approaches while building a network of inclusivity ambassadors.
- With EU4Youth support, a [national training in Rivne](#) strengthened young people's awareness of healthy lifestyles and mental health, addressing challenges linked to war and post-war recovery.
- National networks of [local youth councils from Moldova, Ukraine, and Georgia](#) met for a regional exchange to share initiatives, strengthen democratic youth participation, and build cross-border collaboration.



October

- The [EU4Youth Days 2025](#) took place in Brussels on 8–9 October, marking another successful chapter of this flagship event dedicated to advancing employment, participation and education opportunities in the Eastern Partnership. Building on the tradition of previous editions, the event brought together around 150 participants from the EU4Youth programme and beyond, including youth representatives, practitioners, decision-makers and stakeholders from the EU and Eastern Partnership countries.
- EU4Youth [Regional Youth Exchange in Yerevan](#) brought together over 60 youth leaders and civil society representatives from Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine to strengthen regional cooperation and youth engagement.



November

- The [Tech4Skills Ideathon in Tbilisi](#) brought together young people to boost engagement in the TVET sector, drawing on youth-driven insights developed through Georgia's Youth Policy Labs with EU4Youth support.
- The EU4Youth project hosted the [Youth Organisations Forum in Tbilisi](#), bringing together around 30 youth NGOs and over 100 participants to strengthen cooperation and youth engagement.





EDUCATION AND EMPLOYABILITY

While access to education has continued to improve across the Eastern Partnership region, findings from the [2025 ETF cross-country monitoring report](#) show that concerns about the quality and relevance of education persist. Despite near-universal enrolment in compulsory schooling, many young people in Armenia, Georgia and Moldova leave basic education without the foundational skills needed for successful progression – with underachievement in mathematics reaching 55-66% in several EaP countries.

These systemic gaps are largely caused by limited institutional capacity, shortages of qualified teachers, and constrained resources – particularly in rural areas and in VET institutions where outdated equipment and uneven access to practical training hinder learning. As a result, the region continues to struggle to align education outcomes with labour-market needs, contributing to skills mismatches and difficulties in young people’s transition from school to work. Youth unemployment therefore remains high, reflecting the persistent gap between the competencies delivered by education systems and those demanded by employers.

Acknowledging these challenges, the EU4Youth programme supported partner countries in building more effective structures to ease the transition from education to work and advanced the recognition of skills gained through non-formal and informal learning. Throughout the reporting year, EU4Youth expanded competence-development activities through its grant projects, provided additional training for youth educators, and created more opportunities for young people to gain practical experience through scholarships, mobility offers, and work-based learning initiatives.

The majority of data for these initiatives was last fully [reported in 2024](#). The information on this report provides a brief consolidated update for 2025.

Young people’s work preparedness

Young people across the Eastern Partnership have a strong capacity to contribute to innovation, economic development and broader societal progress. However, many graduates still face obstacles when seeking employment or trying to launch their own ventures. To help ease this transition into the labour market, the EU4Youth programme supports specialised training designed to strengthen young people’s practical skills and readiness for work. Throughout 2025, the programme rolled out a wide range of competence-building activities that equipped young people with skills relevant to the digital and green transitions, while also nurturing essential transversal and soft skills needed for today’s evolving job market.

The regional grant projects supported through the EU4Youth:

Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship initiative share a common goal of strengthening young people’s prospects in the labour market, with particular emphasis on green and digital skill development and the cultivation of entrepreneurial abilities.

In 2025, more than 1,050 competence development activities were delivered through the seven regional grants together with the five direct grants to Ukraine. Across the region, close to 3,000 young people took part in tailored skills building and extracurricular learning opportunities. Women represented over 47 per cent of all participants, while around 53 per cent were identified by the projects as disadvantaged youth.

The **SEEDS project** - Social Entrepreneurship and Enhanced Development based Skills in Georgia and Ukraine, implemented by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and funded by the European Union, continues to strengthen innovative skills development for young people through initiatives such as Youth Career Development Clubs in Georgian schools. These clubs provide career planning training, psychological support, expert engagement, enterprise study visits, and adapted digital learning resources, empowering vulnerable youth with practical knowledge and skills to plan their professional future.



In 2025, the SEEDS project continued strengthening entrepreneurial skills among young people in Georgia and Ukraine, with 93 young people participating in competence development activities focused on entrepreneurship, delivered through both face-to-face and online formats.

Young people involved in EU4Youth projects strengthened their skills, expanded their networks, and helped to build a growing ecosystem of youth-led innovation, resilience, and inclusion across the region. These achievements were made possible through initiatives like **SKYE Net - Skills and Knowledge for Youth Empowerment Network**, **Building Back Better Through Social Entrepreneurship**, **Fostering Youth Social Entrepreneurship and Practical Career Management Skills in Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Armenia Through the Innovative Social Student Companies (SSC) Approach**, **Upskilling digital competences and career management skills of disadvantaged youth in Georgia, Armenia and Moldova**, and **Greenhouse for Social Innovators**.

Quality education and career guidance

To ensure that education and career support for young people is more relevant, effective, and accessible, the EU4Youth programme also prioritises strengthening the capabilities of local actors involved in delivering these services.

In the first half of 2025, EU4Youth regional and grant initiatives continued strengthening mentoring systems across the region. Projects under **Create Ukraine**, **Greenhouse for Social Innovators**, **Building Back Better Through Social Entrepreneurship**, and the **Post-Conflict Education and Trauma informed Pedagogy Programme** collectively engaged 149 mentors who provided guidance and personalised support to young people in Ukraine, Georgia, and Belarus.

At the same time, these projects reached 435 mentees, offering structured mentoring in environments such as schools, youth spaces, and programmes designed for post conflict recovery. These mentoring activities played a central role in expanding access to quality career guidance, psychosocial support, and skill-building opportunities for young people, particularly in challenging contexts.

In 2025, EU4Youth continued to expand its support for both formal and non formal learning. A total of 31 new formal learning materials were developed to support and strengthen post-conflict teaching and learning, including two in Armenia, one in Georgia, two in Moldova, and 26 in Ukraine. Additionally, 55 nonformal educational resources across the region were produced, including 42 in Ukraine, six in Georgia, three in Armenia, two in Belarus, and one in Moldova. These materials range from practice-oriented handbooks and training guides to toolkits that schools, youth organisations and community providers can deploy to enhance the relevance and quality of learning opportunities for young people.¹

Targeted programmes have also been advancing social entrepreneurship skills among young people across the region. The **Student Social Entrepreneurship Programme**, developed by the **Child Fund project**, approved by the Ministry of Education of Armenia, and listed **among recommended extracurricular activities**, supports the development of entrepreneurial skills through experiential learning. In Moldova, a similar initiative for vocational institutions was approved for piloting, with full integration to be considered after evaluation.

The **Social Entrepreneurship Programme** was developed and translated into local languages in Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine, and integrated into extracurricular school activities in Georgia and into vocational institutions in Moldova and Ukraine (**Junior Achievement project**). The **Social Entrepreneurship Handbook**, created under the **World Vision project**, equips educators with a methodology to foster youth social entrepreneurship and is being translated into local languages; it has been distributed to educational institutions, youth organisations, and Business Support Organisations across participating countries. **Learning Modules** were finalised and endorsed for inclusion in the UPG digital platform once operational in Georgia, with training materials already available via Tallinn University. Online portals offering educational resources for young social entrepreneurs were created in **Moldova, Georgia**, and **Armenia**.

Under the **Post Conflict Education and Trauma Informed Pedagogy Programme** in Ukraine, 42 new non formal educational resources were developed and put into practice, contributing directly to improved learning environments in conflict settings. Additional non formal educational resources were produced through the SEEDS project in Georgia, which generated five new materials and implemented seven. In 2025, the Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship project developed a total of eight new resources across the region: two in Armenia, two in Belarus, two in Moldova, two in Ukraine, and one in Georgia.

The **Social Student Companies** (SSC) project created and implemented two nonformal resources in Armenia and one in Georgia.

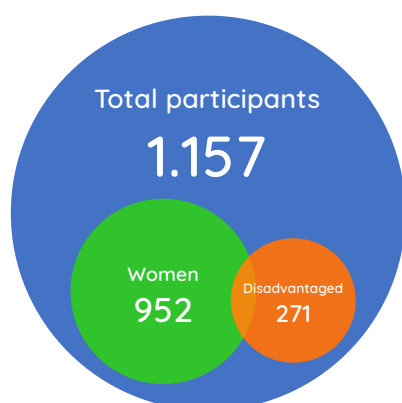
¹ EU4Youth Database 2025

Improved employability through internships

In 2025, EU4Youth expanded access to practical learning pathways and strengthened youth employability across the region. Through internship schemes implemented under the Rehabilitation Space for Veterans of the Ukrainian Army - [Checkpoint](#), [Persp@ctive](#), [Social Student Companies](#) (SSC), and [Create Ukraine](#), a combined 175 young people took part in structured internship and apprenticeship placements, with opportunities offered in Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, and Armenia. These placements included 72 women and 119 disadvantaged youth, underscoring efforts to prioritise equitable access for groups facing greater barriers to labour market entry.

Beyond practical experience, young people participating in EU4Youth supported programmes demonstrated strong improvements in their readiness for employment. Across all projects, 1,157 participants indicated enhanced employability following their participation in training, mentoring, or internship activities. These results are based on participant level outcomes reported by implementing partners through EU4Youth project monitoring and progress reporting, reflecting self assessed improvements in work relevant skills and preparedness for the labour market. Taken together, these findings illustrate the contribution of EU4Youth interventions to strengthening employability outcomes among young people.

Young people reporting improved employability in 2025



Complementing hands on training, mentoring and internship pathways, EU4Youth also invests in advanced academic opportunities that support longer term leadership and career development.

Since 2021, the [EU4Youth: Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship project](#) has been providing annual scholarships enabling students from the Eastern Partnership countries to study at the [College of Europe](#). The programme aims to deepen scholars' understanding of European governance while fostering intercultural dialogue and mutual learning.

Throughout the [ten-month European Interdisciplinary Studies programme](#) at the Natolin campus in Poland, participants follow a rigorous academic curriculum complemented by professional development activities and language training. By the end of their studies, graduates are equipped with both the analytical knowledge and the leadership capabilities needed to act as constructive agents of change in their home countries.

In 2025, EU4Youth supported advanced academic and professional development opportunities through its scholarship and fellowship schemes at the College of Europe Natolin Campus. A total of 41 beneficiaries received EU4Youth support during the year, including 30 European Interdisciplinary Studies (EIS) students - with 18 students completing the second semester of the 2024–2025 academic year and 12 students beginning the first semester of the 2025–2026 academic year - as well as 11 fellows who participated in the Natolin Fellowship Programme between January and March 2025. Through these programmes, beneficiaries were exposed to international and multicultural learning environments, complemented by academic exchange, policy dialogue, and engagement with European institutions, contributing to EU4Youth’s objective of expanding access to high-quality international education and professional experience for young people.

The **Natolin Fellowship’s impact** is illustrated by alumna Salome Kandelaki, whose research on church-state dynamics and EU integration demonstrates how the scholarship combines academic rigour with policy immersion. During her fellowship, she accessed first-rate resources, engaged directly with EU experts, and completed a visiting fellowship at CEPS in Brussels – experience that strengthened her ability to connect complex, values-laden debates (religion, pluralism, rights) to real-world policy on enlargement and democratic resilience. This blend of study and practice is precisely what enables fellows to return home as credible, networked changemakers.

The students’ academic work continued to reflect the pressing priorities of their countries, ranging from information resilience and national security analysis to EU accession dynamics and regional cooperation, demonstrating the critical role of mobility schemes in shaping informed, future-oriented young leaders.

Community-based support

At the community level, youth organisations and civil society partners played a targeted role in supporting young people to translate ideas into concrete actions, particularly in local and crisis-affected contexts. Through outreach, mentoring and small-scale, locally driven initiatives, these actors supported young people facing personal and socioeconomic barriers to participation and employment. While limited in geographic scope, these interventions contributed to improved individual employability outcomes and encouraged more inclusive forms of engagement, demonstrating the potential of community-based support in enabling youth-led action.

Together, these examples illustrate how locally anchored initiatives can help young people move from initial ideas to tangible outcomes when supported by responsive institutions and community partners, while complementing broader, programme-level interventions described elsewhere in the report.



Working with veterans

EU4Youth's support proved essential for young veterans rebuilding their lives after service and injury. At the [Checkpoint Rehabilitation Space in Zaporizhzhia](#), veterans accessed 3,727 consultations, including psychological, legal and economic assistance.



3,727
consultations

- > psychological assistance
- > legal assistance
- > economic assistance

Denys, a platoon sergeant wounded near Avdiivka, described how the centre helped him emerge from months of isolation and mental decline:



*"I recommend everyone not to be afraid. Go, meet the specialists at the Rehabilitation Space. They're wonderful and can help you with anything – whether it's starting a business, solving a legal issue, or receiving counselling from psychologists. You must give it a try, because staying home alone really can drive you mad."*²

Another veteran, Denys Bodnar, [used an EU4Youth grant](#) to convert part of his home into a private inclusive kindergarten, addressing a severe shortage of early childhood education in the Dnipropetrovsk region. As project lead Oleksandra Shchukina emphasised, *"Each of these projects is not only a personal success for its founder but a contribution to the recovery and strengthening of Ukraine."*³

Strengthening psychosocial support in education during conflict

The war has also placed significant emotional strain on children in Ukraine. To help address these needs, EU4Youth trained **430 educators and psychologists** in trauma-informed methods, equipping them to provide emergency psychological support and create safer, more supportive learning environments. Through the [Post Conflict Education and Trauma-informed Pedagogy Programme](#), young professionals gained urgently needed tools to support students during crisis situations.

Olena, a clinical psychologist from Kyiv, explained how the training transformed her ability to respond when children freeze in fear during sirens or explosions:



*"These events have shaped the most important skill in me – to react quickly, be clear, and act to the point... I felt I was gaining knowledge I could apply not 'someday' but literally tomorrow."*⁴

² [If you close yourself off, you can go insane' – the Story of veteran Platoon Sergeant Denys - EU NEIGHBOURS east](#)

³ Ibid

⁴ [Olena's story: how a psychologist helps children in war with knowledge gained from EU4Youth - EU NEIGHBOURS east](#)





ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND EMPLOYMENT

Entrepreneurship continues to offer young people in the Eastern Partnership region a powerful pathway to shape their own careers while generating meaningful social and economic value for their communities. By helping youth turn ideas into sustainable initiatives, entrepreneurial support not only addresses persistent unemployment challenges but also empowers young people to take ownership, foster innovation, and act as local changemakers.

To drive systemic improvements in youth employment and entrepreneurship, the EU4Youth programme combines direct support to young people with institutional capacity building and targeted policy assistance. In 2025, the programme further strengthened this dual approach by supporting the development of enabling policy frameworks, improving local support structures, and expanding opportunities for young people to acquire the skills, resources, and confidence needed to create and grow their own ventures.

Building on the foundation established in previous years, EU4Youth continued to pilot innovative community-based initiatives through its grant projects, delivered tailored entrepreneurial learning materials, and deepened cooperation with national institutions to reinforce mutual learning and promote **Youth Guarantee** type measures across the region. Together, these efforts aim not only to equip young people with entrepreneurial skills, but also to shape a more supportive ecosystem in which youth-led enterprises can thrive.

Strengthening local economies

In 2025, EU4Youth grant projects provided financial assistance to 113 young entrepreneurs and technical assistance to a further 168, helping to launch 100 youth-led start-ups that remained active. A total of 2,924 young people took part in competence development activities on entrepreneurship across Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Armenia and Belarus.



These youth-led ventures are already contributing to job creation, local service provision, and community resilience – demonstrating how entrepreneurship can transform not only individual livelihoods but also entire local economies.⁵

A growing number of **success stories** reflect how EU4Youth’s entrepreneurship support translates into meaningful impact on the ground. From eco-friendly manufacturing to digital services and locally grounded social enterprises, EU4Youth is helping young people to transform innovative concepts into sustainable economic activity, strengthening local ecosystems and contributing to broader community well-being.

In Moldova, **trained community mediators** are helping young Roma navigate access to services, employment initiatives, and entrepreneurship pathways “*acting as a bridge between institutions and young people who often feel invisible,*” as one mediator described.⁶

In Georgia, where EU4Youth support helped young innovators build solutions for the green transition. **BioNova**, a youth-led cleantech enterprise that developed a biogas device capable of turning organic waste into clean energy and fertiliser, benefited from EU4Youth mentoring, technical guidance, and business diagnostics. As a result, it, strengthened its business model, refined its technology, and prepared for market entry – demonstrating how green youth enterprises can contribute both to environmental sustainability and to new economic opportunities across the region.⁷


⁵ EU4Youth Phase III Employment and Entrepreneurship Narrative Progress Report 4; EU4Youth Database

⁶ <https://euneighbourseast.eu/news/stories/>

[community-mediators-a-bridge-between-the-authorities-and-the-roma-community/](#)

⁷ [BioNova: turning waste into clean energy in Georgia - EU NEIGHBOURS east](#)

In Ukraine, [six EU4Youth-supported organisations](#) helped young people, internally displaced persons, and veterans develop new business ideas, access mentoring, and secure seed funding that enabled them to rebuild economic stability during wartime. As one beneficiary noted,

 *“These opportunities helped us turn our ideas into real solutions for our community-solutions that create jobs, support displaced families, and give people hope.”⁸*

Mini-grants and tailored mentoring accelerated enterprise growth and resilience, with youth-led businesses engaged in the mentorship programme reporting an average 30% increase in performance within six months.⁹

In Georgia, the [Ikorta Studio](#) a youth-led social enterprise run by internally displaced women, experienced a similar transformation. With mentoring and business guidance from the EU4Youth Greenhouse for Social Innovators project, the enterprise strengthened its financial management, refined its product strategy, and expanded its services by introducing jewellery making workshops. The support helped Ikorta stabilise its operations, enter new markets, and create dignified income opportunities for women rebuilding their lives after displacement.¹⁰

In Moldova, [Sergiu Gurău](#), a longstanding social entrepreneur, used EU4Youth support to significantly expand his work with young people with disabilities. Through a strategic partnership and project assistance, Sergiu delivered digital and entrepreneurial training to hundreds of young people, helping them build confidence, develop employment ready skills, and access new economic opportunities. His enterprise grew in scale and impact, offering an inclusive model that demonstrates how social entrepreneurship can empower some of the most marginalised youth to participate fully in local economic life.¹¹

⁸ [How EU4Youth is driving opportunity and success among young Ukrainians - EU NEIGHBOURS east](#)

⁹ EU4Youth Phase III Employment and Entrepreneurship Narrative Progress Report 4

¹⁰ [Ikorta studio: crafting hope and opportunity for Georgian women - EU NEIGHBOURS east](#)

¹¹ [Sergiu Gurău – the social entrepreneur from Moldova who creates real opportunities for young people with disabilities - EU NEIGHBOURS east](#)

Building youth-led solutions

Across the Eastern Partnership, young people are increasingly stepping forward as drivers of economic and social innovation. This chapter explores how EU4Youth helps build those systems, and how young people across the region are using them to shape better employment pathways for themselves and their peers.

EU4Youth's employment and entrepreneurship interventions have helped unlock this potential by strengthening the systems, institutions, and local ecosystems that enable youth-led solutions to take root. During the reporting period, the programme expanded youth participation in labour market initiatives, supported public institutions in designing more responsive services, and fostered an environment where young people can shape the future of their communities through employment, enterprise and civic action.

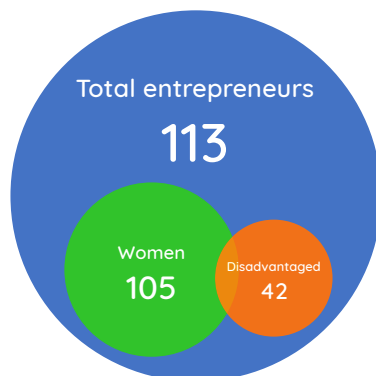
Based on data reported in the CPVA Progress Report, a central pillar of this progress was the programme's support for more inclusive and youth responsive employment systems. In 2025, EU4Youth delivered 14 major capacity building events for Public Employment Services (PES) across Armenia, Moldova, and Ukraine, equipping 459 officers with modern approaches to labour market forecasting, digitalised service provision, youth outreach, and human resources development. These efforts strengthened frontline services on which young jobseekers rely, particularly those facing multiple barriers, including NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training), displaced youth, and young people from marginalised communities.

Public Employment Services (PES) continued to play a frontline role in supporting young jobseekers, adopting more youth-responsive approaches, expanding digital services, and improving outreach to vulnerable groups. These efforts strengthened national systems' capacity to deliver tailored guidance, enhance profiling, and respond more effectively to emerging labour-market needs. Cross-sector collaboration further accelerated systemic improvements.

Civil society also played a growing role in shaping youth employment solutions across the Eastern Partnership. Through regional exchanges and dialogue labs, youth organisations, national youth councils, and CSO networks strengthened their capacity to engage in NEET outreach, youth employment governance, and local activation measures. These platforms enabled actors such as the National Youth Council of Moldova and youth networks from Armenia, Georgia, and Ukraine to co-design policy recommendations, participate in cross-country learning, and contribute to coordinated approaches on employability and activation.



Across all entrepreneurship-focused interventions, a total of 281 young people benefited from financial or technical assistance to advance their business ideas. They included 113 young entrepreneurs who received direct financial support, of whom 69 were women and 38 were disadvantaged young people. A further 168 young people strengthened their entrepreneurial capacities through tailored technical assistance, with 105 women and 42 disadvantaged participants gaining skills, guidance, and business development support tailored to their needs.



Taken together, these results demonstrate a steadily growing entrepreneurial ecosystem in which young people, including women and disadvantaged groups, are equipped with the financial resources, technical knowhow, and confidence needed to launch and grow viable enterprises.

Based on the CPVA Narrative Progress Report for 2025, the programme strengthened youth employment policymaking by deepening cross-sector coordination at national level. In Armenia and Moldova, EU4Youth supported the functioning of National Steering Groups (NSGs) - national coordination platforms that bring together ministries, public employment services, youth councils, civil society organisations and social partners to jointly guide youth employment policies. Through these groups, more than 120 institutional stakeholders were convened to align youth employment strategies, review and validate policy proposals, and support the preparation of future labour-market reforms.

Throughout 2025, these groups met several times to align youth employment strategies, review and validate policy proposals, and support the preparation of labour market reforms. Their work contributed to the validation of policy recommendations, strengthened national ownership of youth employment reforms, and helped integrate EU4Youth supported measures into longer term policy frameworks.

In Ukraine, youth employment reforms progressed during wartime with the establishment of an Inter-Agency Working Group, supported under the EU4Youth programme. The Working Group brought together relevant national stakeholders and contributed to the adoption of amendments formally anchoring Youth Guarantee-type measures in national legislation.

At community level, civil society partners increasingly became direct contributors to employment pathways. In Moldova, local youth organisations working alongside the municipal Public Employment Service (ANOFM Chişinău) piloted new outreach models for Roma and Sinti NEETs, engaging more than a hundred young people through joint mapping, awareness activities, and co-management mechanisms.

In Ukraine, youth organisations and youth centres implementing the ‘Startui’ project established youth centre based social enterprises, while the Checkpoint Rehabilitation Space in Zaporizhzhia delivered thousands of psychosocial, legal, and employability consultations and expanded entrepreneurship and reskilling opportunities for young veterans and internally displaced youth. For Belarus, exile-based organisations such as BERO and RADA adapted entrepreneurial and employability tools into digital formats, ensuring continued access for young Belarusians despite restrictive domestic conditions.

Youth employment and innovation ecosystems

Building on earlier interventions, this section highlights EU4Youth’s contribution to strengthening institutional coordination and policy frameworks underpinning youth employment.

Youth organisations and local stakeholders also expanded innovation spaces. Initiatives such as **SKYE Clubs** enabled young people in Armenia, Georgia, and Moldova to design and deliver community projects, while social entrepreneurship incubators supported by World Vision, ChildFund, and Junior Achievement helped young people turn ideas into real ventures – from eco-friendly wooden toy production in Moldova to school-run circular-economy enterprises in Ukraine. These community-driven approaches strengthened local leadership and created practical, small-scale employment and learning opportunities.

Youth-led social enterprises

Across Ukraine, EU4Youth support helped to launch eight youth centre led social enterprises and ten additional social businesses created by veterans and internally displaced young people.

In Bucha, Diana, a youth worker with no prior business experience, channelled her determination to help her community into a social enterprise: the **EcoPrinting Station**. With EU4Youth training, mentoring and a grant, she built a printing hub that not only produces eco-friendly merchandise but also reinvests profits directly into youth initiatives across the Kyiv region.

*“I am not a businesswoman...
But when you have an idea and
support, it becomes a reality,”
Diana explains.¹²*

¹² [‘I just wanted to create something that would be useful’ – how Diana set up an Eco-Printing Station in Bucha, with help from EU4Youth - EU NEIGHBOURS east](#)



The enterprise now funds scout camps, mini-grant competitions for teenagers, and educational activities, proving that even small youth-led ventures can contribute to community healing and long-term resilience after occupation.

EU4Youth's [Personal Assistance Programme](#) provided lifechanging support for families of people with intellectual disabilities, while creating meaningful employment for young assistants.

Through the programme, in 2025, 370 young people were trained as personal assistants, 312 completed supervised practice, and 82 found employment supporting people with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities.



In Sumy, Ukraine, Iryna, a [single mother caring for her adult son Dmytro](#), says the arrival of a young assistant, Yulia, transformed their lives:



“My joy cannot be put into words... I can finally breathe easy... Such personal assistants are an invaluable help.”¹³

Yulia, newly trained under the programme, gained professional experience and a stable income while enabling the family to regain its independence and dignity.

EU4Youth's crisis-responsive entrepreneurship and employment interventions demonstrate that even in a time of war, young people's ideas can grow into institutions that strengthen local economies, provide social care, and inspire hope. These youth-led efforts show that Ukraine's recovery is not only a matter of postwar reconstruction, it is already happening now, in homes, youth centres, classrooms, rehabilitation spaces, and community initiatives across the country.

Beyond supporting individual entrepreneurs, EU4Youth strengthened community-based youth ecosystems through the [SKYE Net - Skills and Knowledge for Youth Empowerment Network](#), where young people applied soft-skills training, mentoring, and hands-on experience to drive social and economic change in their regions. Across Armenia, Georgia and Moldova, SKYE youth turned local challenges into practical, community-driven solutions.



¹³ [How a personal assistant changed the life of a family from Sumy - EU NEIGHBOURS east](#)

In Moldova, for example, the [GUGA GAGA](#) social enterprise grew from a student idea into a workshop producing eco-friendly wooden toys that offer families sustainable alternatives to plastic. In Georgia, a [young psychologist transformed a family garage into an inclusive educational centre](#) where children learn through play, while another young participant launched an event-management initiative that reinvests its profits to support vulnerable community members. In Armenia, youth leaders revitalised their communities through SKYE Clubs, from [implementing environmental and social projects in Vardenis to converting an abandoned family home into a multifunctional youth centre](#) that now serves as a hub for skills development and creativity.





ENGAGEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT

In 2025, young people across the Eastern Partnership region continued to demonstrate their critical role as drivers of democratic resilience, community development and social change. Despite an increasingly challenging civic space in parts of the region, youth remained active in shaping local and national agendas and defending democratic values. As Moldova and Ukraine advance in their EU accession processes, young people are not only following reforms, but also actively influencing them. At the same time, youth in rural and disadvantaged communities have taken on new leadership roles, challenging long-standing barriers to participation.




Against this backdrop, EU4Youth placed emphasis on empowering youth to generate tangible, lasting impact in their communities and countries. Throughout 2025, EU4Youth continued to expand its support to youth organisations and institutional actors across the Eastern Partnership region. A total of 57 capacity-building programmes were implemented across Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, targeting youth organisations, public institutions, and local authorities involved in youth policy and youth work. These activities strengthened organisational capacities, professional skills, and institutional practices related to youth participation, inclusive policymaking, and structured dialogue. As a result, national and local systems were better equipped to enable young people to meaningfully shape decision-making processes. Youth organisations, public institutions and local authorities received targeted support to design and facilitate inclusive participatory environments, contributing to increased youth engagement in policy processes and local initiatives..

In 2025, a total of 3,349 individual beneficiaries were directly reached through EU4Youth grant funded activities. This figure refers to people (not institutions) who benefited directly from the programme, including participants in civil society fellowships and individuals who took part in international mobility activities other than trainings. Moldova accounted for the largest share of beneficiaries (1,383).



These figures reflect the broad human reach of programme activities, spanning civil society capacity building initiatives and mobility opportunities, and demonstrate EU4Youth’s efforts to ensure access to meaningful engagement for young people from diverse backgrounds.

In 2025, the EU4Youth:Engagement and Empowerment, implemented by GiZ¹⁴, demonstrated that strategic investment in youth leadership and participatory governance yields tangible results:

-  **13,567 young people increased their awareness of national developments**
-  **3,547 contributed to policy drafts**
-  **254 revived local community structures**

Importantly, support extended to youth from disadvantaged, conflict-affected, or remote areas, ensuring that empowerment efforts translated into broader social inclusion. The initiatives highlighted in this chapter illustrate how young people, when equipped with skills, resources, and platforms, can become catalysts for democratic reform, community resilience, and social innovation across the EaP region, with EU4Youth helping to transform engagement into sustained, youth-led action.

¹⁴ [eu4youth_onepager_giz_3.pdf](#)

Advancing youth voices

Across the region, youth involvement in policy processes remained a central focus. In 2025, 3,547 young people participated in Youth Policy Labs and policy events. Participation was highest in Ukraine (1,938), followed by Armenia (585), Georgia (554) and Moldova (470). Female participation reached 1,874 young women (52.8%), while 2,238 disadvantaged youth (63.1%) were engaged, ensuring strong inclusivity in policy dialogue.

The programme facilitated 43 policy discussions, supporting continued dialogue between youth, civil society and public authorities.

The programme further strengthened youth ecosystems by supporting 87 youth structures in 2025, including youth councils, youth centres and local youth advisory groups – 15 in Armenia, 33 in Georgia, 14 in Moldova and 25 in Ukraine. Youth awareness of national policy developments also increased, with 2,867 young people informed through programme activities.



Importantly, 935 young people across the region started participating in policy development after receiving EU4Youth training – the majority of whom were young women (516) and disadvantaged youth (663), illustrating a strong conversion from skills-building to real civic engagement. Ukraine (542 participants), Armenia (279) and Moldova (114) were the largest contributors.

EU4Youth Alumni Network

The EU4Youth Alumni Network has, over five cycles since 2019, become one of the most effective mechanisms for expanding meaningful youth engagement across the entire Eastern Partnership region, including Azerbaijan and Belarus. Built on a simple but powerful premise – supporting young people who previously benefited from EU mobility and non-formal learning programmes to become youth workers and local changemakers – the Network mobilises Alumni to deliver inclusive, participatory youth initiatives in underserved communities. Through repeated cycles of mentoring, hands-on youth work, codesign with disadvantaged young people and national and international capacity building, the Alumni Network has fostered a new generation of youth leaders who connect EU values with local realities, strengthening social cohesion, activating youth participation, and expanding access to opportunities in communities where structured youth work is often limited or absent.

Across its first five cycles (2019-2025), the EU4Youth Alumni Network has delivered measurable and cumulative impact:

-  346 Alumni trained and **supported to design and lead inclusive youth initiatives**
-  199 Alumni-led initiatives **implemented across six countries.**
-  **2,234 sustained youth work activities** each representing repeated sessions with the same group, not one-off events.
-  4,486 direct beneficiaries, including 3,316 disadvantaged youth, receiving **regular structured youth work**, often for the first time.
-  Over **9,800 indirect beneficiaries engaged through community actions**, events and campaigns.
-  104 young people supported to **access EU and international mobility opportunities** across cycles.
-  Presence in over **80 regions across the Eastern Partnership**, including **rural districts, conflict-affected areas** and **hard to reach localities.**

Most notably, several of the initiatives launched by the Alumni have persisted even after the respective cycle or the Network concluded its activities.

The fifth cycle of the EU4Youth Alumni Network, held between September 2024 and July 2025, marked one of its strongest years of youth engagement, demonstrating the maturity of the model and the sustained commitment of Alumni across the region. Over this period, the Network supported 60 Alumni across five countries, who implemented 28 youth initiatives and 313 activities in 31 regions, reaching 708 direct beneficiaries, of whom 449 were disadvantaged youth. This cycle deepened the Network's inclusivity by expanding its presence in rural and remote areas, and by strengthening approaches tailored to young people facing socio economic barriers, displacement, disability, or limited access to youth services.

A key feature of this cycle was the enhanced capacity building and support architecture, including an international **IdeaLab**, national midterm evaluations, strengthened mentoring (rated the highest value support measure at 9.3/10), and redesigned peer-to-peer review sessions, which significantly increased the relevance of online components (average score of between 7.3 and 8.5). Alumni reported strong gains in confidence, leadership, project management and youthwork competences, with ratings of 8.6 for personal development and 8.9 for professional development.¹⁵

¹⁵ Scores reported in this section are based on feedback collected from programme participants and alumni at the end of activities or programme cycles. Individuals were asked to rate different aspects of their experience - such as the usefulness of mentoring, learning formats, or perceived personal and professional development - using simple numerical scales (for example, from 1 = very low to 10 = very high). The scores shown represent average ratings calculated across respondents and consolidated at programme or multi-cycle level. They reflect participants' own assessments of value and outcomes, rather than externally measured or independently verified impact.



Initiatives implemented under the fifth cycle created safe, participatory spaces for young people to learn, collaborate and engage with their communities. Beneficiaries showed notable improvements in communication, teamwork, leadership and civic awareness and, in several cases, progressed to applying for international mobility opportunities with Alumni support. Community level impact included stronger local partnerships, increased youth participation in civic life, and the creation of new opportunities, clubs and local support structures.

Overall, the [fifth cycle confirms the Alumni Network](#) as a high impact, low cost, scalable model that builds inclusive youth ecosystems while reinforcing the positive role of the EU in partner countries.

Enhancing the quality of youth work

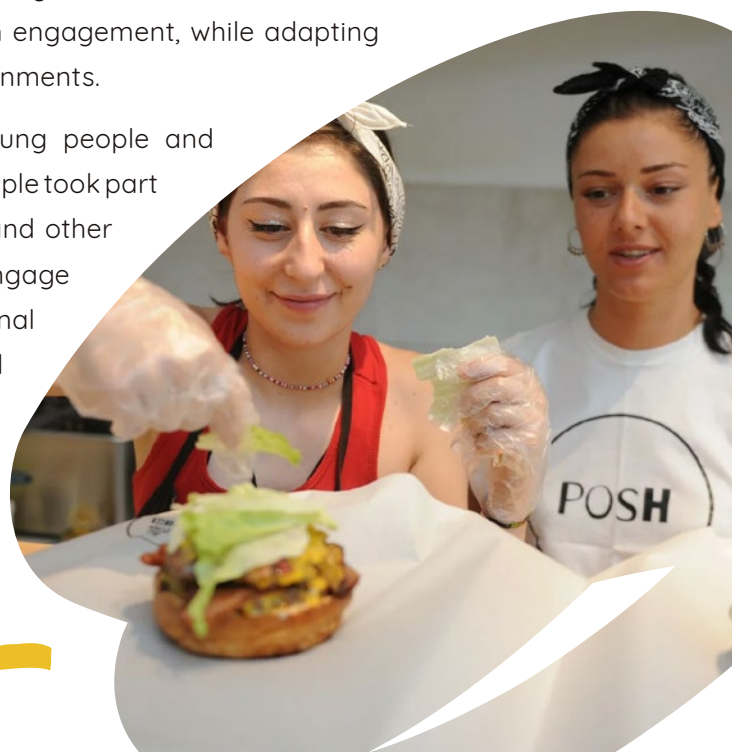
The EU4Youth Coordination and Policy Support project, implemented by Ernst & Young, prepared new youth work-focused contributions for the [Youth Wiki](#). The Youth Wiki serves as an online knowledge platform presenting structured information on youth policies across European and Erasmus+ countries.

In cooperation with the [Council of Europe - EU Youth Partnership](#), the EU4Youth programme continuously updates and expands [country-specific reports for EaP](#) states on a range of youth-related themes, providing an overview of key developments, emerging challenges, and notable progress within the region.

Policymaking through participatory dialogue

Throughout 2025, the EU4Youth programme supported structured and inclusive youth dialogue by strengthening cooperation between public institutions, youth organisations and young people themselves. Building on previous years, EU4Youth actions focused on creating safe and participatory spaces for youth engagement, while adapting approaches to restrictive or crisis-affected environments.

Across the year, the programme mobilised young people and institutional stakeholders at scale: 3,547 young people took part in policy dialogue platforms, Youth Policy Labs and other policy-focused events, enabling them directly to engage with decision-makers at local, national and regional levels. Their contributions fed into 43 youth-related policy discussions and the development of 49 new policy recommendations, 40 of which were implemented during the year, showing tangible policy uptake.



Youth Policy Labs

A Youth Policy Lab (YPL) is a collaborative, multi-stakeholder process that uses co-creation and design thinking methods to address complex policy challenges affecting young people. Bringing together youth, policymakers, public institutions, and other relevant actors, these labs create structured spaces where young people help to define problems, propose solutions, test new approaches, and contribute to policy recommendations. This participatory format ensures that youth perspectives are integrated throughout the policymaking cycle and that resulting measures are better aligned with their needs.

In 2025, a total of 554 young people took part in YPLs, including 320 young women, who represented a significant share of participants, and 152 disadvantaged young people, demonstrating strong efforts to ensure inclusiveness and representation of vulnerable groups. These participation levels reflect the continued strengthening of youth engagement structures across the region, with Youth Policy Labs providing accessible spaces for young people to contribute to policymaking, gain civic competencies, and collaborate with institutional actors.

Participants in Youth Policy Labs and Policy Events (2025)



EU4Youth has played a central role in strengthening participatory governance, youth empowerment, and cooperation between institutions and young people across the region. Youth Policy Labs proved especially effective in shifting participation from one-off consultations to meaningful co-creation, helping young people and public authorities jointly to identify challenges, design solutions, and test new approaches. Evidence from Armenia, Georgia, Across Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, programme implementation demonstrated consistent improvements in policy dialogue, trust-building, and institutional learning, contributing to more responsive and participatory policymaking. Moldova, and Ukraine shows consistent gains in dialogue, trust building, and institutional learning, contributing to more responsive policymaking, as evidenced below.

Across Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, the Labs produced 89 policy recommendations, several of which were taken up by municipal and national institutions. In many communities, YPLs led to tangible improvements in youth-authority cooperation, such as joint action plans, newly established consultation mechanisms, and pilot initiatives in areas including participation, civic engagement, accessibility and youth employment.

The Labs also contributed to a wider cultural shift: young people moved from being consulted occasionally to engaging in structured co-creation processes with decisionmakers. This transition was reinforced by the regional methodological support provided by the Coordination and Policy Support YPL Hub, including the development of a common YPL framework, facilitator training modules, published toolkit, and cross-country peer learning formats, which ensured consistent quality and comparability across countries.



The Youth Policy Labs also contributed to a wider cultural shift in youth participation, moving from ad-hoc consultation towards structured and sustained co-creation between young people and decision-makers. This transition was supported by the regional methodological assistance provided through the EU4Youth Coordination and Policy Support [Youth Policy Labs \(YPL\) Hub](#), which was established to harmonise and strengthen the implementation of Labs across the Eastern Partnership. Support included a common Youth Policy Lab framework, capacity-building and training modules for facilitators, regular cross-country peer-learning exchanges, and the development and publication of the [EU4Youth Youth Policy Labs Toolkit](#).

The Toolkit provides step-by-step guidance on planning, implementing and following up Youth Policy Labs, clearly defining roles, competencies, and the full YPL cycle, and helping distinguish Labs from other participatory formats. Together, these resources helped ensure consistent quality, methodological rigor and comparability of Youth Policy Labs across countries, while supporting meaningful, evidence-informed engagement between young people and public authorities.

These methodological resources now form a durable foundation that can be reused and adapted in future phases or successor programmes, enabling deeper, more systematic and sustainable youth participation in policymaking. Across the region, Youth Policy Labs reshaped the relationship between young people and policymakers. Young participants gained leadership, analytical, and communication skills while contributing directly to policy development. Public authorities gained deeper insight into youth needs and improved their ability to design evidence-based, youth responsive programmes.

In Ukraine, YPLs influenced the content and structure of several local youth programmes. In Armenia and Georgia, the Labs strengthened problem identification and supported coordinated action between municipal authorities, youth organisations, and educational institutions. In Moldova, the challenges encountered generated important learning that informed stronger YPL designs for 2025 through improved co-hosting and cofinancing models.

Overall, YPLs have become a catalyst for cultural and institutional change, embedding participatory methods, strengthening institutional responsiveness, and empowering young people as active partners in policymaking. They leave behind a more resilient architecture of participation – one that can support inclusive, innovative, and youth driven policy development across the Eastern Partnership.



Capacity building of youth stakeholders

Capacity-building efforts prioritised peer learning, exchange of practices and the acquisition of practical skills needed to support participatory youth dialogue in diverse and often challenging contexts. In 2025, EU4Youth implemented 40 capacity-building programmes across Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. These programmes directly benefited 655 institutions, strengthening their technical and organisational capacity to engage young people and to design and facilitate inclusive, evidence-based participatory processes.

In 2025, the programme reinforced the role of youth associations and youth councils as critical intermediaries connecting young people with public decision-makers. Across the region, EU4Youth supported 87 youth structures with training and technical assistance including newly established bodies and reactivated councils that had previously become inactive. This strengthened their institutional resilience and expanded opportunities for formal youth participation.

Youth small grants scheme

In 2024-2025, the EU4Youth small grants scheme implemented through the GIZ-led EU4Youth: Youth Engagement and Empowerment project was a powerful instrument for expanding youth work, strengthening civic ecosystems, and enabling young people to become local changemakers. With **33 small grants** awarded across Armenia (9), Georgia (9) Moldova (6) and Ukraine (9)¹⁷, the scheme created a region-wide network of youth-led initiatives that strengthened democratic participation and built resilience in communities affected by conflict, displacement and shrinking civic space.

The small grants deliberately targeted local, emerging and under-resourced youth organisations including those operating in rural areas, conflict-affected regions, and minority communities. This approach allowed EU4Youth to reach segments of the population that are often excluded from national programmes, such as internally displaced youth, ethnic minority youth, young people with disabilities, and adolescents experiencing war-related trauma. By enabling youth actors who understand their communities best, the scheme delivered tangible improvements in youth empowerment and local governance across the EaP.

¹⁷ [EU4Youth: new funding opportunity for youth organisations in the Eastern Partner countries - EU NEIGHBOURS east](#)



Across all four countries, the small grants catalysed a surge in youth-led projects, uplifting young people as creators of solutions rather than passive beneficiaries. Many projects followed a similar impact are:

- 1 Youth **gain skills and confidence** through targeted workshops, leadership sessions, and mentorship.
- 2 They **identify local problems**, from environmental degradation to exclusion of vulnerable youth.
- 3 They **design and implement their own initiatives**, rooted in community realities.
- 4 Their **actions influence decision-makers and produce durable changes** in local governance, community cohesion, and public awareness.

A defining impact of the EU4Youth small grants scheme was its ability to reach **youth living in marginalised and conflict-affected areas**. Across Ukraine and Armenia, the small grants played an essential role in supporting displaced and war-affected young people, not only by providing psychosocial support, but also by creating practical pathways into leadership, civic education, and community engagement.

Dozens of initiatives gave displaced youth their first real sense of stability and belonging. For example, the **Karabakh-led community projects**, launched through the Pathways Youth Academy, enabled displaced young people from the cities of Goris, Gyumri and Yerevan to design solutions for their new communities. Their initiatives ranged from career orientation sessions and youth clubs to cultural events and hiking groups, each one helping participants reconnect socially and emotionally while contributing to local life. These projects were created by teams of displaced youth who had completed training in civic education, leadership, social entrepreneurship and mental health support, equipping them with both the confidence and the practical tools to act. Many participants are already continuing their projects independently, organising follow-up activities months after the programme ended – a clear sign of restored agency, resilience and community rootedness.¹⁹

For example, the Pathways Youth Academy in Armenia equipped 60 displaced young people from Nagorno Karabakh with leadership, civic education, and entrepreneurship skills, enabling them to launch seven youth-led community projects across the country. Similarly, in Dilijan, the DUCO Leadership School trained rural youth, helping them to design four community initiatives and enabling their regular participation in local council meetings, often the first time that young people from these villages had been invited into municipal decision making.



¹⁹ [EU4Youth: Pathways Youth Academy in Armenia fosters civic empowerment and community action for displaced youth - EU NEIGHBOURS east](#)

The initiative supported affected young people, not only by providing psychosocial support, but also by creating practical pathways into leadership, civic education, and community engagement.



In Ukraine, the grants supported frontline youth to take active roles in reconstruction and recovery processes. Through the Youth Plan for the Restoration of Sumy Region, young people organised five ideathons (brainstorming events), which led to 12 concrete recovery proposals, and even drafted a collective youth manifesto that was shared with 10 local governments, amplifying the voices of communities directly affected by the war. In Odesa region, the Public Academy of Invincibility engaged 261 young people, supported Roma youth to launch their own initiative, and brought together over 100 participants for a regionwide youth forum.

In Georgia, a wide range of youth-focused initiatives contributed to strengthening civic participation and community resilience. Across the country, other projects helped young people to design advocacy campaigns, facilitate consultations with local authorities, and develop policy recommendations rooted in community needs, demonstrating remarkable agency even under crisis conditions. In wide youth forums across the Javakheti and Guria regions, minority youth gained access to new civic and educational opportunities, such as learning programmes and language exercises, that strengthened community cohesion while building confidence to lead local initiatives.

The EU4Youth small grants scheme also created transformative opportunities for ethnic, linguistic, and national minority youth in Georgia and Moldova. In Georgia's Kvemo Kartli, Samtskhe Javakheti, and Guria regions, minority youth gained access to new civic and educational opportunities, such as the Anidabani language learning programme, which delivered 20,000 new Georgian language exercises and engaged 500 ethnic minority pupils through meetings in local schools. In Akhmeta and Pankisi regions, Georgian and Kist youth took part in civic trainings, mock elections, and cultural festivals, strengthening intercommunity cohesion while building confidence to lead local initiatives.

In Moldova, the grants expanded civic participation in communities where youth engagement has historically been limited.

The Youth Civic Engagement Initiative in Ștefan Vodă engaged 545 young people across 17 communities, established five youth-friendly civic hubs, which are now used by over 1,200 young people for dialogue and innovation.



Elsewhere, minority youth in the Taraclia, Basarabeasca, and Gagauzia regions formed three youth initiative groups, implemented community projects, and developed action plans that were formally submitted to local authorities. These efforts not only strengthened young people's sense of belonging and empowerment but also improved trust between minority communities and local institutions, opening new channels for cooperation where meaningful youth participation had previously been rare.

In 2025, EU4Youth supported 87 youth structures across the four countries: 15 in Armenia, 33 in Georgia, 14 in Moldova and 25 in Ukraine, providing durable entry points for youth participation in municipal and national decision making. These structures were complemented by 45 formal youth policy discussions convened during the year, linking young people, CSOs and authorities.

What began as micro-projects frequently translated into long-term governance tools, improving transparency, responsiveness and youth dialogue in municipalities. Across the four countries, the grants helped:

- Establish **new youth councils** (196 newly formed or supported youth structures)
- Activate **dormant youth structures in remote municipalities**
- Set up **youth-friendly spaces** (5 spaces in Moldova now **servicing over 1,200 young people**)
- Introduce **feedback and consultation mechanisms** between municipalities and youth
- Generate **policy briefs, action plans and recovery proposals** adopted or considered by local authorities (**20 developed in 2025**)

A significant share of the small grants supported **youth-driven environmental action**, enabling young people across the region to take leadership in addressing climate challenges and promoting sustainable practices within their communities.

In **Moldova**, innovative Eco-Hackathons brought together motivated students and young innovators to develop digital tools, green business concepts, and creative environmental solutions, while renewable-energy awareness programmes reached 350 high-school students, introducing them to practical applications of sustainability and inspiring some to pursue future careers in the field.

In **Armenia's** Syunik and Aragatsotn regions, youth mobilised around hands-on environmental campaigns that combined awareness-raising with concrete action, from tree-planting to local conservation initiatives.



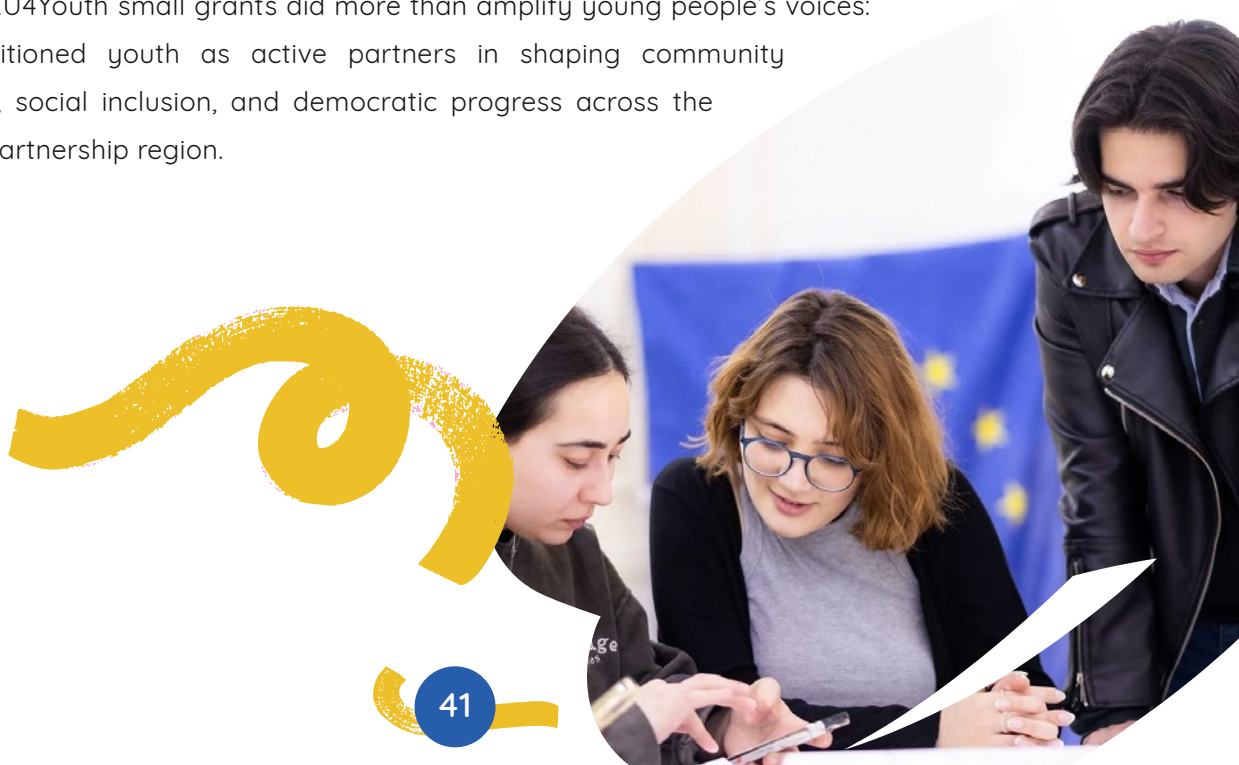
In Georgia, peer education networks and a series of youth-led micro projects helped young people in four municipalities promote climate literacy, encourage environmentally responsible behaviour, and initiate local actions to mitigate climate risks. By pairing environmental education with advocacy, practical engagement, and community mobilisation, these grants nurtured a growing cohort of young environmental leaders equipped to drive long term sustainability efforts across the Eastern Partnership.

Across the 33 grants, organisations embraced a diverse and replicable repertoire of youth work methods - from leadership labs, hackathons, and design-thinking workshops to peer mentoring platforms, youth-led research, and mobile civic exhibitions. Hybrid online-offline models extended these approaches to displaced and hard-to-reach youth, while simulated decision-making processes gave young people direct experience of democratic practice. These methods have clear potential for regional scaling and cross-country adaptation.

The most compelling evidence of impact comes from youth testimonies gathered across all four countries. Young people who joined with limited civic awareness or low self-confidence consistently reported meaningful growth: stronger civic literacy, greater willingness to engage with authorities, and new leadership roles in their schools and communities. Many went on to pursue volunteering, education, or advocacy on their own initiative, and a significant number continued their projects well beyond the original grant timeline - a clear indication of genuine ownership and sustainability.

Taken together, the EU4Youth small grants scheme has demonstrated that targeted micro-investments can generate change at a much larger scale. The 33 projects collectively strengthened youth participation ecosystems, expanded the quality and reach of youth work services, fostered inclusive democratic dialogue, and mobilised thousands of young people across the region. In doing so, they also built cross-regional solidarity and laid practical groundwork for future national youth policies.

In 2025, EU4Youth small grants did more than amplify young people's voices: they positioned youth as active partners in shaping community resilience, social inclusion, and democratic progress across the Eastern Partnership region.



Youth participation: country highlights

Youth in Armenia taking the lead

Across Armenia, the small EU4Youth grants fundamentally shifted who gets to participate in community life and how young people influence local decisions. In Dilijan's remote villages, where youth had long been excluded due to lack of transport and opportunities, the [DUCO Leadership School](#) enabled 24 young people to participate regularly for the first time, resulting in youth-led needs assessments, project proposals, and community initiatives that did not exist before. This created a new generation of rural youth who are no longer passive observers but agents shaping solutions in their own villages.

In Lori, the project broke through longstanding institutional barriers: youth entered municipal buildings for the first time, met directly with mayors and council members, and saw their ideas taken seriously. This changed both sides – youth gained the confidence to approach local authorities, and local officials acknowledged that the project served as a “first real practice of dialogue” with young people. The result was a new relationship of trust that continues beyond the grant, with municipalities offering their halls, resources, and staff to host youth activities.

The [Armavir Youth Inclusion Initiative](#) achieved impact where it had previously been impossible: with a dedicated social worker, the organisation successfully engaged young people with disabilities, displaced youth from Nagorno-Karabakh, and ethnic minority youth, many participating in public life for the first time. Through informal brunch dialogues and a youth hackathon, participants co-created three mechanisms for improving youth-municipality cooperation, which municipalities later pledged to integrate into official practice, an institutional change directly triggered by youth ideas.

Across all three regions mentioned, the EU4Youth grants transformed local youth ecosystems by building new social bonds across villages, backgrounds, and identities.

Participants from remote areas formed inter-village networks; ethnic minority youth and young people with disabilities became visible leaders; and displaced youth found platforms to regain stability and purpose.

Many young people have already replicated debates, simulations, and initiatives in other communities, showing clear evidence of ownership and ripple effects beyond the project lifespan.



These community-driven shifts at the local level were mirrored by significant advances at the national level, where structural reforms further strengthened Armenia's youth policy landscape. A major milestone was the successful adoption of the [Youth Policy Law](#)²⁰, following sustained technical and coordination support provided by EU4Youth to the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports (ESCS) and the Youth Organisations Union. The law progressed through parliamentary debates and was ultimately adopted and signed by the President, marking a historic step forward for youth policy reform in the country.

Youth participation in policymaking was significantly strengthened through the nationwide implementation of the programme's [15 Youth Policy Labs](#)²¹, engaging approximately 400 young people from all regions of Armenia. With a finalised methodology and trained facilitators, the Labs enabled structured dialogue between young people and local authorities, resulting in concrete policy recommendations tailored to local needs. By the end of the year, all Youth Policy Labs had been successfully completed, producing comprehensive recommendation packages that fed into broader national discussions, including the [National Youth Forum 2025](#)²², where over 1,000 participants took part in the opening session and 153 actionable recommendations were developed.

Capacity building of youth organisations remained a core priority. In partnership with the Youth Organisations Union, EU4Youth implemented targeted capacity-building activities, strengthening the organisational management, sustainability, and leadership skills of youth organisations from across the country. In addition, thematic workshops involving around 90 young people and municipal representatives enhanced local capacities for youth engagement and inclusive decision-making, contributing to stronger cooperation between youth actors and local authorities.

At the community level, EU4Youth supported the successful implementation of [nine youth-led grant projects](#)²³, which generated tangible impact across multiple regions. These initiatives included leadership schools, hackathons, public awareness campaigns, environmental actions, and civic engagement activities, reaching diverse groups of young people and demonstrating innovative approaches to youth participation and community development. All grant projects were completed successfully, generating strong results and transferable good practices. Armenia hosted a [regional study visit](#)²⁴ for representatives of youth CSOs and public institutions from Eastern Partnership countries, showcasing Armenian experiences in youth policy development and participation. Armenian youth and government representatives further strengthened international cooperation through participation in European level events, including the Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth and EU supported exchanges and study visits.

²⁰ [EU4Youth: over 500 young people help shape Armenia's Youth Policy Law with EU support - EU NEIGHBOURS east](#)

²¹ [EU4Youth Initiative: Youth Policy Labs launched in 15 communities across Armenia - EU NEIGHBOURS east](#)

²² [Armenian National Youth Forum Yerevan 2025](#)

²³ [EU, BMZ and GIZ support launch of nine youth-led grant projects in Armenia to drive positive change - EU NEIGHBOURS east](#)

²⁴ [EU4Youth study visit to Armenia fosters high-impact exchange on youth participation in policymaking - EU NEIGHBOURS east](#)

Georgia's emerging civic leaders



“We managed to gain the trust of those who were initially very sceptical about youth empowerment.” – Head and founder of one of the grantee NGOs.

Across Georgia, several EU4Youth initiatives achieved meaningful shifts in youth participation by turning some of the country's most persistent barriers – geographic isolation, linguistic divides, social exclusion, and disability related obstacles – into pathways for civic engagement. One example is the project Promoting Akhmeta and Pankisi Youth Engagement and Unity for Community Resilience, implemented by the Youth Centre Illuminator. In Akhmeta's remote villages, the Illuminator initiative transformed long-standing disengagement into active youth leadership. Young people who had never previously participated in any training were brought into civic activities, identified key community problems across five areas, and helped organise intercultural events that revived an inactive youth organisation and established a sustainable model for engaging village-level youth.

In Kvemo Kartli region, the Step Toward Success project strengthened civic readiness among Azerbaijani- and Russian-speaking youth through bilingual learning, structured internships, and advocacy processes that enabled participants to analyse public service gaps and design solutions, even within a politically constrained municipal environment. And in Imereti region, the Coalition for Independent Living empowered disadvantaged and disabled young people to navigate municipal mechanisms, co-draft policy proposals, and publicly articulate their needs, while also increasing local awareness on disability inclusion through accessible communication tools.



“I didn't know I had these rights, because men in my municipality usually met in teahouses, where I couldn't join. Now I know my rights and feel confident to ask to be included.” – Young woman from one of the trainings

Together, these initiatives demonstrated that when logistical, linguistic and societal barriers are deliberately removed, young people across diverse regions not only gain confidence and skills, but also step forward with concrete proposals, new civic identities, and strengthened networks that make local decision making more inclusive and representative.



These efforts also laid foundations for long term change by equipping young people with practical civic tools, and strengthening local organisations capable of sustaining engagement beyond project timelines. As a result, people from these regions now benefit from a more prepared, motivated, and connected generation of youth who are likely to remain active contributors to community life well into the future.

The foundations laid through these community-driven initiatives were complemented by higher-level policy work that expanded opportunities for youth engagement nationwide.

A central pillar of the year's EU4Youth efforts in the country was the implementation of **Youth Policy Labs** (YPL)²⁵, which provided structured platforms for dialogue between young people, vocational education institutions, and civil society. Across multiple municipalities, YPL cycles engaged young people in identifying barriers to participation, developing policy recommendations, and piloting micro experiment projects, particularly in the areas of youth participation, engagement, and VET-related employment. The YPL process culminated in draft policy recommendations and practical pilot actions, some of which directly contributed to employment outcomes for participating youth.

Capacity building of youth civil society organisations remained a key priority throughout 2025. EU4Youth designed and rolled out a comprehensive **capacity building programme**²⁶, combining training sessions, peer to peer mentoring, and **youth CSO forums**²⁷. Around **50 youth organisations**²⁸ enhanced their competencies in organisational development, strategic communications, youth policy and engagement, access to funding and sustainability. In parallel, the Association of Youth Advisory Councils of Georgia implemented multi phase capacity building and training of trainers programmes, empowering youth councils from different municipalities and supporting the implementation of community led initiatives.

High-level dialogue and visibility for youth engagement were also strengthened during the year. EU4Youth supported exchanges and meetings between young people and senior decision-makers, including **EU Ambassador level engagements**²⁹ in regional municipalities, which provided youth with direct opportunities to discuss priorities, challenges, and Georgia's European future. Georgia also actively participated in regional exchanges and study visits, including study visits to Armenia and other EU-supported regional learning formats, fostering cross-country knowledge exchange and cooperation among youth actors and public institutions.

²⁵ [EU4Youth: Youth Engagement and Empowerment project launches Youth Policy Labs in Georgia - EU NEIGHBOURS east / EU4Youth concludes second cycle of Youth Policy Labs in Georgia - EU NEIGHBOURS east](#)

²⁶ [EU4Youth in Georgia: Empowering youth in Imereti through inclusion and civic engagement - EU NEIGHBOURS east](#)

²⁷ [EU4Youth: forum on youth challenges and opportunities - EU NEIGHBOURS east](#)

²⁸ [Georgia: EU4Youth empowers 50 youth civil society organisations through Intensive Capacity Development Programme - EU NEIGHBOURS east](#)

²⁹ [Kakheti youth engage in dialogue with EU Ambassador on Georgia's European future - EU NEIGHBOURS east](#)



Young voices rising in Ukraine



“I realised I can do much more than I think” - Valeriia Kozova.

The EU4Youth small grant implemented in Ukraine enabled a comprehensive empowerment programme for teenage girls from remote, disadvantaged and conflict-affected communities, creating an inclusive and motivating space for leadership development. Through a mix of online lessons, in-person visits, cultural trips, and guided community projects, participants built their confidence, improved their communication skills, and became more active in civic life, many even visiting cities like Kyiv or Lviv for the first time. The programme cultivated a supportive peer environment where girls overcame their fear of public speaking, developed practical project-management competencies, and learned how to translate ideas into action. Several participants went on to join local youth councils or implement their own initiatives, demonstrating how small-grant investments can generate sustained civic participation and [leadership among young women in wartime Ukraine.](#)

Beyond leadership development for young women, EU4Youth small grant support also generated significant impact across wider youth communities in remote and conflict affected regions of Ukraine. Through complementary initiatives implemented by local partners, young people in frontline and rural areas gained unprecedented access to participation tools, policy dialogue, and opportunities for community driven recovery. In Sumy, Konotop, Buryń and Romny, youth who had long been isolated by insecurity and damaged infrastructure were mobilised to co create a Youth Manifesto that informed local recovery strategies and opened new channels of dialogue with municipal leaders.

In parallel, a mobile exhibition showcasing international youth engagement practices travelled across ten communities, bringing accessible, low cost models for civic action directly to small towns and villages and equipping young people with practical tools they could apply immediately. These efforts helped to shift youth from passive beneficiaries to recognised partners in community development, leading to the establishment of youth councils, the allocation of public spaces for youth centres, and stronger collaboration between young people and local authorities. The strengthened organisational capacity of the implementing partners ensures that these participatory mechanisms will continue to grow, supporting sustainable, youth led recovery in wartime Ukraine.

This surge in grassroots engagement created a foundation for wider institutional progress, reflected in Ukraine’s national youth policy developments in 2025. EU4Youth played a critical role in strengthening youth participation, institutional capacity, and policy coordination in Ukraine, while adapting its support to the realities of wartime and early recovery contexts. Throughout the year, EU4Youth closely cooperated with the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine, other sectoral ministries, regional administrations, and youth civil society to ensure that young people remained actively involved in decision making and policy development at national and local levels.

A key area of impact was [youth policy coordination and institutional strengthening](#)³⁰. EU4Youth provided continuous technical and communications support to the Ministry of Youth and Sports, including through an EU4Youth funded communications expert, enhancing public outreach and coordination across the youth sector. EU4Youth also actively contributed to [Sectoral Working Group Youth meetings](#)³¹, ensuring alignment with national youth policy priorities and effective coordination with other donor funded initiatives.

Youth participation in policy dialogue was further strengthened through [policy labs, dialogues](#)³², and consultative formats. These processes resulted in concrete policy recommendations, including proposals submitted to central and local authorities and contributions to strategic documents such as the [State Target Social Programme ‘Youth of Ukraine 2026-2030’](#)³³. Youth engagement was also promoted through [ideathons](#) and policy labs in regions affected by the war, ensuring that young people’s perspectives were reflected in [community recovery and resilience planning](#).³⁴

Capacity building of both youth organisations and public officials was a strong focus throughout the year. EU4Youth supported a wide range of national and regional trainings for youth CSOs, youth councils, and public officials responsible for youth policy. These activities strengthened competencies in youth participation, advocacy, inclusion, mental health support, and youth engagement during wartime. Special emphasis was placed on inclusive and barrier free approaches, with multiple trainings enabling youth centres and organisations to develop concrete action plans to improve accessibility and [non discrimination in their work](#).³⁵

EU4Youth also supported a diverse portfolio of youth led initiatives implemented by grantee organisations across Ukraine. These projects included [youth camps](#)³⁶, leadership schools, ideathons, science schools, and community based initiatives that empowered young people to contribute to local decision making, recovery efforts, and social cohesion. Particular attention was given to vulnerable groups, including young women, internally displaced youth, young veterans, and youth from rural or war affected communities. Several initiatives resulted in practical outputs such as policy recommendations, educational materials, advocacy tools, and strengthened networks of youth leaders and organisations.

Finally, EU4Youth facilitated Ukraine’s participation in regional and European exchanges, strengthening peer learning and international cooperation despite ongoing challenges.

³⁰ [EU4Youth supports dialogue on politics as a social environment for youth Kyiv - EU NEIGHBOURS east](#)

³¹ [EU4Youth organises strategic session for new Ukrainian Youth Council - NEIGHBOURS east](#)

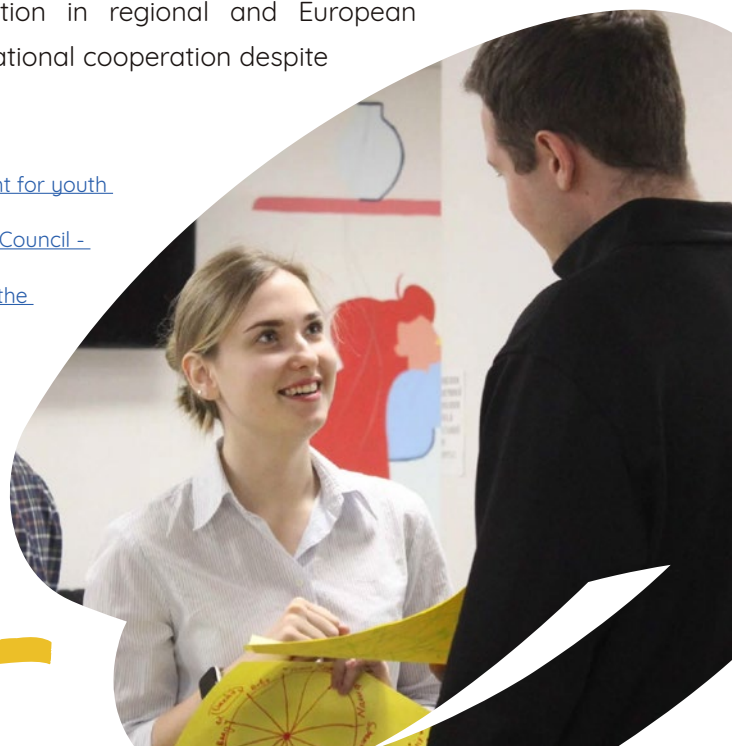
³² [EU4Youth organises strategic session for Youth Council under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine - EU NEIGHBOURS east](#)

³³ [EU4Youth: National youth councils gather in Lviv, Ukraine, influence state youth policy - EU NEIGHBOURS east](#)

³⁴ [EU4Youth: Five ideathons on youth engagement community recovery held in Sumy region of Ukraine - EU NEIGHBOURS east](#)

³⁵ [EU4Youth supports Youth Participation School Zhytomyr, Ukraine - EU NEIGHBOURS east](#)

³⁶ [EU4Youth: youth camp in Zolotonosha, Ukraine, inspires community action - EU NEIGHBOURS east](#)



Active youth dialogue in Moldova

Across Moldova, the EU4Youth small grants turned first-time participants from rural and minority communities into confident civic actors, producing visible and lasting changes in local governance and youth ecosystems. In southern localities that previously had no youth centres or participation channels, young people co-created new youth spaces that now function as permanent hubs for dialogue and community action, including fully operational centres in two villages, Roşcani and Lingura, that continue with municipal funding.

Youth groups that had never approached authorities before now attend council meetings, submit proposals, and secure resources; in Taraclia, youth advocacy led to a tenfold increase in the youth budget, enabling more services and structured activities. A pilot of one-week internships inside municipalities gave young people first-hand insight into how local government works; municipal staff reported valuing their contributions, especially on digitalisation tasks, and interns returned as credible partners who helped establish local initiative groups and indirectly mobilised over 750 peers across five communities.

Minority youth from Gagauzia, Taraclia, and Basarabeasca, many accessing civic processes for the first time, held direct dialogues with national and EU institutions, including the EU Delegation and parliamentary representatives. This exposure resulted in concrete follow-up: several participants applied to the Youth Parliament, others volunteered at national cultural events, and youth in Basarabeasca secured UNICEF funding to equip their local youth centre. In Taraclia, two young women developed research-based reports that prompted the community to rehabilitate a neglected park and plant four hectares of forest, showcasing youth-led environmental action. Across communities, youth-authority cooperation strengthened, with formal collaboration agreements signed in Taraclia and Basarabeasca and new partnerships emerging with the other NGOs.

Taken together, these shifts, new youth spaces, budget increases, institutional internships, environmental improvements, successful funding applications, and sustained participation, show that when access and mentoring are in place, even the most excluded young people quickly become effective co-producers of local policy and community change, leaving durable structures and empowered youth networks in their wake.

This strengthening of youth participation on the ground was complemented by important national-level advancements in youth engagement and policy coordination. In 2025, EU4Youth made a strong contribution to advancing youth participation, leadership, and policy dialogue in Moldova through a balanced combination of policy-oriented initiatives, support to youth-led projects, and large-scale civic engagement activities. The year was characterised by a strong focus on inclusive participation, outreach to diverse regions and language groups, and strengthening cooperation between young people, civil society, and public authorities at local and national levels.



Youth participation in decision making was significantly strengthened through the programme-led [Youth Policy Labs and structured dialogue initiatives](#)³⁷ implemented in multiple localities, including [Cimişlia, Zubreşti, Cupcini, Bardar, and other communities](#)³⁸. These processes brought together young people and local public authorities to jointly identify challenges, prioritise needs, and co create practical solutions. The labs resulted in concrete local initiatives and recommendations, improving mutual understanding between youth and decision makers and enhancing the responsiveness of local governance to young people's needs.



A flagship achievement in Moldova in 2025 was the successful organisation of the [EU4Youth Model European Union \(MEU\) Moldova](#)³⁹, which attracted strong nationwide interest, with hundreds of young people registering from cities and villages across the country. The event provided participants with hands on experience of EU decision-making processes, strengthened their understanding of democratic governance, and fostered active citizenship. The MEU generated significant public visibility, wide social media reach, and strong engagement from participants, institutions, and the EU Delegation, positioning it as a key youth civic education initiative in the country.

Particular emphasis was placed on reaching [young people from rural areas](#)⁴⁰ and vulnerable groups, including NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) youth, ensuring inclusive access to opportunities. Youth organisations and national youth structures benefited from coordination support, mentoring, and learning exchanges, strengthening their ability to represent youth interests and implement quality initiatives.

To further amplify youth engagement throughout the year, EU4Youth supported regional and [national youth festivals, forums](#)⁴¹, and International Youth Day celebrations, which collectively engaged thousands of young people across multiple regions, including Chişinău, Edineţ, Ştefan Vodă, and southern and rural localities. These events created platforms for dialogue, networking, and celebration of youth initiatives, while also strengthening cooperation with [local authorities and national institutions](#)⁴².

At the national level, EU4Youth advanced youth participation in broader democratic processes through initiatives such as the 'Youth Vote' campaign, which combined local debates, offline engagement, and digital outreach to encourage informed participation in civic and political life. The campaign achieved substantial reach and visibility, reinforcing young people's role as active citizens and contributors to democratic development.

³⁷ [EU4Youth: 120 young people in Moldova empowered for civic engagement and employment - EU NEIGHBOURS east](#)

³⁸ [EU4Youth: 100 young people from Gagauzia, Taraclia, and Basarabasca gather for Leadership Academy project closing event - EU NEIGHBOURS east](#)

³⁹ [Over 100 Young People Took Part in the Second Edition of Model European Union Moldova - EU for Moldova](#)

⁴⁰ [Moldova: EU4Youth helps to launch Leadership Academy to empower youth in Gagauzia - EU NEIGHBOURS east](#)

⁴¹ [EU4Youth: fourth edition of Diaspora Youth Forum in Moldova - EU NEIGHBOURS east](#)

⁴² [EU4Youth: Celebrating Youth Impact within the Moldovan Youth Councils - EU NEIGHBOURS east](#)

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