

Future Mentors Manual



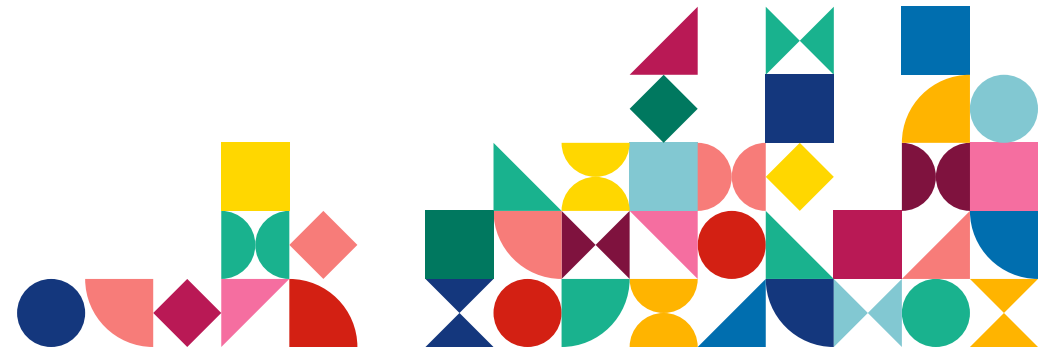
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1. Introduction

1.1. The Future Mentors programme in a nutshell

Great to have you joining our programme, together we will make this something inspiring and a programme of impact!

The Future Mentors programme is a reversed mentoring programme, in which a small group of young people will mentor a leader from their own city about the hopes, dreams and fears of the future generation regarding the future of their city. In this programme the city leaders are not the mentors, but the mentees, the ones offered the opportunity to be exposed to the bright thinking of their young mentors.

The main idea of the program is dialogue, collaboration and discussion, to create mutual understanding for the future cities. It is a platform for youth in the cities to contribute to a sustainable future at the same tables with the decision makers

The Future Mentors will be given a task to dream a city of future. The topics of the mentoring will be decided by the Future Mentors themselves during the process, as this programme is a platform to for the voice of the next generation. The Future Mentors will use their own city as the starting point and vision it in the near and far future, and then communicate their dreams and fears for the future of the city to the mentee, the city leader, as part of the mentoring process. The topics can be grand scale such as climate change in cities, opinion polarization, mental health issues and biodiversity loss, or more concrete and local such as urban mobility, recycling plastic, youth empowerment and everything in between. All of these are issues that must be dealt with to create a better future for the generations to come. We must be willing to question our thinking and be open to the idea that our thinking could be better. This can best be done by exposing ourselves to dialogue with different people.

The mentorship programme enhances youth's participation and strengthens their voice in their cities. The aim is to exchange ideas and gain perspective and understanding on themes for sustainable future cities through the eyes of younger generations. The young Future Mentors will reinforce the future world community by bringing youth and leaders of the cities together.

This manual contains information on the programme and uses The Future Mentors programme 2022, as a reference to understand how this programme works.

We encourage posting about the Future Mentors programme on social media. Please use the hashtags **#Espoo**, **#FutureMentors** while posting.



1.2. Who is this manual for?

This manual is for any organisation that wants to create a platform for dialogue between the youth and the decision makers. The Future Mentors programme is designed to be used in cities, but with minor modifications it can be applied to other organisations, too

The main actors involved in carrying out this programme are

- The mentors (the youth),
- The mentees (the city leaders),
- The City coordinators (coordinating the practicalities and organizing the meetings of the mentoring programme in each city) calities of the programme.

This manual gives an overview of how the programme proceeds and describes the role of each actor. We recommend all the participants to read this whole manual to get an understanding of the objectives and practicalities of the programme.

A more detailed step-by-step guide on arranging the mentoring meetings can be downloaded from our [website](#). The step-by-step guide is for the city coordinators to use for help in planning the mentoring sessions first with the Future mentors and then with the mentees as well.

1.3. How did it go for the first time?

The Future Mentors programme was first developed in the City of Espoo and was run as part of the European Year of Youth in 2022. Twenty-six European cities ran this programme during spring 2022. The mentoring took place locally and culminated at the Eurocities Annual Conference, where Future mentors from around Europe met with their peers. The Future Mentors addressed the high-level conference of European mayors with recommendations on how to better involve the youth in their decision-making processes. This manual benchmarks the Future Mentors programme from 2022 and can be used as a reference guide to execute this programme in any city or organisation.



2. Aim of the programme

The aim of the mentoring programme is to

- Provide a platform for dialogue between city leaders and youth about a sustainable future in the cities. The values and decisions of today's cities directly affect the near and far future. The youth are the ones who must live in that future therefore they should have their say in conversation and ideation.
- Bridge the gap between youth and the city leaders. Young people all over the world have begun to fight the global sustainability deficit and demand governments to act, especially against climate change. The youth climate movement has not only shone a light on the sustainability challenge, but also on the gap between decision-makers and young citizens.
- Increase the mutual understanding in a dialogue and decision-makers' knowledge of the values, hopes and dreams steering younger generations. Give new perspectives to all participants.
- Make the voice of young people better heard in cities. Increase the youth's feeling of being invested in the city's future. If the youth is not interested in their city's future, does the city have a future at all?
- Increase the feeling of togetherness between young people in the cities.
- Create a new and future-oriented way of working towards dialogue with the youth in cities.



3. The roles

3.1. The Future mentor

In this mentoring programme the youth will act as mentors. A group of 3–4 young mentos chosen from the participating city will mentor a leader of their own city as a team. All the mentors will be equal participants of the local meetings.

The Future Mentors are experts on the thoughts and dreams of the young and in this programme they have the opportunity to make their and their city's youth's voice better heard at the city level.

The mentors will get instructions from the local city coordinator on how to do the mentoring and are guided and supported by the coordinator throughout the whole programme. The youth should read this manual and the step-by-step guide.

With the help of the coordinator, they will choose specific topics related to a sustainable future of the city. They would then prepare for the mentoring meetings, collect views and opinions from their city's local youth, prepare a little presentation for the mentee and have a dialogue with the leader in two to three meetings.

3.2. The mentee

The mentee is a city leader/politician e.g., mayor, deputy mayor, local politician, or a director from the city administration.

The mentee's role is to be open to learn about the dreams, hopes and fears of the younger generations through the eyes of the Future Mentors from their own city. This will empower the youth to become active urban citizens and have their voices heard in the decision making to encourage the feeling of being a part of their own city's future.

The mentee receives an invitation to the programme with a nutshell overview on the programme. The city coordinator ([see 3.3](#)) will inform the mentee about all the necessary information on participating in the programme, take care of all the practicalities, book the meetings and prepare the content of the meetings together with the mentors. By reading this manual the mentee/their assistant can get to know the overall view of the mentoring programme and their own role in it in more detail.

The mentee will be sent a little pre-task to do before the first mentoring meeting. The mentee will participate in two 1,5-hour meetings with the mentor and preferably make a quick 5–10 minute (virtual) visit to say hello at the first meeting of the mentors and the city coordinator ([see 4](#)).

3.3. The city coordinator

The city coordinator is in charge of coordinating and organizing the mentorship programme.

The city coordinator can [download](#) this manual, and instructions on how to run the youth's application process. The city coordinators can also download ready-made marketing material for different platforms and social media that can be used and edited according to the needs of each city. The city coordinator runs the youth's application process according to the instructions provided and chooses 3–4 Future mentors among the applicants. The application and selection process can also be done in some other way most suitable for the city.

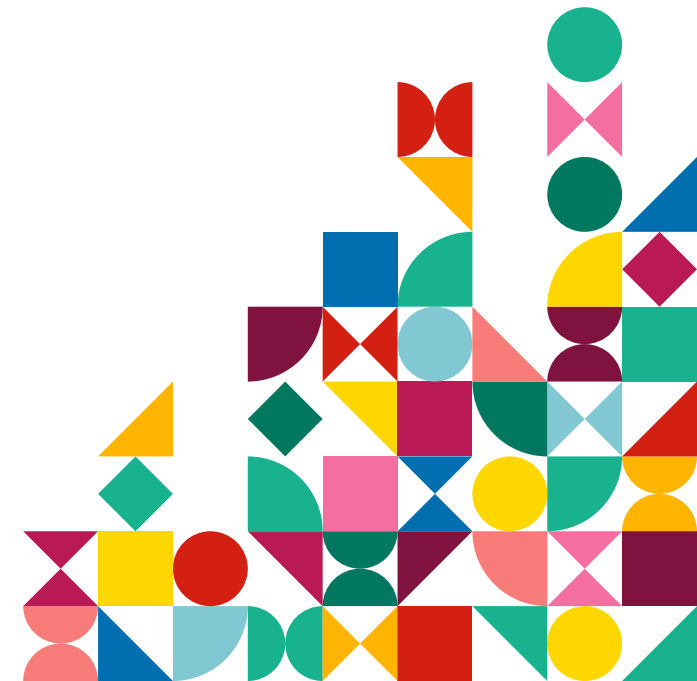
With the help of this manual the city coordinator will plan the specific timetable of the mentoring in their city. After choosing the Future mentors, the city coordinator will inform them about the kick-off meeting, book all the upcoming meetings with them and let them know the dates and times of the meetings with the mentee. The city coordinator can download from the City of Espoo, a step-by-step guide on how to implement the mentoring programme.

There are detailed instructions for every meeting in the step-by-step guide. According to those guidelines the city coordinator can plan the content of the three meetings with the city coordinator and the Future mentors. In those meetings the city coordinator helps the Future mentors in choosing the topics to be discussed with the mentee, prepares on how the mentors will collect other local youth's opinions and views and plans the content of the actual mentoring session in relation to the chosen topics.

3.4. Local youth & children

Future Mentors are instructed to ask/discuss the hopes, dreams and fears related to their home city from local youth, to get a broader perspective. Instructions and tips are provided in the step-by-step guide. This can be done according to the ideas and wishes of the Future mentors, so it can be done differently in every city. Future Mentors can for example plan a small questionnaire for their friends on social media, interview local children/youth in schools or something else.

The idea is to include a bit of a broader perspective in addition to that of the mentors in the mentoring programme. This will give the mentors a chance to be the true voice of the youth of their area.



4. Timetable for the programme

			Admission Phase				Participation Phase			Mentoring Phase	Follow-up
			2-3 weeks			5-6 weeks				5-7 weeks	After the programme
Phase of the programme	Onboarding of young people starts	Onboarding of young people finishes	Future Mentors kick-off meeting	Online kick-off	Mentors 1st meeting	Mentors 2nd meeting	At least two- three meetings				
Time allocated for meetings			1 hour	1 hour	2 hours	2 hours	1,5 hours				
Roles taking part in activities			mentors + city coordinator	mentors + city coordinator + a quick visit from the mentee	mentors + city coordinator	mentors + city coordinator	mentors + mentees + city coordinator				
City coordinator: To Do	Start youth onboarding process Keep communicating – make sure young people know how to get onboard	Review applications to the programme Select up to 4 young people to be mentors Prepare for the local online kick-off	Offer support for Future Mentors during the task Prepare for face to face meetings: contact young people, reserve space, familiarise with the guide, prepare materials...		Facilitate sessions (guide available!)		Facilitate sessions, enable the development of ideas Agree on follow-up actions and schedule. Collect feedback.				
					Help young people contacting relevant stakeholders in the city when collecting other youth's views. Aid mentee in preparation for the meetings	Communicate results to mentees			Provide feedback on the process		
Future Mentors: To Do	Apply for the programme	Wait for a reply from the city coordinator	Participate in online session	Work on the assignment Agree on an online collaboration channel	Participate in meetings			Online platform stays open after the programme. A chance to continue networking with other young mentors from their cities Provide feedback on the process			
					Participate in online communication channel (e.g. Discord)						
Mentees: To Do				Introduce yourself in the local online kick-off (5 to 10 min)	Prepare for meetings with Future Mentors (guide available!)		Participate in local meetings Possible work to prepare for next meetings	Provide feedback on the process			

5. Topics to be discussed during the mentoring

Future Mentors will be given a task: to dream a city of the future. The topics discussed together will be linked to sustainable future of the city. The Future Mentors will decide the more specific topics themselves during the first meetings together. The city coordinator can help choose the topic(s).

The topics can be of grand scale such as climate change in cities, opinion polarization, circular economy, social segregation, increasing loneliness, mental health issues, biodiversity loss, the metaversum and/or more concrete and local such as urban mobility, food loss, recycling plastic, youth empowerment and everything in between (see some of the topics presented by the youth during the Futures Mentors programme 2022, here). The topic should be related to the hopes, dreams and fears of the young Future Mentors. Something that is of importance to them, regarding the future of their city. Here are a few questions as examples of the task the Future Mentors can be given:

In your dreams,

- What does your city look like in the near and far future? 5–10 years from now? What about 15–20 years from now?
- What has to change to make that reality?
- What must we hold on to, so that we don't end up in a future of your fears?
- How could the voice of the youth be better heard in decision making?



Photo: Tuomas Uusheimo

6. The Mentoring Process

A step-by-step guide is used by participants and is available for download on City of Espoo website. The guide contains instructions for organizing the meetings and running the mentoring process with instructions for pre-tasks, icebreakers, goals and facilitation and concrete tools to reach those goals. Timetable (9) and the time required for each phase are included in this manual as a guide. The cities can make their own schedule that suits them best.

The process consists of one virtual meeting, a pre-task, two preparation meetings and two mentoring sessions. During the preparation meetings the Future Mentors will discuss the future of their city with the City coordinator. The instructions are there to inspire Future Mentors to discuss different topics with each other. In addition, their aim is to enable a safe environment so that everyone can reach their full potential during the programme.

Of course, the City coordinator can approach these sessions in any way he/she/they wants, the instructions are there to provide support during the process.

During the pre-task the Future Mentors will be asked to broaden their views by collecting views and opinions from their city's local youth. This can be an online questionnaire or a visit to a local school. If possible, the City coordinator can prepare some ideas for the collection of ideas beforehand (ie. discuss the possibility of a school visit or a channel for questionnaire etc.). More ideas can be explored in the step-by-step guide.

After the preparation meetings the Future Mentors, the mentee and City coordinator will participate in two mentoring sessions where the Mentors and mentee will engage in dialogue. Instructions for these sessions can be downloaded as well.



7. After the programme

The city taking part in the programme is encouraged to follow up on the topics discussed during the mentoring sessions. They are also encouraged to reflect the learnings of the Future Mentors programme in the city development work, especially the ones that involve the local youth.

8. Organising Future Mentors programme in many cities

If the programme is being collaborated with other cities, it is a good idea to create a virtual meeting place to network and discuss the topics of the programme. The youth can exchange ideas and tips on how to do the mentoring. They can also get to know each other, talk about their experiences after the programme and stay in touch afterwards for hopefully even lifelong connections.



9. Future Mentors programme and Eurocities network

Eurocities is a network of more than 200 cities in 38 countries, representing 130 million people. Eurocities mission and goal is to strive for a Europe where cities are genuine partners with the EU to create a better future where:

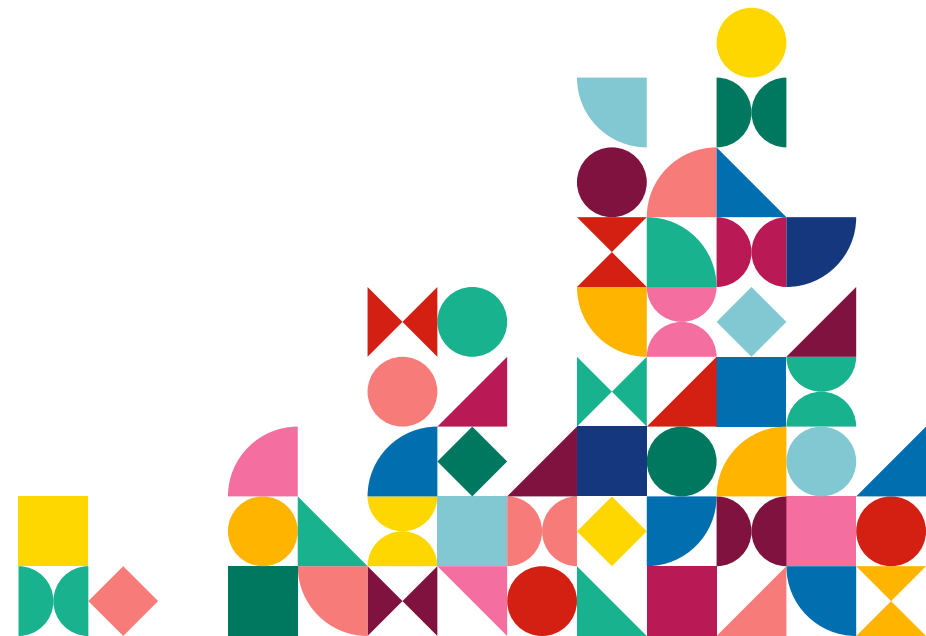
- People take part in an inclusive society
- People progress in a prosperous local economy
- People move and live in a healthy environment
- People make vibrant and open public spaces
- City governments address global challenges
- City governments are fit for the future

The City of Espoo coordinated and introduced the Future Mentors programme for young people in 2022, as part of the European Year of Youth to further Eurocities' goals; Number one by providing the youth participation possibilities and number six by providing the city leaders with fresh ideas for the future of the city.

The Future Mentors programme was an official part of the European Year of Youth with visibility both in Eurocities communications and European Year of Youth communications.

In this facilitated mentoring programme, Eurocities mayors met with a Future Mentor, a young person from their city, to learn about their fears, hopes and dreams for the future city. The mentoring took place before Eurocities Annual conference 2022, according to the programme set up and designed by Espoo and Eurocities. All the Future Mentors were then invited to join the delegation of their cities and to participate in the Eurocities Annual Conference 2022 in Espoo. The aim was to raise the voice of young people in issues related to sustainable development.

The Future Mentors programme was an official part of the European Year of Youth with visibility both in Eurocities communications and European Year of Youth communications.



10. The Annual General Meeting and Conference 2022 in Espoo

26 European cities ran Future Mentors programme during the spring 2022, as part of the European Year of Youth, where 94 young people mentored their respective local leaders

In June 2022, Espoo hosted the annual general meeting and conference of the Eurocities network. The conference brought hundreds of European city leaders and a significant number of EU decision-makers and officials to Espoo. The theme of the future oriented 2022 conference was *“An era of new beginnings”*.

Months of work of the young mentors was presented and shared at the Eurocities Annual Conference. The future mentors met with other young delegates from different European cities. They discussed how their respective cities could better involve the youth in their decision-making process.

Espoo 2022 under the title *“An Era of New Beginnings”* invited city leaders, future generations, visionaries, European decision-makers to *“dream, act and lead”* a more sustainable future together and thus the voice of the next generation had an essential role in the conference. Young people and city leaders had a dialogue with the aim of increasing mutual understanding between the youth and decision-makers in cities.



11. Findings and feedback from the conference

11.1. Themes explored by the Young mentors

During the Eurocities 2022 Espoo conference, as well as through this Future Mentors programme organized before the conference, the participating city leaders had the opportunity to broaden their awareness of the dreams and insights of young people regarding their cities. Lessons were learned about what kind of cities do we and the future generations want to live in, and what creates the value of future European cities. Espoo 2022, displayed the highlights of the Future Mentors programme that the young mentors have been working on (a few examples can be seen here), and observed the values of the next generation that will guide our cities forward.

In 2015, all United Nations Member states shared certain values and goals for peace and prosperity of people and the planet. These values were adopted as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. At the core there are 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which call for urgent actions by all the countries towards ending poverty and inequality, improve health and education, boost economic growth and preservation of our planet.

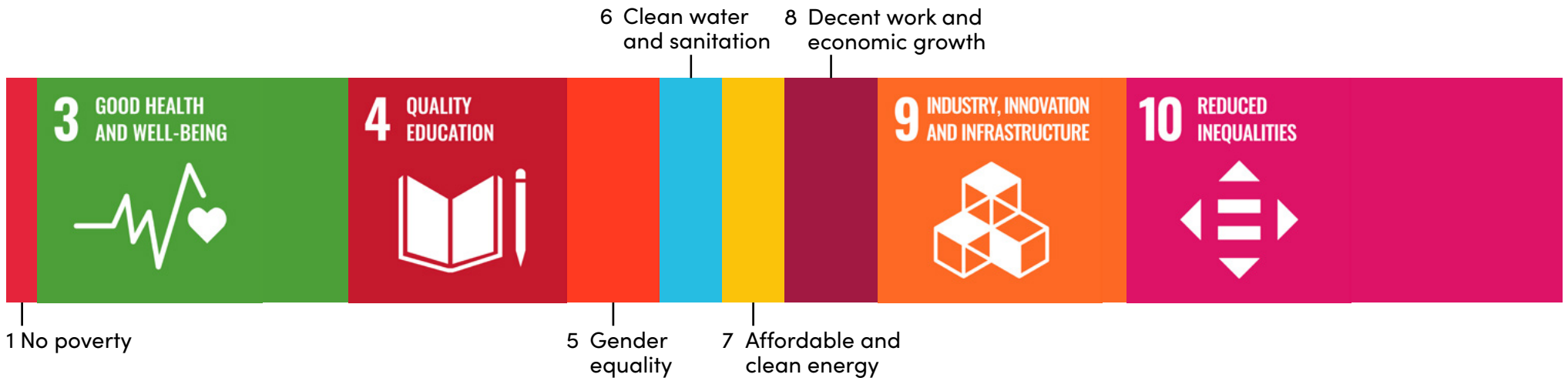
The themes explored by the young mentors during the Future Mentors programme 2022 were, for the major part, concerned with these SDG's. The themes important to the young mentors regarding the future of their cities, ranged from addressing poverty, to sustainable cities and climate actions.

The themes used by the young mentors were grouped under each SDG to have an elaborate picture of the youth's dreams and fears and their relationship to the sustainable development goals..



The topics raised in the discussion during the local mentorings, categorized under SDG's. The bigger the square, the more often a topic related to this SDG was mentioned.





Development areas derived from the topics explored by the young mentors in their cities and coded under each sustainable development goal.



- Remuneration compared to the cost of living

- Developed sports infrastructure and numerous sports events
- Mental health of the youth
- Substance use of the youth
- Foster care
- The mental health of the youth
- Preventive work in schools
- Health and social care
- Psychological health
- A city that feels healthier
- Mental health challenges and anxiety should be taken seriously

- Attractive and modern university
- Public institutions commitment on education
- Education
- Educational system
- Educational equity and equal opportunities
- Modern school as a friendly space for expanding students' horizons
- Dialogue and conversation skills as part of the education curriculum

- Gender equality
- Equality
- More public toilets (also for girls)

- Public commitment to save water
- Waste management

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



- Making city greener (green spaces and solar energy)
- Energy efficiency

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



- Quality job opportunities
- Happiness vs economic growth?
- To have more opportunities, recreation, leisure, jobs

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



- Planning and delivery of key investments for residents
- Expanding infrastructure and reducing building sites at the same time
- Embracing the new digital era
- Artificial intelligence
- Cyber security
- More bold, concrete city-level experiments and pilots
- Capture the Potential of Emerging Technologies to Solve Technological Everyday Problems
- Experimentation

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



- Social cohesion
 - Become a model city in welcoming migrants
 - Be inclusive towards all people with migrant backgrounds
 - Bridging social gaps
 - Make Europe accessible, inclusive, and close to its citizens
 - Educational equity and equal opportunities
 - Equality
 - Fight the discrimination of young people
 - Promotion of diversity in the city
 - Diversity as richness
 - Segregated groups of youth
- Unresolved Division of the City (political and practical)
 - Explicit Efforts to Improve Social Inclusion
 - Emphasize on Youth and Family

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



- More youth-tailored hang out spots
- More random patches of wilderness
- More green areas within the city
- City planning – a good city to live in
- Sustainable, safe & fun mobility
- Respect and care of green areas
- Clean, friendly, and integrated public transport
- Safe and comfortable individual transportation
- Affordable housing solutions
- Increase the size of green areas and create new ones
- Public commitment to sustainable mobility
- Maintaining urban biodiversity
- Sustainable transport
- Sustainable cities
- Making city greener (green spaces and solar energy)
- Hobby & entertainment bus
- Urban food production
- Mobility
- Urban mobility
- Create a better sense of community in our neighborhoods
- Promote self-efficacy
- How to make city car free (public transport, cycling routes)
- Affordable housing
- Preserving public and green spaces
- More playgrounds where they can play but also do sport
- More adventurous playground equipment for the teenagers
- More roads around schools that are safe
- More and wider bike paths
- More places where teenagers can come together
- More colours and graffiti in the city
- More trees and plants in the city
- A city that feels Cleaner/Greener
- More public toilets (also for girls)
- More animals
- A city where we feel more included
- A city where we feel more connected
- To have more opportunities, recreation, leisure, jobs
- Improved mobility and access (mass transport, parking regulation, etc)
- Safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, children at play
- Desperate need for green spaces
- Recycling of waste with minimal emissions
- Awareness about responsible consumption
- Public institutions commitment on actions aiming at responsible consumption
- Circular economy
- Eco-responsibility (green companies, packaging, food waste)
- Happiness vs economic growth?
- Less waste and more trash cans
- Improvement of Waste Management



- Climate adaptation solutions for water resiliency
- Effective methods for preventing negative effects of climate change
- Regeneration and beauty
- Reach climate neutrality by 2030
- Eco-responsibility (green companies, packaging, food waste)
- Carbon neutral city is an important target



- Biodiversity



- Green spaces
- Biodiversity



- Youth participation in decision-making processes
- Active participation of residents in the cultural life of the city
- High standards of debate on the direction of the city's development
- Favorable conditions for the development of the third sector
- Supporting municipal advisory bodies and increasing their role in creating and implementing urban policies
- Developed civil society
- New ways of participation for the new generations



16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



- Include children's rights in the German constitution
 - Reform the right to vote
 - Transparent decision making
 - Inclusion and esteem of the youth's opinion (hopes, fears, expectations, ideas)
 - A friendly city for all
 - Welcoming, openness and inclusion
 - Proximity to citizens
 - Violence and harassment faced by the youth
 - Social sustainability
 - Security
 - Transform the administrative systems
 - Engage and integrate
 - Happiness vs economic growth?
- Youth participation
 - More actions, less words
 - More participation of youth in the decision-making
 - Our city consists of individuals, who all are important in making a change
 - To meet/face the youth as individuals
 - Effective social policies
 - Everyone is needed for finding solutions to big challenges
 - Integrated (and Creative) planning and evidence-based, responsive governance

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



- Teach and learn about Europe



11.2. Impact of the Future Mentors programme

Jukka Mäkelä, the mayor of Espoo, who was also a part of this mentorship programme working with 4 mentors in spring 2022, added that it has been a meaningful journey and he would recommend it to other colleagues. Addressing the role of the youth, Jukka Mäkelä expressed,

“ Let’s listen to our young people, their hopes, dreams and fears. And let’s all pledge not to fail them. They are our future. Let’s listen to them”.

Addressing the enthusiasm and involvement of the youth in this programme, Mathias De Clercq, the Mayor of Ghent, remarked,

“ There are more dreams than fears for the future”.

94 mentors that worked with 26 cities, decision makers, and coordinators, had a chance to exchange ideas with their likes on how cities could integrate and include youth in the decision making process.

The themes of the local mentoring sessions were collected by the City of Espoo to form word clouds ([Word cloud 1.](#) & [Word cloud 2.](#)) that represented the dreams and fears of the future mentors. These fears and dreams were presented and further discussed during the conference.

A workshop was arranged in Espoo during the conference, dedicated to the analysis of the local mentoring sessions. These word clouds were used as a unit for analysis by the city decision makers in that workshop. The decision makers were shown the word clouds and SDG categorizations. After that we presented them with a couple of questions they first had a conversation about and then also wrote their answers to on a virtual platform. To the first question, what kind of thoughts and feelings they have on these themes important to the young in their city’s future, they commented e.g., *“The dreams seem small and concrete, fears seem big and general.”* The city leaders added in their virtual comments, *“adults are looking at the world through fears and problems instead of hopes and dreams. That is not the way of building hope for the future”.*

Another comment read, *“Fears are linked to themes that the city can make a difference to”.*

During the workshop it was also asked to the city decision makers that What should be the balance between the opinions of young people of the city and those already in power? The comments explored that *“we need more young people in the city councils and as mayors. Young people should be encouraged to run for offices.”* It can be seen that the city leaders are open for continuous dialogue and the two way communication to ensure that *“everyone is heard”.* (If you wish to look at the comments of the decision makers or the mentors in more detail, write to international@espoo.fi)

The young mentors were asked to add a final comment virtually for the city leaders regarding the mentoring/youth participation. They opened up by saying *“try to listen to the youth”.*

Reflecting on how the future can be inclusive and effective, they added *“Future cities have to be for everyone”* for this, the city leaders have to be more involved and willing to listen to the voice of young people, while also learning from other cities, so we can *“Dream global, act local!”*



Word cloud 1. Dreams of Young Mentors derived from local mentoring sessions



Word cloud 2. Fears of Young Mentors derived from local mentoring sessions



11.3. Wordcloud and SDG categorization analysis: workshop results

Question: What are your thoughts and feelings on the hopes and fears of the young generation and the themes important to them in their city's future?

Responses:

- Young people are smart . Smarter than us, the older generation. They can think and see the future and next generation too. So, feelings are good. We are in safe hands.
- It's giving hope, because the dreams listed are important and it's quite easy to share them with the young.
- There is a real concern in young generation about their future and they have willingness to makes their dreams come true.
- We adults are looking world through fears and problems instead of hopes and dreams. That is not the way of building hope for the future.
- The solutions need to be local and the resources should be acknowledged. Same things don't work everywhere. Equality is very important, but an individual's efforts need to be rewarded.
- Most of Young people dreams are workable on city level. But their fears are big.

Analysis: The respondents seem to have many concerns about the future. The main concern seemed to be the continuity of democracy. Another main fear of the respondents was that the mentors did not stress the importance of education enough.

There were also fortunately many respondents with high hopes for the future. The mentors and respondents shared many dreams and fears.

Climate goals and sustainable development seemed to be a commonly shared vision about the future. Many of the solutions to the fears lie within the dreams, and are manageable on a city level.

Question: What should be the balance between the opinions of young people of the city and those already in power? How can they feel invested in building future of cities?

Responses:

- Participation. Maybe we should listen to students and go to schools to ask how they feel
- Co-creation
- Free education
- We need more young people in the city councils and as mayors. Young people should be encouraged to run for offices.
- Youth are the ones who will suffer from the consequences of our actions. Or benefit if we do it right. This should always be at the back of decision makers' mind when taking decisions
- If the opinions are not put into action then they are not really being respected. We need to take more chances on the young.
- The city suited for young people should also fit to other generations.
- There should be more younger people to be part of the desicion making process.

Analysis: Future can be both inclusive and effective. Involving the youth more frequently in decision making appears to be the most common answer among the respondents. Frequent Youth involvement appears to be the most common answer among the respondents.

Free education and budget for participatory activities to encourage youth participation in decision making.

Lowering the age of voting to 16 all over Europe is a great way to get the youth more involved in decision making.

Question: One last advice/comment from the mentors for the city leaders regarding the mentoring / youth participation / sustainable future of the cities.

Responses:

- Try to really listen to youth and not just brush it off with “we are already doing this” or “I am thinking like this too” – we need to see results.
- Better communication from the local administration sides on what they are doing to tackle our hopes.
- Continue listening to what the youngsters have to say and consider their ideas as enriching even if they seem radical. Only high ambitions can create a change. Create opportunities for them to engage – the earlier the better.
- The youth need rolemodels not critics!! Listen to us, act on it, and leave us cities we are happy to live/work in in the future!
- Believe in the experience of young people
- Try to learn from other cities. Broaden your perspective. Dream global, act local!
- The need of the establishment of youth city councils"

Analysis: The youth often have the feeling that their voices are not heard nor respected.

It's important for the youth to be involved in every step of decision making, and seeing the results of their influence.

The mentors hope that there will be youth councils in every city and all over Europe in the future, and that information will be shared with other city's and countries.

Communication should be respectful and transparent.



11.4. Six recommendations to involve young people in cities

During the Eurocities 2022 conference, the Future Mentors were asked to come up with five recommendations for youth participation and inclusion on local level. They passionately drafted six recommendations instead. These recommendations were presented to European city leaders:

- Compulsory and non-tokenistic youth engagement in decisions which affect them and their futures.
- Create a Eurocities youth department; young people should always be part of the Eurocities network.
- An open line of communication between the city leaders and young facilitators, with at least two meetings per year.
- Any engagement with young people must be accessible and inclusive. We should put extra care to involve those from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Enough resources – money and staff – to support youth-centered organizations.
- After any engagement, feedback should be gathered: constant evaluation of youth participation processes.

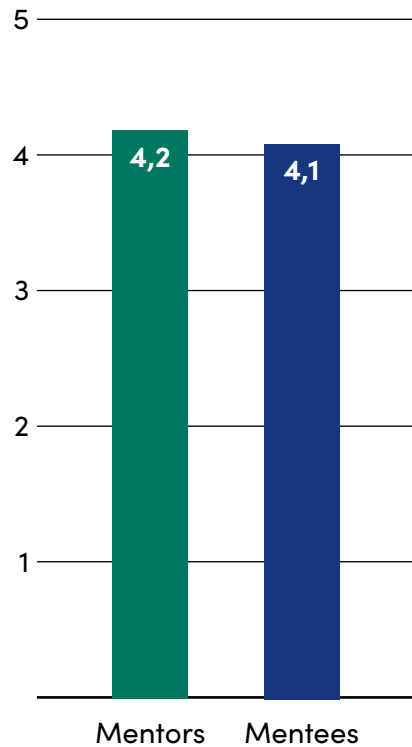
These recommendations made by the future mentors were published at the conference and given as recommendations to all European cities. They are also reflected in the [Charter on Youth and Democracy \(europa.eu\)](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/e0000000-0000-0000-0000-000000000000/asset/e0000000-0000-0000-0000-000000000000/Charter%20on%20Youth%20and%20Democracy%20(2017).pdf) that was adopted by the Committee of the Regions.



12. Feedback on the programme

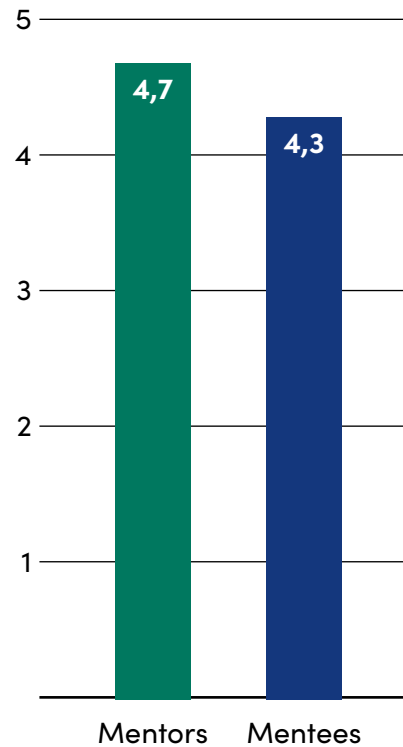
The Young Mentors and Mentees were asked through a survey after the programme, that how satisfied they were with the programme. With five being the most satisfactory, the programme was marked as an average of 4.2 by the Future mentors and 4.1 by the mentees.

How satisfied were you with the programme?



When asked if this kind of programme is a good addition to the toolkit of youth participation method, With five being the most satisfactory, the programme was marked as an average of 4.7 by the Future mentors and 4.3 by the mentees.

Is this kind of a programme a good addition to the toolkit of youth participation methods?



12.1. Comments from the young Future Mentors

- “ By itself, dialogue between city administrations and young people is extremely hard, if not impossible, the programme has proven to be a very needed chance to promote this dialogue.”
- “ I feel like whatever I say to the representatives they say they “listen” but they actually do not care because they know the current status quo.”
- “ [The programme is] making sure that the people who have to live with the future older generations choose, at least have a chance to get their voices heard and ideally implemented into decision-making.”
- “ It’s been incredibly participative and every part worked their best to create mutual understanding, it remains to be seen whether or not it’ll lead to substantial progress with time.”
- “ Usually we share similar values. By exchanging ideas we could find solution suits for everyone.”





12.2. Comments from the mentored decision makers

- “ ...the idea of setting up a dialogue between city representatives and representative of our youth is an effective way to give youngsters a voice in the decision making process.”
- “ The dialogue was very positive and respectful. the most difficult part begins now with the mentors’ expectations after this experience.”
- “ The issues raised up by our future mentors were handled in the Management Board of the city, and will be further handled in the Management Boards of each city department. Regarding the points raised by the Future Mentors in the Eurocities Espoo AGM, the Management Board will in the future meet regularly with the Youth Council.”
- “ Continued dialogue is important for the success of this programme and the implementation of measures addressed by the Future Mentors.”

Some more insights can be seen [here](#).



13. Closing notes

The Future Mentors programme aspires to find new ways to hear the voice of the young people. We hope you find the programme inspiring, meaningful and fun, and construct a city of your dreams where the young are the vital building blocks, living with a sense of belonging!

14. Appendix

14.1. Examples from future mentors programme

Slides from the presentation of Glasgow city Future Mentors.

Consultation With Young People in Glasgow - Results

2. What should we change about Glasgow?

- ▶ Change the mentality that young people just want to be heard. We need action and accountability
- ▶ How public transport works
- ▶ Better and affordable transport
- ▶ Cleanliness of Glasgow-better grass cutting, road improvements, pavement cleaning and removal of weeds
- ▶ More inclusive education
- ▶ Stronger/improved street lighting
- ▶ Regular drain blockage removal/clean-ups
- ▶ More cycle lanes-make cycling more accessible
- ▶ Reduce the cost of public transport and more reliable

Conclusions

When looking to the future on how to make cities more sustainable, young people must be meaningfully engaged with

For engagement to be meaningful young people need to be involved at every stage in the process

Participation should be accessible and inclusive

There should be no barriers to participation



Young people from seldom heard groups must be given an opportunity to be heard as we know they are the most likely to be left out of the decision-making process

When looking to engage with young people the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) should be taken into consideration, specifically article 12

Slide from the presentation of Bordeaux city Future Mentors.

Bordeaux Future Mentors' priorities

- By the first meeting with our group of 7 future mentors from Bordeaux Métropole, they agreed on 5 main priorities that must be taken into account in the future city of their dreams:
 1. Gender equality
 2. Social cohesion
 3. Experimentation
 4. Sensorial experience
 5. Hybridation

Slide from the presentation of Gothenburg city Future Mentors.

QUESTIONS

Describe how/why this is a challenge for your city. Describe what needs to be solved.

If we don't invest time and resources on tackling youth exclusion today, we risk facing a lost generation tomorrow with negative societal impact for many years to come.

We have seen that during the pandemic and its aftermath, the youth has been struggling to get into the labour market. Our youth are showing more and more distrust towards local governments and authorities. Gothenburg still has larger volumes of young newcomers excluded from the society and the labour market due to primarily language barriers, lack of integration, relevant networks and role models. The past years have also shown an alarming increase of negative mental health issues revolving youths linked to adult expectations in addition to societies unhealthy norms.

These effects risk becoming both permanent and long-lasting.

Hållbar stad – öppen för världen


Describe why the challenge is important for your city.

According to the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (MUCF) one in four young people is out of work and study. Many of them become long term unemployed leading to continued exclusion in the society if nothing is done. Statistics also show that youths with foreign background remains longest time outside the labor market. In addition, many of these have an incomplete upper secondary education.

Because of entry into the labor market continues to be made more difficult due to increased demands of high competences, employment and inclusion of the youth is challenging.

Additional Questions

- ✓ How do we increase the trust of the youth for the local governments?
- ✓ How do we include newcomers in the labor market?
- ✓ How do we tackle with the increasing mental health issues due to exclusion of the labor market?
- ✓ How do we help our youths to cope with societies unhealthy norms and adults' expectations?
- ✓ How do we get more young people to finish their upper secondary education?
- ✓ How do we reach companies that in some cases put a too high competence level on their job description?



Slides from the presentation of Bologna city Future Mentors.

Young people and Green and Water

- green spaces in Bologna
- respect and care of green areas
- wastage of water
- Public commitment to curb water waste

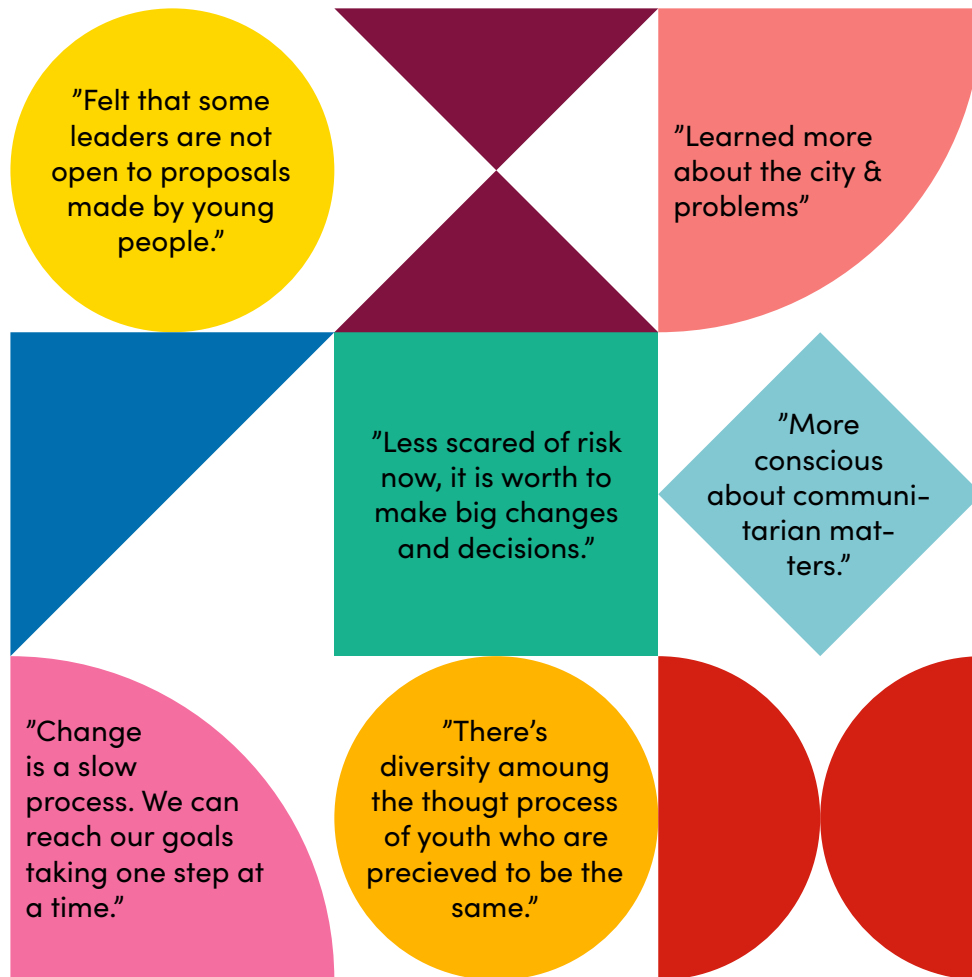
Young people and responsible Consumption

- awareness about responsible consumption
- public institutions commitment on education ad actions aiming at responsible consumption



14.2. More Insights from the programme

Learnings during the Programme / Change in Thinking.
Future Mentors' point of view



Learnings during the Programme/ Change in Thinking.
City Leaders' point of view

