Toolkit collecting methods and knowledge from FYEG’s training sessions ahead of the European Elections 2024

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# Table of contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table of contents</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating the digital space</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training topics - selection</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training realisation and methodology</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artificial intelligence in campaigning</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak to be Heard - Speak to Convince</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan, organise, and make it happen - Project management essentials</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable leadership - How to motivate and retain</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging the youth</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tips</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After online, comes offline</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Green Rave 2024</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sessions to strengthen volunteer expertise and engagement</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Not only now, but also tomorrow</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

The average age of an Member of the Europen Parliament (MEP) is 50, with national averages fluctuating between 44 and 60. The youngest MEP of the 2019-2024 term, Kira Peter-Hansen (elected at 21), was a Europe-wide exception.

The lack of intergenerational representation stops the changes that the younger generations want and contributes to disinterest in political and social processes.¹ The lack of interest or ability to successfully run for office may, among other things, be reflected in a reduced interest in voting.² This reduces the popularity of electing young, progressive candidates in favour of the far-right vote, which remains popular mainly among older voters.³ The far-right vote often brings to the forefront discriminatory policies and undermines democratic processes, as seen in Europe with the examples of Poland or Hungary. This leads to a further deterioration in young people's access to rights, as there is no one there to strengthen mechanisms and address existing problems.

The lack of youth participation is a direct threat to healthy democratic systems.⁴

This toolkit describes and reflects on the proceedings and outcomes of the Green Base training session series, Influencelection Games, Federation of Young European Greens’ (FYEG) initiative designed to equip young, motivated people with the requisite skills and knowledge for civic engagement in the run-up for the EU24 campaign. The project was followed up with further training sessions taking place offline, in the beginning of 2024.

The Green Base is FYEG’s digital space located on a Discord server.

The training period, conducted between September and November, aimed to cultivate and prepare a substantial number of volunteers to assume leadership roles during the critical junctures of the 2024 campaign - with its culmination in June 2024 during the polling period. FYEG opted for a snowflake model of decentralised organising, with trained volunteers assuming the roles of team coordinators.

A series of 4 online monthly training sessions was put forward to develop the practical skills of participants on public speaking and debating, community organising and innovative

² I Andresson, ‘France is struggling to attract young voters; its political system is only making it harder’: https://sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0261379422000452.
⁴ n(1).

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campaign elements and tools. Hosted parallel to the training series, an online customisable digital platform gamified the learning process.

Collectively, the aim was to contribute to the realisation of a more inclusive and sustainable Europe. Participants not only gained access to pivotal training events but are also accorded exclusive entry into the Green Base's Discord community, a proprietary space fostering collaboration, strategy exchange, and cohesive community building.

This toolkit stands as a testament to the strategic importance of collective, informed action, wherein each campaign volunteer assumes a pivotal role in the broader endeavor to shape a feminist, inclusive and sustainable Europe. **This is possible thanks to an educational approach based on non-formal education, where all participants are responsible for their personal learning as well as the learning process of other participants, creating an environment of support and effective learning.** Moreover, by sharing a detailed account of the work that was implemented by the staff of the FYEG office and many involved volunteers, this publication is to serve as a funding milestone for the Young Green path towards creating an attractive and useful digital space that will further allow the Federation and the Green Movement as a whole to grow.

(Some of) the Team Leaders and Campaign Team members during the live meeting in Brussels 17.12.2023
Creating the digital space

To advance the vision of establishing an accessible and appealing training platform that could evolve into the digital community for Young Greens, the selection of an online space for the project was approached with meticulous consideration. Ultimately, Discord was chosen for its adaptability, ease of creating a gamified environment, and widespread popularity.

FYEG enlisted the services of a young developer who not only set up the online space but also provided ongoing support for its development as the project unfolded. The Otter-bot, specially crafted for the Green Base, gained the capability to award XP points and facilitate level-ups, enhancing the interactive and engaging nature of the platform. The infrastructure allowed for the creation of multiple channels, each catering to members with varying degrees of responsibility or expertise. Those participants who sought early access to the platform were given the opportunity to vote on the name and image used for the bot, ensuring a sense of inclusivity and ownership.

The Otter-bot.

The platform served as the backdrop for training sessions, follow-ups, and various formal and informal meetings, all conducted in designated stage or voice channels. Many of FYEG political, cultural and informal discussions shifted to various organised channels on Discord, which was taken as an early sign of successful creation of an attractive digital space.
In the early stages, aspiring Team Leaders expressed their eagerness to contribute to the expansion of the Green Base. As a result, they were entrusted with tasks such as organising social meetings, creating videos, and other initiatives aimed at fostering community engagement and growth. This collaborative effort not only enriched the Green Base but also empowered future leaders to actively shape and contribute to the evolving digital space.

Roles

Roles linked to the levelling system (through gaining XP points)
1. @ everyone - default: everyone as soon as they join
2. @ Micro Green - 5 XP: people get it when they introduce themselves in the #introductions channel
3. @ Mini Protein - 100 XP
4. @ Nano Neuron - 200 XP
5. @ Macro Cell - 400 XP
6. @ Giga Gene - 600 XP
7. @ Mega Fungus - 850 XP
8. @ Tera Brain - 1100 XP

The created roles.

Training topics - selection

The topics for the training sessions were chosen based on what the Community Manager and Project Officer of FYEG deemed crucial for developing potential Community Leaders and enriching the general organisational knowledge of FYEG. They were also designed to equip regular volunteers with ideas on how to contribute to a campaign or run their own projects, either as part of the FYEG campaign or others.

The first topic, 'Artificial Intelligence in Campaigning,' was selected to attract young people to the project and the digital space in general. The staff believed that engaging a large group of people would be challenging, and this topic aimed to somewhat overcome that hurdle. It was deemed novel and relevant for Greens, who tend to fall behind some political trends.

The second topic, 'Speak to be Heard - Speak to Convince,' was decided to be sufficiently attractive and chosen to build the confidence of potential Community Leaders. While young candidates are often trained in public speaking, the leaders of campaigns, who are the ones to do the groundwork in speaking to opponents during events, might lack such training.

The third session focused on project management, providing a foundation for a community of engaged participants interested in continuing their active involvement in the campaign or organising in general. Knowing the basics of project management can elevate ones efforts to a higher, professional level.
To conclude the project, participants were given training on leading groups in a sustainable and inclusive way. This marked a moment to materialise their leadership skills before selected participants would receive further training in their roles as Community Leaders during a live meeting in December 2023 and The Green Rave, a campaign kickoff event.

During the planning, the team realised the need to increase the initially planned number of training sessions from four to eight, with four sessions exclusively dedicated to practical follow-up activities after the theory and practice-based training sessions.

Training realisation and methodology

Artificial intelligence in campaigning

The inaugural training session delved into the intricate realm of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in campaigning. Given the nuanced nature of this subject and its timing—immediately following the summer break—the team opted to enlist the services of a professional trainer, Masimmo Rottuno, to ensure an effective and comprehensive course of the meeting.

AI constitutes a relatively emerging technological domain that has permeated diverse aspects of political campaigning. Recognising its novelty and the inherent ethical complexities associated with its deployment, the team approached the subject matter with a discerning and thoughtful perspective.

The team's discernment in selecting a trainer stemmed from the belief that, given the novelty of the subject, a foundational introduction to AI was imperative. This introductory phase aimed to equip participants with a broad understanding before delving into the practical applications of AI and, significantly for FYEG, probing the ethical implications associated with its integration into any form of public activity. In essence, the training sought not only to impart knowledge but also to foster a thoughtful consideration of the ethical dimensions surrounding the utilisation of AI in the realm of campaigns.

The objectives of the session were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O1:</td>
<td>Participants obtain the knowledge of how to use different types of AI and put it into practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O2:</td>
<td>Participants are able to identify and evaluate the benefits but also the dangers and ethical concerns of using AI in campaigning and organising.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O3:</td>
<td>Participants reflect on the future of the use of AI in campaigning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O4:</td>
<td>The overall big aim: Participants understand how AI can be used in campaigning and organising, and are ready to use the technologies themselves.</td>
</tr>
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The session lasted for 3 hours, with three breaks in between. The participants were guided through the theory, which was intertwined with plenary discussions, self-reflection questions, and small practical tasks, the latter mostly placed at the end of the session. The trainer prepared materials for the participants to use before and after the session: an overview agenda that signaled what sort of set-up the participants would need to make the most of the training session, a list of useful AI tools, and a Google Collab space for the Amazon Recognition tool.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What worked well:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- The topic was gripping and attracted a lot of interest from new participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The release of materials prior to the session.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What did not work well:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- The session was too long.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The session covered too much material; it should have focused on exploring one or two tools or the idea of using AI in campaigning in general.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Follow-up
The follow-up session to ‘Artificial Intelligence in campaigning’ aimed to give a practical example in order for the participants to try implementing the knowledge from the previous meeting. The participants received a simulation game of an election campaign in the fictitious country of Genovia. Since tech based topics can present a unequal representation of participants, dominated by men, the trainer picked the fictitious Country of Genovia from the series Princess Diaries in order to appeal to women.

After presenting the case for the simulation game, the participants had to imagine to be the campaign manager to the Candidate Lily Moscovitz:
I am Lily Moscovitz, a proud Genovian and advocate for sustainability and justice. With my experience and commitment, I aim to represent our beautiful nation in the European Parliament, working tirelessly to create a future where people and the planet thrive together. Join me in this journey for a greener, fairer future for all!

Against a conservative candidate:
As a lifelong servant of Genovia, I am dedicated to preserving the principles and values that have made our nation great. With your support, I will represent Genovia in the European Parliament with dignity, strength, and an unwavering commitment to our prosperity and sovereignty. Stand with me for a stronger, prouder Genovia!

And the following scenario:

While at the beginning, the campaign for Lily Moscovitz appears to be running smoothly and quite successfully, all of a sudden, social media is flooded with pictures of Lily engaged in explicit scenes, misrepresenting her political position and spreading false information. What appears peculiar is that nearly half of Genovia's population interacted with these posts within the first 10 minutes of them being online…

The participants were ask to research and experiment with AI Tools to answer the following tasks:

1. Decide how you should adjust a campaign, based on the current circumstances.

2. After finding a strategy, research and use AI Tools which you think would improve the campaign in any way.

3. If you found a Tool you would like to use, write down your experience:
   
   a) why are you using it?
   b) how much would the tool cost?
   c) is it easy to use?
   d) what are the concerns with the tools?

4. Try to at least use 1 or 2 tools to create some sort of AI generated output for the campaign. Develop a ethical framework for AI Practices in your campaign.

The session concluded with a presentation of the findings and discussion on the ethical implications of the use of AI in general. Young Greens agree that some oversight of the use is needed, but resigning from applying new technologies in campaigning could put the Greens at a risk of falling behind other political fractions.

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Speak to be Heard - Speak to Convince

The second training session, titled 'Speak to be heard - Speak to convince,' departed from the conventional focus solely on candidates, as commonly observed in routine media training. Instead, it was thought to suit the needs of campaigners, recognising the unique communication challenges they encounter.

To enhance the overall learning experience, the team opted to enlist external facilitators, Emma Timmermans and Ben Thomas. This decision stemmed from the conviction that insights from seasoned professionals, particularly in the specific context of the training (topic specificity), would significantly enhance the impact of the session. The introduction of gender balance was considered a valuable addition, especially in a training environment addressing the diverse insecurities of young individuals. This inclusion was driven by the understanding that people often find inspiration in those with whom they can relate.

The objectives of the session were as follows:

| The overall big aim: Participants are able to activate and motivate the public to engage in the EU24 campaign using different public speaking methods. |
| O1: Participants learn how to attract positive attention in public communication (debates, one-to-one discussions, semi-public conversations, canvassing). |
| O2: Participants become more proficient in applying different motivational or persuasion techniques. |
| O3: Participants understand what techniques their opponents may use and how to turn this to their advantage. |

The trainers focused on providing four clear and readily applicable tips for public speaking:
1. Present like you own the space.
2. Make it sounds as if it is already happening.
3. We need new words, metaphors and frames.
4. Don’t use facts - use values and emotions.

Participants received the relevant information through a handout sheet, serving as a valuable reference during and after the session. The engagement was fostered through an interactive presentation, strategically crafted to involve participants in exploring practical examples that illustrated both successful application and instances of failure in applying the discussed rules.

This interactive approach extended beyond passive information absorption, actively encouraging participants to engage in discussions and evaluations of specific tools. Through dynamic dialogue and critical examination, participants not only absorbed theoretical knowledge but also gained practical insights into the nuances of applying the presented rules. Consequently, the session seamlessly integrated theoretical instruction with hands-on exploration, cultivating a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter among the engaged participants.

What worked well:

- The trainers exhibited charisma and effectively conveyed new information to the participants, also thanks to building the session on the handed out materials.
- The session's duration, approximately 75 minutes, proved sufficient for delivering all the necessary information without overtaxing the participants' energy capacities.

What did not work well:

- The facilitators concentrated on examples featuring politicians rather than campaign leaders, potentially failing to emphasise the profile of the gathered participants.
Follow-up

The follow-up for ‘Training 2: How to speak - how to convince’ focused on adding practical dimensions to the information provided by the trainers the week prior. To test the flexibility of thought, creativity, and persuasiveness of the attendees, the main task of the follow-up was to be able to convince an audience of the speaker’s opinion on a topic provided on the spot. The attendees were given one minute to prepare and organise their thoughts into arguments meant to convince a larger audience of their convictions. Particular attention was given to the tone, active sentence structure and flow of the argument; this despite being organised in a digital environment. It can be noted some participants struggled with the format, as if not turning their camera on, most of the physical factors of public speaking such as body language were lost. Moreover, the structure of the exercises required the employment of charisma to make up for the absence of timely preparedness. This touched on an element discussed during the training: sprezzatura, or nonchalant speaking. Finally, the participants’ motivations for partaking in the Green Movement were discussed, as these play an important part in making speech more convincing. The main takeaways from the follow up was to activate the attendees in exploring their own ‘speaker personalities’ and practising techniques discussed during the training.

This session, as mentioned, aimed to provide a learning space in which the participants could practise their public speaking skills. The break-out rooms were utilised as a ‘stage’ on which the participants practised speaking on a topic on the spot, whilst the listeners acted as the audience. The audience was also required to give feedback, to provide learning points for further practising. The section on connecting the personal stories and motivations of the participants aimed to strengthen the emotional and moral involvement, to make clear for the participants why their active roles in the training was important to them.

Plan, organise, and make it happen - Project management essentials

The workshop aimed to impart basic project management skills specifically tailored for political campaigns. This focus was crucial, as managing a political campaign requires a unique blend of traditional project management techniques with the situation based
requirements political campaigns present. Participants were expected to develop skills relevant to managing political campaigns efficiently, emphasising planning, execution, monitoring, and closing phases.

The objectives of the session were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The overall big aim: Participants are capable of introducing structured processes and models into their project planning.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O1: Participants learn about the existing theories, tools and models of project management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O2: Participants explore Notion, one of the platforms facilitating plan-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O3: Participants critically evaluate concrete solutions and proposals, while being able to select their favourite styles of project planning and execution.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The facilitator based the session on their experience from campaign teams, as well the following materials: *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge* by PMBK GUIDE 6th Edition and *Political Campaign planning manual a step-by-step Guide to winning elections* by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, and *Modern Wahlkampf* by Ramona Greiner.

While it was challenging to reduce such a complex topic for a 90 minutes workshop, the team decided on the following scope:

**Understanding the 5 Phase Model**: Learning the five key phases of project management (Initiation, Planning, Execution, Monitoring & Controlling, and Closing).

**Lifecycle and Scope of a Political Campaign**: Understanding the overall structure and stages involved in a political campaign.

**Setting Campaign Goals**: Learning how to establish clear, achievable objectives for a campaign.

**SMART & CLEAR Planning**: Introducing these two frameworks for effective goal setting and project planning.

**Persona Creation**: Teaching how to develop personas, which are critical in understanding and targeting the campaign's audience.

**Introduction to Project Management Methods**: Covering various methodologies like Agile, which is vital for adapting to the fast-paced, often unpredictable nature of political campaigns.

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Role of a Project Manager: Clarifying the specific responsibilities and skills required of a project manager in a political campaign context.

Roles in Project Management: Discussing different roles and responsibilities within a campaign's project management team.

Use of Tools like Kanban and Sprints: Implementing these tools to enhance efficiency and organization in campaign management.

Cultivating a Feedback Culture: Emphasizing the importance of feedback in continuous improvement of campaign strategies.

Due to time constraints, the workshop did not cover topics such as building a communication and social media strategy, data analysis, an overview of various project management software, and team building. These topics were considered potentially relevant for future Community Leader training.

The session was structured around the interactive examination of a Notion template, which was subsequently provided to the participants as a checklist for their future project management endeavors. This not only facilitated the conveyance of knowledge but also introduced the participants to a highly useful and widely used organisational tool. The facilitator ensured structured interaction and implemented a few breakout room group tasks to ensure that the participants engaged sufficiently with the shared information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What worked well:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- The session was adequately timed (90 minutes).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The session provided a general overview and invited to further explore the territory of project management.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What did not work well:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- The facilitators struggled with technical aspects of the platform, as the switching between Notion and Discord contributed to interruptions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Follow-up

The follow-up session to 'Plan, Organise, and Make It Happen' provided a task that allowed participants to directly implement the knowledge gained from the third training session. The task was also designed to further contribute to FYEG’s plans for one of the upcoming projects—the European Train Tour linked to the 2024 European Elections. Participants were tasked with donning the hat of a Project Manager for a one-day activity, a stop, in a selected country. They were given the freedom to choose any activity, focus on a selected aspect of planning using the methods presented in the session or others, and create their own timelines as well as conduct risk evaluations. The group was split into two, with each team working on one activity.

The presented findings generated many ideas for potential activities during the day, such as flower bomb planting. Participants also created timelines and identified logistical challenges along with solutions. The facilitator, Project Officer of FYEG, examined the presentations and gave live feedback on the participants ideas but also their planning priorities. The session concluded with a Q&A session on project management, aiming to assess how much participants had learned and memorised and how confident they felt with the topic, considering that some of them were soon to be promoted to Community Leader roles.
Sustainable leadership - How to motivate and retain

Training 4 ‘Sustainable Leadership - How to motivate and retain’ was approached using a dual interpretation.

The objectives of the session were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The overall big aim: Participants obtain an education packag consisting of leadership qualities, their implementation and how it can be used to nurture and grow a movement.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O1: Participants explore what leadership is in theory and what it means to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O2: Participants critically engage with the existing leadership model.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O3: Participants go on a journey to realise that their past experiences contribute to them becoming sustainable leaders.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The initial part of the meeting shifted its focus to exemplary figures in sustainability, with a particular emphasis on workshopping Greta Thunberg. Leadership qualities, as documented in academic literature about Thunberg, were explored. These qualities encompassed attributes such as hope, courage, sacrifice, belonging, and trust. Greta's journey, spanning from her emergence in the climate movement in 2018 to her speech at COP25 in late 2019, was examined to understand how she manifested and developed these leadership skills. Greta serves as an insightful figure for study due to her age and the contemporary context of social media, which remain relevant to today's emerging leaders. Following this, participants reflected on their personal experiences and embodiment of these attributes, identified areas for improvement, and considered the type of leader they aspire to become.

The second interpretation focused on making leadership sustainable, or, looking into the personal relations involved between a group and its leaders. Sub-themes taken into consideration included interpersonal appreciation, giving critique and activism burnout. This section focussed on recruiting, empowering and maintaining relations between the leaders and the members of the team they were leading. Emphasis was given to making the project trajectory personal, by creating personal benchmarks and conducting one on one sessions in which the leader could reflect on the member’s progression. A template provided the steps in looking to address the positive attributes of a member’s work through learning to appreciate and give compliments. The other template looked into undesired behaviour, what factors could have triggered this behaviour, and how to stimulate change.

As per the division between interpretations of sustainable leadership, this training also used a plethora of methodologies. The first, thus the Greta Thunberg case study, was formatted into an E-learning produced on Rise360. This interactive platform allows the participant to peruse Greta’s trajectory in their own time. The platform provided quiz questions, fill in the blank templates and storyline features. Here, the case study’s main topics were able to be applied to the participant’s own experiences and goals. Following the completion of this E-learning, the
participants were invited back into the training environment to collectively reflect on Greta’s journey and the future of her advocacy.

The second half aimed to inform participants of theory on interpersonal relationships and human resource management. These included short overviews in the factors playing into retaining motivation and connection to a movement, and the role of a leader in providing a bridge between the Self and the movement. The participants were then split up into break out rooms to apply the suggested theories of providing feedback and giving compliments by reflecting on examples of their own lives. They were asked to act out a situation in which their working partner acted undesirably, and to simulate a conversation in which this was addressed and improved amongst each other. Next, the participants were asked to think of a person in their life who contributes significant value to their working process, and who should receive gratitude for this. The participants were again asked to simulate a conversation in which they expressed the value of the other’s behaviour. The final section looked into examples of previous advocacy on mental health, and an open discussion was facilitated in the many factors which can influence the mental health of those active in the movement. A number of resources were provided for further consideration.

What worked well:

- The session introduced a self-study aspect which was positively received.
- The session explored the topic of leadership through a lens of what young Greens hold dear.

What did not work well:

- The two segment design of the training was a tad confusing to the participants.
Follow-up

The practical follow-up session to Training 4 set out to explore the essence and structure of a campaign team. Exceptionally for the project since tailored to both campaigners and candidates, the session aimed to address objectives deemed pertinent to individuals facing campaigns as well as the members comprising their campaign teams. The Prep Team perceived a shared relevance and importance of this activity for both candidates and volunteers at large.

Following a brief introduction, emphasis was placed on elucidating the significance of establishing a varied campaign team. Key aspects such as member roles, social media strategies, and policy support were introduced. Subsequently, the core of the practical follow-up unfolded in the form of a hands-on exercise. Participants were tasked with constructing a campaign team for the fictional candidate Zoe, who sought a seat in the European Parliament without the support of established party structures. Leveraging the collaborative platform GitMind, the participants engaged in a brainstorming session. They generated ideas, which, under the facilitator's guidance, were discussed and organised into potential roles adaptable to varying team sizes.

Throughout this exercise, the focal points remained on relevance, sustainability, and practical applicability, fostering active participation and encouraging queries. The session was designed to be both interactive and informative, aiming not solely at conceptual understanding but also at the real-time ability to critically engage with ideas for constructing a sustainable campaign team structure.
Engaging the youth

In today's digital age, engaging the youth in political discourse requires innovative strategies that resonate with their interests and habits. Influenecelection Games demonstrates how we successfully integrated youth culture and modern digital tools to enhance participation and engagement in political discussions. These are the main ways to engage the youth, based on the above-presented experiences:

1. Creative Social Media Strategy:
   Utilising youth culture and employing camp-coded social media posts to distinguish one’s messages among other political communications leads to increased viewership and engagement among potential participants.

2. Youth-Centric Designs:
   Using Discord as the main digital platform for exchange and participation leverages familiarity among young participants with the platform's functionality and facilitates adaptation and consequential engagement.

3. Selection of Popular and Useful Topics for Youth:
   Recognising the eagerness of young people to learn and addressing their actual needs and interests in a well-designed series of training sessions is crucial. This approach responds not only to the organisation's goals but also to participants’ preferences and expectations.

4. Gamification and Rewards:
   Earning points for attending and actively participating in sessions, with a ranking and badge system, creates an incentive for increased involvement. Participants with the most points had a better chance to attend significant political events, with their expenses being fully covered, or to become involved in Europe-wide political campaign. A certificate system could be considered as well.

The Green Base introductory page.

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Tips

Based on our experience in organising, carrying out, and evaluating the digital trainings, we derived several tips:

1. Clarity in Goals: Establish clear objectives and goals for the training sessions to guide participants. These objectives and goals should be communicated in the preparation of the trainings and throughout their run. To convey them effectively, the creation of agendas, worksheets and other materials share before, during and/or after the sessions can be considered.

2. Put some practice in there: Ensure sessions are not overly theoretical but rather focus on the practical application of tools, skills, and strategies. Use diverse methods beyond lectures, like interactive exercises or inviting practitioners for more practical insights. The use of platforms that the participants could utilise in the future is recommended.

3. Keep it short: Screen time is exhausting, for the eyes and the brain. In digital trainings keeping it short is key. We advice to keep trainings below 90 minutes, with one or two breaks throughout.

4. Suitable training formats: Training in the digital space is practical because people can join from everywhere. But it also means that people often join on their commute or in settings away from their desk. Trainings should be accessible from a mobile device and engaging via voice and chat.

5. Provide guidance: Whether it is in breakout sessions or on digital learning platforms, offering specific tasks and guidance by trainers is more necessary in digital spaces compared to in-person activities. Participants will be thankful for guidance and clearly specified, singular tasks.

6. Offer an incentive: If asking somebody to dedicate their free time to something, one ought to make sure that the offered reward is sufficient. A role, trip or a certificate can ensure frequent attendance as well as the understanding of one's desire to return to the digital space on a regular basis.
After online, comes offline

In the realm of modern political campaigning, it is crucial to recognise the symbiotic relationship and necessity between online and offline training sessions – if not for the purpose of honing different skills, then for strengthening connection of the trainees to the project and group purpose. This chapter provides examples of the training themes undertaken by FYEG offline in the first months of 2024.

Combining online and offline training sessions was crucial for youth in the campaign for the 2024 EU elections for several reasons. Firstly, it provided a well-rounded learning experience that catered to different learning styles and preferences. While online sessions offered flexibility and accessibility, allowing participants to engage from anywhere, offline sessions provided opportunities for more immersive and interactive learning, for longer periods of time.

Additionally, the offline sessions offered valuable networking opportunities, enabling participants to build meaningful relationships with peers, mentors, and experts in the field, fostering cross-border collaborations and a sense of belonging in the Green community.

Overall, the combination of online and offline training sessions was essential for equipping youth with the knowledge, skills, and networks needed to effectively engage in the campaign for the 2024 EU elections. It provided a dynamic and inclusive learning environment that empowered participants to become informed, confident, and active agents of change in European politics.

The Green Rave 2024

In its first 2024 internation event, The Green Rave, that took place in Rome on 1-3 of March, the Preparatory Team and staff of FYEG focused on providing insight into four topics:

- Novel and nuanced ideas for campaigns
- Understanding of past campaigns and their effectiveness
- Mental health and wellbeing of campaign teams
- Different avenues for engagement in 2024

As such, FYEG identified that activities covering these themes would answer the most quintessential needs and questions of the Team Leaders and other or new volunteers to the FYEG campaigning efforts or young candidates.

Below, we are presenting some sessions that could be replicated in similar events.

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Sessions to strengthen volunteer expertise and engagement

How to roll and not fall off the cliff? Mental health in activism, politics, and your personal life

In the session ‘How to Roll and Not Fall Off the Cliff? Mental Health in Activism, Politics, and Your Personal Life’, participants engaged in a structured programme designed to provide practical tools and insights for managing mental health in high-stress environments. The session commenced with a presentation introducing the concept of burnout, its signs and symptoms, and its impact on activists and political campaigners - based on available sources and experiences of some of the FYEG volunteers. This presentation was followed by a guided discussion in plenary, where participants shared their experiences and reflections on burnout, fostering a shared understanding and communal support.

The second part of the session was organised around a World Café, tackling various aspects of mental health struggles and aids encountered while organising and campaigning. Participants rotated between different tables, each focusing on a specific topic such as coping mechanisms, work-life balance, building resilience, and accessing mental health resources. These small group discussions allowed for in-depth exploration of each topic, facilitated peer learning, and generated practical strategies for managing mental health.

Additionally, a self-reflection moment was incorporated into the World Café, where participants took time to individually assess their own mental health, identify personal stressors, and contemplate their self-care practices. They were provided with various written prompts but also encouraged to work in pairs, if preferred. This activity was aimed at fostering personal insight and encouraging participants to develop personalised action plans for integrating mental health practices into their daily routines.

By engaging in these diverse and interactive activities, participants gained a comprehensive understanding of how to maintain their mental health while being active in the demanding fields of activism and politics - and most of all, why taking the time to reflect on it is so important.

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Campaigner session with Narmine Abou Bakari - Greens/EFA Campaigner

During the session, participants engaged in various interactive activities designed to enhance their understanding of legislative campaigning and develop practical advocacy skills.

The session began with an icebreaker activity called ‘Campaign Bingo’, where participants were welcomed and introduced to the session. This activity served as a fun and light-hearted way to set the tone for the session while allowing participants to get to know each other and their campaigning background.

Following the icebreaker, participants took part in the ‘Campaigner Chronicles’ quiz, a challenging quiz on successful legislative campaigns. Through this quiz, participants tested their knowledge of notable campaigns such as the Me Too movement, ACT UP, Stop TTIP campaign, and climate law initiatives. By engaging in this quiz, participants deepened their understanding of past advocacy successes and the strategies employed in these campaigns.

The main segment of the session focused on understanding legislative campaigning, featuring presentations, case studies, and interactive discussions. Participants learned about the EU legislative process, key components of legislative campaigns, and effective lobbying strategies at different stages of the legislative process. They explored case studies highlighting successful legislative campaigns, gaining insights into the strategies and tactics employed in real-world advocacy efforts.

The session concluded with a workshop segment where participants worked in small groups to develop advocacy strategies for specific legislative files. Each group was assigned a legislative file, such as the EU Gender-based Violence Directive or the Right to Repair initiative, and tasked with drafting effective slogans, identifying strategies for garnering support, and outlining steps for advancing their campaign objectives. Through this workshop, participants applied the knowledge and skills gained during the session to practical advocacy scenarios, fostering collaboration and critical thinking among diverse stakeholders.

Overall, the combination of interactive activities, presentations, and group discussions provided participants with a comprehensive learning experience, equipping them with the skills and knowledge necessary to drive meaningful change through legislative advocacy - a type of such which is rarely explored by youth organisations.
Talking Across the Divide

The session ‘Talking Across the Divide’ aimed to foster understanding and communication across ideological differences, particularly within the context of Green politics. The session sought to challenge the prevailing attitude of arrogance and aloofness towards differing beliefs. The objectives included teaching participants to genuinely understand differing beliefs, exploring the reasons behind these differences, and promoting a more empathetic (and effective!) approach to communication.

The session commenced with an introductory game using Mentimeter, where participants assigned pictures along the liberal/conservative and authoritarian/libertarian axis. This interactive activity set the stage for discussing differing viewpoints. Following this, a lecture delved into research on the origins of divergent values and opinions, providing participants with insights into the underlying factors driving ideological differences based on the academic but also more popular approach to the phenomenon.

Group Work 1 involved participants discussing experiences related to three FYEG campaign pillars (developed in the Work Plan of 2023) from various societal perspectives. Each group was assigned a campaign pillar to explore different viewpoints and perceptions using prompt messages, comments and scenarios. This exercise aimed to encourage empathy and understanding towards diverse perspectives.

An explainer session highlighted how messaging targets underlying values and opinions, contributing to polarisation. This segment provided participants with a deeper understanding of the role messaging plays in shaping ideological divides.
Group Work 2 focused on discussing messaging in relation to the diverse perspectives explored in Group Work 1. Participants analysed potential messaging strategies that could effectively bridge ideological gaps and promote constructive dialogue.

The session aimed to produce three flipchart sheets corresponding to the FYEG campaign pillars, documenting diverging opinions, underlying concerns, and potential messaging strategies. The outcomes of the session centred on enhancing participants' understanding of differing beliefs, fostering empathy and communication skills, and promoting a more inclusive approach to political discourse, while also equipping them with concrete prompts to use while using the FYEG narratives in their campaigns.

Campaigns Done Right

The session ‘Campaigns Done rRght’ aimed to showcase successful examples of green politics campaigns, inspire participants, and provide insights into effective campaign strategies. The session featured speakers Francesca Cucchiara, a young female councillor of Milan, and Benedetta Scuderi, a young candidate in the EU elections. Sadly, MEP Rosa D’Amato who was invited could not make it last minute, but instead, she sent a short video providing some insights into her campaigning experience. The guests shared their experiences and perspectives on running impactful campaigns. The objectives included familiarising participants with the different profiles of the speakers, offering ideas for conducting effective campaigns, and instilling hope for the future of politics - with strong, progressive woman in the lead.

The panel discussion provided participants with the opportunity to ask questions and engage with the speakers. The pre-prepared questions covered topics such as campaign strategies, resource allocation between online and in-person campaigning, team composition, mobilisation of activists, social media usage, possible gender biases and managing personal well-being during campaigns.
FYEG seized the opportunity to offer participants an update on the volunteer campaigning efforts, along with guidance on further engagement. Through four concurrent sessions, attendees had the chance to assess, contribute, and strategise for future activities - based on their preference and interests. These sessions were pivotal in the grand scheme of things by not only providing training but also clarifying avenues for participants to apply their newfound knowledge and pursue their passions effectively - showing them that they are the ones that factually shape the work of the Federation and the aligned youth movements.

The team created workshops that focused on:

- The Get Out The Vote campaign
- The European Train Tour
- The general political narrative campaign of FYEG
- Team Leaders, their teams and projects

**Summary**

As we conclude this toolkit, we celebrate the culmination of FYEG's training sessions ahead of the European Elections 2024. This comprehensive series of activities, conducted both online and offline, has played - as we hope so and wish - a pivotal role in educating and empowering the next generation of politicians and activists. FYEG has witnessed the tangible outcomes of these efforts through the growth and engagement of the Green Base, a community actively supporting narrative and electoral campaigns led by young people poised to revolutionise EU politics. By participating in these sessions, young individuals have been invigorated to take charge of their journey and realise their potential as catalysts for change in European politics.

This project serves as a significant milestone for the Federation, marking its readiness to embrace electoral periods by having established effective and engaging avenues for training young leaders. We extend our sincere gratitude to the European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe for their invaluable support, which has been instrumental in bringing this project to fruition.