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# UP2YOU

Bottom-up sustainable  
and inclusive development

## Newsletter #3

### From Co-Design to Community Impact: Final Highlights of the UP2YOU Project

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## A Movement of Ideas, People, and Purpose

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What happens when universities, local communities, and civil society come together with a shared goal? You get UP2YOU — a project that didn't just talk about sustainable development, but actually co-designed it with the people who live it every day.

Over the last two years, thanks to support from the Erasmus+ KA220 programme and the National Agency SEPIE, UP2YOU brought to life a collaborative model that blends academic expertise, grassroots energy, and institutional support. At its core lies the Quadruple Helix model, where universities, civil society, public authorities, and the private sector work together as equal partners.

## What We Built Together

### WP2 – UP2YOU Community Leadership Program

How do you empower the next generation of changemakers? By offering **free, flexible, and forward-looking learning opportunities**. This work package launched a fully online **Leadership Program** targeting university students, CSO professionals, and community volunteers.

The program included **five thematic microcourses** designed to integrate **technical skills** with **civic engagement and SDG goals**:

1. **Master Your Project**  
Learn the art of project planning, evaluation, communication, and team coordination.
2. **Finance Forward**  
Master financial management, fundraising, budgeting, and sustainability practices.
3. **Soft Skills: Unlock Your Personal and Professional Potential**  
Develop life skills in leadership, inclusion, employability, and emotional intelligence.
4. **Bridging Gaps: Digital Skills for Civil Society**  
Empower CSOs with essential digital, data, and cybersecurity competencies.
5. **Empower Your Community: Entrepreneurship and Innovation**  
Cultivate social innovation through design thinking, ethics, and strategic planning.

Each course was made available in multiple languages and awarded **certificates of completion**. Participants were encouraged to enroll in more than one course, making the program flexible and personalized for diverse learning paths.

On **September 15<sup>th</sup> at 11.00 CET**, the consortium, together with the [Skillman network](#), will be hosting a webinar to showcase the courses.

If you're interested, just fill out the [Google Form](#), and the organizers will get in touch with you.

👉 **The courses will be available from September! Enroll at this link:**

<https://learn.skillman.eu/course/index.php?categoryid=31>

## Enrolled, Engaged, Empowered

The course exceeded expectations with **411 total enrollments** — far above the original target of 265:

- 🧑 61 Higher Education teachers
- 🎓 140 University students
- 🏢 163 CSO professionals
- 🧩 47 other profiles (local actors, volunteers, etc.)

Each participant who completed the course received **digital badges and micro-credentials**, certified according to EQF standards and supporting lifelong learning goals.

### What did they say?

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive — with satisfaction, clarity, and tutoring rated between **3.5 and 4.0 out of 4**. While some noted room to improve the platform's user-friendliness, participants praised the **practical focus, engaging content, and real-world relevance** of the courses.

## WP3 – UP2YOU Living Communities Labs

This is where **theory meets action**. Each partner developed and tested a **Living Community Lab** — an experimental space for co-designing solutions with and for local communities.

- **Italy (FCAT & LINK):** In the pilot *Tradizione InPressa*, organized in Alcamo with the support of the Municipality, older adults, young people, and people with disabilities came together to explore the intersection of manual clay modeling and 3D ceramic printing. The activity fostered creativity, mutual learning, and inclusion, while showcasing how digital innovation can enhance — not replace — local heritage. This Living Community Lab illustrated the UP2YOU approach in action: empowering communities through collaboration, accessibility, and meaningful hands-on experiences.



- **Spain (UVigo): UVigo designs new learning paths to match local job market needs.**

Universidade de Vigo launched a pilot action to tackle the gap between current education and labour market demands. Through a series of participatory workshops, students, teachers, entrepreneurs, civil society and local authorities co-designed flexible learning itineraries aimed at boosting employability and promoting inclusive education.

These will be rolled out next academic year through activities such as the *Creativity and Innovation Week*, an entrepreneurship event and workshops in secondary schools.



- **Cyprus (CSI) :** The Center for Social Innovation (CSI) will run a digital campaign through its official Facebook and Instagram pages, which have a combined audience of over 21,000 followers, from late-July to mid-August. The campaign will feature two videos and one carousel post, highlighting the impact and contribution of local stakeholders in promoting inclusive and sustainable community development. The videos will be co-created with local stakeholders, who will share how they engage with and support young people in their communities. Through personal stories and real-life examples, the stakeholders will showcase their role in empowering youth, fostering opportunities, and building a more resilient local environment. This authentic and collaborative approach aims to raise awareness, inspire action, and promote the importance of local partnerships in shaping positive futures for younger generations.
- **Türkiye (CEKDEV):** The “Antalya Youth Skills Studio,” implemented by CEKDEV Academy, presented an innovative and participatory approach to tackling youth unemployment. Co-designed with local stakeholders, the pilot action aimed to empower NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) youth in Antalya by focusing on digital skills, social entrepreneurship, and civic engagement. Through a series of interactive workshops,



participants learned to use digital tools such as Canva, CapCut, and Miro, designed social media awareness campaigns, and developed micro-projects addressing local community challenges. By the end of the program, participants earned digital badges to validate their learning and were matched with mentors to further develop their social entrepreneurship ideas. This initiative helped young people discover their potential, gain 21st-century citizenship skills, and enhance their pathways to employment, while promoting a replicable model of inclusive, community-based learning.



- North Macedonia (SEGA): Empowering youth through Career Guidance and Community Innovation** In April 2025, Coalition of youth organizations SEGA, launched two impactful pilot activities in North Macedonia. A career guidance workshop at the University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in Bitola brought together students and professors for mentorship and labor market insights. Later, an educational and career fair in Ohrid connected youth with universities, employers, and support organizations, fostering career exploration and networking. These actions laid the groundwork for the Living Community Labs — collaborative spaces where students, educators, and local actors co-create solutions for a more inclusive and sustainable future.



Each LCL reflected its local context while experimenting with shared tools and methods — showing that **flexible, place-based innovation works**.

## Guidelines on How to Set Up and Run LCLs

The Labs were supported by a practical guide that distills experiences, tools, and strategies into an adaptable methodology.

The Guidelines on how to set up and run the Living Communities Labs are a compendium presenting the co-design methodology underlying the 5 context-based laboratories and tracing back the whole implementation process through concrete examples and lessons learnt from the partners. Additionally, the final section includes the entire toolkit developed within the work package: the idea is to make available a set of interactive tools that might be helpful to guide the co-design of similar experiments of community-led strategical territorial planning, in order to continue perfecting this feasible methodology through new examples implemented in different contexts.

The Guidelines will be published on the project's website as well as on ALDA's website, in the section dedicated to Up2You. A space for dissemination will be given to the Guidelines also in ALDA's Territorial and Local Development Hub next newsletter.

## WP4 – UP2YOU Community Balance Scorecard

How do you measure the impact of cooperation between universities and communities? The answer: the **Community Balance Scorecard (CBS)**.

This tool, paired with a practical manual, helps local actors **assess engagement, adapt strategies**, and measure social value — from co-design processes to long-term ownership of actions.

### What is the Community Balance Scorecard (CBS)?

The Community Balance Scorecard (CBS) is a practical tool designed to track the impact of local development initiatives. It helps communities evaluate progress across four key areas: **social, economic, educational, and environmental**.

By using this balanced approach, CBS supports better decision-making, ensures efforts are aligned with long-term goals, and promotes fair, inclusive and sustainable growth.

The indicators were selected during a collaborative and multicultural **hackathon**, bringing together students, teachers and civil society organisations to ensure a diverse and meaningful perspective.

We have chosen four key categories to structure the CBS:

- **Social:** Community engagement, inclusion, quality of life, and support for vulnerable groups.
- **Economic:** Job creation, local entrepreneurship, income equality and economic resilience.
- **Educational:** Access to education, training, digital skills and lifelong learning opportunities.
- **Environmental:** Energy use, waste, natural resource protection, and climate-friendly practices.

The CBS will soon be available on our website, open to **everyone** who wants to explore how their community is progressing, transparently and inclusively.



## Stay With Us – Let's Keep Building

UP2YOU may be wrapping up, but the energy and resources it generated are here to stay. We invite educators, youth workers, public authorities, and community leaders to **reuse, remix, and relaunch** the UP2YOU model wherever it's needed.

 [up2youerasmus.com](https://up2youerasmus.com)

 Instagram: [@up2you\\_project](https://www.instagram.com/up2you_project)

 Facebook: [UP2YOU Project](https://www.facebook.com/UP2YOUProject)

From grassroots to global impact — **thank you for being part of the UP2YOU journey.**



— The UP2YOU Consortium