

Work Plan 2023-2025

Adopted in the Council of Members of OBESSU on 3rd and 4th December 2022

The Work-plan is a document through which OBESSU commits to working on a number of topics and domains for a three year period, namely 2023, 2024 and 2025. The Work-plan represents the guiding document for the Membership, the Board and the Secretariat in the conceptualisation and implementation of specific activities. The document is intentionally broad in its scope and does not explore direct activities and structures to be put in place, as these are foreseen by a yearly implementation plan proposed by the Board in consultation with the Members and in agreement with policy priorities on the European level.

The 2023-2025 Work-plan differs from its predecessor in one way: it does not indicate overarching topics and yearly priorities, rather it indicates 3 main areas of focus and 2 strategic objectives, allowing for a more long-term orientation and a better focus on the current challenges of education in Europe and globally. Moreover, the work-plan is interconnected with:

- The OBESSU Political Platform
- The OBESSU Development Strategy 2020-2024, and is informed by the strategic priorities to implement them
- The political environment we operate in, as the Work-plan is not set in stone and should be flexible and adaptable to the new developments we will witness in the upcoming years.

This work-plan therefore defines 3 thematic clusters:

1. Competencies for democracy
2. Sustainable development
3. Re-booting School Student Action

These 3 clusters will be looked at mainly through 2 lenses, that of membership & capacity building and that of advocacy. This will mean that for each of these clusters, over the three years we will look at both capacity building and advocacy actions, rebalancing the amount of events and capacity building for members and advocacy actions and to keep a sustainable focus on both elements. The work on organisational development and capacity, both for OBESSU and its members, will remain at the centre of the work of OBESSU and will be overarching and transversal.

Competencies for democracy



Democracy in the European continent has been challenged constantly for the past years and we see a trend from many different movements, parties and coalitions in Europe that threaten democracy and basic human rights, from civil rights, to access to health, education and a safe life, especially for marginalised communities. This Work Plan will be implemented between 2023 and 2025 and we cannot fail to mention the upcoming European Elections that will be celebrated in 2024. OBESSU, through different projects and campaigns, is already working on promoting participation through elections but also through strengthening grassroots movements led by students all over Europe.

Education is at the core of transmitting the values of inclusion, democracy, equality and participation to people in Europe and the world, and as such it is an easy target for those who want to challenge fair societies and maintain the status quo, instead of moving forward. For this reason, we believe education plays a fundamental role in providing quality accessible competences for young people to be able to shape societies. Democratic competencies, however, do not only have to be acquired through formal processes and classroom activities, but also at large through non-formal education and the practice of democracy in our schools. Participation starts from the school Boards and co-decision on leadership in schools and this is why we want to work especially on **school democracy, new curricula and learning democracy, political participation and campaigning for the voting age to be lowered to 16 years old.**

More specifically, in the years 2023-2025 we want to:

- Strengthen our work on school democracy and advocate for school leadership to have stronger school students' involvement
- Promote renewed curricula and the importance of teaching democratic competencies, both through citizenship education and the recognition and validation of non formal education
- Raise awareness on the polarisation of the political debate in Europe and its effect on the debate in education and in youth organisations and build the capacity of OBESSU structures to be able to react to such polarising debates
- Build the capacity of school student unions to advocate for vote at 16 and participation in democratic spaces
- Provide spaces for school students to participate in the European Parliament elections 2024 process.

Measures of the development strategy tackled: measures for advocacy, measures for quality assurance of activities, measures for the global level.

Sustainable development



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The sustainable development goals are meant to set up priorities and objectives such as: no poverty, zero hunger, good health and wellbeing and quality education among many other important topics. In the framework of these sustainable development goals, OBESSU aims to extend and shape them according to the values, priorities and demands of the school students that we represent.

By extending and shaping them, we aim to make the matters listed below, more inclusive and representative of the reality of students across Europe and the world. This is why this part of the WP addresses different points that are interconnected among themselves.

The outbreak of the Covid19 Pandemic accelerated the digital transition. This situation, in the case of our Education Systems, proved that schools and high schools need more financial resources to ensure that every student can benefit from the technological advancements but also that schools need to include more digital literacy in their programs so that students can develop skills for the 21st century.

The pandemic built up on existing inequalities and the current situation of the world is uncertain, many existing conflicts have worsened in these past years and some new conflicts have arisen. Ukraine is another example, one very close to us, of why our education system needs to reinforce our knowledge of history, to not make past mistakes but also teach students how to solve current problems through dialogue and understanding.

It is therefore imperative that for the upcoming years, we work to:

- Bringing forward the importance of digital education both in relation to the pandemic and as part of the twin transition.
- Continue cooperation with relevant institutional and non-institutional stakeholders, including Generation Climate Europe, to campaign for climate justice
- Strive to bring the voices of students from migrant background to the forefront
- Monitor the way children, youth and secondary students from migrant backgrounds are being accommodate for in education across Europe and developing campaigns and public statements necessary to voice the opinions of school students on this matter, also with and through platforms such as SIRIUS
- Understand the intersection between conflict, youth and educational practice, in particular when it comes to curricula
- Promote school student voice in national and international policy making and ensure the presence of school students representatives in foras such as the UN, UNESCO, ECOSOC and other SDG related fora to monitor the implementation of SDGs from the school student perspective and in cooperation with our constituency and our partners.
- Build more alliances with youth organisations to promote the SDGs, specifically SDG4, but with special attention and intensive work on other SDGs striving for gender equality, eradication of poverty, decent work, reduced inequality, etc.



- Capacity building of MOs, ensuring they have the skills and capacity to develop their advocacy actions for sustainable development in their countries and regions.

Measures of the development strategy tackled: measures for advocacy, measures for quality assurance of activities, Measures regarding governance, finances and management, Measures regarding the global level

Re-booting school student action

The fight for any civil right is constant, rights cannot be taken for granted and have to be defended and promoted. School students' rights are no different and many times are challenged and threatened, this is why school student actions are needed specially to safeguard the wellbeing of our peers and our schools.

OBESSU's goal in this regard will be twofold, through its projects, campaign and initiatives OBESSU will consolidate the representation of school students at the European level. On the other hand, these exact actions will continue to gather and attract the attention of school students unions and hopefully enlarge our community.

There are many important components and factors that make our organisation useful for its members. OBESSU will continue to:

- Continue to bridge the gap between schools students from different regions across Europe and world
- Give capacity to student unions on different topics
- Develop an innovative and forward looking membership strategy to develop in a sustainable way
- Work to promote the validation and recognition of attitude, knowledge and skills necessary for (school) student activism
- Provide resources and ensure the participation of its members in internal and external events
- Strengthen our work on advocating with and for our members, bringing the national level and the European level closer together and making sure to keep policies relevant to the national school student unions, as a tool for them to use in national work and advocacy
- Maximise our advocacy efforts by continuing working with other student-led organisations such as ESU, ESN, AEGEE,etc
- Promote cooperation with student organisations from all over the world by supporting and engaging in the work of the Global Student Forum
- Building better connections with existing allies such as the members of the Lifelong Learning Platform and the European Youth Forum creating synergies with other NGOs who share similar interests and values.



Measures of the development strategy tackled: measures for advocacy, measures for quality assurance of activities, measures regarding governance, finance and management, measures for the global level.

Implementation technicalities

As the Work-Plan defines the thematic annual priorities per cluster, but not particular formats through which implementation of each topic will be done, every year the Board - in coordination with the Secretariat - will propose an Annual Implementation Plan, outlining a clear strategy on how to approach a particular topic.

Possible formats of implementation are listed in the following section of this work-plan - they are based on previous practice of OBESSU. The Implementation Plan will be sent to the Membership pre-COMEM of the year preceding the implementation year (i.e. pre COMEM 2023 for activities in 2024). It will be open for amendments in the usual procedure (see Statutes of OBESSU).

This approach will facilitate a more realistic planning of activities implementation in priority areas, as it will allow OBESSU to:

- align easier with funding opportunities;
- plan for long-term projects and initiatives;
- build joint initiatives with other stakeholders.

Possible formats of implementation

The work plan priorities can be implemented annually through diverse means. Depending on the agreed purpose and target audience, as well expected results, following formats will be used.

Policy Events

- Convention - a gathering of school students' representatives aiming to explore a particular topic from European school students' perspective, and formulate a set of policy recommendations that can be used in OBESSU advocacy work. Ideally, a convention has elements of so-called "structured dialogue", with presence of decision or policy makers, and an open debate.
- Seminar - a gathering of school students (and other participants) with expertise in a particular topic, aimed at exchanging good practices and using them to build policy recommendations.
- Research - including both desk research, as well as gathering evidence through surveys and interviews with OBESSU Membership and individual school students.



Capacity building

- Training course - an event, usually between 3-6 days of duration, gathering school student representatives, with clear learning objectives and focused on developing participants' competences in certain area / topic.
- Study session - international youth event lasting between 4 and 8 days which bring together members of youth organisations or networks and experts for discussions on a specific subject leading to conclusions relevant to the priorities and programmes of the Council of Europe Youth sector; they are organised in co-operation with youth organisations and networks, and are hosted by one of the European Youth Centres in Strasbourg and Budapest.
- Summer school - an event, usually of approx. 1 week of duration, organised during the summer, exploring a particular topic with a variety of active methods.
- Online activities - diverse capacity building activities that can be delivered with the use of ICT (i.e. webinars, e-learning courses etc).
- Peer learning activity - an event during which members start from their own practices and exchange good practices.

Advocacy

- Internal advocacy and policy development - includes gathering input from OBESSU membership (through surveys or dedicated events, like conventions), formulating policy statements and using them through advocacy campaigns internally with working groups and within the board, as well as External Representations.
- Participation in external structures and events - working in cooperation with relevant stakeholder in the sector (i.e. European Youth Forum, Lifelong Learning Platform, other organisations with similar agendas), to benefit from possible synergies. This format can include membership in working groups, joint statements, campaigns or participation in one-off events.
- Public discussion organised by OBESSU with influencing stakeholders as guests, such as institutional and elected representatives

Campaigns

- Advocacy campaign - targeting mainly policy and decision makers, with a purpose of achieving a concrete policy claim of OBESSU.
- Awareness raising campaign - targeting a broader audience, with a purpose of making an issue visible and gathering public support for it.



- Projects (ad hoc) - complex, long term initiatives, that use diverse formats of activities, and build towards a general objective.

Internal / structural formats

- General Assembly and Council of Members
- Working Groups
- Study visits and tailored trainings
- Other membership services

The Board and the Secretariat can also add to the Implementation Plan long-term projects as well as more structural work, including the work done with the Pool of Trainers, the Global Students Forum and the European Apprentices Network.

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