

OBESSU Implementation plan 2023

Adopted at the Council and Members 2023 on the 3rd and 4th December 2022

As stated in the OBESSU Work Plan, OBESSU commits to working mainly in three areas: competencies for democracy, sustainable development and re-booting school student actions. On each of these topics, OBESSU wishes to reach a certain number of objectives. Moreover, this Implementation Plan reflects on other documents that are relevant to the strategic development of the organisation, such as the Development Strategy, the Advocacy Strategy, the Political Platform and the needs that arise on education and societal matters as time develops.

With this document we highlight the activities and topics OBESSU will work on and summarise which objectives will be achieved. A summary of the activity over the year is annexed at the end of this document.

Introductory words - The role of OBESSU in the European Year of Skills

EU Commission President Von Der Leyen announced in her State of the Union speech that 2023 would be the European Year of Skills. But what skills does Europe need to thrive in the future? Certainly, Europe doesn't only need more stable and contingent skills for the labour market or for a green and digital transition that is not able to continuously self-innovate. On the contrary, we believe that the challenges that Europe is facing at the moment call on us to re-discuss what is our approach on skills and to start looking at lifelong learning competencies as our only way out of the multiple crises we are facing.

The climate crisis, the energy crisis, the housing crisis, the wars we see globally, the rise of populism and fascism in Europe and the world demand for school student unions to take action and to promote the mainstreaming of democratic competencies into schools. To do so, school student unions need to be strong, transparent, accountable and representative. This is why, we have decided to put at the centre of our work the members and their capacity.

We also have a pillar interrogating our organisation and challenging European policy makers to foster their work on sustainable development. The crises we mentioned, above others, cannot be tackled in silos but need to be tackled interconnectedly, with an intersectional approach and the vision of sustainable development.

We commit to continue defending and advancing school students' rights, as we do every day since 1975. Nothing about us without us.

Thematic cluster: Competencies for democracy



Study Session "I have a say! - Ensuring democratic participation of youth by Voting@16"

The aim of this activity is to improve the democratic participation of young people and school students through empowering them to advocate for access to rights and the right to vote more specifically.

The specific objectives of the activity are:

- To discuss good practices and different examples from around Europe and beyond on enabling the right to vote at 16;
- To give tools to young people, school student unions and youth groups to campaign for the right to vote at 16 and to demand a pluralistic democratic culture and their inclusion in the same at different levels and contexts;
- To discuss what democratic culture is, and what are the enablers and barriers for it in Council of Europe countries and agree on a set of principles and recommendations.

Throughout the programme, and linking with the previous objectives, there are two practical outputs foreseen of this activity:

- A set of recommendations on what enables a pluralistic democratic culture and how to put in place vote at 16;
- A handbook for youth groups on campaigning for vote at 16 and for a democratic culture in their communities (involving other measures such as citizenship education, pluralistic democracies, other forms of citizenship participation, etc.)

DemocracySEE the change

DemocracySEE the change is an international activity aimed at empowering young trainers and facilitators to be able to contribute to the fight against extremist and to foster democratic spaces for young people, especially secondary students. School students, as the youngest of young people, are often left out of many discussions and have few opportunities to participate, however, they have a strong voice and they feel- especially in the post-covid scenario - a need to raise that voice. This often results in a polarisation of the debate, which we can also witness more at large throughout Europe. Trainers, and especially younger ones, are faced with a challenge having to face such polarised debates and the conflicts they may results in. This activity tries to tackle this challenge by training young trainers and facilitators for them to be able to empower more young people.

Our aim with this activity is to fight extremism and promote quality debate among young people to foster democracy and participation and revitalise democratic spaces, especially within young people in secondary education.



Our objectives are:

- To critically analyse the changing nature of the role of trainer and the facilitator in a polarised political scenario
- To equip young trainers and facilitators with skills and competences in non formal education and Education for Democratic Citizenship
- To learn methods and techniques for facilitation to manage debates and conflicts in a proactive way to foster the practice of democratic participation

EPiC - Empowering Students Participation in Campaigning

EPiC is a project under evaluation. If approved, the project will kick off in January 2023 and will have two main phases connected among each other as well as with the political climate of the upcoming years:

1. Capacity building and multiplying effect
2. Campaigning and communications towards the EP elections

The action will kick off with a training for change-makers, the International Officers of OBESSU Member, Candidate and Affiliate Organisations, gathering around 25 school student activists that represent their national organisation. The training will be focused on equipping participants with the necessary competences to transfer back to their organisations and corresponding membership the ability to mobilise to vote and participate in political life at different levels. This includes: an introduction to the European Union and its institutions; the role and competences of the European Parliament, together.eu; concepts and techniques of political activism, including campaigning around the European elections 2024; inclusive participation and consultation; leadership and campaigning (including the creation of campaign narratives for the elections, the organisation of events, building a social media presence and campaigns, public speaking); disinformation, information manipulation and their role in elections. The training will be followed by a call for grants to be able for participants to implement their local actions.

Participants will organise dissemination and capacity building activities in their home organisations and contexts, reaching out to school students and activists, which will mostly be first-time voters for the 2024 EP elections.

This capacity building phase will close with an event that links capacity building with communication in September 2023: the Summer School. This event will gather 25 school student activists in order to build their capacities specifically in political communication, engagement and campaigning. At the same time, in this event a school student manifesto with the key claims of school students in Europe towards policy-makers and candidate MEPs will be created. This manifesto and the pool of change-makers will serve as a basis for the annual OBESSU campaign around the 17th of November (international Students' day), where OBESSU cooperates with other organisations.



Following the Summer School, participants will organise communication and campaigning activities, applying the learning outcomes of the Summer School in their context and multiplying the effect of the activity. In order to increase the outreach and further support the follow up of the event, OBESSU will work together with some of its Member, Candidate and Affiliate Organisations as implementing partners through a micro-granting scheme aimed at supporting bigger mobilising and campaigning actions in different countries in Europe.

Thematic cluster: Sustainable development

Advocacy on Twin Transitions

OBESSU has been working already on advocating for a just digital and green transition, especially in cooperation with other partners and with a special focus on its impact on Vocational Education and Training and on Apprenticeship. In 2023 we will continue working on ensuring a just twin transition, with specific regards to the European Year of Skills and the skills needed for Europe to not only transition in economic terms, but also to guarantee a socially just digital and green transition. We will therefore mainstream this topic and work to develop specific policy recommendations.

Working Group "Ensuring inclusivity in education"

This working group will focus on ensuring inclusivity on education but also internally in OBESSU. It has also never been more important to ensure inclusive events, in an inclusive organization.

Working on inclusivity is something that always can and needs to be revised and worked more on.

As OBESSU we need to improve our events to be as inclusive as they can be, so that we can really engage **every** student from Europe. It's crucial to make sure that everyone feels included at events and mostly with OBESSU policies. These are one of the many reasons we open this WG so that we can gather as much information and best practices from all of the OBESSU Membership.

Working with Generation Climate Europe

Climate action comes on a broad level, and is influenced by broad coalitions backed up by facts and democratic organising. During 2022, OBESSU will focus its climate advocacy through active engagement with organised youth and climate activists in a coalition Generation Climate Europe. OBESSU will strengthen the cooperation with GCE by actively taking part in GCE leadership and



activities, influencing the advocacy work from a school student point of view and co-create statements and activities.

Since the movement initiated by school students, Friday's for Future, started to mobilise students and young people throughout the world, it has been proven that collective actions are necessary and that Climate Justice is one of the most urgent problems to address and solve. There is no school without a planet.

Climate actions have also been a catalyst for wider demands of the student movement all over the world. This is why OBESSU will continue to work on these topics with a bottom up approach, from school students to european foras and coalitions such as Generation Climate Europe (european level) and Global Student Forum (global level).

Global Students Forum

GSF formalised in 2020, and OBESSU nominated one member to their Steering Committee. In 2021, OBESSU will engage in the different activities proposed by GSF and will strive to involve its membership in the different structures (working groups and standing committees) and its activities (trainings, seminars and more). The nominated SC member will also report back to OBESSU and its governance bodies where appropriate.

Since 2020, the GSF has organised many different online and in person meetings and has brought together representatives from all over the world to discuss important topics such as: fighting tokenistic practices in global foras, climate actions trainings, the ALA Academy, etc.

Furthermore the organisation together with its membership (ESU, OBESSU, AASU, CSA, OCLAE, etc) has been present in important events such as the World Higher Education Conference (Barcelona, 2022), the Youth Pre-TES Summit Event (Paris, 2022) and the Transforming Education Summit by the UN (New York, 2022).

OBESSU will continue to support and contribute to the work of the GSF, by having a member of the Steering Committee working for the GSF and serving as a channel between OBESSU and GSF, ensuring the participation and the perspective of school students unions. Moreover, OBESSU will mainstream the work of the GSF so that OBESSU's membership can benefit from the work and projects that they are running.

International Students' Day and other short campaigns

As part of our Communication and Advocacy Strategies, OBESSU will continue to engage in campaigns that reflect our and our members' organisational priorities and share our core messages with a wider audience. In particular:



- We will celebrate the International Students' Day through a global campaign that involve students from every part of the globe thanks to the cooperation with the Global Students' Forum;
- We will carry out shorter social media campaigns in occasion of international days that are relevant for the organisation such as International Women Day and International Youth Day in order to raise awareness on specific topics;
- We will take part in relevant campaigns of our membership and partners to magnify our impact.

Thematic cluster: Re-booting School Student Action

Support to Membership engagement and development

OBESSU will continue creating a space for stronger cooperation among school students unions in Europe and outside Europe.

OBESSU objectives for 2023 are as it follows:

- To keep providing continuous support to our membership;
- To provide more opportunities for OBESSU membership and other school student movements in Europe for sharing and learning from each other;
- To support students union in reaching out to their membership;
- To create a space for cooperation among school students' unions;
- To continue cooperation with the already established Alumni network.

Through the different activities we aim at:

- Enabling in person sharing and learning of organisations in regions with similar issues;
- Giving concrete benefits to the constituency and enlarge the reach out OBESSU currently has;
- Developing ideas for further student organising development and cooperation strengthening;



- Fostering cooperation with emerging school student unions not involved with OBESSU yet and strengthen such movements

Membership strategy

In 2023 OBESSU will work intensively on the co-creation of a Membership Strategy. We want to make sure that OBESSU as a well co-owned structure with its members develops together in terms of internal communication, priorities and needs and wishes of the membership. As OBESSU has been growing and developing over the past years, we believe it is important to make sure it remains relevant not only to external stakeholders but also to the membership. Not only does OBESSU want to continue providing continue support and opportunities to the membership, but we also want to continue growing the spaces for cooperation and to co-decide on the future of OBESSU, as we approach our 50th anniversary. For this reason, the membership strategy will be built as a long process and it will kick off other relevant governance processes such as the revision of the Statutes, the Annual Financial Contribution system and anything else that the Membership might deem important to discuss. .

Overarching: Achieving the goals of the Development strategy through organisational capacity and governance

Topics and activities explored under this heading also reference objectives outlined in the Development Strategy of OBESSU, not solely on the Work-Plan. The following are activities and structures supporting the achievement of wider organisational goals. As such, they encompass several of the thematic clusters above explored and go beyond the topics into organising sustainable organisations and structures, both with regards to OBESSU and its membership.

Governance

As part of general governance, four types of statutory meetings will be organised throughout the year, namely:

- The General Assembly (GA)
- The Council of Members (COMEM)
- Board Meetings (BM)
- Monitoring Committee Meetings (MCM)

Both the GA and the COMEM will be organised as face to face assemblies. The BMs and the MCMs, apart from face to face forms, will also be complemented by video conferences, when necessary. The Board Meetings will, to the extent possible, include a visit to one of OBESSU Member / Candidate / Affiliate organisations or a prospective contact organisation.

Development Strategy objectives tackled:



- OBESSU is owned by well-functioning school student unions
- OBESSU has a strong and stable organisation

Pool of trainers

OBESSU will continue investing in the Pool of Trainers and aim in 2023 to further guarantee quality standards in OBESSU events. The Pool of Trainers will be engaged in Stronger School Student Unions and other processes. Their role will be clarified thanks to the development of the Events 101 document for OBESSU events and the Code of Conduct.

Besides, the PoT 2023 will have the chance to meet and get trained on facilitating participatory and political processes in July 2023 as part of the DemocraSEE the change training activity.

European Apprentices Network and work on VET

OBESSU will continue co-sponsoring the European Apprentices Network and being an engaged partner of the European Commission on the work concerning Vocational Education and Training. In this field, OBESSU shall support the EAN in fundraising for a project manager to further work for the creation of an independent EAN.

Projects in which OBESSU is involved

OBESSU is currently involved in several projects, either as a lead applicant or a partner. Some of them include members, candidates and associates directly, others simply foresee a consultation and a free usage of tools. At the time of writing this Implementation Plan, OBESSU is still waiting for a number of results from different applications, however, information on the projects that the OBESSU Secretariat is managing in cooperation with the Board are available here: <https://obessu.org/what-we-do/projects/>

Among already approved projects, in 2023 OBESSU will be engaged in:

- **COYV** (Co-Operation Youth Vote- Enabling future active European citizens)
- **Innovation station:** A new approach towards online and blended education
- **Erasmus in schools**
- **CITIZED** (Policy implementation support and teacher empowerment for CITIZenship Education)
- **EUCARE** (European Cohorts of Patients and Schools to Advance Response to Epidemics)
- **PERFECT** (Perform and share local histories)
- **BLISS** (Boosting health Literacy for School Students)
- **Humanness:** EU social challenges and civic engagement for solidarity



- **InclusiVET** (Inclusive Engagement of Underrepresented Students in Vocational Education & Training)

These projects cover topics like the Vote at 16, European elections,, participation of disadvantaged people in communities and civic and active citizenship education, innovation in education and the impact of Covid-19 on schools and students, inclusion in VET, community building, global solidarity and more.



Appendix 1 - Provisional calendar of activities

In **BLACK** are all process of OBESSU as an organisation

In **GREEN** are events involving all membership

In **BLUE** are the events in which part of the membership (e.g. selected members through call or partners in projects) are involved

In **RED** are consultations processes.

	Competencies for Democracy	Sustainable Development	Re-booting school student action	Organisational Capacity and governance
Overarching mainstreamed priority: European Year of Skills				
Long-term processes/on-going processes	Vote@16 consultation	Advocacy on Twin transitions Cooperation with GCE and GSF	Membership strategy	
	EPIC micro grants for actions (follow up from Training in January)	Policy paper on Twin Transition Working Group on Inclusivity in Education	AFC revision	



	Campaigns related to the European Parliament Elections	Position paper on Validation of Non-Formal and Informal learning		
January				
February	EPiC Training for Multipliers			
March	Study session "I have a say" in Budapest			
April				
May				
June				General Assembly
July	DemocracySEE the change training for PoT			
August				
September	EPiC Summer School			



October				
November		17th November campaign		Council of Members (tbc - around last 2 weeks November, 1 week December)
December				



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