

OBESSU IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2025

**Adopted by the Council of Members on the 7th & 8th
December 2024 in Bologna, Italy**

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OBESSU

Organising Bureau of
European School Student Unions

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OBESSU Implementation plan 2025

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As outlined in the OBESSU Work Plan, the organisation is committed to focusing on three key areas: competencies for democracy, sustainable development, and revitalising school student initiatives. For each of these focus areas, OBESSU aims to achieve specific objectives. Additionally, this Implementation Plan takes into account other important documents related to the organisation's strategic growth, such as the Development Strategy, Advocacy Strategy, and Political Platform, as well as emerging needs in education and society over time.

This document highlights the activities and themes that OBESSU will prioritise and outlines the objectives to be met. A timeline of the year's activities is provided in the annex at the end.

Introductory words - Reflecting on 2024 and a path forward

As we reflect on the past year, and plan ahead for 2025, we cannot help but examine the results of the European Parliament elections held across each Member State, June 6-9th 2024. While the elections themselves can only be described as a remarkable example of international democracy, it is difficult to look past polarisation which now exists across Europe and the wider world. The elections themselves resulted in a generally low turnout, lack of youth representation and engagement, and overall little gain despite our hardest efforts. Likewise, in just the recent weeks, we have seen attempts by the Commission to cut Erasmus+ funding by up to €295 million¹.

However, we mustn't let this get us down. In 2025, we have the opportunity to create new relationships with our European officials, new strategies and new platforms for cooperation, such as the Lifelong Learning Platform & Civil Society European Proposal for an Intergroup the Future of Education and Skills for a Competitive Europe. In 2025, we set off with two main focuses; With the European Year for Digital Education Citizenship, we will examine the latest digital technologies in our classrooms, including Artificial Intelligence, alongside the Council of Europe through our Study Session. Likewise, we will be working on our annual work plan IMPACT, which will aim to combat intersectional gender inequality by focusing on Diversity and Inclusivity.

As we celebrate our 50th anniversary, with many of the activities outlined below, we remain dedicated to defending school student rights in solidarity with those who do not have the voice to fight for themselves.

¹ See p. 15 of the [proposed draft budget for 2025](#), the [opinion of the European Parliament](#) & p. 9 of the [explanatory memorandum issued by the Council of the European Union](#)

Thematic cluster: Competencies for democracy

School Democracy

Amplifying the voices of young people is crucial to ensuring the legitimacy and future of our democratic institutions. Within the context of schools and student unions, school governance serves as a vital space where this democratic practice can be effectively realised. Next year, a Working Group on School Democracy will be established to continue with the efforts to empower young people to take an active role in the decision-making processes concerning them. The objective is to bring the OBESSU Membership closer to EU policymakers and education stakeholders. In relation to this, OBESSU will continue to represent school students in the Steering Group of the ELNE - Educational Leadership Network Europe, launched in late 2023 as a space for cooperation amongst different educational stakeholders across Europe, with the overarching aim to transform education systems and institutions into learning communities and to collect and showcase existing research and good practices to achieve the goals of the European Education Area. Following its first-year activities dealing with many topics such as green and digital transitions, inclusiveness, skills and competences, and teacher shortage, ELNE selected a new overarching theme for its second year of work, namely 'Dimensions of collaborative leadership – exploring together'.

A central aspect of collaborative leadership is the need for democratic structures within schools. Democratic structures mean that decision-making processes are not carried out exclusively by a single leader or a small group, but that all relevant stakeholders –including teachers, students, parents and administrative staff– are involved in these processes. This requires a deep understanding and active promotion of participation and codetermination within the school community. The school thus becomes a place where all voices are heard, and everyone has the opportunity to influence the development and decisions of the organisation. Such a democratic environment not only strengthens the sense of belonging and ownership but also contributes to the emergence of innovative solutions and a shared vision for the school. The exploration of such collaborative practices will intersect with the aim of the OBESSU Working Group on School Democracy.

Education 2040 follow up

Following the success of the Education 2040 Work Plan and the recommendations outlined in the 'School Student Demands on Education 2040' Policy Paper, OBESSU will monitor the needs of membership organisations to map out the support they need to implement such recommendations.

Following a discussion at the Council of Members in Bologna, 2024, the Coordination team will finalise the 'School Student Demands on Education 2040 Policy Paper for proposal and ratification at the General Assembly 2025. In 2025, the MOs will be assisted in disseminating the Policy Paper with education stakeholders at the national level and advocate for those demands.

2025: European Year of Digital Citizenship Education

The Council of Europe Standing Conference of Ministers of Education declared 2025 as the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education with the intention to provide a platform for member states to create initiatives to make learners more aware of the changes that digital technology is bringing to the world, to see more clearly the positives of the online environments they choose to move in, and improve their knowledge and skills to avoid the downsides. This is why the following actions will be taken throughout the year within the overarching theme of digital citizenship education:

- Study session in March 2025 *CYBER ACTIVISTS: Understanding digital rights in the artificial intelligence era*. The overarching aim of the activity is to provide participants with the tools to understand rights in the digital age, especially in relation to artificial intelligence and internet governance processes, while building the capacity of student organisations for advocacy and activism in a digital environment. This activity has 3 specific objectives:
01: Understanding rights in the digital era and reflecting on how to promote accessibility of education for all young people based on the opportunities provided by the new digital tools,
02: Discussing and sharing good practices and different examples from around Europe on digital participation and the incorporation of artificial intelligence in the school system,
03: Building capacity in School Students Unions for advocacy and activism in a digital environment and using digital tools,
04: To support the advocacy of School Students Unions through a toolkit on young people's access to digital rights in the school environment.
- At the same time, the results of the study session will inform the Policy Paper that will be drafted on AI in education to redefine participation in online spaces and leverage the potential of AI-enabled systems while safeguarding the rights and well-being of students.
- Moreover, a number of other initiatives to promote the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education will be put in place, such as a policy paper/reaction/expectations for the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education and/or social media campaigns.

Vote@16 campaign

The primary objective of our advocacy towards Vote@16 remains ensuring that young people are given the opportunity to actively participate in democratic processes. Throughout the last year, we have continued with our efforts to campaign towards this political change. To do this, we have supported the European Youth Forum's Vote@16 campaign, conducted online workshops, and worked on policy papers concerning this topic. Vote@16 remains a fundamental pillar in our efforts to improve and include young people in decision-making processes and their democratic systems. Throughout the year 2025, we will work on the following points:

- Continue to work on the vote@16 campaign by expanding our efforts to secure a wider political consensus on lowering the voting age. We will keep on engaging with policymakers, youth organisations, and other key stakeholders across Europe to push for legislative reforms. This will involve lobbying at both the national and European levels, using evidence from countries that have already implemented Vote@16 to demonstrate its benefits.
- Reaction to voter turnout in the 2024 European Parliament Elections: an analysis of the turnout will provide critical insights into the state of youth engagement in democratic processes. By conducting a thorough analysis of voter participation rates among young people, particularly those aged 16 to 18 in countries where they were allowed to vote in EP elections, heavily focusing on countries that introduced this for the first time. Based on this analysis, we plan to release a report identifying the barriers young people faced in casting their ballots and proposing solutions to overcome these obstacles in future elections.
- Reaction to the rise of polarisation and the far-right in Europe and national contexts, this topic will be discussed in a webinar directed to young people and students, and it will be tied to our Training Course for International Officers (TCIO) on promoting gender equality in democratic participation. These topics are heavily intertwined and can provide an intersectional point of view which we want to achieve.
- Additionally, we will run a series of events—both online and offline—designed to raise awareness and educate young people about their democratic rights. We aim to expand the online workshops we initiated last year, ensuring they reach a broader audience and offer practical tools to empower youth to participate actively in civic life.

Thematic cluster: Sustainable development

Work plan 2025_IMPACT (Intersectional Measures Promoting Advocacy, Collaboration and Transformation)

While the topic of gender mainstreaming has been constantly present within our organisation, over the last years we are witnessing a rising concern and attention to the issue of bringing forward intersectional feminism as a key element for discussing and enabling inclusion and accessibility of our spaces and of our organisation. In many countries all over Europe women rights are regressing rather than progressing, and there is a general decline in the quality of the conversation around intersectionality, considering the several attacks made also on women's, migrants' and minorities' rights. We also witness a growing generational and country divide in the way intersectional feminism is understood and practised: from the development of decolonial thoughts in some countries more than others, to the discussion around anti-discrimination and access to education and quality jobs in different contexts. The 2025 Work Plan aims at tackling gender mainstreaming from a broad organisational and intersectional perspective and focusing on building the capacity of our Members.

The overarching objectives of the WP are to:

O1: Build the capacity of our members in making their organisation more inclusive and intersectional by giving them the tools to integrate a gender perspective in their governance structure and in their different activities,

O2: Enable peer learning amongst different Member organisations regarding their activities connected to women's rights and gender equality, both structural/organisational and in terms of advocacy and campaigns, reflect on gender equality across cultural and religious contexts,

O3: Reflect on student movements and structural issues in the participation of women throughout OBESSU's history.

As part of this Work Plan, there will be three main activities including:

- A Training of Trainers targeting the Pool of Trainers aimed towards establishing intersectional spaces within non-formal educational activities, empowering trainers to integrate intersectionality as both a concept and practice in their methodologies and organisational strategies.
- The second activity will be a Study Visit targeting staff and youth workers coming from the OBESSU constituency, who will visit the OBESSU office as well as other civil society organisations in Brussels and discuss practices of youth workers supporting school students in matters related to gender equality and gender mainstreaming within the organisation. The exchange of knowledge will focus on gender equality and feminist leadership from multiple perspectives including event organisation, activity development and advocacy.

- Lastly, we will hold a Training Course for International Officers focused on bringing our membership together and making space for a reflection on gender equality and mainstreaming in their organisations, in our organisation as a whole and in the world outside of these. The activity will be aimed at preparing participants to act as multipliers in their own national organisations on women's rights advocacy with an intersectional perspective, making room for the empowerment of feminist and female leaderships and creating a long-term impact in their organisations.

The exchanges conducted as part of the IMPACT Work Plan activities will inform the *Policy recommendations on Gender Sensitive Education* to explore the different gender norms that exist in the society, and how they are reflected in the education (and access to education) of secondary level students, and to develop recommendations for educational stakeholders to make education more gender sensitive.

Partnership with the Climate Pact

In 2024, OBESSU became a partner of the [European Climate Pact](#), an initiative from the European Commission, which is part of the European Green Deal and is helping the EU to meet its goal to become climate-neutral by 2050.

- Revise internal documentation and OBESSU practices on sustainability, such as vetting and evaluating the ethical practices of project collaborations, conducting a review of the environmental impact of OBESSU, organising capacity building activities on environmentally friendly and sustainable practices, and creating tangible goals at the internal level for 2030.
- Engage in Climate Pact activities by collaborating with the [community](#) of the European Climate Pact and attending the Annual Event in March 2025.

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Just Transition Platform

In 2024, we became members of the European Commission's (DG REGIO) Just Transition Platform - Working Group on Equal Opportunities and the Youth TaskForce as part of our advocacy for a sustainable future. As part of our continued advocacy for the implementation of our Policy Paper on the Twin Transition, and the sustainable development goals, we are committed to continuing with this cooperation. In particular:

- We will advocate for student voices across the platform and the region to ensure a just transition in and beyond the areas of education, technology and wider society;
- We will promote the use of sustainable, digital technologies in the classroom, while advocating for digital media literacy;
- We will continue to advocate for an education that prepares society for the future of the green transition, including Education for Sustainable Development, Civic and Peace Education, as well as Global Citizenship Education.

Continued cooperation with Generation Climate Europe

During 2025, OBESSU will continue to focus its climate advocacy through active engagement with organised youth and climate activists in a coalition Generation Climate Europe (GCE). 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.

In 2025, we will promote the expansion of GCE through European and Global advocacy, as well as increasing the membership of the coalition in order to strengthen our joint advocacy. As we face an impending climate crisis, we must recognise that there is no education without a healthy planet, and as such over the following year, we must continue our efforts to protect it.

Youth Test (European Economic and Social Committee)

In August 2024, OBESSU was accepted as a youth organisation to take part in the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) Youth Test. The European Economic and Social Committee is an official EU body that represents the organised civil society within the European Union.

The Youth Test is a new initiative to involve youth in the policymaking process on the EU institutional level. OBESSU will now receive regular calls for consultation from the EESC, where we can put forth a nominee for those relevant to us. Together with all other [youth organisations](#) in the youth test, we will decide on a nominee to represent all youth organisations in the specific call. The representative selected will join the study group following a specific EESC opinion, and will be able to make both oral and written contributions during the writing process of the opinion.

Therefore, OBESSU will:

- Monitor calls for consultations from the EESC and put forth representatives when relevant.
- Involve member organisations in our consultations.
- Continue with our other advocacy initiatives targeting the European institutions as planned.

It is extremely important to note that the youth test is not a substitute for the other advocacy we do, nor is it a replacement for meaningful dialogue in other forums than during the youth tests. OBESSU will continue with the other advocacy activities we do on the institutional level, and the youth test is just a supporting measure we participate in.

Global action and solidarity

In the globalised society in which we live, many of the challenges we face as a student organisation (such as climate change or the increase of conflicts, as well as access to education and student democracy) must also be tackled from a global perspective. This is why we advocate for human rights, justice, and free quality education for all people on a global level.

Expressing widespread solidarity with students and people across the world of whom we share the struggle, has been and will continue to be a core pillar of our activity on this topic/matter. If we want to ensure that school students' voices are heard all around the world, the first step to achieve that is having those students to discuss and organise between each other. This is why one of OBESSU's main priorities should be to foster a re-building process of the global school student movement, that can lead to joint global action built together with other national and international student organisations, and capable of having a relevant impact.

A strong school student movement can also help us to establish a more effective relationship with other parts of the global social movement, beginning with university students, and following with all the others.

The Global Student Forum will play a significant role in our plans to fulfil these goals, through its structures (working groups and standing committees) and activities (trainings, seminars and more).

- OBESSU will coordinate with our steering committee members to make sure GSF's work is taken on in accordance with our priorities.
- OBESSU will share relevant activities of the GSF to the membership, to make sure everyone can benefit from such activities and projects.

International Students' Day and other annual 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 Student Forum;
- We will carry out shorter social media campaigns in occasion of international days that are relevant for the organisation, such as the International Day of Education, International Day of Women and Girls in Science, International Women's Rights Day, International LGBTQIA+ Pride Day, International Youth Day (among others) in order to raise awareness on specific topics;
- We will take part in relevant campaigns of our membership and partners to boost 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 2025 are as it follows:

- To keep providing continuous support to our membership;
- To have a focus on doing more study visits when possible.
- 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 enlarge the network of members and organise study visits to meet and exchange with potential Member/Candidate/Affiliate organisations or a prospective contact organisation;
- 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 (i.e. microgrants, capacity building workshops) 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 strengthening such movements.

OBESSU 50th Anniversary

In 2025, OBESSU will celebrate 50 years of existence, 50 years of mobilisation for the rights of secondary school students, 50 years of fighting for quality education, 50 years of collective reflection on education and society on an international scale, 50 years of coordination of social youth movements. It is with this in mind that we are launching a series of activities to celebrate our shared history and recall the key moments in this collective construction:

- The extension and dissemination of the OBESSU History Booklet, which will be published on the OBESSU website at the end of 2024 and includes a series of interviews and written testimonies from the Alumni of the organisation including former Board members, members of the Pool of Trainers, Monitoring Committee and Secretariat.
- A final video that will encapsulate not only important moments of the organisation but also from and for the membership.
- Coordinated events across the countries of the OBESSU membership where an intergenerational exchange between the OBESSU alumni and the current members will be fostered.

The aim of these activities is not to exclusively focus on the history of OBESSU, but also on the contributions that the high school movement has made to democracy over the past 50 years. All in all, the exchange between current members and the OBESSU alumni intends to foster a series of follow up actions on the ground to create further democratic spaces in local communities at a time where even in historically democratic nations there are increasing restrictions on how civil society can operate and democratic backsliding needs to be prevented.

Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

Following the outcomes of the work led by the Board and the WG on Diversity and Inclusion, OBESSU will kick off and initiate the implementation of the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. The strategy will put forward collaborative efforts to meaningfully and actively foster diversity - internally, helping OBESSU as a whole and its bodies to be a safer, more accessible and more empowering organisation for and beyond its membership.

Each year, focus will be given on selected key issues/themes that will guide the organisation and its actions, following set indicators and expected impact. Thus, guided by the strategy and focusing on certain themes every year, OBESSU aims to actively shape its work and to further

foster an inclusive culture. The process overall aims to go beyond cultivating awareness to setting accountability and continuously improve the organisation's diversity practices.

Membership survey

A membership survey will be conducted to identify capacity building needs of members regarding advocacy actions. Results from the survey will be pivotal in shaping the capacity building activities that OBESSU will organise for its members to be able to conduct advocacy campaigns in their local communications and engage national policymakers and stakeholders.

The membership survey is an important tool for the different structures of OBESSU to identify the needs of the members and the areas of improvement. It is integral to OBESSU that we know our members needs, wants and expectations, to be effective in our work. Moreover, it serves as an opportunity for the Membership to have a structured way to bring constructive feedback to the OBESSU governing bodies.

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 explored above 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 2025-2029

In 2025, OBESSU will focus on implementing its first year of our new Development Strategy. We will continue to frame our development with the areas of influencing change, well function member organisations, representation and stability. We will particularly focus on diversifying our organisation, in terms of inclusivity, sustainability and financial terms.

The Development Strategy outlines specific long term goals and monitors their achievement through a series of qualitative and quantitative indicators linked to a set of actions categorised by development area, such as advocacy, quality assurance of activities, governance, finance and management, global level, etc. Throughout the period 2025-2029, the Board and the Secretariat will use the Development Strategy as a reference point for decision-making and to define the actions included in the upcoming annual implementation plans.

The Strategy will be reviewed bi-annually for the General Assembly and Council of Members by the Monitoring Committee who will outline indicators met, and priorities for the next period.

Pool of trainers

OBESSU will continue investing in the Pool of Trainers (PoT) and aim in 2025 to further guarantee quality standards in OBESSU events. The Pool of Trainers will be engaged in the Study Session and in the activities of the Work Plan.

The Pool of Trainers will meet regularly in 2025 with different purposes throughout its mandate: teambuilding, capacity building for the Pool of Trainers, peer learning, updates, focus groups of pedagogical matters, and so on. Lastly, the Pool of Trainers will continue to be engaged in different OBESSU projects in which there are consultations foreseen with educators and youth workers, such as INCLUSIVET.

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 by working on the following actions:

- In cooperation with Ecorys, disseminating a report assessing the factors impacting mental health and well-being of apprentices across the membership and the European Alliance for Apprenticeships;
- Being involved in high-level stakeholder events to represent students and advocate for their rights regarding VET education;
- Engaging the OBESSU membership and collaborating with EAN members to promote the EAN's seven priorities and make them a reality. The priorities are:

- Quality education and quality assurance,
- Apprentices rights and representation,
- Responsibilities and protection,
- Legally binding agreements,
- Promoting apprenticeships,
- Anti-discrimination,
- Accessible information
- Working to better the structure of the EAN, and making it a stronger network.
- The Policy recommendations produced in the framework of the INCLUSIVET project will be disseminated with the EAN network as they will contain recommendations targeting local, national and European policy makers as well as school actors and education stakeholders, on inclusive student engagement in the VET.

Projects in which OBESSU is involved

In the year 2024, OBESSU successfully concluded many projects, such as COYV, Innovation Station, Erasmus in Schools, Epic, Bliss, Humanness and Perfect. Some of them included the membership directly in activities or events, others simply foresaw a consultation and a free usage of the tools produced in the framework of the projects. At the time of writing, OBESSU is still waiting for a number of results from different applications funded by different EU programs such as Erasmus+ and CERV. More information on the projects that the OBESSU Secretariat is managing in cooperation with the Board is available at <https://obessu.org/what-we-do/projects-2/current-projects/>.

Projects that will continue throughout 2025:

- **EUCARE** (European Cohorts of Patients and Schools to Advance Response to Epidemics): monitors the spread of Covid-19 in schools across Europe while focusing on the psychological effect of certain aspects of the pandemic, with the aim of finding alternatives to absolute school closures, such as better testing and containment strategies.
- **InclusiVET** (Inclusive Engagement of Underrepresented Students in Vocational Education & Training): contributes to a more inclusive environment at VET Institutions by creating interventions aimed at increasing underrepresented students' engagement.
- **SBIM (Skip the barriers of international mobility)**: This project is the follow up of Erasmus in Schools and started in November 2024 with the aim of equipping young people from diverse backgrounds with the right information and tools to get informed about international mobility opportunities. SBIM will provide training to youth workers to be more relevant when raising awareness about

international mobility; develop innovative and complementary tools to enhance the inclusiveness of international mobility; finally to raise awareness about international mobility to different stakeholders in the youth sector.

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:				
Long-term processes/on-going processes	Vote@16 campaign Activities for the European Year of	Cooperation with GCE and GSF Just Transition Platform Working Group	OBESSU 50th Anniversary	

	Digital Citizenship Education Education 2040 follow up	European Climate Pact European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) Youth Test Cooperation with European Apprentices Network	AFC revision	
January				
February				
March		IMPACT Work Plan_Training of Trainers	Study session in Budapest CYBER ACTIVISTS: Understanding digital rights in the artificial intelligence era	

April				
May		IMPACT Work Plan_Study Visit		
June				General Assembly
July				Board Mandate handover
August				
September		IMPACT Work Plan_Training for International Officers		
October				

November		17th November campaign		Council of Members (tbc - around last 2 weeks November/1 week December)
December		IMPACT Work Plan Booklet on Gender Mainstreaming and Intersectionality in Youth Practices		