

The future you(th) want: co-producing recommendations for inclusive societies

19th - 20th September 2018, Utrecht, The Netherlands

Summary Report

The
Future
you(th)
Want

Project partners

EUROPREAN PLATFORM FOR REHABILITATION
Belgium

ASTANGU KUTSEREHABILITATSIOONI KESKUS
Estonia

CENTRO DE REABILITACAO PROFISSIONAL DE GAIA
Portugal

GTB vzw
Belgium

Fundación INTRAS
Spain

Fundación ONCE
Spain

SOCIAL INTEGRATION STATE AGENCY
Latvia

STICHTING REA COLLEGE PLURYN
The Netherlands

STICHTING HELIOMARE
The Netherlands

Theotokos Foundation
Greece

Other organisations and youth committees involved

European Disability Forum (EDF)

European Network on Independent Living (ENIL)

Euro Youth Mental Health (EuroYouthMH)

I. Introduction

People with disabilities, including young people, have long endured social exclusion mainly because of their different abilities. Stigma and other stereotypes associated to disability have also led to further exclusion, especially in the education system and in the labour market. “*Nothing about us, without us*” calls for a meaningful participation of people with disabilities in matters that directly relate to them and can influence their lives for more social, educational and labour market inclusion. Improving policies and programmes for the full inclusion of young people with disabilities can ensure this group develops capacities to fully participate in society in a later stage of their life.

EPR and the project partners from Belgium, the Netherlands, Greece, Portugal, Spain, Latvia and Estonia decided to organize the structured dialogue between young people with disabilities, policy makers and experts in the disability field with “*Nothing about us, without us*” in mind, and specifically implementing using a co-production approach. “The future you(th) want: co-producing recommendations for inclusive societies” will build on the talents, interests and skills of young people with disabilities to promote their participation in the democratic life and co-create recommendations for both policy makers and service providers on issues that directly relate and are of interest to them.

EPR and its partners have decided to adopt the broadest interpretation of disability to uncover the potential of all young people regardless the type of disability. Therefore, based on the profiles of the young people attending courses in the partner organisations, participants that will be involved in this project are over 30 young people with special needs and/or fewer opportunities, specifically disability including: blindness or severe visual impairment; physical disability; intellectual disability; learning difficulties; autistic spectrum disorder and mental health conditions who are attending training programmes led by the partners in the project.

Each national partner organizes a preparatory meeting where Ambassadors are chosen by and among the young people. All Ambassadors’ will meet in Utrecht, through non-formal learning activities, including future-planning methodology, they reflect together on what initiatives and policy are most relevant to them, identifying their personal strengths and skills needed to achieve their individual goals. They will dialogue with experts and policy makers, refining their message and gaining further understanding of relevant EU policy initiatives. The “Manifesto” and the “Roadmap document” are the key outputs of this project and will summarise recommendations young people with disabilities have co-created with policy-makers and service providers and how they can be implemented. Selected Ambassadors will present the recommendations to the participants of the EPR Annual Conference. Focusing on the personal talents will be also an opportunity to enhance self-confidence among the young people.

Young people will gain a better understanding of relevant policy and will directly participate in dialogue with policy makers and experts. Policy makers and experts will have increased trust and confidence in young people’s capacities to meaningfully contribute to society.

By involving key experts in the disability field, including network organisations advocating for the rights of people with disability and independent living, youth councils, policy makers and service providers, EPR aims to maximize the impact and dissemination of this project.

<https://www.epr.eu/the-future-youth-want/>

DAY I: The making of... the Manifesto

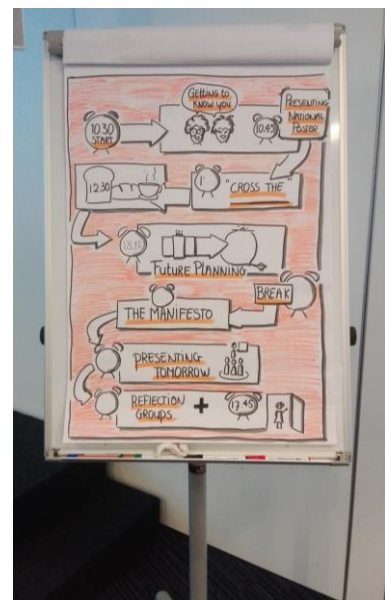
Young Ambassadors, accompanying persons, policy makers and experts on disability participated to the interactive workshop taking place on the 19th September in Utrecht, the day before the EPR Annual Conference. In particular, this structured dialogue project involved over thirty young Ambassadors from different European countries, elected by and from students and trainees with disabilities attending courses in the project partners: Estonia (2), Portugal (5), the Netherlands (9), Spain (3), Latvia (3), Belgium (8), Greece (2).



The four facilitators involved in on this project developed a series of engaging activities to ensure everybody could fully contribute to the sessions, sharing ideas, experience and learning from each other. In addition to different activities, the facilitators used graphic recording to guide participants in the learning journey and reflection, including producing dissemination materials, such as the Manifesto and Roadmaps.

a. Welcome and something about us...

The day started with a welcoming session where the facilitators explained the foreseen activities of the day and presented their experience and background. This was an important moment given that participants have never met before and created a good atmosphere in the room. Participants were also invited to ask questions and/or clarification in relation to the activities of the day, to ensure everyone has clear what the goals of the meeting are and how to best contribute to it. Afterwards, the facilitators invited all participants to get to know peers and others. Using some music and cards prepared in advance, participants were invited to say name, country and age, and their favourite food, so to share something more about themselves and their own culture with the international group.



b. What is the UNCRPD all about?




After the round of presentation, the following session focused on the United Nation Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD), considered the international milestone to ensure the full enjoyment of human rights by persons with disabilities and full equality under the law. Due to the relevance of this treaty, the facilitators decided to present the main features of the UNCRPD in a different and more dynamic way. In order to do so, all participants were invited to watch a short video produced by the EQUASS unit of EPR (with funding

from the European Union EaSI Programme in 2015). Through animation and visual and clear information, the video offered the opportunity to convey the main goals and rights contained in the UNCRPD in an easy and appealing way to a wider audience, including younger people.

c. Reporting from...



After the icebreaking activities and some time to familiarise with the group, the new setting and the facilitators, it was time for the Ambassadors to present the work and outcomes of the national meetings. Each partner of the project organised an internal meeting with students, trainees and other young people with disabilities wishing to share their inputs on matters that are relevant to them and connected to European policy. Format of the event and number of participants is different for each partner and according to student's availability and interest. The main outcomes are reported below and the picture of the national partners can be downloaded on the project webpage, as well as various other resources and reports from partners: <https://www.epr.eu/the-future-youth-want/>



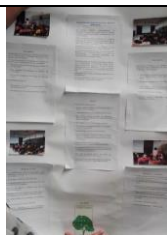
Rea College Pluryn – Heliomare
Netherlands

Breaking the circle of stigma preventing youngsters with disability to have access to employment, education and independent living




Fundación ONCE
Spain

They call for a “normalisation of disability” to eliminate barriers in education and employment so that young people can thrive in the future. Sport could play a crucial role in promoting inclusion




Theotokos
Greece

It is difficult to find a job because there is a general lack of recognition of motivation, ability to learn new skills and build on existing skills of young people with intellectual disabilities




CRPG
Portugal

Young people with disabilities feel included but misunderstood, they call for better ways to demonstrate their talents, not assistance and less bureaucracy when they ask for support



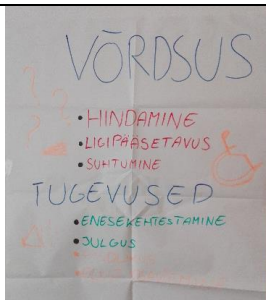
GTB
Belgium

Raising awareness about rights of people with disabilities, more altruism and support among all members of the society, better support for the families, equal opportunities in education and when looking for jobs



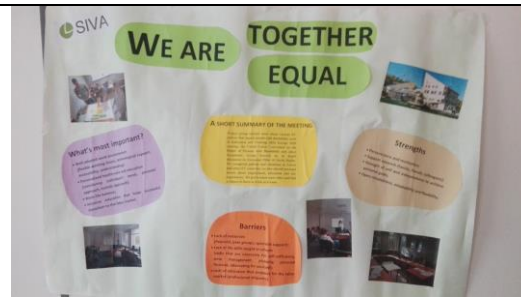
INTRAS
Spain

Personalised support for young people with mental health problems is needed to ensure they can be included and complete their education pathway. Education systems should also build on motivation and include non-formal education that can best support mental well-being.



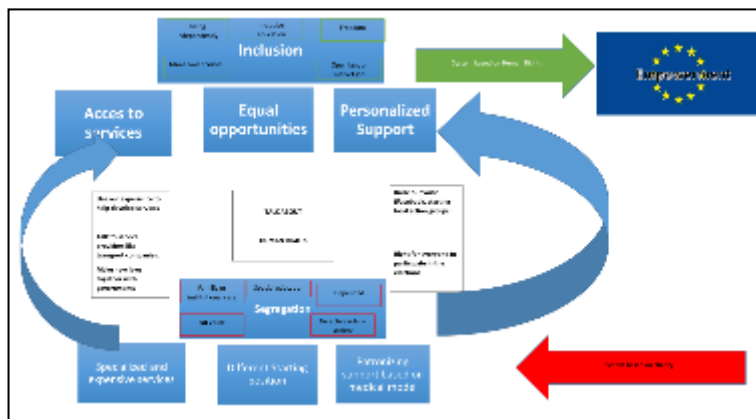
Astangu
Estonia

Students shared their concerns about the complicated work capabilities assessment, accessibility and the somehow biased attitude toward people with disabilities. Courage and assertiveness help young people in overcoming these problems in their daily lives.



SIVA
Latvia

By comparing national and European policy, students concluded workplace adjustments, personalised health-care and inclusive education are crucial to get a job and participate fully in society. Being independent and achieving life goals motivates the students.



ENIL-EPR
Belgium

Building on the expertise of the ENIL's Youth Committee, young advocates presented how co-production of services, equal opportunities and personalised support can bring about a real social inclusion. The cornerstone principle is moving away from a charity-based system to a more social rights-based system, where people with disabilities are granted the opportunities to participate in society on an equal basis, where they can own choices and access the open labour market and quality education.

d. Our experience of the UNCRPD...

Based on the inputs from the video and the presentation of the national events, the facilitators invited the participants to think about the UNCRPD and how they experience their rights. The facilitators proposed to work on 6 main areas linked to one of more articles of the UNCRPD:

- 1) Independent living
- 2) Home and family
- 3) Reasonable accommodation
- 4) Self-determination
- 5) Preventing abuse
- 6) Equality and non-discrimination

By working in mixed groups, supported by facilitators and accompanying persons, participants shared their ideas, thoughts, suggestions and experiences based on their daily life in their own country. By this non formal learning experience, participants were encouraged to share their personal story and perception to peers from other countries, having the opportunity to learn from others who might have a different experience on the same issue. Each group produced several post-it with suggestions and opinions on how people with disabilities

can fully enjoy their rights. Participants were invited to add the post-it to the specific right and read what others have written about it.



- Fully accessible schools, including transport to/from
- Schools to promote “diversity and inclusion” within their teaching programmes
- Improving laws to fight prejudice and discrimination, including in the workplace
- Talent-based approach looking into what people can do
- Promote a culture where everybody can access legal protection and ask for help
- Equality in wages, opportunities and accessibility
- Fighting discrimination towards pwd with different sexual orientation
- We are all different and all equal
- Poor mental health equal to and physical disability



- Stop being considered people with disabilities, but just people
- We want to be able to do thing alone, we do not need to be looked after
- More actions to stop abuses
- Education to promote diversity in society
- More tools to make our life easier



- We are persons not a way to make money
- More co-production in policy and services
- Raising-awareness on what possibilities we have
- More disability-awareness training to professionals
- More possibilities to make our own choices including budget
- We want more meaningful engagement
- We need “more time to take time”



- Better regulations and laws for workplace adjustments
- Right to participate in deciding what I can chose
- More accessibility



- I want to have the right to stay close to my family
- Increase neighbourhood activities and commitment
- Community services (including for mental health) to stay closer to the family
- More training in independent living
- I want to choose where I live
- Better information about the available opportunities
- Reducing the waiting lists for houses



- We have to be more proactive – no one will do it for us
- More personalised to be independent
- Adapt support to individual preferences, not preferences to support
- Support from the community
- Centralised services / organisations
- Better financial support and training
- Increased employment opportunities
- I have to be able to decide where to work, live, play

e. Future planning

The next activity of the morning session focused on promoting self-reflection, identifying personal goals and how to achieve them, looking at external support and personal strengths. The facilitators presented this technique as individual “Future Planning”, which is strongly connected to some of the ideas and requests for “personalised” support emerged in the previous session.



To facilitate participants to familiarise with this methodology and steps, one of the facilitators guided the young people using as example her own Future Planning. This was very useful to ensure everybody could fully understand the potential impacts and how to develop personalised planning.

Participants have been working in small groups, some of which with mixed nationalities, whilst other groups preferred to work with their peers from the same country and together with the accompanying persons. Considering the outcome of the Future Planning is highly personalised and that promoting self-awareness of personal capacities is among the objectives of this structured dialogue, working in national groups was considered a good solution. Additionally, reflecting on the different steps required a lot of energy and critical thinking from the Ambassadors. Accompanying persons supported the young people in this process, clarifying and giving examples in native language if needed.

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Each participant received a blank copy of a graphic recorded Future Planning previously prepared by the facilitators. After identifying the dreams and goals, included in the **HOPE** section, the Future Planning process entails different steps, which are analysed separately by the participants and afterwards merged together.



1) **NOW:** participants were asked to add anything important to them and that can represent their current situation. Family, sports, hobbies are some examples of what participants have mentioned.

2) **TALENTS:** here participants listed all their own qualities and strengths. For some, this was very different perspective from their daily life where they undergo an external assessment of their capabilities.

3) **WHAT WORKS:** participants were asked to think about what do they need to function well. This could be applied in different contexts, such work environment, society, home and depending on the preferences of each participant, they focused on one or more.

4) **WHO:** this part of the Future planning calls for participants to identify key persons/stakeholders within their network (or beyond) that could be able to help them in pursuing their personal goals and dreams.

5) **NEXT STEPS:** this part focuses on actions that participant can take in the short-terms. They are linked to the long-term goals but require smaller and more concrete steps.

6) **NIGHTMARE:** this part is used to think about what would let you down in case nothing happens. Listing items in this part of the future planning can activate and motivate participants to take concrete actions.

After this exercise, which lasted over an hour, participants had some time to compare and share some key points their own Future Planning with their peers, experts and service providers. In particular, experts and service providers gave feedback on the “Who” section of the future planning but also on the “Next Steps”, providing suggestions on available services that could support the youngsters in achieving their dreams. Some Ambassadors were also inspired by the different systems, services and opportunities in the other countries.

f. House of commons

After the lunch break and an energiser where mixed groups had to come up with a “motto” and said it out loud in front of the others, such as “*Independence for the future*” and “*We got the power*”, participants were ready to start the afternoon session.



To create more open dialogue and encourage participants to critical reflect on their own points of view, the facilitators invited participants to join in the “House of Commons” exercise. Divide by a line, participants create two groups facing each other. Places are randomly allocated and aiming at mixing the national teams as far as possible but ensuring everyone could follow the conversation.

The facilitators showed and read some statements prepared in advance that might relate to some personal experiences faced by the young Ambassadors with disabilities in their daily life. Participants were then invited to raise either the “Green” or the “Red” card based on whether they agreed/disagreed.



Each statement was the starting point to start the discussion about different topics:

Statement 1 **Privacy / Exchange of info**

Participants were somehow divided in terms of green and red cards. Rather than the need of personal information (case history), the discussion focused on:

- A good case worker is able to talk to the person and collect the info s/he needs to build up the history of the client;
- Ryan should have the right to decide which information is disclosed;
- Centralised information can prevent similar situations;
- Maybe the past is not important and the focus should be on the future/ goals.

Statement 2 **Right to work / employment conditions**

The second statement created also mixed responses:

- Without additional details and background, it is hard to say whether going to work is good for Melissa;
- If job is connected to any talent/passion, maybe best to stay at home;
- Govt should provide better training/upskilling pathways, not just a job;
- Melissa should think out-of-the –boxes to find alternative jobs she likes;
- The coach should support Melissa in finding better jobs;
- Having any job is better than staying at home;
- Benefits are a quick fix to avoid tackling structural problems.

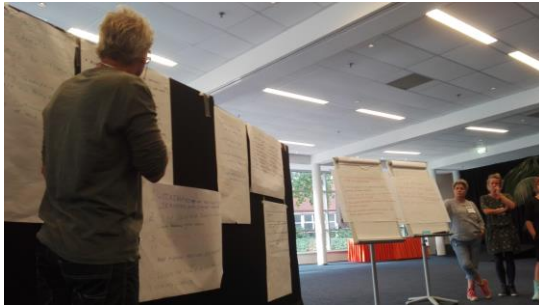
Statement3 Equal opportunities / Accessibility

The last statement was less controversial and focused mainly on workplaces

- Full accessibility is still not a reality in many places;
- Companies offer jobs but don't check what skills we have;
- Employers do not invest in retention strategies/ skills development;
- Some companies employ people with disabilities to avoid taxes/ get benefits.

g. Writing up the Manifesto

After the House Commons, the facilitators asked to think about the ideas, feedback and any other inputs, including from the individual Future Planning, emerged during the day. Building on this information and knowledge, participants were tasked to write down all topics/ key concepts they would like to include in the Manifesto. Participants were invited to share and discuss the topics in groups, so to have different lists to hang on the wall and present to the others.



After presenting all the posters with the topics, each participant had to vote for the most relevant in his/her opinion. In order to have an effective selection process which would clearly identify the most relevant areas, each participant could vote 5 times and not for topics presented by his/her own group. Using this process was appreciated by all participants,

because they could make their own choices and take responsibility. The most voted topics which defined the contents of the Manifesto are:

- 1. Centralised services and support**
- 2. Equal employment opportunities**
- 3. Opportunities to prove themselves in society and labour market**
- 4. Focus personal talents and strengths**
- 5. Create a more positive image of people with special needs**

The 5 topics identifying at the end of DAY1 represents the backbone of the Manifesto prepared by the Ambassadors, to which experts and policy makers involved have contributed as Observers. It is important to note that up to this stage, the young Ambassadors have played a crucial role in developing the contents of the Manifesto. Experts and otherwise involved have been present and listened to the Ambassadors' ideas, feedback and suggestions without influencing the outcomes. Creating this atmosphere where they could freely share and be heard to, rather than told what to do, was one of the main goal of the structured dialogue. Considering most participants were tired after this intense day, it was agreed to elaborate more on the 5 topics the day after, including asking and preparing the Ambassadors for the formal presentation during the EPR Conference.

DAY 2: Presenting the Manifesto

a. Warming up and fine-tuning the Manifesto

After a relaxing night without joint activities, requested by many at the end of previous day, the young Ambassadors met the facilitators early in the morning to fine-tuning the contents of the Manifesto. Building on the information and ideas emerged the day before, each of the 5 topics was further elaborated to include more details to create a more powerful message to the audience.

1. Centralised services and simplified support

- Availability of easy-to-access and reliable information
- Digitalisation of information and less paper work
- Personalised guidance
- (Self) control over information
- Ability to have a clear overview
- Clear communication so that can be explained once

2. Equal employment opportunities

- Same opportunities for people with / without disabilities
- No discrimination in wages
- No loss of the benefits if employed
- Inclusive measures in the workplace preventing discrimination
- Disability-awareness sessions for all employees
- Clear and accessible communication between employer/employees

3. Opportunities to prove themselves in society and labour market

- Educate the general public on inclusion
- Mentor/ job-coach in the workplace can support during on-boarding process
- More internships/traineeships experiences to prove able to perform tasks
- On the job lifelong learning/ professional development available to people with disabilities
- Raising-awareness among companies on the available opportunities to hire people with disabilities (financial/workplace adjustments incentives)
- Variety / challenging tasks to be performed

4. Focus personal talents and strengths

- Look at what I am good at rather than focus on what I cannot do
- Look at my passions/interests

5. Create a more positive image of people with special needs

- Share and promote more success stories
- More cooperation
- Early education and integration

b. Ambassadors on stage: official presentation of the Manifesto

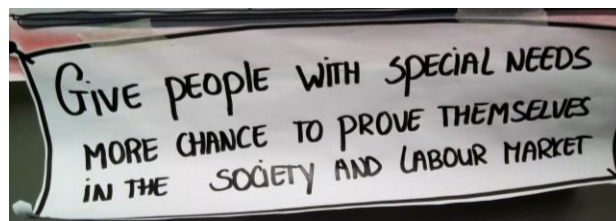


During the first day of the EPR 2018 Annual Conference morning session, once session was allocated to the public presentation of the Manifesto. Some of the young Ambassadors decided to go on stage and present the outcomes to the audience of the conference, including international policy makers, service providers and experts in disability. This opportunity was specifically included to maximise the impact of the Manifesto and also give Ambassadors to speak for themselves about topics



that matter the most to them. For many young participants, this was the first time they could present in front of an international audience and for those wishing to present in native language, the accompanying persons were translating.

The presentation was very powerful and attendees of the Annual Conference really appreciated the hard work of the young ambassadors and their willingness and clarity in presenting what they think is important to them to public.



b. Joining the EPR Annual Conference

Following the presentation of the Manifesto, some Ambassadors agreed to participate and contribute to the morning session of the Annual Conference. The young Ambassadors were the “experts from experience” and they actively contribute to the group discussion with the other attendees and led by the facilitator of the conference.



Additionally, young Ambassadors had the opportunity to assist and intervene in the policy debate with key stakeholders from other European networks and a representative of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC).

It is important to mention that due to the intensive work for presenting the Manifesto and in light of the afternoon activities, some Ambassadors preferred to take a break. Together with accompanying person, those wishing to relax went outside or in other areas of the venue of the conference.

3. What's next: the participatory workshop

a. Co-producing recommendations

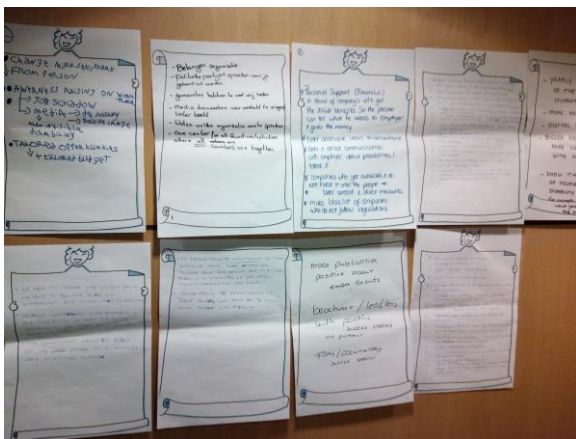
The afternoon workshop was open to all wishing to contribute to the development of the next steps to make the Manifesto a reality. Inspired by the powerful presentation in the morning, some delegates of the Annual Conference decided to join the activities and work together with young Ambassadors.



The facilitators set up 5 different discussion tables, one for each of the key points of the Manifesto. Participants would start working and sharing ideas in one table and afterwards they were all invited to mix groups and to start working on another topic in another table. By doing this, the facilitators created a very interactive atmosphere which strongly promoted the exchange and discussion with all participants on an equal basis. Everybody was able to share ideas and

make suggestions based on his/her own experience and knowledge.

The most relevant outcomes of this session have been selected and written up in a series of posters, each linked to a specific topic:



1. Centralised services and support

- One center for all questions
- More open communication between policy makers and people with disabilities have
- Better information to whom we should talk to

2. Equal employment opportunities

- Change mindset: start from "person"
- Raising Disability-awareness in the workplace
- Job-shadowing
- Media: demystifying disability / positive image

- Make invisible and physical disabilities equal
- Tailor-opportunities depending on personal needs
- Benefits to the person: s/he can decide what is needed not the employer for her/him
- More accessibility in the workplace
- Encourage companies who get subsidies to invest in people / professional development
- More controls and enforcement measures
- Creating a blacklist of companies who do not abide the rule

3. Opportunities to prove themselves in society and labour market

- More awareness on disability so that everybody is more self-aware of the possibilities
- Make companies responsible to create inclusive workplaces
- Change the system by making people with disabilities more aware of their competences
- Develop training on flexibility / adaptability

- Public funding allocated to pay for mentors
- Focus on talents not productivity

4. Focus personal talents and strengths

- Ask the students what they need at the beginning of the year
- Training for staff (school, companies, public sector) to better recognise and build on talents
- Develop strategies to match talents with opportunities (not opportunities with talents)
- Increase cooperation among schools to share experiences on inclusion
- Develop tools where students can list what barriers they face to enter mainstream education
- Develop effective strategies/tools to identify students' talents
- More programmes supporting students to build on their talents
- Reversed learning (from students) and promoting a more proactive attitude among students to ask what their needs are
- Stop focusing on disabilities
- Make mainstream environments ready to be inclusive
- End of the special schools – create exclusion

5. Create a more positive image of people with special needs

- More video/images showcasing potentials of people with disabilities
- Digital portfolios for students
- Better and closer cooperation with businesses and employers
- Increase presence and visibility of success stories
- Yearly publication of graduated students
- More movies about disability

b. Co-producing Roadmaps



After writing up the recommendations, participants formed different groups to work on the Roadmaps. The young ambassadors will use these posters to report back to peers and friends, presenting the proposal for the implementation of the Manifesto. During this session, participants from the same country, some decided to create a more international document. The Roadmaps are all connected and based on the inputs of the meetings and the Manifesto, yet they will be used as starting point and to open up the discussion in the local context. In fact, the Roadmap will be used in the follow up event that each partner will organise in the centre after Utrecht.

EU

Improving connections between people and civil society
 Raising –awareness and campaigns on disabilities with disabled events, cooperation with organisations
 “Nothing about us without us”: active involvement of disabled in civil society
 Active advocacy for disabled people in local councils, governments and parliaments
 Better connections with politicians
 Dialogue between decision makers, schools, people with disabilities and citizens
 Concrete educational projects beginning in schools
 Commitment from advocacy organisations

Latvia

Goal: Increase visibility of people with disabilities
 1) Find the right people in SIVA to support this
 2) Start cooperation with Furmala (Youth Parliament)
 3) Discussion on how to best introduce ourselves through social media
 4) Enlarge social connections to become better known

Portugal

Change the system – focus on competences not certificates / promote on the job adaptability

Promote mainstream /effective /available support (this is the role of some organisations)

Tailored job offers – tailored budget

Organisations to offer consultancy to access adapted work places

Promote a shared payment (company/govt) for the job coach/mentor

People with disability actively part of this change of culture – by sharing their stories, they learn what to do and how to act – just do it

Belgium

Organising a yearly meeting with other students and policy makers

Media coverage

Expand contacts within specific ministries / department

Spain

Accountability and enforcement of the law

Effective education about disabilities

Promoting new strategies for improving inclusive education

Create a toolkit explaining how to talk about disability for the media

Increase the number of politicians with disabilities

Estonia

Goal: positive image

Develop brochures/ leaflets

Make more video on success stories

Use the digital portfolio

People with disabilities to teach “disability” to others

Everyone knows a bit about special needs

Netherlands

Creating a list request based on the personal situation

Centralised support where all organisations work together

Shared information to all

Better control on the budget, the way it is spent, ensuring that everyone get the right amount, sanctions

Greece

To staff all types of schools with multidisciplinary groups (social worker, psychologist, SLT, OT)

To adapt curriculum according to students’ needs

To include courses on special need education at all university departments of Education

To develop collaboration between mainstream and special needs schools.

Share more Success stories

Share more the local authorities to be adequate to give information and support to pwd

Organizations of pwd to stand up for their rights

Tailored made jobs for pwd

Increase employers’ awareness about different kinds of disability

Revise policy concerning disability benefit and wages.

Support from experts in order to get and maintain a job.