



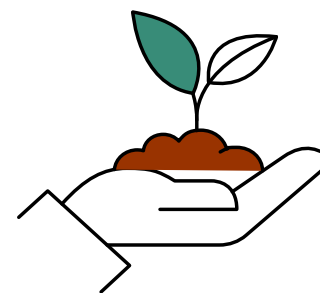
## MODULE 4

# Empowering All Voices – (DEI) Diversity, Equality & Diversity in the Green Transition

# Purpose & Aim of Module 4

## Empowering All Voices – (DEI) Diversity, Equality & Diversity in the Green Transition

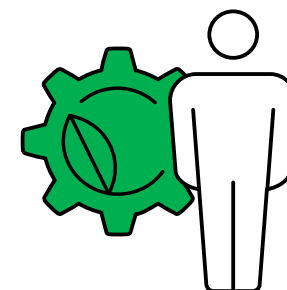
**Ensuring that sustainability & Green Transition efforts are inclusive and equitable is essential for long-term impact.** Embedding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) into youth work and green transition initiatives strengthens sustainable business practices and ensures that youth organisations engage diverse communities in environmental action.



**Module 4 of the Youth-Fit-for-55 Blueprint is dedicated to reinforcing DEI as a leadership priority and a fundamental pillar of sustainability.** This module equips youth-serving organisations with strategies and tools to engage diverse communities in sustainability efforts, ensuring that all voices are heard and empowered in the transition towards a greener future.



**Inclusion is about making sure everyone feels valued and has the opportunity to take part.** It's about creating environments where people from all walks of life can come together, share ideas, and work towards common goals. When different perspectives and experiences are included, the outcomes are often more innovative, impactful, and fair.



# Learning Objectives

## European Context: Green Transition & DEI for Nonprofits

Understand the European Green Deal and the Fit for 55 framework and its role in green transitioning for nonprofits. Recognize the importance of non-profits integrating DEI into green transition efforts so that they align with the European environmental and social goals.

## DEI and Environmental Sustainability for Nonprofits

Explore how DEI principles can enhance sustainability initiatives in nonprofits. Understand the synergies between environmental and social sustainability.

## Breaking Barriers to DEI in Green Transition

Identify challenges nonprofits face in DEI and the green transition. Learn strategies to overcome these barriers and promote inclusivity.

## Effective Engagement and Outreach

Learn best practices for engaging diverse communities and stakeholders in sustainability. Build strong connections with communities, fostering collaboration and mutual benefit.

## Measuring and Supporting DEI in Green Transition

Explore methods to assess and track DEI outcomes in sustainability projects. Learn tools to support ongoing inclusion efforts in green transition initiatives.





# Table Of Contents

- 01** **European Context:** Importance of Green Transitioning & DEI for Not for Profits
- 02** The Intersection of DEI with Environmental Sustainability for Non-Profits
- 03** **Breaking Barriers:** Challenges to DEI Inclusion in the Green Transition
- 04** **Building Strong Connections:** Effective Engagement and Outreach
- 05** Measuring and Supporting Diversity and Inclusion in the Green Transition
- 06** Practical Application & Conclusion



Co-funded by  
the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the National Agency. Neither the European Union nor National Agency can be held responsible for them.

An illustration of a city park scene. In the foreground, a woman in a blue shirt and yellow headband is cleaning a yellow bench. Another person is sitting on the bench. To the right, a man in a yellow shirt is holding a blue trash bag, and another man in a blue shirt is standing nearby. The background features a city skyline with various blue and green buildings. A large, faint 'ESG' watermark is visible in the upper left corner.

# 01

## European Context: Importance of Green Transitioning & DEI for Not for Profits

# The Importance of DEI in The Green Transition

**Inclusion** is about making sure everyone feels valued and has the opportunity to take part. It's about creating environments where people from all walks of life can come together, share ideas, and work towards common goals. When different perspectives and experiences are included, the outcomes are often more creative, impactful, and fair.

**Diversity, Equity & Inclusion** goes beyond recognising differences, it's about celebrating them. By embracing a mix of cultures, backgrounds, and abilities, organisations and communities can create stronger, more resilient teams that are better prepared to tackle the challenges of today and tomorrow. This is especially important as we move towards a more sustainable future.

**Green Transitioning:** The transition to a greener world must involve everyone to be truly successful. Including voices from underrepresented or marginalised communities ensures that no one is left behind and that solutions are equitable and long-lasting. The European Green Deal and Fit for 55 initiatives remind us that, yes, sustainability is about environmental goals, but also about fairness and social inclusion. By making inclusion a priority, we can create a future where everyone has the chance to contribute and benefit.



# The Importance of DEI in The Green Transition



**Understanding the intersection of DEI (Diversity, Equality and Inclusion) and environmental sustainability is crucial.**

The green transition must be inclusive and equitable, addressing environmental challenges while ensuring social inclusion for all communities, particularly those historically excluded from sustainability efforts. This approach promotes:

- ❖ Equal access to green jobs and training opportunities.
- ❖ Diverse perspectives in environmental decision-making.
- ❖ Holistic sustainability solutions that consider social, economic, and environmental well-being.

# DEI Will Make Your Non-Profit Organisation Stronger



An organisation that strengthens and increases DEI stands to improve:

- ✓ Alignment among purpose, services, and a true representation of community.
- ✓ Organisational culture, connectedness, and increased staff retention.
- ✓ Innovation in programs and services.
- ✓ Funding, as funders are increasingly looking at DEIB measures and impact as key funding considerations.
- ✓ Economic mobility and greater client wellbeing.
- ✓ The more DEIB is present within your organization, the stronger the alignment is between your programs, services, and outcomes.

Increasing DEIB is also the right thing to do. Having diverse representation in your teams, boards, and clients ensures your purpose is helping achieve greater, holistic community wellbeing.



# The Power of DEI in Sustainability & Green Transition

**Diversity, equity, and inclusion go beyond simply recognizing differences—they celebrate them.**

By embracing a mix of cultures, backgrounds, and abilities, organizations and communities can build stronger, more resilient teams capable of tackling the environmental and social challenges of today and tomorrow.



Research from McKinsey & Company found that companies in the top quartile for ethnic and cultural diversity are 35% more likely to outperform their peers financially, demonstrating the power of diverse perspectives in decision-making and innovation. ([McKinsey, 2020](#))

# Youth Organisation's Role in 'Fit for 55' Package

**For non-profit and service organizations,** this emphasis on social inclusion presents opportunities to engage in the green transition actively. These organisations can play a pivotal role in:

- ❖ **Advocacy:** Championing the needs of marginalized communities to ensure that policies are inclusive and equitable.
- ❖ **Education and Outreach:** Raising awareness about sustainable practices and the importance of the green transition among diverse populations.
- ❖ **Implementation of Support Programs:** Utilizing funds like the Social Climate Fund to develop and implement programs that assist vulnerable groups in adapting to new environmental policies.

By integrating Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) principles into their operations, non-profit organizations can ensure that the green transition is not only environmentally effective but also socially equitable. Embracing DEI can lead to more innovative solutions and a more resilient approach to sustainability challenges.

In summary, while the "Fit for 55" package is primarily focused on environmental objectives, it recognizes the critical importance of social inclusion. Non-profit and service organizations have a significant role to play in ensuring that the transition to a sustainable future is just and inclusive for all members of society.Sources



02

## Understanding the Intersection of Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) with Environmental Sustainability



# The Link Between Sustainability & DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion)

The concepts of **Sustainability** and **DEI** may not seem connected, but they have a very close relationship in a sustainable world. The scope of sustainability has broadened beyond the environmental footprint to overlap with DEI. For example, it now includes factors like **human rights** and **social responsibility**. To see how these two must work together, let's first understand what each means.



## **Sustainability** (involves more than just the environment)

In simple words, sustainability is understanding that how we live today affects the ability of all future generations to lead a good life. It's a company's effect on the environment, economy and society. An organisation's sustainability strategy typically aims to positively impact these areas, thus helping address some of the most pressing problems of today, such as:

Climate change	Income inequality
Depletion of natural resources	Pollution
Gender inequality	Fair working conditions
Racial injustice	Human rights issues

# The Link Between Sustainability & DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion)

## Diversity, Equality & Inclusion

**Diversity** is the presence of a wide range of people and recognising and valuing their differences including gender, gender identity, age, race, nationality, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, physical ability, or even political perspective. It's not about meeting quotas; it's about understanding that a wide range of perspectives strengthens organisations and leads to better results.

**Equity** is the process of fairness. Diversity shows us how people differ, and equity is about understanding that different groups face different challenges. So, it is about creating a level playing field where everyone has fair access, opportunity, and advancement.

**Inclusion** is an outcome to ensure that everybody feels supported and welcome regardless of their background or circumstances. They feel they belong and can fully contribute. Inclusion is about removing barriers that prevent participation and actively involving people in decision-making. It is about creating the right culture and environment so that everyone feels a sense of belonging in the organisation and like they are a valued member of their team.



# What is a Great Organisation Culture?

*"A great place to work is one where you trust the people you work for, have pride in what you do and enjoy the people you work with."*

According to Ireland's Best Workplaces, a great culture can be defined from an employee perspective, as an organisation where:

**You Feel:** That You Can Trust Those Around You,

**You Feel:** Fairly Treated, Regardless of Who You Are,

**You Hear:** That Your Suggestions and Ideas are Welcome,

**You Hear:** That Your Work is Valued.



Source [Great Place to Work](#)



# Recognising the Intersection Contributes to Organisational Sustainability

**Environmental sustainability and DEI are increasingly acknowledged as interrelated aspects within thriving organisations.** Sustainability encompasses a comprehensive approach addressing environmental, economic, and societal challenges. Simultaneously, DEI focuses on promoting an inclusive environment that values diverse perspectives and promotes fairness in opportunities and advancement.

**The interconnection between environmental sustainability and DEI becomes evident in various aspects of organisational functioning.**

**For example,** in the business world, organisations with higher diversity levels report a higher proportion of revenue from innovation, with those having above-average diversity generating **45%** of revenue from innovative initiatives compared to **26%** from companies with below-average diversity. Additionally, the most ethnically diverse companies are **27%** more likely to outperform their peers in profitability. This synergy between DEI and sustainability drives financial performance but also contributes to a more robust and enduring operating model.

Source: [AIM](#)

# How to Address Intersectionality: Create an Inclusive Workplace

By recognising and addressing the intersectionality, organisations can develop more inclusive and effective strategies that promote environmental sustainability and social equity for all individuals, regardless of their background or identity.

**Organisations must create a sense of belonging for all for everyone to thrive!** Individuals experience environmental issues differently based on intersecting factors such as race, gender, and socioeconomic status. An intersectional approach, considering how various forms of discrimination and privilege shape experiences within the organisation and broader community. Creating an inclusive culture is fundamental to addressing both environmental sustainability and DEI. Inclusive environments encourage diverse perspectives and voices, promoting innovation and creative problem-solving essential for tackling complex environmental challenges.

Source: [AIM](#)



**For example,** establishing a team focused on sustainability initiatives can empower diverse voices to contribute to environmental goals and drive positive impact.

# The Interconnectedness of DEI, Sustainability and Environmental Green Transitioning



**Inclusive Leadership Drives Sustainable Change:** Leaders with cultural intelligence can enhance sustainability efforts by effectively engaging diverse communities and stakeholders. They can effectively engage with different backgrounds and at different levels both internally and externally improving the youth organisation culture, sustainability and environmental footprint.



**DEI Improves Policy and Strategy:** A diverse team provides insights into environmental impacts, leading to more effective, equitable sustainability strategies. A team with different demographics, communities, and locations helps organisations better understand its negative and positive impact (e.g., operational impact) on their surrounds. These key insights helps build better strategies to support society and the environment.



**Equality & Inclusion Enhance Engagement:** Inclusive processes ensure all stakeholders contribute, strengthening sustainability initiatives and preventing oversight. It is vital to include all stakeholders and generate processes that make every individual feel heard and supported and successfully integrate sustainability and environmental responsibility into a strategy.

Source: [Bradfield Group MENA](#)





### **Diversity Drives Innovation**

In the context of the Youth Fit for 55 goals, diverse youth organisations are better equipped to develop bold, creative solutions to environmental challenges. A wide range of experiences and perspectives helps challenge outdated systems and spark new approaches that support a fair and effective green transition.



### **Equity Encourages Participation**

When team members and communities feel valued, they are more likely to actively engage in sustainability work. Equity ensures that everyone—especially young people from underrepresented backgrounds—has access to opportunities, training, and leadership roles in the transition to a greener future. This shared sense of responsibility strengthens collective action.



### **Inclusion Leads to Better Decisions**

Inclusive youth leaders reflect on their own assumptions and actively create space for others to contribute. This results in more balanced, thoughtful decision-making that considers the needs of different communities. In the long term, inclusion supports more sustainable, just, and impactful environmental outcomes.



**DEI helps organisations reach a wider audience.** Having people from different backgrounds gives the youth organisation an insight into the untapped areas where support is needed. It also helps identify and reduce discrimination (like racist or sexist policies or practices), making the organisation a trustworthy brand for its supporters and team.



**DEI Promotes Transparency, Empathy and Good Governance:** Inclusive environments promote accountability, ethical leadership, and effective sustainability governance. When there are equal opportunities and a safe space for everyone, more transparent communication leads to good governance. This combined with strong inclusive empathetic leadership leads to teams that are better equipped to deal with confrontations, conflicts of interest and ethical problems.



**Diverse Teams Strengthen Trust:** Organisations prioritising sustainability efforts with DEI and a green transitioning focus build credibility and create a trustworthy public image. Inclusive organisations have leaders that are more open to understanding different opinions of stakeholders, team members, employees, end-users.



## **Diversity Boosts Creativity, Efficiency and Financial Sustainability:**

A broad range of perspectives drives innovative, creative sustainable solutions, improving efficiency and financial stability. Diversity increases creativity and profitability. The different thought processes and ideas of various team members from diverse backgrounds improves innovation while reducing risks, while a homogenous group might be drawing from a narrower set of experience and skills.



**Bottom line:** As part of corporate responsibility, youth organisations should look outward to understand what they contribute to society and how they affect the environment and communities they serve. They also have to look inward at their purpose, values and practices. A strong focus on DEI can be the key to turning all sustainability and green transitioning efforts into a success. It will benefit the organisation, humanity and the environment as a whole.



# Be open, be transparent



For youth organisations, DEI should be built into everything you do—not treated as an add-on.

This means setting clear goals, planning how you'll measure progress, and making sure your team has the time and tools to make it happen.

Being honest and open about your DEI work—what's working, what's not—builds trust with young people, partners, funders, and the wider community.

Taking a clear and committed approach helps tackle unfair systems and creates long-term change in how your organisation includes and supports all voices in the green transition.



## Sample DEI Strategies



# Be inspired by ....

## European Solidarity Corps

[https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity/projects\\_en](https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity/projects_en)

## Green Projects for Youth

- **Go Green II in Craiova, Romania:** This project engages volunteers in ecological workshops, awareness campaigns, and green initiatives in and around Craiova. [Instagram](#)
- **BEYOND Horizons – Team One 2025:** A two-month volunteering project in Craiova offering young participants opportunities for self-discovery and environmental stewardship.

[European Youth Portal](#)



Be inspired by ....



Promoting Youth Participation in Just Transition

## #EUTeens4Green Initiative

The **#EUTeens4Green** initiative empowers young people across Europe to actively participate in the just and inclusive transition towards climate neutrality. In 2024, over 250 young individuals implemented 70 projects in 41 regions across 19 EU Member States.

These projects addressed various challenges, such as enhancing environmental awareness in daily life, combating 'brain drain' by creating local opportunities for young professionals and establishing inclusive spaces for community engagement.

[European Commission+1](#)[Wikipedia+1](#)

### *Why it matters for YF55:*

This initiative demonstrates how youth-led projects can promote inclusivity and sustainability, ensuring that diverse communities are actively involved in the green transition.

## Some Key European Findings

Integrating Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) with sustainability and environmental responsibility offers significant advantages for nonprofit and youth organizations. Here are some key statistics and findings:

**Report - Blocking the Backlash:** The Positive Impact of DEI in Nonprofit Organizations" analyzed data from over 3,000 nonprofit leaders and staff members. The findings suggest that DEI initiatives correlate with improved workplace attitudes and organizational outcomes. ([Source](#))

Since 2014, the **European Youth Foundation (EYF)** has encouraged youth organizations to adopt environmentally sustainable practices in their projects. The EYF provides guidelines and a sustainability checklist covering areas such as teamwork, accommodation, food, transport, and education to help organizations minimize their environmental impact. ([Source](#))

**The European Union Youth Orchestra (EUYO)** has implemented a DEI and Gender Policy guided by principles aimed at promoting a more diverse, fair, and equal future. This policy underscores the organization's dedication to fostering an inclusive environment, which is integral to its sustainability efforts. ([Source](#))



**Organisation culture is viewed as one of the most critical factors for predicting overall success.** A cultural audit is important because it allows an organisation to assess the current state and take corrective actions before unacknowledged cultural issues derail its success.

**Culture can make or break an organisation, and if it breaks there may be no coming back.** Not all cultural issues lead to an implosion, but a bad culture, even a localised bad culture, can hurt an organisation .

Source Audit Board

## Next Section Some Exercises & Resources



## EXERCISE: Define What You Want Your Youth Organisation Culture and Values to Look Like

Defining an inclusive culture involves articulating a vision and creating actionable principles that reflect the organisation's values and goals. Below are examples and definitions to guide organisations in shaping their inclusive culture:

### Vision Statement (Example)

*"Our inclusive culture empowers every individual to feel valued, respected, and supported. We celebrate diversity and foster belonging, ensuring equitable opportunities for all to thrive and contribute."*

### Principles (Examples)

- ❖ **Respect:** Create an environment where all voices are heard and valued.
- ❖ **Equity:** Provide equal access to opportunities and resources tailored to individual needs.
- ❖ **Transparency:** Maintain open communication channels for feedback and accountability.
- ❖ **Collaboration:** Build teams with diverse perspectives to drive innovation and decision-making.

# EXERCISE: Assess if you are an Inclusive Organisation

Here are some ways you can assess inclusivity in core areas. The answers will tell you if you are inclusive or if there is still work to be done.

## **Diverse employee representation.**

- ☐ Do you have demographic data across all levels, including leadership? Are there any barriers to diversity in progression in the organisation?

## **Equity in policies and pay.**

- ☐ Review policies to ensure they are inclusive and non-discriminatory. Are there any pay disparities? Do you accommodate working or volunteering arrangements for diverse needs

## **Psychological safety.**

- ☐ Do team members feel safe sharing feedback and concerns? Do managers receive training in inclusive behaviours and active listening? Is there a high level of team disengagement or turnover?

## **Inclusive leadership and decision-making.**

- ☐ Do your leaders receive DEI training? Do they understand how to incorporate diverse perspectives into decision-making? Do team members express or complain about leadership and lack of inclusivity?

## **Employee empowerment and belonging.**

- ☐ Do you create spaces for team members to provide unique contributions, collaborate or learn? How are your team engagement satisfaction ratings? How is team turnover? How happy are the team? Do team members eagerly put their hand up to participate and contribute?



# BRAINSTORM EXERCISE: Inclusion Clarity Workshop

**Objective:** Determine how inclusive your employees think your youth organisation is.

**Participants:** Get a sample of your team from all levels with a diverse representation encouraged. Record all answers on a whiteboard or collaborative digital tool.

Gather your team and discuss these prompts:

- ☐ What do you think inclusion means to us as a youth organisation? Can we do better? How?
- ☐ How do we ensure fairness and equity in decision-making? Or can we improve?
- ☐ What actions or behaviours currently make you feel supported, included and valued? Is this enough?
- ☐ How can we explicitly promote respect and inclusion in your work? Dream big!
- ☐ Do you feel safe and respected? That includes both psychologically and physically safe. How can we improve?
- ☐ Where are our weaknesses and where are our strengths? Can you provide solutions or opportunities?





## Resources & Articles

- ❑ **Forbes** [11 Effective Ways To Create An Inclusive Nonprofit Organization](#); how to conduct an internal culture assessment, embed inclusion in the foundation and how to engage with communities.
- ❑ **Bonterra & McKinsey Report** [Diversity and Inclusion for Nonprofit Organizations](#): how it will make you stronger, understanding the realities, ensuring DEI conversations happen
- ❑ **PNC** [Ideas for Improving Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion for Nonprofits](#); discusses best practices, dealing with systemic racism, unconscious bias, leadership level...and more.
- ❑ **The National Council of Nonprofits** [Why Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Matter for Nonprofits](#); questions to ask as you embark on your journey, library or resources, glossaries, toolkits, assessment tool
- ❑ [International Youth Alliance](#) – A non-profit youth organization that prioritises supporting and nurturing culture, education, ecology, science, sports, and tourism. The alliance implements projects with a strong emphasis on inclusion and diversity.
- ❑ [SALTO-YOUTH Inclusion & Diversity Resource](#) provides resources and support for youth organizations to enhance inclusion and diversity within EU youth programs. It offers practical tools, training, and guidance to help organisations develop and implement effective inclusion strategies, ensuring that young people with fewer opportunities can participate fully in society.



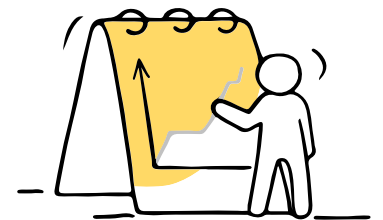
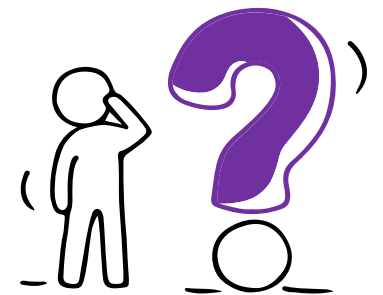
## Breaking Barriers: Challenges to DEI Inclusion in the Green Transition for Nonprofits

# Breaking Barriers: Challenges to DEI Inclusion in the Green Transition for Nonprofits

Integrating Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) into sustainability initiatives is crucial to enable a comprehensive and impactful green transition. However, many youth organisations face significant challenges that hinder this integration. Creating an inclusive organisation requires overcoming various obstacles that may prevent certain groups from fully participating or feeling valued.

**Recognising and addressing these barriers** is essential to ensuring that sustainability efforts are accessible, inclusive, and effective for all communities. Common barriers include limited resources, unconscious biases, physical inaccessibility, cultural and language differences, and a lack of diverse representation in decision-making.

**Identify the challenges,** so you can implement targeted strategies, leverage relevant resources, and engage in practical exercises to foster greater inclusivity. Thoughtful planning and proactive measures can help create a sustainability movement that truly empowers and includes everyone.



# Creating Inclusive Environments



**Creating an inclusive environment begins with small, thoughtful actions that make everyone feel welcome and valued.** These actions focus on ensuring that all individuals can participate fully, regardless of their needs or background.

**Communicating in a clear and respectful way is an essential first step.** Avoid using language that could exclude or alienate people, and provide materials in multiple formats, such as large print, braille, or audio recordings, to ensure everyone can access the information.

**Physical spaces should be designed to accommodate people with different needs.** This might involve adding ramps, accessible toilets, or adjusting layouts to make spaces easier to navigate for wheelchair users or those with mobility challenges.

**Digital accessibility** is just as important.





# Overcoming Resource Limitations


We see in Module 1, limited resources are one of the most significant challenges faced by nonprofit organisations. For youth organisations focused on social inclusion and sustainability, this limitation can feel like an insurmountable obstacle.

From securing funding to managing human resources, these constraints can make it difficult to provide inclusive programs that address environmental sustainability. However, with creative approaches and strategic partnerships, these challenges can be addressed, ensuring that DEI and sustainability remain central to the work of these organizations.

## Solutions to Overcome Limited Resources

- ❑ Explore Partnerships and Collaborations
- ❑ Seek External Funding and Grants
- ❑ Leverage Low-Cost Digital Tools
- ❑ Engage Volunteers and Youth Leaders
- ❑ Utilise Community Resources

Solution	Example of What Could be Done
<div data-bbox="609 480 739 617" data-label="Image"> </div> <p data-bbox="120 592 562 639"><b>Limited Resources</b></p> <p data-bbox="120 660 913 1094">Collaborating with other nonprofit organisations, local governments, or private companies can help pool resources and share costs. By joining forces, partners can access grants or funding opportunities dedicated to sustainability or social inclusion.</p>	<p data-bbox="990 459 1473 507"><b>Build collaborations</b></p> <p data-bbox="990 528 2105 831">Explore partnerships and collaborations with local environmental groups and support organisations and experts to co-host workshops or training, while sharing the cost of venue hire, materials, or facilitators.</p> <p data-bbox="990 919 2092 1222"><b>Note:</b> Local businesses, schools, and community organisations often have resources they are willing to share to support youth programs. This can include providing venue space, materials, or even expertise.</p>

Solution	Example of What Could be Done
<p><b>Seek External Funding</b> </p> <p>There are many funding opportunities dedicated to both DEI and sustainability. Youth organizations can apply for grants offered by European Union programs such as <i>Erasmus+ Youth</i> that support projects related to social inclusion and the green transition.</p>	<p><b>Apply for Funding</b></p> <p>Apply for EU funding or local funding such as <a href="#">ERASMUS+ Youth</a> which supports projects on green transition, sustainability and innovation. Youth-focused programs can receive funding for environmental education, energy efficiency, and youth-led environmental projects.</p> <p>Also reach out to local eco-conscious businesses for sponsorship or in-kind donations (e.g., materials, volunteers, expert speakers, or office space) to support DEI-focused sustainability projects.</p>

Solution	Example of What Could be Done
<p><b>Leverage Low-Cost Digital Tools</b></p> <p>Many free or low-cost digital tools can assist with program delivery, community engagement, and DEI training. Tools like Zoom for virtual meetings, Canva for creating inclusive and visually accessible content, and Mural for collaborative idea-sharing help minimize costs while increasing organizational capacity.</p>	<p><b>Create Multilingual Materials</b></p> <p>Use platforms like Canva to create multilingual materials or inclusive infographics that engage a wider range of participants. Virtual platforms like Zoom or Google Meet can host online workshops, allowing for wider participation without the need for expensive venues or travel.</p>
<p><b>Engage Volunteers and Youth Leaders</b></p> <p>Volunteers and youth leaders can be a valuable resource for driving DEI and green transition efforts. Involving young people directly in the development and implementation of programs fosters a sense of ownership and empowerment.</p>	<p><b>Create Inclusive Green Transition Mentorship Programs.</b> Create mentorship programs where youth leaders from diverse backgrounds help organize green transition activities and guide peers through the process. This reduces the demand for paid staff and ensures that young people are directly contributing to the sustainability agenda.</p>



## Overcoming Conscious and Non Conscious Bias

**Conscious and unconscious biases are common barriers that nonprofit youth organizations face** when trying to create inclusive and equitable programs, especially within the context of the green transition. These biases can negatively impact decision-making, program design, and the ways in which young people from diverse backgrounds engage with sustainability efforts. For organisations aiming to engage in an inclusive green transition, it's essential to address both conscious and unconscious biases to ensure that everyone, regardless of their background, can participate, contribute, and benefit from these initiatives.

### Impact and Addressing Bias in Youth Support

Biases, whether conscious or unconscious, are ingrained preferences or judgments that can shape how we interact with others. In youth support organizations, biases can affect recruitment, program participation, and leadership development. If left unaddressed, they can perpetuate exclusion and inequality, which is particularly concerning in the context of the green transition, where the goal is to involve all communities in creating a sustainable future.

Solution	Example of What Could be Done
<p><b>Provide Bias Awareness Training</b></p> <p>Offer regular workshops on identifying and overcoming both conscious and unconscious biases for staff and volunteers. This can help raise awareness and enable you to create strategies to mitigate them.</p>	<p>Implement bias training programs for youth leaders, staff, and volunteers, focusing on recognising prejudiced behaviors and making more inclusive decisions in recruitment, and leadership opportunities.</p>
<p><b>Use Structured, Bias-Reducing Recruitment Processes.</b> Organise recruitment or selection processes that minimize the influence of bias, such as blind applications where genders, and other identifying characteristics are omitted.</p>	<p>Use anonymous application forms for leadership roles or internships. This ensures that decisions are based on merit rather than on assumptions linked to candidates' names, backgrounds, or genders.</p>
<p><b>Embed DEI into Organizational Culture</b></p> <p>Develop clear organizational values and practices that prioritize DEI and actively combat bias in all aspects of the work, from planning events to creating inclusive communication strategies.</p>	<p>Establish a DEI framework and create specific actions that the organisation will take to challenge bias. For example, ensure that environmental education materials are accessible to all in different languages.</p>

## Addressing Physical Inaccessibility

Physical inaccessibility refers to environments that are not designed to accommodate the needs of individuals with additional needs. This can include physical spaces like buildings that lack ramps or accessible toilets, as well as digital platforms that are not optimized for screen readers or other assistive technologies. In the context of nonprofit youth organizations working on sustainability projects, it's crucial to ensure that all youth, including those with disabilities, can participate in educational programs, workshops, or events aimed at the green transition.

### Solutions to Address Physical Inaccessibility

- ❖ **Choose Accessible Venues:** When hosting youth events, workshops, or programs, ensure that venues are wheelchair accessible. This includes ramps, wide doorways, and accessible toilets.
- ❖ **Adapt Materials for Accessibility:** Provide materials in multiple formats to accommodate individuals with different needs. This can include large print versions, braille, or easy-to-read versions of documents, ensuring that everyone can access information.



# Addressing Physical Inaccessibility

## Solutions to Address Physical Inaccessibility

- ❖ **Ensure Digital Spaces Are Accessible:** Make sure that your organization's digital platforms, including websites and apps, are accessible to individuals with disabilities. This includes optimizing these platforms for screen readers, adding subtitles to videos, and ensuring that navigation is easy and intuitive.
- ❖ **Provide Personal Assistance and Support:** Offer personal assistance or support for individuals who may need help navigating the event space or understanding the materials.

According to the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, *“Over 1 billion people, or 15% of the world’s population, experience some form of disability.”* This highlights the importance of creating accessible spaces and materials to ensure that no one is excluded from participating in important societal initiatives, including the green transition.





## Overcoming Cultural and Language Barriers

**Cultural and language differences can be significant barriers for youth organizations when trying to engage diverse communities in the green transition.** For individuals from different cultural backgrounds, or those who speak a language other than the dominant one in a given area, these barriers can limit participation in sustainability initiatives and educational programs. Addressing these barriers is crucial for creating an inclusive and equitable approach to the green transition, ensuring that all youth have the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from sustainability efforts.

**Barriers can manifest in various ways**, such as a lack of representation of certain communities in sustainability discussions, language obstacles that prevent effective communication, or cultural differences that impact how individuals perceive and engage with sustainability practices.

**Youth organisations working on environmental initiatives must make intentional efforts to break down these barriers.** When cultural and language differences are addressed, organisations can more effectively engage youth from diverse backgrounds, ensuring that every voice is heard and that sustainability efforts are equitable and inclusive.



# Solutions to Cultural and Language Barriers



- ❖ **Provide Multilingual Materials:** If your organisation is hosting an event, providing materials in the languages spoken by your target community ensures that everyone has equal access to information. Translate event flyers, educational materials, and digital content into the languages spoken by your audience. Consider offering a variety of languages based on the demographics of the local community.
- ❖ **Hire Bilingual or Multilingual Staff and Volunteers:** Recruit volunteers or staff who are fluent in the languages spoken by your target community. This can improve engagement by ensuring that participants feel understood and respected, and ultimately facilitate better communication.
- ❖ **Cultural Sensitivity and Inclusivity Training:** To create a welcoming environment, youth organizations should invest in cultural sensitivity training to help staff and volunteers understand and respect the diverse cultural backgrounds of their participants. Offer regular training to ensure they are aware of cultural customs, practices, and sensitivities that may affect how young people engage with sustainability initiatives.

# Solutions to Cultural and Language Barriers



**Create Safe Spaces for Open Dialogue:** Encouraging open dialogue about cultural differences in sustainability practices can help break down barriers and allow for a more inclusive and respectful exchange of ideas. Facilitate forums or focus groups where participants from different cultural backgrounds can share their perspectives on sustainability. This dialogue can help uncover common values and create opportunities for collaboration.

## The importance of addressing this barrier;

A **United Nations report** on migration and climate change states, *“Environmental challenges, such as climate change and environmental degradation, disproportionately affect migrants, youth, and marginalized communities, who often face multiple barriers to participation and leadership in sustainability efforts.”*

This reinforces the need for inclusion and the importance of addressing cultural and language barriers in green transition initiatives to ensure a truly equitable approach.



## Barrier: Lack of Diverse Representation

**When leadership, decision-making, or key operational areas within an organisation lack diversity, it leads to gaps in perspectives, ideas, and innovation.**

These gaps can negatively impact decision-making, employee satisfaction, and the organization's ability to address the needs of its diverse customer base or community. Representation is essential to ensure that a variety of voices are heard and that policies and practices align with the diverse needs of the people the organization serves. Key Barriers include;

- ❖ Limited access to leadership roles
- ❖ Lack of diverse hiring and volunteering practices
- ❖ Cultural or bias barriers
- ❖ Inaccessible work environment

**When leadership and key areas lack diversity, it limits perspectives, innovation, and fair decision-making.**

Representation ensures all voices are heard and policies align with the needs of diverse communities.





# BRAINSTORM EXERCISE: Identify Cultural Barriers

**Objective:** Identify Barriers in Your Organisation with diverse team members

**Participants:** Get a diverse group of staff, volunteers and stakeholders together in a workshop and ask them to write down any existing barriers. Ask them to think of areas e.g., representation.

**Example questions for reflection:**

- ☐ Are there certain groups underrepresented in leadership roles?
- ☐ Is there a lack of diversity in decision-making processes?
- ☐ Are there physical or cultural barriers in the organisation?

**Group Sharing:** After 5 minutes of writing, ask participants to share their barriers and stick them on a whiteboard or flipchart. Group similar barriers together (e.g., "lack of mentorship," "unconscious bias").

**Divide into small groups** and ask each group to brainstorm practical solutions and improvements to each barrier.





## Building Strong Connections: Effective Engagement and Outreach with Stakeholders

04

# Building Strong Connections: Effective Engagement and Outreach with Stakeholders



Successful community engagement for nonprofit youth organizations requires a deep understanding of the communities you serve, an openness to collaboration, and a commitment to making sustainable, inclusive changes.

By ensuring that local groups are heard, working towards shared benefits, and maintaining continuous communication, youth organizations can foster lasting partnerships that empower diverse communities and drive meaningful, sustainable change.



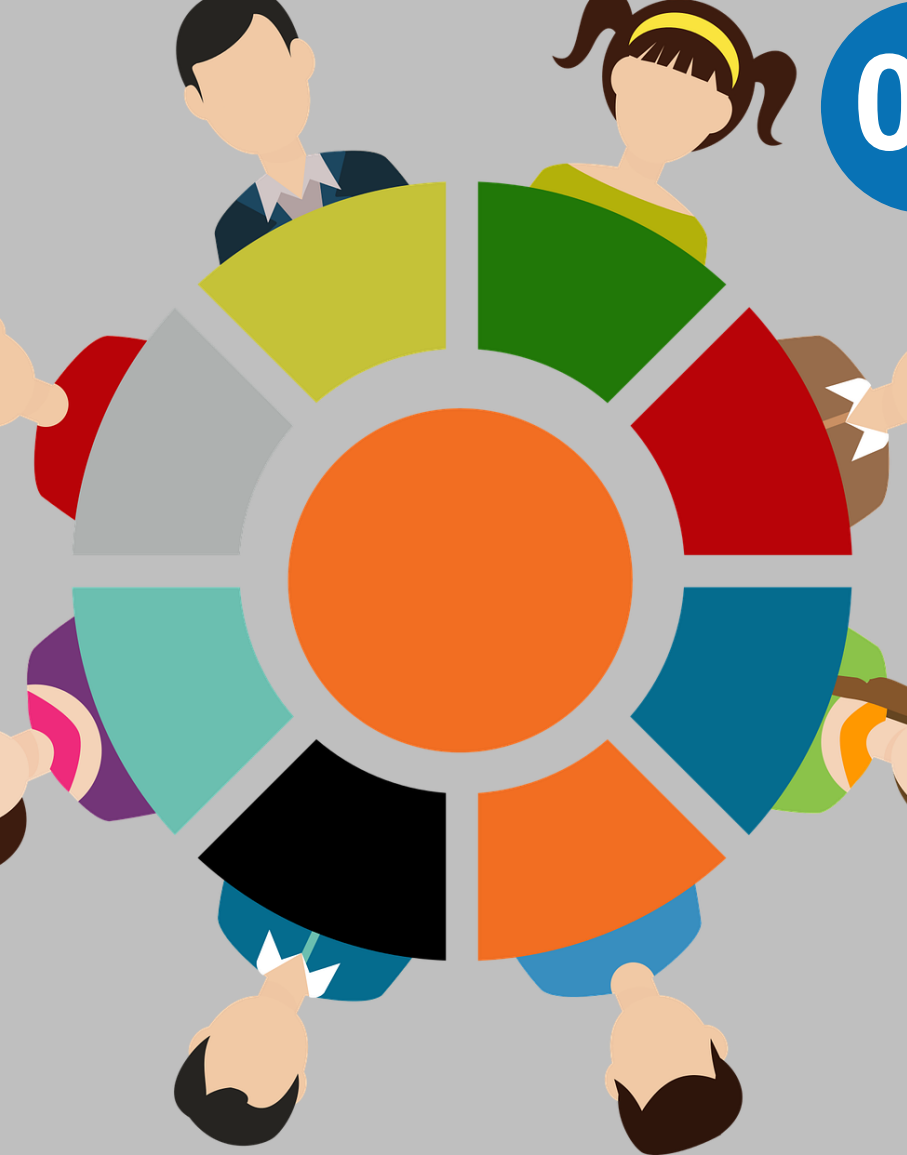
## 01

# Engagement and Outreach

Engagement and outreach are about building meaningful relationships with the communities and groups you want to include.

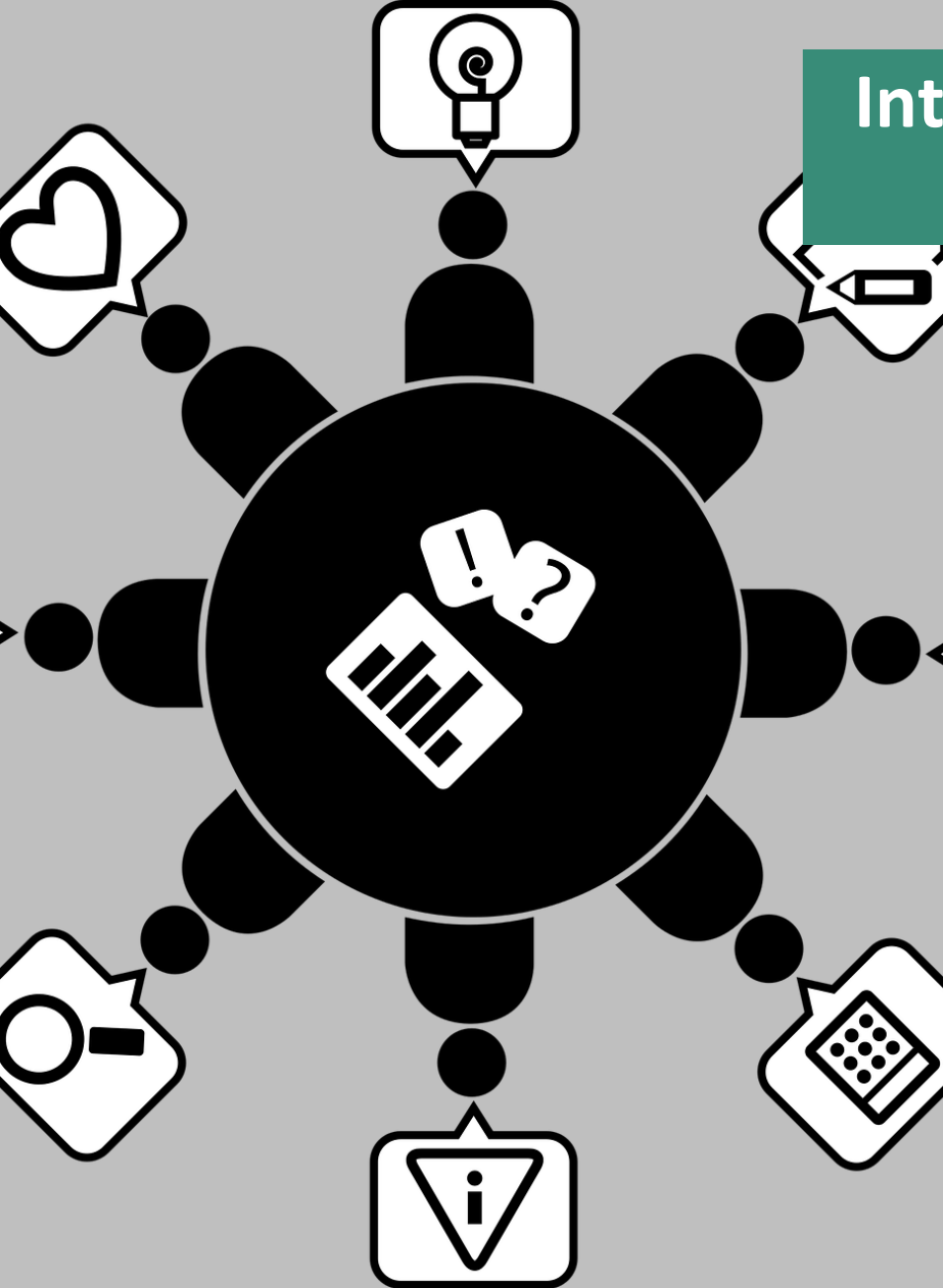
Engagement and outreach begin with identifying the right local groups that represent various segments of the community. These can be cultural associations, youth groups, disability organizations, or community-led initiatives. By reaching out to these groups, you can ensure that the needs and priorities of different communities are incorporated into your projects. Engagement involves understanding their needs, listening to their ideas, and working together to create opportunities that reflect their priorities. This needs to be a long-term process to build trust, strengthen collaboration by getting feedback, understanding needs for long lasting relationships.

**Successful outreach and engagement ensures that people feel heard and valued.** This strengthens trust, builds long lasting partnerships, and helps create projects that are truly inclusive.





# Introduce Your Organisation: Practical Approaches



**Host Introduction Sessions:** Introduce your organisation to local groups, stakeholders, communities and businesses. Explain your DEI and green transition initiatives, mission and goals. Ask for their feedback and if you can work together.

**Build Trust Through Consistent Communication:** Don't just reach out once. Maintain ongoing communication, ask for feedback and their involvement, provide updates on ideas to create long-term collaboration.

**Ask Open-Ended Questions:** Instead of assuming what communities need, ask them directly. “What changes would make our programs more accessible for your group?” or “How can we best support your community’s sustainability efforts?” These questions promote dialogue and encourage real partnership.

## 02

## Listen and Build Trust Practical Approaches



**Listening is one of the most important aspects of effective engagement.** People are more likely to participate, are open to feedback, and are open to your suggestions when they feel their voices are genuinely heard. Listening enables trust, which is essential for long-term partnerships.

**Active Listening Practices:** Ensure that you not only hear but also understand communication and the feedback. Use regular monitoring methods such as follow-up surveys or community forums to confirm how their input and align it with your project.

**Transparent Decision-Making:** Show that you value the input of others by being transparent about how it will influence your work. Share feedback so everyone understands and feels respected.

**Acknowledge Challenges Openly:** Be upfront about any difficulties that arise and make it clear that you're committed to addressing them and coming up with solutions together.



# 03

## Collaboration for Shared Benefits Practical Approaches

Collaboration is strongest when everyone involved feels they are gaining something from the partnership. Whether it's sharing resources, knowledge, or support, ensuring mutual benefit builds stronger, longer-lasting connections. In youth organizations, the focus should be on creating win-win situations where all partners—whether groups or individuals—feel that their time and effort are worthwhile.

**Identify Mutual Goals:** Collaborate with community groups by aligning your objectives with theirs.

**For example,** a youth organization collaborates with a local school and teaches skills on green technologies while the school contributes by involving students in practical community projects like creating urban gardens or energy-saving initiatives.





# Collaboration for Shared Benefits

## Practical Approaches

**Celebrate Contributions:** Publicly acknowledge the efforts of your partners. Whether it's through social media shout-outs, thank-you events, or showcasing their work in your materials, recognition helps strengthen relationships.

**Be Flexible:** Understand that not all partners will have the same capacity. Some may provide resources, while others may offer expertise or time. Adapt your approach to match each group's strengths and needs.

*"Collaboration isn't just about doing something together; it's about achieving something together that neither party could do alone."* –

*Source: Collaborative Partnerships, Stanford Social Innovation Review*





# 04

## Making Engagement Sustainable Practical Approaches

**Engagement requires ongoing communication and involvement.** Sustaining community engagement ensures that your relationships with local groups remain strong long after the project's initial phase and evolves. Long-term engagement prevents communities from feeling abandoned and ensures continuous improvement.

**Create Feedback Loops:** Implement regular feedback mechanisms, such as surveys, forums, or follow-up meetings, to gather input from the community continuously.

**Develop a Long-Term Plan:** Engagement should not end once a project is completed. Create a strategy to keep community members involved in future initiatives.

**Share Regular Updates:** Whether through newsletters, social media posts, or in-person meetings, make sure the community stays informed about the outcomes and future plans of your project this strengthens ongoing participation.



05

## Measuring and Supporting Diversity and Inclusion in the Green Transition



# Measuring and Supporting Diversity and Inclusion in the Green Transition



In the pursuit of a sustainable and equitable green transition, measuring and supporting inclusion within youth-serving organizations is essential for ensuring that no one is left behind.

Inclusion is about more than just being present; it involves actively involving diverse voices, ensuring equal access, and creating environments where everyone, regardless of background or identity, can contribute and thrive.

Supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the green transition leads to more innovative solutions, stronger community bonds, and a more impactful long-term transformation. When inclusion is prioritized, organizations tap into a wider pool of perspectives and ideas, creating a more resilient and effective sustainability movement.

# Measure Impact & Accountability

**To drive progress in environmental sustainability and DEI, organisations must establish clear metrics for measuring impact and ensuring accountability.** This involves tracking key performance indicators related to diversity representation, equity in hiring and promotion practices, and environmental metrics such as carbon emissions reduction and resource conservation.

Regular reporting and transparency demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement and stakeholder engagement. By measuring impact and ensuring accountability, organisations can track their progress towards environmental and social goals, identify areas for improvement, and hold themselves accountable to their commitments.





# Measure Impact & Accountability

It is evident that balancing equity with environmental sustainability is not only beneficial but fundamental for the long-term success of any organisation.

The synergy between DEI and sustainability strategies enhances an organisation's resilience, attractiveness to potential employees, and overall market competitiveness.

With this understanding, organisations are encouraged to evolve their practices, marking a commitment to equity and sustainability as imprints of their corporate identity. The journey toward integration may be complex, but the potential rewards for the workforce and society are vast, urging organisations to navigate these challenges with strategic intent and clear purpose.

STUDY

Requested by the FEMM committee



## The Gender Dimension and Impact of the Fit for 55 Package



[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/R egData/etudes/STUD/2022/736899 /IPOL\\_STU\(2022\)736899\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/R egData/etudes/STUD/2022/736899 /IPOL_STU(2022)736899_EN.pdf)

# Measuring and Supporting Diversity and Inclusion



**Creating an inclusive organisation means regularly assessing your efforts to ensure they are meeting the needs of your community especially the marginalised and underrepresented in the green transition .** They need to be continually actively involved in decision making, feedback mechanisms so youth organisations can meet diverse needs and lead to equitable outcomes. This can be done by:

- ❑ **Gathering Feedback:** Use surveys, discussions, and informal conversations to understand how people feel about your organisation's inclusiveness and identify areas for improvement.
- ❑ **Tracking Participation:** Review who is involved in your activities and whether the diversity of your organisation is represented. If certain groups are underrepresented, adjust your approach to include them.
- ❑ **Reviewing Policies:** Regularly update your policies and practices to reflect changing needs and ensure they remain effective.

# EXERCISE: Community Led Planning and Decision Making

**Objective:** Engage with your community, stakeholders and partners.

**Conduct Focus Group:** Community-led planning involves consulting with local groups and stakeholders to co-create solutions that are culturally relevant and address specific local challenges.

Partner with local organisations that represent marginalized groups (such as other youth organizations, women's groups, or indigenous communities) to ensure their perspectives are included in sustainability projects.

**Conduct focus groups** and consult with youth, local leaders, and community organizations to identify priority issues related to environmental sustainability.

**Hold collaborative workshops** that include brainstorming sessions, where everyone's ideas are welcomed and valued.







# Practical Application: Embedding DEI Principles

Creating an inclusive organisation doesn't require big, overwhelming changes. Small, thoughtful actions can make a significant difference.

**Integrate DEI into Your Current Strategy:** For nonprofit youth organizations, DEI should not be a separate initiative but a foundational part of the organization's mission and strategic planning. Incorporating DEI principles into the green transition framework ensures that sustainability efforts reach and empower all sections of society, particularly marginalized and underrepresented groups. Some steps you can take:

- ❑ **Include DEI goals in organisational mission statements and action plans** related to environmental sustainability.
- ❑ **Assess Your Current Practices:** Take a look at your events, meetings, activities, and materials. Are there barriers that prevent some groups from participating? Identify what can be improved.
- ❑ **Use data to track and assess** participation from diverse groups in green initiatives, ensuring that no one is excluded from these opportunities.
- ❑ **Set Clear, Achievable Goals:** Focus on one or two changes to start with. This could mean improving accessibility at events, providing materials in multiple formats, or reaching out to a wider audience.

# Practical Application: Embedding DEI Principles Company-Wide

**Create spaces** where everyone feels welcome and valued, we can unlock new ideas, strengthen our communities, and ensure that our work reflects the needs of all.

**Collaborate with Partners:** Work with community groups or other organisations to share knowledge, resources, and support. Partnerships can help you broaden your impact and reach.

**The steps to improve inclusion don't have to be overwhelming.** Small actions, like reviewing accessibility, engaging underrepresented groups, or updating policies, can make a meaningful difference. With the tools and guidance provided, your organisation is equipped to take those steps and build a more inclusive future.

**Inclusion is about progress, not perfection.** Every effort you make contributes to a better, more connected, and sustainable community. T

The journey starts with one simple question: **What will you do today to make your organisation more inclusive?**

# Conclusion

- ❖ **DEI is Essential for Sustainable Change:** Embedding diversity, equity, and inclusion in green transition efforts ensures they are effective, fair, and supported by diverse communities, leading to creative, holistic solutions.
- ❖ **Listening and Inclusivity Strengthen Communities:** By acting on the needs and input of marginalized groups, trust and collaboration are built, fostering inclusive and sustainable outcomes.
- ❖ **Flexibility and Adaptability are Crucial:** Engaging diverse communities requires tailored approaches to address unique needs, ensuring meaningful participation.
- ❖ **Collaboration Promotes Innovation and Equity:** Involving diverse stakeholders in decision-making creates opportunities for shared learning, innovation, and equitable solutions for green transitions.
- ❖ **Long-Term Commitment to Inclusion is Key:** Ongoing dialogue, feedback, and adaptive strategies ensure that marginalized voices remain central in the green transition process, supporting lasting success.

YOUTH  
FIT  
FOR



You have  
completed  
**Module 4**

Next up:

**Module 5**

Embedding Environmental  
Sustainability Towards the  
EU's Green Transition

[www.youthfitfor55.eu](http://www.youthfitfor55.eu)



Co-funded by  
the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the National Agency. Neither the European Union nor National Agency can be held responsible for them.