



Knowledge hub - Collection of best practices

Summary of the best practice

1. Title of the best practice (e.g. name of policy, programme, project, etc.) *

Young Innovators Cyprus (2020 ,2021)

2. Country or countries where the practice is implemented *

Cyprus

3. Please select the **most relevant** Action Track(s) the best practice applies to *

- Action Track 1. Inclusive, equitable, safe, and healthy schools
- Action Track 2. Learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development
- Action Track 3. Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession
- Action Track 4. Digital learning and transformation
- Action Track 5. Financing of education

4. Implementation lead/partner organization(s) *

Cyprus Energy Agency, Cyprus University of Technology

5. Key words (5-15 words): Please add key descriptive words around aims, modalities, target groups etc. *

creativity, systems thinking, problem solving, low carbon lifestyle, enterprising skills, digital skills, mobilising others, managing uncertainty, empowered students, mitigate climate change challenges, inspire students/teachers, engage stakeholders

6. What makes it a best practice? *

Considering the needs of Cyprus by implementing the pilot in 2020 and the Young Innovators CY2021, we have realized there is gap of knowledge on the consequences of climate change and climate change itself, as well as miscommunication on important terminologies that we, as experts, could provide to the educators and students via training. The programme supports the development of some essential skills, which are somehow neglected in the modularization of learning. The program helps students realize the footprint of their actions and how systems operate and therefore provide innovative and sustainable solutions on real-life climate-related challenges, that are just and inclusive, and are based on system thinking.

Description of the best practice

7. Introduction (350-400 words)

This section should ideally provide the context of, and justification for, the practice and address the following issues:

- i) Which population was affected?
- ii) What was the problem that needed to be addressed?
- iii) Which approach was taken and what objectives were achieved? *

The EIT Climate-KIC Young Innovators Cyprus aimed to support secondary and high school students to develop their 21st century skills and competences related to climate innovation, under the umbrella of the PBL pedagogy. Among other competencies, the project promotes systems thinking and analysis, critical thinking, creative problem-solving and entrepreneurship. During the first year of the YICY2020 the challenge that students needed to tackle was the food waste, and at the second year YICY2021 was the Maritime Sector and the pollution of the Mediterranean sea. With the Young Innovators programme, students were invited to join it by introducing them to a systems innovation approach. Taking a systems innovation approach, students were enabled to explore the relationships between interconnected aspects and also to take account of the people who are affected, their values, their expectations and their reactions. Involving students working towards a healthy and sustainable planet and encouraging them to act as catalysts for systemic change, is critical. Some other objectives were achieved with the tools of the program: Creativity (visual toolbox during the schools' workshops and Young Climathon, especially with the use of cover story canvas), Problem Solving (presentations about ocean pollution and maritime sector, visual toolbox especially with the use of exploring and navigating the challenge), Low Carbon Lifestyle (presentation about climate change and carbon footprint- discussion during the school's Workshops), Mobilising Others (during Young Climathon participants had the opportunity to contact stakeholders and build community with other students as well).

8. Implementation (350-450 words)

Please describe the implementation modalities or processes, where possible in relation to:

- i) What are the main activities carried out?
- ii) When and where the activities were carried out (including the start date and whether it is ongoing)?
- iii) Who were the key implementation actors and collaborators? (civil society organizations, private sector, foundations, coalitions, networks etc.)?
- iv) What were the resources needed (budget and sources) for the implementation?

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The main objectives of the project were delivered in three stages:

Stage 1: Train the Trainer Training: In stage 1 of the project, different teaching specialists (e.g., Geography, Science, Chemistry, Biology, Design & Technology etc.) and environmental and sustainable development educators across Cyprus participated in training sessions. The participating teachers were introduced to the tools of the program, climate change, system thinking and the challenge that students were asked to tackle during the stage 2. The first year of the programme was about food waste and the second year about the maritime sector and the ocean pollution in the Mediterranean Sea. [Start: May - End: July],

Stage 2: Schools Innovators Training: In stage 2 of the project, the trained educators were called to prepare workshops and challenges for their students with the support of YI coaches and challenge -owners. Once the participating students introduced to the programme and its context, they asked to provide innovative and sustainable ideas/solutions to tackle the given challenges using the program's Visual Toolbox." [Start: October - End: November],

Stage 3: Young Climathon: In stage 3 of the project, an ideation competition took place, where students worked in teams, to create bottom-up, meaningful, and long-lasting climate actions based on real-life challenges and had the opportunity to win special prizes. In Young Climathon students from across Cyprus participated. The first year was implemented online due to covid-19 pandemic restrictions and at the second year was implemented a face-to-face event. [one-two days event- December].

The YICY team were able to find stakeholders with expertise on environment, food waste and maritime sector from the public and private sector, and NGO's organizations enriching the challenges and offering time and support to the teams. Specifically, the Republic of Cyprus Commissioner for the Environment, for two years in a row a second year, providing guidance to the teams and answering all the questions after the completion of the competition. We believe that this relationship can only grow further during the subsequent implementations of the programme. Private companies supported the Young Climathon by presenting their organization and their work and participate as well to the jury and supported by offering the prizes for the winners of the competition.

9. Results – outputs and outcomes (250-350 words)

To the extent possible, please reply to the questions below:

- i) How was the practice identified as transformative? (e.g., impact on policies, impact on management processes, impact on delivery arrangements or education monitoring, impact on teachers, learners and beneficiary communities etc.);
- ii) What were the concrete results achieved with regard to outputs and outcomes?
- iii) Has an assessment of the practice been carried out? If yes, what were the results? *

By implementing the programme for the second year in Cyprus, YICY team have realized the importance of embedding systems thinking and challenged-based learning through the school year. Therefore, the approach the School's Workshop to educate the students to fill the gap on the consequences of climate change and climate change itself and essential terminologies. In order to achieve the development of Lesson Plans and make the best effort for the students, during the development of the lesson plan, the team tested it two times with the contribution of young people from different sectors to provide input of how interested the lectures were and how clear where the instruction about the tools. With their help, we manage to create aid of the tools, make it simpler for the students and that approach was helpful for the success of the project. In addition, the second year of the YI, the team developed educational material for the Train the Trainer, School Workshops and the Young Climathon, that was provided and disseminated to their schools. With the development, especially, of the material about climate change it was really helpful and successfully the students gained more knowledge and more sensitivity about the environment. Moreover, the YICY2020 and the YICY2022, empowered students to mitigate the climate change challenges, inspired private and public schools to become more sustainable, new methods and tools were offer a different pathway for problem solving and creativity in the face of climate change. Following the evaluation of the Teacher and Students Survey for the Young Innovators that was provided by the EIT-Climate-KIC Young Innovators, the overall assessment of the activities with a percentage of 66.7% was evaluated by the teachers and the students, they found more interesting the knowledge about Sustainability, the teamwork of canvases and the presentation about the Climate Change. Also, most of them believed that the activities of the program achieve the objective of preparing them to implement the programme and the presented tools in the classroom.

10. Lessons learnt (300 words)

To the extent possible, please reply to the following questions:

- i) What were the key triggers for transformation?
- ii) What worked really well – what facilitated this?
- iii) What did not work – why did it not work? *

Implementing the Young Innovators for a second year in Cyprus under COVID-19 restriction it was a difficult, but through perseverance, creativity and planning we managed to pull through. For part of the program we aimed at changing youth mindset toward a more sustainable thinking. This year with the development a new education material and the useful material of LMS to develop the program worked very successful until the end of the year. Moreover, the collaboration with the CUT for a second year to the program, created a concrete collaboration and gave the opportunity to be trained more coaches. In addition, through the collaborations during the activities of the program, new stakeholders supported the program and new collaborations began for a common purpose to empower the young generation.

11. Conclusions (250 words)

Please describe why may this intervention be considered a “best practice”. What recommendations can be made for those intending to adopt the documented “best practice” or how can it help people working on the same issue(s)? *

Considering the needs of Cyprus and gap analysis, the relevance of Young Innovators to achieve the Regional Innovation Scheme strategy for 2022 is the transformation of the education systems. By implementing the programme, the first year, we realized there was gap of knowledge on the effects of Climate Change and Climate Change itself, as well as miscommunication on important terminologies. This year we aimed to introduce sustainability learning aligned with the UNSDGs in both public and private schools, exploiting our expertise (knowledge, trainings, workshops, activities, visits) and the tools of the programme. This helped students realize the footprint of their actions and how systems operate and therefore provided innovative and sustainable solutions on real-life climate-related challenges, that are just and inclusive, and are based on system thinking. By entering schools -both private and public- with the particular programme, we aimed at changing youth mindset towards a more sustainable thinking. This in turn could raise empowered kids who could lead this world to system changes and mitigate the Climate Change phenomenon one day. Some others may be inspired to follow a green career (environmental studies) and get employed in green jobs such as the RES, Green Building (Energy Efficiency), Sustainable Tourism, and Sustainable Mobility. Moreover, we aim through the synergies with other organizations that are involved in projects about climate change with workshops at schools to developed together a collaboration and increase the interest of teachers and students as well to take part of our actions for a more sustainable world.

12. Further reading

Please provide a list and URLs of key reference documents for additional information on the “best practice” for those who may be interested in knowing how the results benefited the beneficiary group/s. *

o Young Innovators Official Website <https://younginnovators.climate-kic.org/about-the-programme/>

o Young Innovators Cyprus Website

https://yicy2021.cyprusinteractionlab.com/news_and_events/events-%CE%B5%CE%BB%CE%BB%CE%B7%CE%BD%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AC/