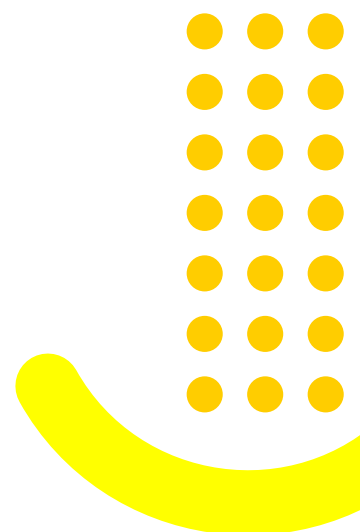
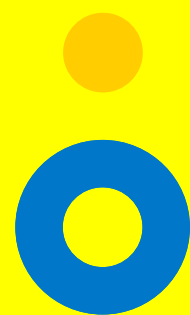


# The understanding of solidarity of young people in the European Solidarity Corps



Solidarity Projects as  
potential and space for social  
and community involvement

SOLIDARITY PROJECT • COMMUNITY IMPACT •  
EUROPEAN VALUES • YOUTH EMPOWERMENT  
• ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP





## Eva Feldmann-Wojtachnia

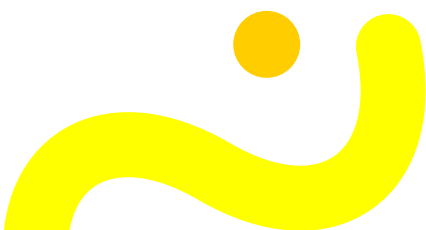
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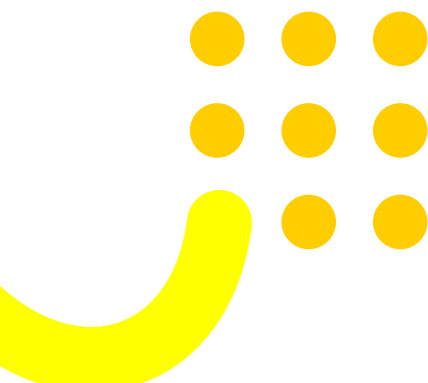
Eva Feldmann-Wojtachnia / Barbara Tham,  
Research Group Youth and Europe at the Center  
for Applied Policy research CAP of the Ludwig-  
Maximilians-University of Munich, members of  
the RAY network and research partners of the  
German national agency responsible for the eva-  
luation of E+YiA and European Solidarity Corps in  
cooperation with IKAB e.V. since 2009.



## Barbara Tham

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Encourage and  
equip young people with  
the necessary resources to  
become active citizens,  
agents of solidarity and  
positive change inspired by  
EU values and European  
identity.

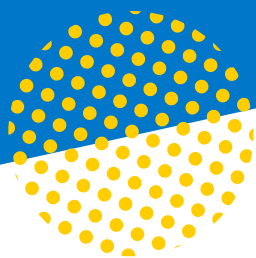
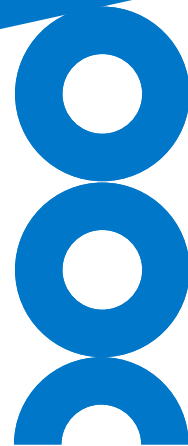
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THE EUROPEAN UNION  
YOUTH STRATEGY  
2019-2027

## ABSTRACT

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This paper examines questions such as: What do young people associate with the concept of solidarity; where do they see a need for action; and in which areas do they want to become active? Furthermore, the paper looks at the role of the 4 cornerstones of solidarity (Human Rights, Active Citizenship, Inclusion and Empathy) and how it impacts young people's realisation of their projects. To address these questions a number of interviews from selected projects from Germany are analysed. Quantitative as well as qualitative data from the participation research is presented. The results of the collected data conclude that the European Solidarity Corps offers young people an interesting option for getting engaged in terms of active citizenship and for creating solidarity among young people across Europe.

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## 1. Introduction: Engage - Connect - Empower

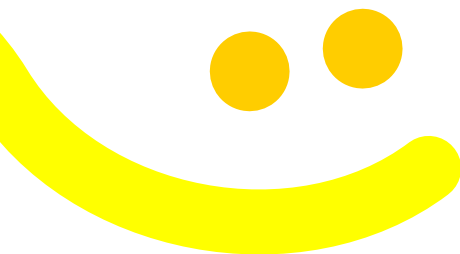
The Flash Eurobarometer 478, 'How do we build a stronger, more united Europe? The views of young people' (European Commission 2019), examines young people's views on EU priorities in relation to building a stronger and more united Europe. The results indicate that the following should be the top priorities for the EU in the coming years: protecting the environment and fighting climate change (67% of the respondents aged 15-30); improving education and training (56%); fighting poverty and economic and social inequalities (56%); boosting employment (49%); and improving health and well-being (44%). When it comes to their own activity, three quarters of young people are engaged in some form of organised movement. In order to consistently foster youth participation, voluntary engagement, learning mobility, solidarity and intercultural understanding of young people, and to strengthen youth work within the member states of the EU, the EU Commission sets the scene for the EU youth policy of the coming years with the renewed EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027. The core areas are outlined as "Engage, Connect and Empower", encouraging young people's engagement

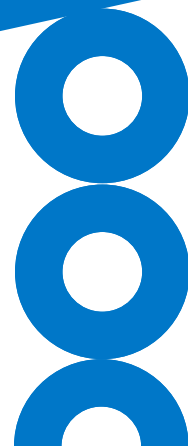
in solidarity. It is considered that "connections, relations and exchange of experience are a pivotal asset for solidarity and the future development of the European Union" (European Union 2018. p4). Against this background, the question arises to what extent the format of Solidarity Projects are seen by young people as an opportunity to take action in the areas they consider important and to what extent they relate to the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy. What problems do young people see in their communities? How do they tackle them in their projects? How do they break down big political and social issues for their social environment? And how do they become active?

## 2. Political impetus for voluntary engagement

The initiative for the European Solidarity Corps was announced by the former President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker during his annual State of the European Union speech in September 2016:

*"There are many young, socially minded people in Europe willing to make a meaningful contribution to society and help show solidarity. We can create opportunities for them to do so... Solidarity is the glue that keeps our Union together... Young people across the European Union will be able to volunteer their help where it is needed most, to respond to crisis situations... These young people will be able to develop their skills and get not only work but also invaluable human experience."* (Juncker 2016. p16).





The European Solidarity Corps creates opportunities for young people between the ages of 18 and 30 years to engage themselves in solidarity activities at local level across Europe. With a budget of 375.6 million Euro over the period 2018-2020, the programme aims to involve over 100,000 young people in European Solidarity Projects. The following activities are possible:

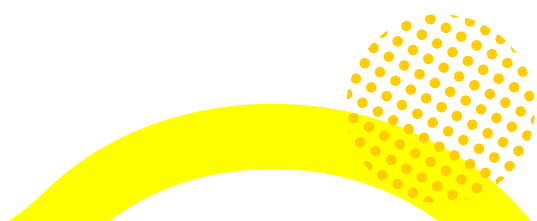
- Volunteering placements (individually or in teams);
- Traineeships and jobs;
- Solidarity Projects.

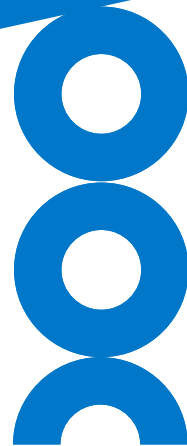
However, the proposal for a new volunteer programme was criticised by youth workers and youth organisations. Without prior consultation with the relevant actors from the youth field, the 'top down' approach of the European Commission was seen as uncoordinated and indecisive. In particular, the outsourcing of the voluntary service from the Youth in Action branch of the Erasmus+ programme was seen as a deterioration of the positive youth policy development at European levels to date. Furthermore, the inclusion in the new format of "traineeships and jobs" was criticised as it did not clearly distinguish itself from other voluntary services and was seen to have insufficient funding.

Since its implementation in 2018, youth work organisations have come to terms with the European Solidarity Corps and are increasingly utilising its offers and opportunities. While the number of applications was very moderate at the beginning

of the programme, all of its formats are now in demand and new approaches to solidarity actions are being developed. The only exceptions are the traineeships and jobs, which still do not seem to fit into a non-formal learning programme and are used much less or hardly at all - depending on the individual programme country (Akarçesme et al 2019. p23).

Solidarity Projects in particular have continuously evolved over the application rounds and represent an attractive format for young people to become active and implement local projects. The format of the Solidarity Projects builds on the former very successful Youth Initiatives that were part of the previous Youth in Action Programme 2007-2013. Youth Initiatives provided young people with spaces and opportunities for their own actions at the local level. The aim of Solidarity Projects is to meet social challenges in one's own community with specific activities and to become active with solidarity initiatives. In this way, and through activities appropriate to young people, the aim is to promote coexistence in Europe, to address grievances, reduce inequalities and promote European values. The young people involved are given the opportunity to take an active part in their society and politics and to advance their communities in the spirit of a solidarity-based Europe. The promotion of active, democratic and European citizenship is also an important basis for the prosperity of the EU. According to the "Declaration on Promoting Citizenship and the Common Values for Freedom,



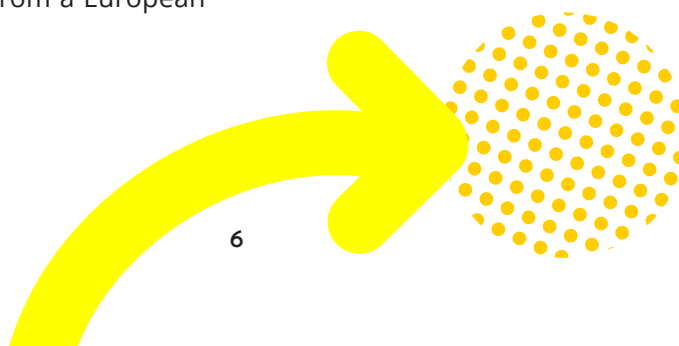


Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Through Education", of the Education Ministers of the EU, social commitment and active citizenship are essential for the future of Europe (European Union 2015). A clear reference to European values, pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between all people mentioned in Article 2 of the Treaty of the European Union is made. In this regard, the European Solidarity Corps can support European awareness and provide a counterpoint to undemocratic and nationalist developments in Europe.

### 3. Young people's attitudes towards solidarity and implications for the projects

The study "Young Europe 2019" (TUI Stiftung 2019) shows that only a minority of young Europeans believe "that the solidarity between countries in the EU will become stronger in the future". Most were sceptical about relations between EU member states in the coming five years, "the majority are convinced that things will not change, or that the sense of solidarity could even weaken". The concept of solidarity used in this study is based on the intergovernmental perspective of the EU. However, what is the situation when young people in Europe can take action themselves to strengthen solidarity on the local level from a European perspective?

In the SALTO Study (Akarçesme et al 2019) on the implementation of the European Solidarity Corps, researchers from the European network 'Research-based Analysis of European Youth Programmes' (RAY), explored the first year of the European Solidarity Corps, 2018 and 2019. The authors of the study considered Solidarity Projects "as an important opportunity for young people to become active - independently from organisations - for any societal challenge that really matters to them" (Akarçesme et al 2019. p18). The majority of the examined projects applied for Volunteering and Volunteering Partnerships and around a quarter for Solidarity Projects. According to the study, Solidarity Projects "gained relatively much interest from the first deadline although this action was newly introduced in the European Solidarity Corps" (Akarçesme et al 2019. p11). Of the applicant organisations for Solidarity Projects, 84% indicated that their projects "aim at involving young people with fewer opportunities" (Akarçesme et al 2019. p11). In addition, the study found "Solidarity Projects attracted a high percentage of 'new' organisations (which had not been involved in an EU Youth Programme before)" (Akarçesme et al 2019. p13). There is a wide variety of topics involved in the implementation of the projects around Europe. Surprisingly, the study states a relatively low percentage for topics with direct links to the programme objectives. However;





*"the topics selected by more than 10% of applicant organisations [of the European Solidarity Corps in total] show a composition of topics which have a direct connection with solidarity (e.g. inclusion or equality and non-discrimination) and of topics which do not seem to have such a direct link, but can be linked to the European Solidarity Corps in some other way (e.g. community development or skills development)".* (Akarçeşme et al 2019. p15).

It is noteworthy that activities to implement themes mentioned particularly in the European Solidarity Corps Guide, such as non-formal and informal learning, recognition and validation of learning outcomes and the European added value receive rather little consideration (European Commission 2020. pp6-8 and p15).

## 4. Topics addressed in the Solidarity Projects

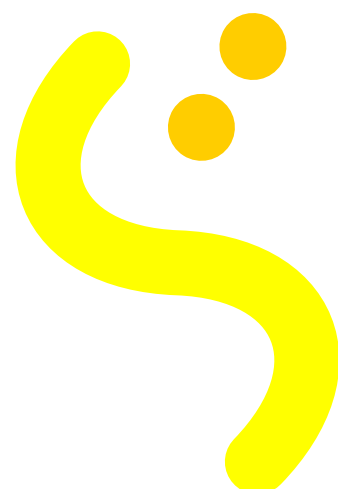
Currently, the database (European Union) of the European Youth Portal contains 1240 Solidarity Projects from all over Europe. A particularly large number of projects come from countries in central and eastern Europe, above all Poland (110), Czech Republic (82) and Romania (71).

Hereafter the author of this paper will focus on the 62 Solidarity Projects from Germany listed in the database. The aim is to take a closer look at the reality of young people and their initiatives on how

to "express solidarity by taking responsibility and committing themselves to bring positive change to their local community" (European Commission 2020. p50).

### 4.1 Spotlight on European Solidarity Corps Solidarity Projects in Europe

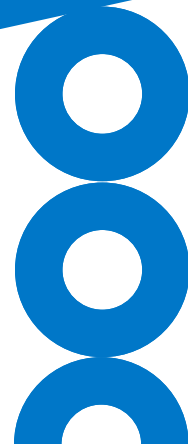
In the first year of implementation, Solidarity Projects often still followed the objectives of Erasmus+ Youth in Action programme and initially seemed to be based strongly on the tradition of the previous Youth Initiatives. Since then some developments can be observed. Furthermore, some striking differences become apparent when the answers are evaluated by country. The relevance of the topics can differ immensely from country to country.





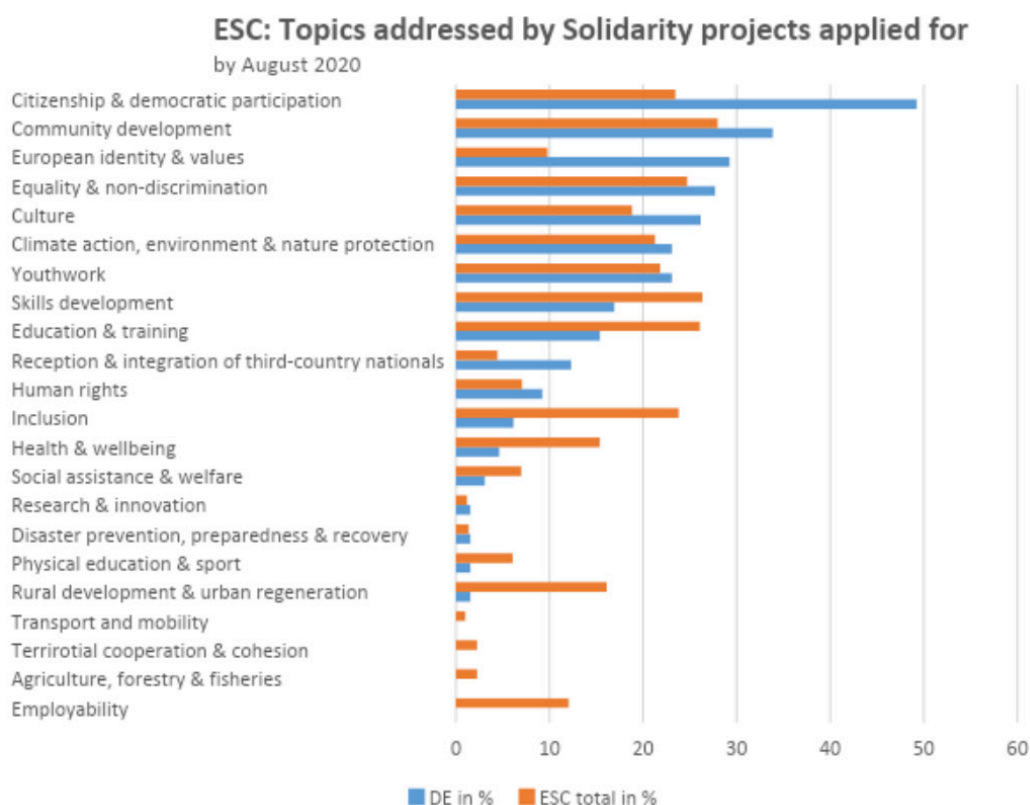
# EUROPE TALKS SOLIDARITY

Eva Feldmann-Wojtachnia  
Barbara Tham

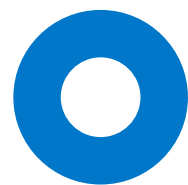


The following overview (Table 1) shows the topics that can be addressed by Solidarity Projects when applying for funding. From the 22 topics, up to three can be selected. On a European level, the topics "Community development" (28%), "Skills development" (26%) and "Education and training" (26%)

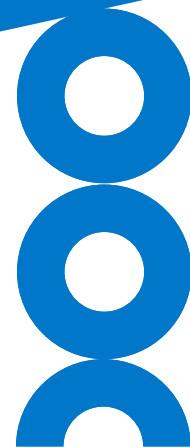
are the most popular. In Germany, the emphasis is weighted differently: "Citizenship and democratic participation" (49%) is in first place for around a third of the projects, followed by "Community development" (34%) and "European identity and values" (29%).



**Table 1.** European Solidarity Corps Topics addressed by Solidarity Projects.  
(Source: European Youth Portal/ European Solidarity Corps Project Platform.  
Authors diagram)





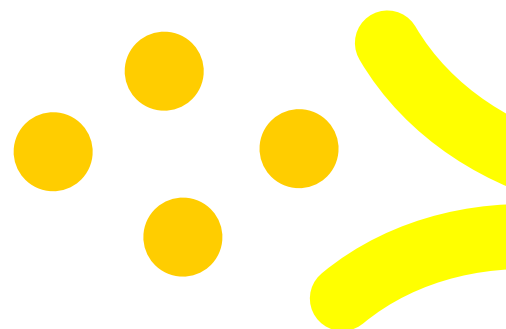


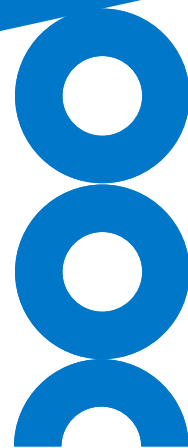
## 4.2 Favourite Topics from a German perspective

The thematic focus for German projects, presented in Table 1, corresponds to the results of the Shell Youth Study 2019 (Shell 2019). This study shows that young people in Germany have a high value orientation in the area of "commitment and tolerance", in particular to "help socially disadvantaged and marginalised groups" (Schneekloth and Albert 2019. p104). The high level of sensitivity towards disadvantaged groups, which has risen steadily since 2002, is linked to the meaningful value orientation "to develop one's own imagination and creativity" (Schneekloth and Albert 2019. p110). It is also very important for young people to recognise and respect diversity and to live and act on personal responsibility (Schneekloth and Albert 2019. p131). Thus, it can be assumed that the Solidarity Projects, especially within the European dimension, are an interesting opportunity for young people to become active in their own communities. This corresponds to the three most common fields of action "Citizenship and democratic participation", "Community development" and "European identity and values", which the Solidarity Projects in Germany clearly state when applying for funding. Unlike in other countries, the awareness of Europe plays an important role here.

The SALTO Study identifies Human Rights, Empathy, Active Citizenship and Inclusion as the "4 cornerstones of solidarity", which are a mix of values, attitudes, priorities and approaches (Baclija

Knoch and Nicodemi 2020. p57). According to the findings of the study, the basic understanding of solidarity implies that "solidarity needs to be about action. (...) Active citizenship implies that 'I take a stand and I act', instead of being a passive observer" (Baclija Knoch and Nicodemi 2020. p68). Active participation is fundamentally anchored in the European youth programmes in order to empower young people. Referring to the solidarity model of the SALTO study (Baclija Knoch and Nicodemi 2020. p13), Solidarity Projects in Germany are mainly oriented towards the cornerstone Active Citizenship and consider the supporting concepts; Active Participation and Strong Communities, to be particularly helpful.





## 5. An inside view of the projects

The European Solidarity Corps Guide states, that "Solidarity Projects should address key challenges within the communities but they should also clearly present European added value. Participation in a Solidarity Project is an important non-formal learning experience through which young people can enhance their personal, educational, social and civic development." (European Commission 2020. p50). The character of a Solidarity Project is described in the following way:

- it is an in-country project, initiated, developed and implemented by young people themselves;
- it should give the opportunity to a group of young people to express solidarity by taking responsibility and bringing positive change in their local community;
- it should be an identified topic of the young people, translated into concrete daily activities.

In order to better understand the potential and the impact on the local environment, below are two examples that provide an inside view into Solidarity Projects and their implementation by young people in Germany.

### 5.1 Breaking the barriers of prejudices

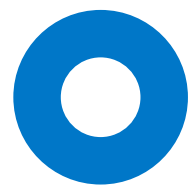
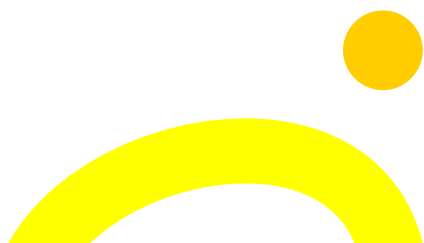
The NGO "Gemeinsam Leben und Lernen in Europa" (Living and Learning Together in Europe), started one of the first Solidarity Projects in Germany in 2018. The aim was to motivate young people to get involved, to live "together in Europe", to get to know people from other cultures and break down prejudices. The project leaders saw the added value of this new European Solidarity Corps programme line in the fact that it offers young people the opportunity to implement their own ideas in a self-organised manner with a small project budget.

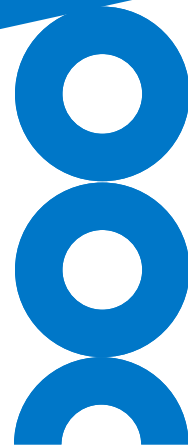
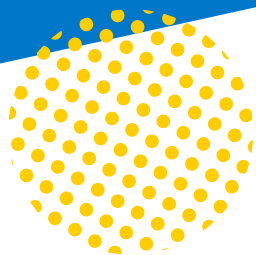
*"Through such projects, the local community is to be changed positively, Europe is to be experienced by the people on the spot. And the young people take on responsibility and learn an incredible amount of new things."*

(Leader of the first Solidarity Project in Germany 2018).

### 5.2 Skatepark meets municipal politics

As the results of the SALTO European Solidarity Corps study make clear, the idea of solidarity is often not explicitly taken up in the project objectives and is not further developed conceptually in the project (Akarçeşme et al 2019. p15). For example, the youth-led Solidarity project "Mini-Ramp" approved in 2020 and initiated by an informal group of six young people, aimed to build a skatepark in the municipality of Kerken. Thanks to a self-initiated Solidarity Project, they have been able to successfully implement the plan for the





construction of a skatepark, the plan itself was first proposed in 2016 but had been rejected by the municipality. In their planning, the young people took into account that the park should not just be for professional skaters, but that it should also be suitable for children and newcomers. In addition, they wanted to build and design the skatepark largely on their own. Having officially started the Solidarity Project, they received unanimous approval from the municipal council which even allocated additional funding from the municipal budget. The involvement of the European Union was also referenced in the media, however being reduced to its role as provider of funds.

This example shows that Solidarity Projects such as the successful skater project primarily focus on the local needs of young people. They include the idea of solidarity in the sense of active citizenship through participation and self-determination, even if young people do not verbalise their understanding of solidarity explicitly.

## 6. The implementation of solidarity in the projects

What significance does solidarity have for young people and how do they put it into practice in their projects? In this respect, the 4Thought study (Baclijs Knoch and Nicodemi 2020) provides a comprehensive Europe-wide overview of the different approaches and motivations of young people. A

qualitative survey<sup>[1]</sup> of young people's understanding of solidarity among participants in Solidarity Projects in Germany in 2020 provides further context. The survey based its question on the following themes:

- The importance of solidarity in the project;
- Implementation of the idea of solidarity;
- European dimension / relation to Europe;
- Inclusion of the social environment;
- Recommendations for a Europe of solidarity.

### 6.1 Young people's understanding of solidarity<sup>[2]</sup>

In general, "solidarity" for young people means empathy for others, especially disadvantaged people, who must be supported and integrated. Solidarity works both within a group and across groups. It is expressed in actions "to carry out a task together that would be too big for the individual". Solidarity as understood by the respondents is fundamentally about helping other people who are in need, regardless of culture, skin colour or other characteristics that make a person into who they are. The means for achieving this are the creation of "encounters across all social borders", which are intended to break down "borders in the mind, racism and discrimination". Their activities are intended to bring people from the community together and to promote understanding and cooperation. It is important for the young project leaders to discover a sense of togetherness and community and to develop an inclusive society.





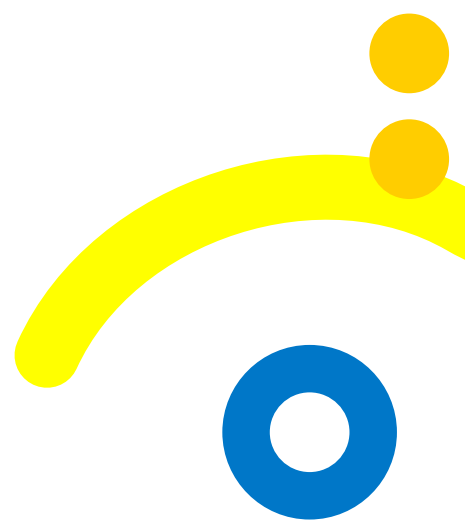
They regard solidarity as "one of the fundamental principles of community, a key concept of humanity". Solidarity Projects in the European Solidarity Corps give the opportunity to "realize ideas and thus contribute to a positive social development". Solidarity also particularly means "listening to young people and giving them a voice", enabling them to become active themselves and to act in solidarity with other groups.

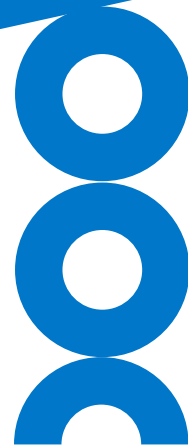
Empathy, one of the 4 Cornerstones and mutual understanding, as a characteristic for the solidarity concept of young people (Baclija Knoch and Nicodemi 2020. p15) seems also to be the conceptual basis of solidarity for most of the respondents of the German sample. Their answers strongly corresponded with the vision of connecting citizens and "bridging gaps" in civil society (Baclija Knoch and Nicodemi 2020. p42). Their projects are often driven by a spirit of "value-based activism" (Baclija Knoch and Nicodemi 2020. p40), where social cohesion, citizenship education and empowerment for participation play an important role for them - especially in times of crisis.

## 6.2 European dimension

As shown above in the analysis of the topics which are listed in the European Youth Portal, European identity and European values are topics, which are three times as frequently addressed for Solidarity Projects in Germany than in the other member states of the European Union. This is also evident in the projects surveyed. Europe plays an implicit

and sometimes explicit role here. In some projects the participants are made up of young people from different European countries or work in a multinational way together. The promotion of inherent common European values plays an important role in these projects, which is also stressed by the 4Thought study (Baclija Knoch and Nicodemi 2020. pp17; 22; 34). In one response, solidarity is even considered "the most important value of Europe", "which contributes to the fact that the political system can be not only an economic but also a social union". Some initiatives are connected to other organisations in Europe and pass on their project experiences to their friends and partners or make their results available for others. Sustainable development through cooperation and transnational sharing of ideas are at the centre of attention. Other projects specifically promote exchange and discussions on European issues in order to make young people aware "that this union is not a given but rather a privilege to be protected". It highlights the "we" in Europe with an emphasis on cohesion and the fight against discrimination. Many cultures and values shape Europe and the European Union, and this is to be communicated and lived in the projects.





## 6.3 Diverse activities

The activities in the projects are equally as diverse as the attitudes of the project leaders themselves and range from: tutoring for homework; learning about sponsorship and media work, such as video and podcast productions or blog articles; upcycling measures such as mask production; city tours and intercultural (learning) offers; educational work on human rights; nutrition and environmental issues; discussion events on political and social topics or the organisation of a European election party... The measures call for the support and integration of (young) refugees and migrants as well as developing encounters and exchanges between different population groups with regard to age, gender, origin, religion, etc. This diversity of practices reflects the "richness of solidarity" (Baclijs Knoch and Nicodemi 2020. p109) and the broad spectrum, which allows for a wide range of possibilities for individual implementation.

## 6.4 Interaction between Solidarity Projects and society

The inclusion of the social and societal environment takes place in a variety of ways. The activities planned within a Solidarity Project group are implemented locally and made available to friends, acquaintances and a wider public. Events, cultural offers, festivals and meeting places, create opportunities for getting to know others and for different social groups to work together. The use of social media and the development of podcasts and blogs spreads the concerns, information and advice

from the projects. The organisation of workshops, seminars and dialogue rounds offers the opportunity to discuss the issues pursued with a broad public, relevant actors and decision-makers. This also includes exchanges with local politicians, such as the Mayors of the municipalities, to ensure sustainable project results. The integration of and networking with local initiatives, organisations and institutions also provides the projects with the necessary social and societal environment.

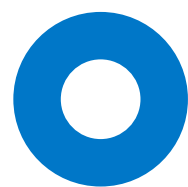
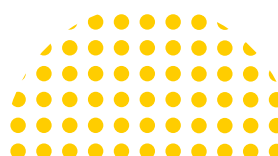
*"Our project cannot take place without this environment. We need the people from the surrounding area to make everything happen. Therefore we will contact organisations that work with young people in the city. But we will also just go out into the streets and talk to the people."*

(Youth and Europe qualitative survey).

In line with the 4Thought study, it can be concluded that the interaction with the local society that arises from Solidarity Projects also encourages the young people to "express their commitment for the benefit of the community" (Baclijs Knoch and Nicodemi 2020. p40).

## 6.5 Young people's experiences

The experimental aspect of the activities and the need of actively creating a common ground through joint experiences is underlined in the 4Thought study (Baclijs Knoch and Nicodemi 2020. p91). The respondents in Germany who answered the survey on young people's understanding of





solidarity, report mostly positive experiences they made in the projects, any difficulties that existed were overcome by working as a team.

*"Everyone is responsible for ensuring that every event becomes, 'OUR' project every time. Success proves us right. Of course, there are also interpersonal problems when different characters come together in a small space. This presents challenges, which we need and want to experience."*

(Youth and Europe qualitative survey).

Although the application process is very time-consuming, especially for smaller groups, and involves a lot of bureaucracy, respondents felt that the effort was worthwhile. This was the prerequisite for obtaining the necessary approval of the authorities involved, including the community. Finding ideas was easy, the exact planning for the implementation steps in the project was more difficult. In particular, communication between the different groups involved in the events or activities as well as keeping the team together proved to be difficult. Difficulties were also experienced in getting people excited about the new formats: "The long-term implementation of ideas is often a challenge" (Youth and Europe qualitative survey). A particular challenge for the projects to be implemented in 2020 was the Corona crisis and the resulting restrictions.

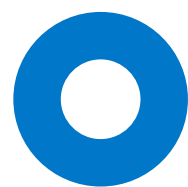
## 6.6 Lessons drawn for Europe from the projects

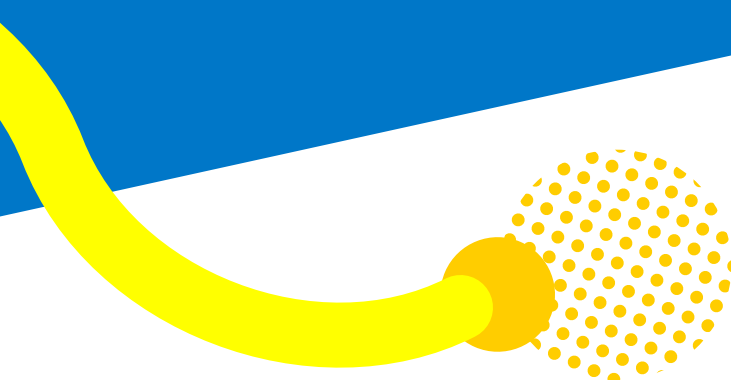
As a recommendation for a Europe based on solidarity; a better distribution of wealth, a different approach to refugees and more exchange encounters and intercultural learning, are mentioned. "Europe is more than an economically beneficial bubble! It is people who shape what Europe means" (Youth and Europe qualitative survey). In this regard, the EU should take young people more seriously and involve them more. Conversely, young people should...

*"(...) think more and talk about what they really want for 'THEIR' Europe. Communicating this (even in a micro regional, local context) is the first step. Getting together more and more with people who think differently and having the courage for critical analysis and discussion would be my recommendation".*

(Youth and Europe qualitative survey).

The subject of refugees and the right of asylum in Europe is of particular concern to young people. They criticise the poor conditions at the borders and the inhuman treatment of refugees. In their view, this is contrary to European values and the requirement of the basic law for the Federal Republic of Germany, Article 1: "Human dignity shall be inviolable". Mutual solidarity can only work if the political structures also stand for solidarity. As one of the project leaders stated:





*"More must be done against discrimination and more education about human rights and solidarity"*  
(Youth and Europe qualitative survey)

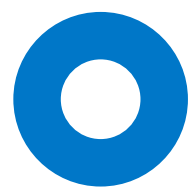
This aspect is also taken up in the 4Thought study, as it addresses solidarity with outgroups and accordingly illustrates to what extent people engage in solidarity when 'dissimilar' groups are affected (Baclija Knoch and Nicodemi 2020. p90)

## 7. Conclusion: Greater awareness of the potential of young people

Many young people in Europe volunteer in projects, showing their solidarity with others who are less fortunate. They help people in need and bring different sections of the population together through their creative projects. By doing so, they promote mutual understanding, respect and tolerance, and fundamental values that pave the way for living together in Europe. In order to ensure that such activities have sufficient room and support, the EU has established the European Solidarity Corps. This gives young people the opportunity to put their own ideas and activities into practice and thereby live in solidarity. Political tailwind and having a budget at one's disposal, creates new conditions for youth commitment and participation. In their projects they take responsibility for the community they live in and can enhance its condition to a certain extent in accordance with their ideas. Subsequently, it is equally crucial to nurture and

empower solidarity with future generations, referred to as "forward-thinking solidarity" (Baclija Knoch and Nicodemi 2020. p111), in order to live up to socio-political responsibility.

Although the European Solidarity Corps programme was a 'top down' initiative of the EU Commission, in its implementation, the participants can shape their projects in a variety of ways locally and contribute their ideas 'bottom up' for the creation of a Europe of solidarity. In this way, they are newly perceived and appreciated as independent actors and relevant stakeholders in the field. All this together provides a good basis for young people to be taken more seriously in their social and political environment and to be faced on equal terms. However, their contribution has yet to be recognised by political decision-makers at local, national and European level. An inside view of the realisation of Solidarity Projects shows that it is worth taking a closer look at the existing potential of young people in shaping active citizenship and implementing European values. Particularly in the context of the coronavirus pandemic, it is crucial to show solidarity in Europe and to support young people in using their energy and creativity to become a beacon of hope for a united Europe.







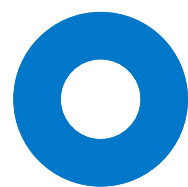
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The source of this data is a qualitative online survey by the Research group “Youth and Europe” from the Centre of Applied Policy Research, Ludwig-Maximilians-University, Munich. It was conducted among the participants of Solidarity Projects in Germany, from July until August 2020. In total, young people from 21 Solidarity Projects responded, they are all young people who have initiated, participated in, or applied for a Solidarity Project (2019 / 2020); they included 12 female and 9 male, and were all between 18 and 30 years of age. The results of the survey have not, at time of writing, been published.
- [2] The numerous quotes in this section, unless otherwise stated, are taken from the “Youth and Europe” qualitative survey.

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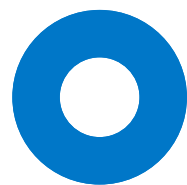
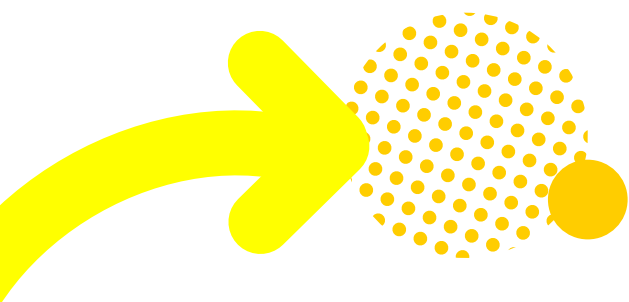
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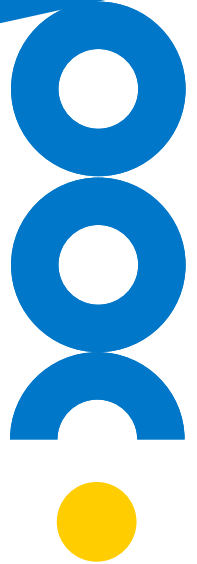




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A **Solidarity Project** is an in-country solidarity activity initiated, developed and implemented by young people themselves for a period of 2 to 12 months. It gives a group of minimum five young persons the chance to express solidarity by taking responsibility and committing themselves to bring positive change in their local community. The project should have a clearly identified topic which the group of young people wish to explore together and which has to be translated into the concrete daily activities of the project and involve all the participants. Solidarity Projects should address key challenges within the communities but they should also clearly present European added value. Participation in a solidarity project is an important non-formal learning experience through which young people can enhance their personal, educational, social and civic development (European Solidarity Corps Guide 2020. p.50).

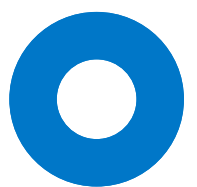
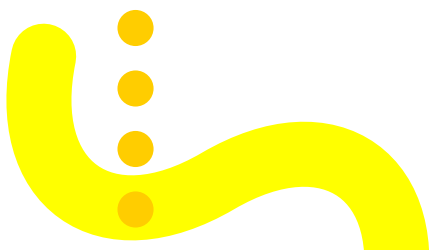


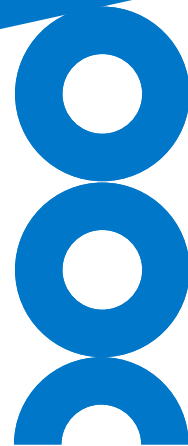


## ZUSAMMENFASSUNG (DEUTSCH)

In dem Beitrag wird die Umsetzung der Solidaritätsprojekte im ESK untersucht und dabei insbesondere auf das Verständnis von Solidarität junger Menschen und die von ihnen gewählten Formate und Ansätze eingegangen. Folgende Fragen stehen dabei im Fokus: Was verbinden Jugendliche mit dem Begriff Solidarität, wo sehen sie Handlungsbedarf und in welchen Bereichen und mit welchen Mitteln wollen sie aktiv werden? In Form von Interviews mit ausgewählten Projekten aus Deutschland geht der Beitrag diesen Fragen nach und analysiert die Ergebnisse mit Bezug zur '4Thought for Solidarity' Studie von SALTO (2020) sowie den bisher vorliegenden Untersuchungsergebnissen zu dem ESK-Programm der EU. Insbesondere wird dabei der Frage nachgegangen, welche Rolle die in der SALTO-Studie identifizierten '4 Cornerstones of Solidarity' - Menschenrechte, Aktive Bürgerschaft, Inklusion und Empathie - für die Jugendlichen bei der Realisierung der eigenen Vorhaben spielen. Gelingt ihnen die Umsetzung in das gesellschaftliche Umfeld?

Vor diesem Fragehintergrund stellen die Autorinnen quantitative und qualitative Ergebnisse aus eigenen Partizipationsforschungen in Deutschland und weitere Studien, unter anderem des europäischen Forschungsnetzwerks RAY zur Implementierung des ESK vor. Mit ihrer Analyse ermöglichen sie exemplarisch eine Innenansicht zur Umsetzung der Solidaritätsprojekte in Deutschland. Dabei stellen sie dar, für welche Ziele und Werte sich junge Menschen in Europa solidarisch einsetzen und welche Orte und Ansätze sie wählen, um sich zu engagieren. Letztendlich gilt es der Frage nachzugehen, was die europäische Dimension der europäischen Solidaritätsprojekte ausmacht und inwieweit Jugendliche den vielfältigen Herausforderungen vor Ort begegnen können.





## EUROPE TALKS SOLIDARITY

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This article is part of “Europe talks Solidarity” – a series of events and publications that offers a platform for the exploration of the concept of Solidarity, initiated by the European Solidarity Corps Resource Centre ([www.salto-youth.net/rc/solidarity](http://www.salto-youth.net/rc/solidarity)). The discussion on Solidarity benefits from inputs from a wide range of experiences and backgrounds. However, the opinions and views expressed in the articles in this series do not necessarily reflect those of the Resource Centre.

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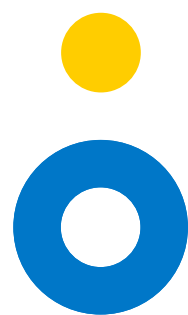
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