PROJECT FACTSHEET

Funded by the European Union

Western Balkans Youth Lab 2

Duration: 01.01.2024 - 31.12.2026

Countries:
Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia

EU contribution: € 1 500 000

Total budget: € 1 500 000

Implementer:
Regional Cooperation Council

Website(s): rcc.int/youthlab

Project description:

The Western Balkans Youth Lab (WBYL) project empowers young people across the region to take an active role in shaping inclusive and sustainable youth policies. Building on the achievements of its first phase, which successfully established a structured dialogue between youth organisations and public administrations, the project continues to strengthen youth participation in policy-making and enhance cooperation among institutions, youth councils, and creative communities.

Through targeted activities implemented within the project's three main components - the Youth Policy Labs, the Creative Lab of Youth Talents, and the WB–EU Youth Cooperation Lab - the project promotes innovative, youth-led policy solutions and fosters regional collaboration. Each component encompasses a range of activities designed to provide young women and men with opportunities to engage directly in decision-making processes, develop leadership skills, and contribute to policies that reflect their needs and aspirations.

This project aims to address the existing gaps in the strategic and sectoral frameworks for youth policy across the Western Balkans, particularly those related to the limited participation of young women and men in decision-making processes. It adopts a two-pronged approach, formal and informal mechanisms, focusing on empowering National Youth Councils and Youth Policy Labs as key platforms for structured dialogue, joint policy development, and evidence-based youth participation.

Expected results:

- Strengthened capacities and increased involvement of young women and men in policy-making processes.
- Enhanced capacities of public administrations, national youth councils, and youth umbrella organisations.
- Facilitated cultural cooperation among young regional artists.
- Increased participation of Western Balkan youth in regional and international events.

By connecting young people, policymakers, and artists throughout the Western Balkans, the 'WBYL' project fosters regional solidarity, creativity, and shared European values. The project contributes to stronger institutional frameworks for youth participation and creates a lasting positive impact on the region's social, cultural, and policy landscapes.

The project is expected to generate tangible and lasting impacts on youth participation, institutional capacities, and regional cooperation across the Western Balkans. By fostering inclusion, dialogue, and creativity, it aims to strengthen both youth structures and the policy environment that supports them.