

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

(To be filled in and uploaded as deliverable in the Portal Grant Management System, at the due date foreseen in the system.

 Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum).)

PROJECT	
Project name and acronym:	From the GroundUp: Fostering Rural Youth Participation in the EU Agenda
Participant:	LAG Dolina Rzeki Grabi
PIC number:	902060425

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	2
Event name:	“From Community-Led Local Development, LEADER and local participatory budgeting to the European Citizens Initiative. Citizens' Dialogue: Elections to the EP 2024 - why do we need fair and equal elections? The role of youth in EU democracy”.
Type:	Conference
In situ/online:	<i>in situ</i>
Location:	Poland
Date(s):	18-20.06.2024
Website(s) (if any):	Host website: https://dolinagrabi.pl/ https://dolinagrabi.pl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1541:konferencja-groundup&catid=18&Itemid=101 https://dolinagrabi.pl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1538:konferencja-4&catid=18&Itemid=101 https://dolinagrabi.pl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1537:konferencja-od-rozwoju-lokalnego-kierowanego-przez-spolecz-nosc-leader-i-lokalnego-budzetu-partycypacyjnego-do-europejskiej-ini-cjatywy-obywatelskiej-dialog-obywatelski-wybory-do-pe-2024-po-co-n-am-uczciwe-i-rowne-wybory-rola-mlodziezy-w-demokracji-ue&catid=18&Itemid=101 FB website: https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064277666371 https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61556445323406 https://www.facebook.com/share/p/QZK7rPDg98133NY9/ https://www.facebook.com/share/p/Znjf3AimU6NxQ1Qm/

		https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Flive%2FY2Cnl6lgTdQ%3Fsi%3DxYKEKjSHwhd9lvL8&h=AT0CkoW2KNq77-31p4Ta1q1pSc75E4z4tZNNX0OpQfl41mPEJBYZPplttEr5zRhv1fnAXxJNsHtOpAHy6M_1MMW1qRXGvjTRpw_QfiWMkrxPcGg9smCRbRUphfKMIw_ry3&s=1 https://www.facebook.com/share/p/L8oEq5omgrDCC3ZB/ The event was broadcasted on FB LAG "Grabi River Valley" and is available on YouTube : https://www.youtube.com/live/Y2Cnl6lgTdQ Local press articles about the conference https://www.laskonline.pl/art1718949189.miedzynarodowa-konferencja-w-kolumnie-video https://www.facebook.com/share/p/zopj7emaoPTRB47T/ Local TV https://www.8tvr.pl/s/16092/miedzynarodowa-konferencja-pod-honorem-patronatem-ministra-rolnictwa-i-rozwoju-wsi-czeslaw-siekierski-ego/ Other websites about the conference: https://www.facebook.com/share/p/Y6FRQAwHxaawmg9D/
Participants		
Female:	88	
Male:	41	
Non-binary:	0	
From country 1 [Czech Republic]:	4	
From country 2 [Finland]	3	
From country 3 [Austria]:	2	
From country 4 [Poland]:	97	
From country 5 [Portugal]:	2	
From country 6 [Italy]	4	
From country 7 [Bulgaria]	2	
From country 8 [Sweden]:	2	
From country 9 [Germany]	1	
From country 10 [Spain]	3	

From country 11 [Greece]	2		
From country 12 [Slovakia]	2		
From country 13 [Ireland]	2		
From country 14 [Holland]	3		
Total number of participants:	129	From total number of countries:	14

Description

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

1. Target groups

Project partners, policy makers, civil society organizations, youth, local actors, European Parliamentarians and other high policy makers.

2. Description of the event and its activities/ context.

On June 18-20, 2024, the LAG Dolina Rzeki Grabi hosted the project partners in their region. This international event was the first on-site meeting of representatives from the EU countries: Czech Republic, Spain, Netherlands, Finland, Bulgaria, Poland, Portugal, Italy, Greece, Slovakia, Austria, Ireland, and Sweden. The project leader is LAG Sdruzeni SPLAV, ZS, from the Czech Republic.

The event explored various forms of citizen engagement, including Community-Led Local Development, LEADER Programme and local participatory budgeting. We aimed to connect local communities and youth with broader European frameworks such as the European Parliament Elections 2024, EU values, and the rule of law, fair and equal elections, and the role of youth in EU democracy.

As part of the project, an international conference was held on June 19, 2024, at Hotel Kolumna Park***. The conference was attended by 130 participants in person. All the GroundUp project partners were represented. Among the Polish attendees, we had the honor of hosting, among others, Adam Nowak – Deputy Secretary of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Agnieszka Ryś – Deputy Marshal of the Łódź Voivodeship, Jolanta Zięba-Gzik – Member of the Polish Parliament, Lieutenant Colonel Przemysław Kornacki – Commander of the 93rd Light Infantry Battalion in Łask, Chief Inspector Marcin Kucner – Deputy Commander of the County Police in Łask, Bartłomiej Masiarek – President of the Łódź Provincial Board of the Rural Youth Association, Ilona Sobul from the Civil Affairs Institute Foundation, Jolanta Urbaniak representing Agency for Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture in Łask, Dr. hab. Katarzyna Zajda – Professor at the University of Łódź, Head of the Department of Rural and Urban Sociology, Przemysław Górski – Expert in Appraisal at Habitat for Humanity Foundation, Łukasz Bartosik – Member of the Bełchatów County Board, Edyta Michalska – Deputy Director of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Programs at the Łódź Voivodeship Marshal's Office, Ewa Korblit – Chief Specialist in the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Programs at the Łódź Voivodeship Marshal's Office, Agnieszka Dukalska – representing the Łódź City Hall, project partners along with its leader – Kristina Holmová – representing LAG Sdruzeni SPLAV from the Czech Republic. The conference was also attended by representatives of local governments, including: Beata Mielczarek – Secretary of the Łask Municipality, Sylwester Florczak – Chairman of the Łask Municipal Council, Igor Jędrzejczak – Councilor of the Łask Municipal Council, Bronisław Węglewski – Mayor of Buczek Municipality, Robert Jarzębak – Mayor of Dobroń Municipality, Michał Kosmowski – Secretary of the Dłutów Municipality, Karolina Cieciorowska – employee of the Dłutów Municipality Office, Łukasz Kukiela – Mayor of Wodzierady Municipality. We also hosted Piotr Pawelec – member of the

Karczmy Village Council, Elżbieta Krawczyk – Director of the Sports and Recreation Center in Łask, Magdalena Kelnierowska – Director of the Łask Cultural House, Grzegorz Rosiak – Head of the Kolumna branch of the Łask Cultural House, Aneta Możdżanowska – Director of the J. Łaski Młodszy Public Library in Łask, Wit Leśniewicz – Director of the Sędziejowice Public Library, Agnieszka Wolska – Director of the Ignacy Paderewski Comprehensive School in Kolumna, Anna Łabęcka – Director of the Comprehensive School in Żelów, Magdalena Krystyniak and Paweł Kowaliński – representing the Władysław Grabski Agricultural Education Center in Sędziejowice, representatives of the Local Action Group "BUD-UJ RAZEM", students of the Ignacy Paderewski Comprehensive School in Kolumna, students of the Comprehensive School in Żelów, students of the Władysław Grabski Agricultural Education Center in Sędziejowice, members of the LAG "Dolina rzeki Grabi" and residents of our area.

The conference was opened by Anna Doliwa – President of the Board of LAG "Dolina Rzeki Grabi", welcoming all the guests.

In the first part of the conference, a debate titled "**Community-Led Local Development - LEADER**" was held. The expert panel included: Adam Nowak - Deputy Secretary of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Agnieszka Ryś - Deputy Marshal of the Łódź Voivodeship, Łukasz Bartosik – Member of the Bełchatów County Board, Bronisław Węglewski – Mayor of Buczek Municipality, Robert Jarzębak – Mayor of Dobroń Municipality, and GroundUp project partners: Kristina Holmová LAG Sdruzeni SPLAV, Annie Linsemark - Lokalt Ledd Utveckling Halland, Dimitris Bogiatzis - LAG of Attica Islands, Fabrizio Cacciatore – Maghweb, with the discussion moderated by Anna Doliwa - Vice President of the Łódź Network of LAGs/member of the Thematic Group for the LEADER Approach.

In the second part of the conference, a session with youth from invited schools was held titled **Civic Dialogue: European Parliament Elections 2024 – Why Do We Need Fair and Equal Elections?** The Role of Youth in EU Democracy. The discussion was moderated by Igor Jędrzejczak, Councilor of the Łask Municipal Council for the current term, Speaker of the Youth Parliament of the Republic of Poland VI term (2023-2024), and Matěj Šlesinger, Communication Manager of the GroundUp Project, LAG SPLAV. The dialogue demonstrated that fair and equal elections are the foundation of EU democracy, and youth play a crucial role in shaping Europe's future. Their active participation in democratic processes is essential. Furthermore, joint educational and technological initiatives can help increase electoral engagement and transparency of electoral processes.

In the next part of the conference, Dr. hab. Katarzyna Zajda introduced participants to the concept of Smart Villages by leading a panel titled "**Social Innovations for Villages in Poland and Worldwide**".

The conference concluded with Przemysław Górski – expert in advocacy at Habitat For Humanity Foundation, who explained the concept of the **participatory budget**. The purpose of the presentation was to explain, using the example of participatory budgeting, the functioning of systemically supported social participation - its impact on community awareness, the ability to actively participate in social life, and resilience to crises, including climate, economic, demographic, and those related to war or natural disasters. Mechanisms supporting local democracies (e.g., participatory budgeting) serve both to address the needs of residents and to broadly promote civic education. This latter aspect is particularly significant – the concept of social co-decision and co-responsibility is relatively new, having accelerated with the entry into the European Union. Systemic support for participation allows for a better recognition of the benefits of cooperation – this translates into an increased sense of agency and community, which in turn fosters democracy, particularly the European one.

Due to lack of time, there was no room to address the European Citizens Initiative which will have to be a topic in the next project meeting.

In the afternoon, the project partners convened for a meeting of the **Steering Committee, the decision-making body of the GroundUp project**. The discussion centered on youth engagement through local activities, focusing on two main points: format and topics. Regarding the format, the committee debated whether to standardize the formats, allowing either citizens' dialogues or Oxford debates, or to permit a broader array of formats, as discussed by the project task force, including options like the World Café. The decision reached was to establish a list of five approved formats for use in local activities, to be implemented by each project partner on the ground. In terms of topics, the committee discussed whether all partners should address the same set of topics or if they should cover complementary topics, such as different EU policies. The consensus was that all partners should address the same group of topics. Consequently, an action item was established to prepare a list of questions for each partner to address during their local activities.

3. Agenda of the event.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Ba046SbsFIbwNF0k5of9u53XPwLYAYP9>



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GroundUP Conference is UP

From Community-Led Local Development, LEADER and local participatory budgeting to the European Citizens Initiative.

Citizens' Dialogue: Elections to the EP 2024 - why do we need fair and equal elections? The role of youth in EU democracy

Kolumna Park Hotel, Przygoń

**19/06/2024
9:00 - 15:15**



**Ministerstwo Rolnictwa
i Rozwoju Wsi**



[P9](#)



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From Community-Led Local Development, LEADER and local participatory budgeting to the European Citizens Initiative.

Citizens' Dialogue: Elections to the EP 2024 - why do we need fair and equal elections? The role of youth in EU democracy

9:30

Registration

10:00 - 10:30

Conference participants welcome

- Project Coordinator - LAG Sdružení SPLAV - **Kristina Holmová**, GroundUp project Leader
- Project Partner - LGD "Dolina rzeki Grabi" - **Anna Doliwa**, President of the Board
- Welcome and presentation of GroundUp partners, the topics of the event, brief summary of the 2024 EP elections - **Dr. Małgorzata Wochowska**, Project Manager
- Speeches by invited Polish guests

10:30 - 11:30

Expert panel debate on Community-led Local Development and LEADER

- **Adam Nowak** - Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
- **Łukasz Bartosik** - Member of the Belchatów District Council
- **Bronisław Węglewski** - President of the Agricultural Chamber of the Łódź Voivodeship, mayor of Buczek Municipality, Chairman of the council of LAG "Dolina rzeki Grabi"
- **Robert Jarzebak** - Mayor of Dobroń Municipality, Vice-chairman of the council of LAG "Dolina rzeki Grabi"
- GroundUP Partners: **Dimitris Bogiatzis**, **Kristina Holmová**, **Fabrizio Cacciatore**, **Anni Linsemark**

Discussion Moderator:
Anna Doliwa



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11:30 - 12:00	Coffee break
12:00 - 12:45	Social innovations for rural areas in Poland and worldwide (Smart Villages concept) - Dr. habil. Katarzyna Zajda, Prof. at the University of Łódź, Head of the Department of Rural and Urban Sociology
12:45 - 13:15	Participatory budgeting – Przemysław Górski - Advocacy Specialist at Habitat for Humanity Foundation
13:15 - 13:30	European Citizens' Initiative - Dr. Małgorzata Wochowska, project manager
13:30 - 14:00	Coffee break
14:00 - 15:00	Civic dialogue: 2024 European Parliament Elections - why do we need fair and equal elections? The role of youth in EU democracy - Igor Jędrzejczak, Councilor of the City Council of Łask in the current term, Marshal of the Youth Parliament of the Republic of Poland (2023-2024) and Matej Slesinger, Project's Communication Manager GroundUP, LAG SPLAV
15:00 - 15:15	Discussion and closing of the conference

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4. Main takeaways/ findings from the event

The key points of the Expert Panel Debate on CLLD:

Community-led Local Development (CLLD) and the LEADER program have significantly impacted rural development in the European Union. By empowering local communities to take charge of their development, LEADER aims to foster sustainable and inclusive growth. This debate explored various facets of LEADER, evaluating its successes, challenges, and future directions.

1. LEADER has been instrumental in promoting rural development by providing funding and support to local projects. It encourages innovation and cooperation, leading to sustainable economic growth, job creation, and improved quality of life in rural areas.
2. LAGs play a crucial role in the LEADER approach, ensuring that development strategies are genuinely community-led. By involving local stakeholders in decision-making, LAGs help tailor projects to the specific needs and potentials of their communities.
3. LEADER funding has provided crucial financial support for numerous rural development projects. The emphasis on sustainability ensures that these projects have a long-lasting impact on local communities.
4. LEADER is excellent at fostering a culture of innovation. It encourages creative solutions to local challenges and supports pilot projects that can be scaled up or replicated elsewhere. Knowledge transfer is facilitated through various networks and events, helping spread best practices.

It's clear that while LEADER has achieved significant successes, there are areas that require attention and improvement. By addressing these challenges, we can ensure that LEADER continues to support vibrant, resilient, and sustainable rural communities.

The takeaways from the Citizens' Dialogue:

The foundation of any session in this format is active audience participation, and this was evident here. Young people were especially actively involved. In the future, it is also important to ensure that the audience engages as much as possible in the discussion.

Next time, it is worth considering extending such a session. It is known that with such extensive topics, no amount of time will be sufficient; however, extending these discussions by another 30-40 minutes in the future would be ideal and would allow for a better discussion of the given question.

Conclusions from the debate from a substantive perspective:

1. Based on the discussion, it can be concluded that social media play an important role in shaping civic attitudes and conducting election campaigns for the European Parliament. Thanks to platforms like Facebook and TikTok, citizens, especially those aged 18-29, have access to information, which can further ensure the fairness and equality of elections, as institutions and candidates present information about themselves and their programs. At the same time, it was pointed out that social media can also pose a threat, which is why young Europeans must be educated from an early age on the proper use of these communication tools.
2. The reason for the low turnout in European Parliament elections among young people is a low sense of agency. One suggestion was to better include young people in election and information campaigns and to increase the number of proposed changes aimed at young people.
3. During the Dialogue, it was emphasized that the foundation of elections, shaping civic attitudes, and building a civil society is direct contact, which is what is most lacking. The problem of the lack of knowledge of our representatives in European institutions, even to a minimal extent, was pointed out. Politicians and EU officials should increase the number of direct meetings with residents, but the most important thing is that they take place regularly, not just occasionally, such as during an election campaign.

4. Diverse mix of participants: thanks to this, we achieved an intergenerational dialogue, but also an exchange of views between students with different worldviews
5. Active students from local high schools with an interest in politics – but they often feel lost in the overload of online information or rather feel that important information (how and who to vote for) is not reaching them.
6. The possibility of free choice is not the last level; young people's interest needs to be constantly cared for and they need to be taught democratic principles and methods.
7. Young people might be given unlimited space to express their own views and opinions, but without listening to them it is pointless – need for a real dialogue (both sides talking and actively listening).
8. The older generation feels that young people have left the public space and are only active online; for young people, on the other hand, the online environment can serve as an extension of that public space.

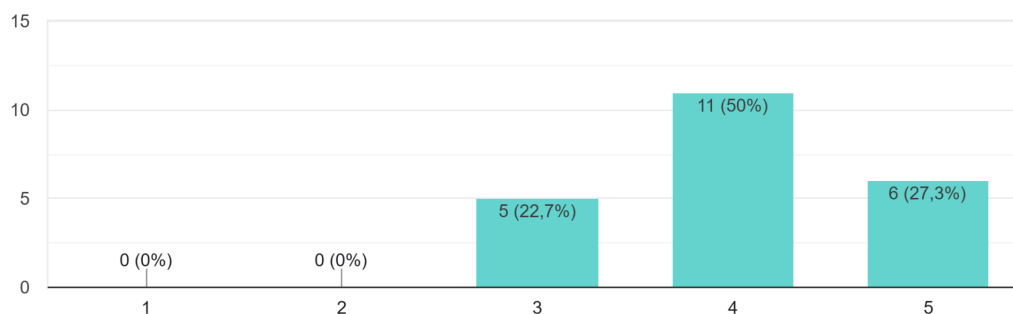
The takeaways from the session on participatory budgeting:

1. Participatory budgets (like democracy) are not perfect. Participation in these processes requires an understanding of the goal, social sensitivity, and cooperation skills. Poland has over a decade of experience in implementing participatory budgets – municipalities that do not yet have a budget can learn from cities such as Sopot, Łódź, and Warsaw. This is important – why repeat the same mistakes and draw the same conclusions when you can learn from them?
2. Participatory budgets increase social self-awareness – they expand the range of possibilities for coping with "interesting times." This, in turn, increases social resilience to crises and adaptive skills. The residents of Łódź effectively and quickly responded to the crisis related to the war in Ukraine. Would the response have been similar without participation?
3. Just as in participatory budgeting, participants choose the tasks that are most necessary for them, so in elections, we indicate those who will best take care of our interests. Therefore, perhaps low voter turnout does not result from a lack of democratic attitudes? Perhaps non-voting is a stance – a manifesto of dissatisfaction with the lack of representation. This, in turn, may result from the lack of the aforementioned: dialogue skills, the ability to express needs, and the sense of agency – understanding and caring for each other. From this perspective, participatory budgeting, participation – ways of creating dialogue and fostering partnership relationships – seems to be an ideal tool for positive change.

5. Participants' feedback:

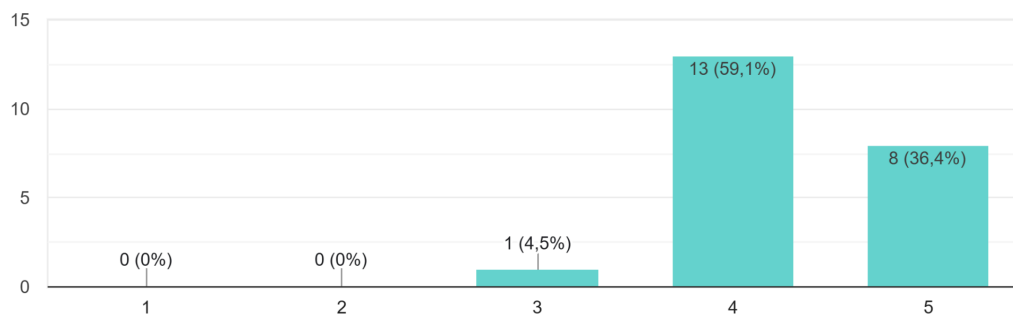
3. How well did the meeting manage to get you familiar with instruments supporting citizens' participation (such as: Community-Led Local Develop...budgeting, the European Citizens Initiative, etc.)

22 odpowiedzi



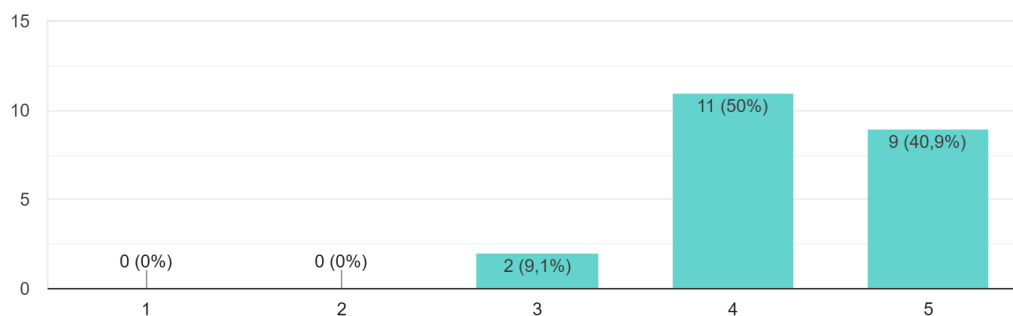
4. How much did the meeting encourage you to use tools of civic participation?

22 odpowiedzi



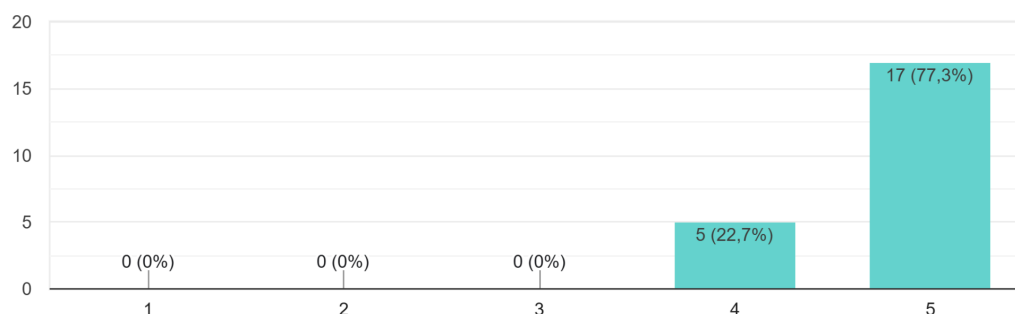
5. Moderation of the meeting/facilitation methods used:

22 odpowiedzi



7. Logistics - accommodation, food, conference venue, etc.

22 odpowiedzi

**Your main take-aways from the event - how would you summarize it?**

"Problems and aspects of youth -but also in general - are more or less similar all over Europe. But also problems and aspects of youth are more or less similar over time! Great networking, possibilities of more projects in the future"

"The facilitation was 10/10, very nice. And very good service from start to finish".

"Communication with the youth is important, we can organise small communities of youth activists and work with their initiatives, plan local budgeting and engage the youth to participate in social events for them to feel valued and important".

"The conclusions obtained will improve the way of doing things in the municipalities I represent. On the other hand, the meeting has facilitated and strengthened the union between the delegations of the participating European Union countries, which strengthens the concept of Europe and union".

"Networking and good practices (e.g. local participatory budgeting). Each partner has something to teach :)"

"It's cool to see so many young people from different parts of Europe gather in one place but still have similar opinions in the debate. I think it's lovely".

"It is extremely important to listen to young people's opinions and invite them to participate in this initiative, making them more active young people".

6. Hyperlinks to some sessions/ modules

<https://www.youtube.com/live/Y2Cnl6lgTdQ> (YT Video)

7. Graphical elements and photos of the event

https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/18vdbP5_k2z5xZofbYCfN26p_F0e6H9uX

















8. Website and/or FB page of the event.

Links where the beneficiaries (project partners) published this report: [GroundUp - links where the beneficiaries published the deliverable 2 of the project.docx](#) - Google Docs

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).