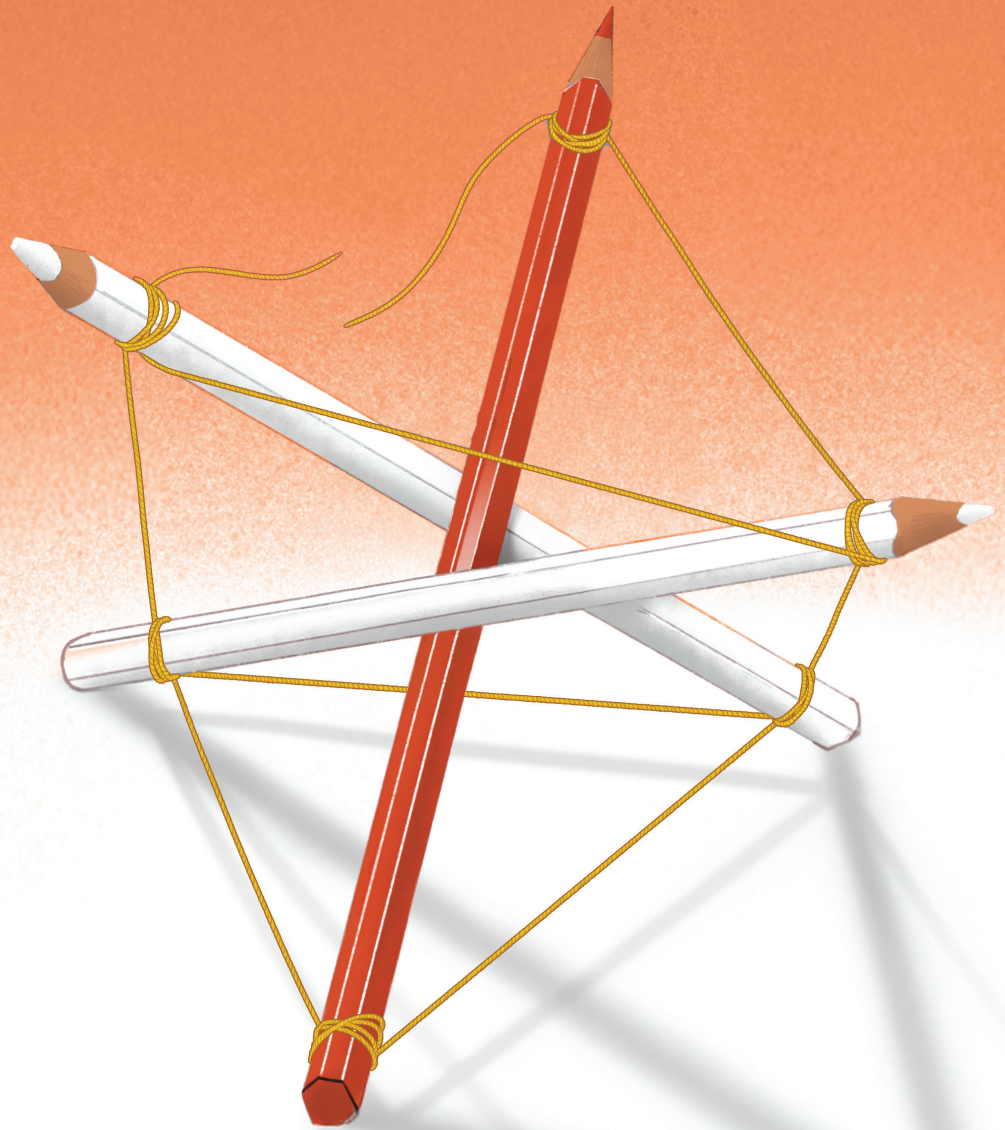


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# Between disruption and resilience

A 35-country overview of  
civic education in Europe

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# Contents

<b>Executive summary</b>	<b>6</b>
CHAPTER 1.	
<b>Mapping civic education in Europe</b>	<b>7</b>
Context and purpose	7
Overview of the mapping process	7
What is civic education?	8
Methodology	9
CHAPTER 2.	
<b>Civic education across Europe – expert insights and data-driven analysis</b>	<b>10</b>
2.1. Perspectives from local experts	10
Fragmentation in civic education systems	10
The role and challenges of non-formal civic education	11
Civic education as a response to democratic challenges	11
Structural and pedagogical barriers to effective civic education	12
Innovation and success stories in civic education	12
2.2. Pan-European trends – aggregated data analysis	13
A. Profiles of civic Education initiatives in Europe	13
B. Legal status, organizational types, and geographical reach	14
C. Focus areas in European civic education	17
D. Who benefits from civic education in Europe?	18
E. Methods, tools, and innovation in civic education	19
F. Choosing between in-house and external expertise	25
G. Funding strategies and their influence on organizations	25
H. Budget distribution of civic organizations	30
I. Balancing core costs and programmatic spending	32
J. Funding for civic education activities	32
K. The role of volunteers and interns	32
L. Exploring team sizes	34
M. Use of independent contractors	36

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N. Understanding and meeting organizational training needs	38
O. Key priorities for a pan-European civic education network	43
P. The need for peer-to-peer learning opportunities	44
Q. The effects of the Ukrainian war on civic educators' work	46
R. Barriers and constraints in civic education activities	47
CHAPTER 3.	
<b>Recommendations: Strengthening Europe's civic education landscape</b>	<b>48</b>
<hr/>	
Rethinking funding and sustainability	48
Ensuring quality and fostering innovation	48
Strengthening collaboration and partnerships	49
Advancing policy and structural reforms	50
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>51</b>
<hr/>	
<b>Disclaimer</b>	<b>51</b>
<hr/>	
<b>About the authors</b>	<b>52</b>
<hr/>	
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>54</b>
<hr/>	
<b>References</b>	<b>55</b>
<hr/>	
Appendix A. First questionnaire	56
Appendix B. Second questionnaire	60
Appendix C. Data sample	61
Appendix D. Data analysis methods	62

## Executive summary

This report explores the state of civic education across 35 European countries, emphasizing its vital role in fostering active citizenship and democratic stability, as well as illuminating the challenges faced by civic actors. It builds on a previous report<sup>1</sup> published in 2023, expanding the scope by including 13 additional countries. Many of the earlier findings remain relevant today, reinforcing the urgency of strengthening civic education.

Europe's civic education landscape is diverse, ranging from small, community-based groups to large, well-funded organizations – all grappling with common challenges related to funding, collaboration, and legitimacy. These challenges include resource shortages, lack of recognition, and the need for adaptability in response to declining trust in institutions and democracy under pressure.

Drawing on a comparative analysis of qualitative and quantitative data, this report argues that the future of civic education as a cornerstone of democratic resilience in Europe depends on sustained funding, innovation, collaboration, and supportive policies which safeguard civic freedoms and integrate non-formal learning. Additionally, cross-sector partnerships and capacity-building efforts are crucial in addressing societal challenges and reinforcing democratic stability.

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<sup>1</sup> Slavkova, L., Kurilić, M. (2023): *Great expectations: Demands and realities of civic education in Europe*. Available at: [https://thecivics.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Mapping-CE-in-Europe\\_Documentation.pdf](https://thecivics.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Mapping-CE-in-Europe_Documentation.pdf).

## CHAPTER 1.

# Mapping civic education in Europe

## Context and purpose

The world was a different place when we published the report *Great expectations: Demands and realities of Civic Education in Europe*<sup>2</sup> in 2023, which resulted from mapping civic work by civil society actors in 22 European countries<sup>3</sup> over two years (2021–2023). That publication appeared at a moment when we were cautiously emerging from the pandemic and one year into the war in Ukraine. The war made us, as Europeans, acutely aware of the fragility of peace and stability, while the end of the pandemic offered a glimmer of hope for a return to normality.

Two years later, the notion of “normal” feels increasingly distant. As Europeans, we confront the reality that the foundations of our progress over the past decades can no longer be taken for granted. Liberal democracy is under strain, our security infrastructure is being tested, and the rules-based world order is being replaced by an *à la carte* system<sup>4</sup> in which the ability to negotiate and maneuver outweighs commitment to democratic norms and values.

Amid these challenges, our team continued mapping the work of civic actors in 13 additional countries<sup>5</sup> (2023–2024), bringing the total to 35<sup>6</sup> for this analysis. The civic field is vast, diverse, and difficult to define. Its diversity reveals how civic education – once seen as the sole responsibility of the state – has expanded far beyond the school domain into spaces occupied by companies, public figures, and even social media influencers. Mapping this field can be both frustrating and encouraging. It is frustrating because civic educators, broadly defined, do not form a unified, easily describable field across Europe. Yet it is encouraging to witness the significant need for civic education and the many allies contributing to it.

Today’s challenges amplify the importance of civic education: growing uncertainty and polarization, the return of hard power and militarization, declining trust in institutions, the rapid advance of artificial intelligence (AI), and the widening gap between citizens and traditional democratic structures, including political parties. The list goes on. In a world where Europe’s ideals of liberty, democracy, and rules-based institutions are becoming the exception rather than the norm, civic education cannot remain solely reactive. Instead, it should focus on proactively empowering citizens to adapt to and address challenges, whatever form those challenges may take.

To support civic educators in meeting these demands, we first need to understand who they are and what they need. This report is a summary of insights drawn from nearly 600 civic actors across 35 countries. Chapter 1 describes the purpose and scope of the mapping initiative, provides definitions for civic education, and explains the methodology used to gather and analyze data. Chapter 2 analyzes comparative data from two online surveys and 35 expert opinion pieces, clustering responses around the most significant findings. Chapter 3 offers actionable recommendations for philanthropy, policymakers, and civil society. The report concludes with Appendices A and B, containing the questionnaires used for mapping; Appendix C, a detailed breakdown of the data sample which traces how many organizations participated within each cycle; and Appendix D, outlining the data analysis methods. While the process was comprehensive, it is referred to as a “mapping” rather than a research report to emphasize its exploratory nature.

## Overview of the mapping process

Between 2021 and 2024, THE CIVICS Innovation Hub, supported by the German Federal Agency for Civic Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung/bpb), worked to map the landscape of non-formal and informal civic education across Europe.

An online questionnaire was distributed to over 4,000 pre-selected civic educators, with nearly 600 responding. These anonymized responses form the foundation of this report, capturing key topics, target

2 Slavkova, L., Kurilić, M. (2023).

3 Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Finland, France, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Turkey.

4 Garton Ash, T. et al. (2023):

*Living in an à la carte world: What European policymakers should learn from global public opinion*. Policy brief, European Council on Foreign Relations.

5 Belarus, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Moldova, Norway, Sweden, the UK, and Ukraine.

6 N.B.: Belarus, Moldova, Turkey, and Ukraine were not surveyed due to various obstacles during the mapping process, including the ongoing war in Ukraine, political instability, and risks posed to civil society organizations in initiating such a process. Nevertheless, as for all the other countries, local partners contributed with analytical expert opinion pieces on the local context. That is why we are counting 35 cases.

audiences, resources, and challenges shaping the field.

At the core of this initiative is the CIVICS NETWORK MAP<sup>7</sup>, the first pan-European visual representation of civic actors. The map provides a detailed view of the profiles and geographic distribution of educators, revealing connections and patterns which support collaboration, advocacy, and strategic planning. The CIVICS NETWORK MAP is updated regularly and open for civic actors to join. If you are not on the map yet, consider joining.

The collected data and visualizations offer a clearer understanding of the civic education field and provide a foundation for academic research and collaboration. This initiative marks an important step in strengthening civic education on a European scale.



[www.mapping.thecivics.eu](http://www.mapping.thecivics.eu)

## What is civic education?

The mapping is focused on non-formal and informal civic education, recognizing its critical role alongside formal education. Eligible participants included a wide range of actors actively engaged in civic education, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), networks, foundations, individual experts, and social media influencers. These contributors demonstrate how civic education extends beyond traditional classrooms, encompassing diverse efforts to equip citizens with the skills and values needed to actively participate in society.

Civic education is often defined with a focus on formal education – curriculum-based learning in schools and universities. While these definitions are essential, they do not capture the broader scope of civic education. Non-formal education includes structured programmes outside formal curricula aimed at developing civic competencies, while informal education refers to lifelong learning gained through daily experiences and societal influences<sup>8</sup>.

The diversity of civic education is shaped by national histories, traditions, and linguistic nuances<sup>9</sup>. European institutions often favour specific terminologies aligned with their policies, while comparative studies and international assessments, such as the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS), further influence discourse by introducing standardized benchmarks. These contextual factors highlight the complexity of defining civic education and the varied approaches across Europe.

For the purposes of this mapping, civic education is defined in line with the Council of Europe's Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education<sup>10</sup> and the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture<sup>11</sup>. Following the wording and recommendation of the Council of Europe, civic education equips citizens with the competences which enable them to actively participate in society. The frameworks identify four domains of civic competences:

- Values: Valuing human dignity and human rights, cultural diversity, democracy, justice, fairness, equality, and the rule of law.
- Attitudes: Openness to cultural otherness and different beliefs, respect, civic-mindedness, responsibility, self-efficacy, and tolerance of ambiguity.
- Skills: Autonomous learning, critical thinking, active listening, empathy, adaptability, linguistic and communication skills, cooperation, and conflict resolution.
- Knowledge and critical understanding: Understanding of the self, language, communication, and the world, including politics, law, human rights, cultures, history, media, economies, and sustainability<sup>12</sup>.

For this report, the terms *civic actors* and *civic educators* will be used interchangeably, as will *NGOs* and *civil society organizations* (CSOs). Likewise, *civics*, *civic work*, *civic education*, and *civic engagement* will be treated as synonymous within this context.

<sup>7</sup> The MAP is available at: <https://thecivics.eu/projects/mapping/>.

<sup>8</sup> Brandner, P. et al. (2020): *Compass: Manual for human rights education with young people*. Strasbourg, Council of Europe Publishing.

<sup>9</sup> Compare: Muleya, G. (2018): *Civic education versus Citizenship education: Where is the point of convergence?* In: *Journal of Lexicography and Terminology* 2 (1), pp. 109–129; Khoo, S. & Jørgensen, N. (2021): *Intersections and collaborative potentials between global citizenship and education for sustainable development*. In: *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 19 (4), pp. 470–481. DOI: 10.1080/14767724.2021.1889361.

<sup>10</sup> Council of Europe (2010): *Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education*. Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 11 May 2010 and explanatory memorandum. Strasbourg: Council of Europe (Legal instruments).

<sup>11</sup> Council of Europe (2018): *Reference framework of competences for democratic culture*. Volume 1, Context, concepts and models. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

<sup>12</sup> Council of Europe (2018), p. 63.

## Methodology

### Data collection

The mapping process was conducted in phases between 2021 and 2024, grouping countries at different times while maintaining a consistent two-step approach. In the first step, a local partner<sup>13</sup> in each country compiled a list of civic education actors. Over 4,000 individuals and organizations were identified, contacted via email, and invited to complete an online questionnaire (see Appendices A–B for the full questionnaire). Respondents were encouraged to recommend additional civic education actors, whose eligibility was examined before they, too, were invited to participate. This process expanded the mapping's reach within each country.

In the second step, a shorter, follow-up questionnaire was sent to those who had completed the first survey. This stage aimed to map relationships between civic education actors and explore their need for cooperation, networking, and peer learning. Respondents identified collaborators within their countries and assessed the intensity of these relationships. The goal was to uncover existing networks and verify connections between actors in each country.

The methodology was developed at the project's outset and refined throughout its implementation. THE CIVICS team collaborated with local partners and a researcher specializing in quantitative methods and network analysis to ensure the process remained effective and reliable. A research agency managed the technical aspects of survey distribution and data collection, streamlining the process for respondents.

### Data sample

A total of 583 entities were mapped across 31 countries: 437 during the first cycle (autumn 2021–spring 2023) and 146 during the second (autumn 2023–spring 2024) (see Appendix C for data sample). This reflects a response rate of 14.6% from the initial 4,000 contacts, with an average of 19 entities per country. These figures are slightly higher than typical online survey response rates, which often face challenges such as invitation fatigue, low motivation, and concerns about data security. To mitigate these issues, the survey design was simplified, multiple reminders were sent, and follow-up calls were conducted in some countries.

In addition to the surveys, 35 analytical expert opinion pieces were commissioned – 22 during the first cycle and 13 during the second. These pieces were authored by local experts in the 31 mapped countries as well as in Belarus, Moldova, Turkey, and Ukraine. They provide qualitative insights which contextualize the survey data, offering a more nuanced understanding of the local civic landscapes. This combination of qualitative and quantitative data enabled the development of well-informed conclusions and recommendations.

### Data analysis

The analysis of the data for this report was carried out by a team of researchers from the University of Potsdam, who reviewed relevant literature and recent studies on civic education, analyzed the qualitative and quantitative data, and formulated recommendations. Using a mixed-methods approach, the researchers examined the two types of data separately (see Appendix D for a description of the data analysis methods). THE CIVICS team focused on analyzing the aggregated data to distil pan-European conclusions and recommendations.

### The role of local partners

Local partners in each mapped country were instrumental in the success of this mapping. They provided critical insights into the national context of civic education, translated the questionnaire into their local languages, and compiled initial lists of organizations. Additionally, they authored expert opinion pieces, outlining key developments in civics in their countries. These partners also participated in workshops to validate the results and played a key role in disseminating the findings within their respective countries.

<sup>13</sup> To learn who the local partners are, please see the acknowledgements at the end.




## CHAPTER 2.

# Civic education across Europe – expert insights and data-driven analysis

## 2.1. Perspectives from local experts

Civic education plays a pivotal role in fostering democratic engagement, yet its implementation across Europe reveals a landscape shaped by diverse contexts and systemic challenges, but also innovation. Drawing on **35 expert-authored country profiles**, the following examines the state of civic education within formal, non-formal, and informal domains. The expert opinion pieces underwent **qualitative content analysis** to identify recurring trends and key topics across these countries. Utilizing a hybrid methodology which combines deductive and inductive approaches, categories were derived from the texts, with **challenges emerging as the most prominent theme** – further divided into three sub-categories (see **Figure 1**). This chapter highlights the **societal, structural, and pedagogical barriers** which hinder progress while also exploring how non-formal education, driven by CSOs, bridges critical gaps. Academic studies further contextualize these findings within broader European trends.

Figure 1. Key challenges in civic education

 <b>Challenges for democratic societies</b>	 <b>Challenges for civil society actors</b>	 <b>Challenges for pedagogy</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low trust in political institutions &amp; low engagement</li> <li>• Rising populism, polarization</li> <li>• Emerging authoritarian, far-right views</li> <li>• War in Ukraine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short-term funding</li> <li>• Competition over limited resources</li> <li>• Shrinking civic space</li> <li>• Limited recognition &amp; limited access as legitimate actors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient teacher training</li> <li>• Lack of coherent approach to CE methods &amp; goals</li> <li>• Implementation gap</li> <li>• Low recognition &amp; motivation</li> </ul>
<p>“The most pressing challenge for civic education in Ireland today is how to educate for citizenship and civic participation in a post-truth era with the added challenges of the rise of far-right rhetoric and democratic backsliding which is evident across Europe.” (Ireland)</p>	<p>“Uncertain and inconsistent project funding is one of the fundamental challenges for organizations offering non-formal and informal education in this field. It makes long-term planning difficult and forces organizations to adapt to each call's conditions and focus, rather than following their own missions.” (Slovenia)</p>	<p>“The varying and conflicting understandings of the content and purpose of civic education have not been reconciled throughout the years.” (Croatia)</p>
<p>War in Ukraine, irregular migration, climate change, cost of living, and terrorism as the main challenges facing the EU (Eurobarometer 2024).</p>	<p>NGOs are significantly engaged in civic education initiatives, frequently in conjunction with local communities (Veugelers 2021).</p>	<p>A majority of EU member states encounter challenges in defining relevance, scope, and content of CE (EURYDICE 2017; Veugelers 2021).</p>

## Fragmentation in civic education systems

One of the most pervasive challenges to civic education across Europe is **fragmentation** – a lack of coherence in **goals, definitions, and implementation**. In many countries, ideological debates and political histories influence what civic education is, especially in schools, and how it should be taught. Unresolved disputes about historical narratives additionally complicate efforts to integrate civic education into curricula. Similarly, other countries face challenges in coordinating their non-formal sector, as project-based funding fosters competition among CSOs, hindering collaboration.

In countries like Lithuania, civic education often focuses on rote learning of political institutions, leaving little room for active engagement or political discussions. Meanwhile, Spain struggles with ideological sensitivities, where debates over civic education content and purpose have stalled meaningful reforms. In France, debates about secularism and multiculturalism intersect with civic education, creating challenges for cohesive implementation. In Albania, misconceptions about civil society's role and its sometimes-blurred lines with politics have resulted in public scepticism towards civic education initiatives. These examples underscore how civic education is often deprioritized, with limited resources and competing interpretations further weakening its impact. Veugelers emphasizes how national identities and political ideologies shape these fragmented approaches, complicating consensus-building around civic education's objectives<sup>14</sup>.

## The role and challenges of non-formal civic education

Non-formal civic education has an important **role in addressing gaps left by formal education systems**, providing essential support through teacher training, project-based learning, volunteering programmes, community initiatives, and more. These efforts help bridge the divide between classroom education and real-life civic engagement. CSOs are also a driving force for **innovation** in democratic education within schools, introducing teachers to new topics and tools. However, CSOs face **persistent challenges**, including **shrinking civic space, insufficient funding, and limited public recognition**. Across Europe, an increasing number of countries are introducing legislation which restricts the work of civic educators, reducing their access to schools and teachers while undermining their credibility as key contributors to the education system. The reliance on project-based funding further jeopardizes the long-term sustainability of non-formal civic education initiatives, often forcing organizations to align with funders' priorities or prioritize constant testing and innovation over proven impactful approaches. CSOs frequently find themselves competing for scarce resources, which hampers their capacity to collaborate effectively. Even in Nordic countries, where funding mechanisms are more stable, the focus on short-term projects risks detracting from broader, long-term goals.

In politically restrictive environments like Hungary's and Belarus's, CSOs contend with government hostility. Hungarian NGOs face smear campaigns and limited access to schools but have demonstrated resilience by forming networks to train election observers and support local civic initiatives. Similarly, many Belarusian civic educators were forced into exile after the 2020 protests, yet they continue their work remotely, reflecting the adaptability of civil society actors. In Turkey, civic education initiatives often lack state support and face significant challenges due to political tensions, yet grassroots movements on topics like gender equality and environmental rights demonstrate the strength of non-formal approaches.

Conversely, Malta illustrates the potential of collaborative models. Partnerships between government, private sector, and NGOs have fostered a rich ecosystem of non-formal civic education initiatives. Estonia highlights how digital innovation can enhance civic education, with programmes promoting digital citizenship as a core component of democratic engagement. In Denmark, folk high schools<sup>15</sup> remain a cornerstone of civic learning, offering examples of long-term success. In Ireland, youth-focused civic education initiatives have found creative ways to connect local communities with national democratic efforts. The European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) underscores the critical role of CSOs in delivering civic education but notes that insufficient core funding and over-reliance on external donors limit their long-term impact<sup>16</sup>.

## Civic education as a response to democratic challenges

Civic education is **uniquely positioned to address societal challenges**, including rising populism, polarization, and democratic backsliding. Across Central and Eastern Europe, low trust in political institutions exacerbates civic disengagement, particularly among youth. In Poland, where government hostility has restricted civic education in the past, CSOs have built alliances to advocate for civic values and support grassroots initiatives. Similarly, in Ireland, non-formal civic education programmes are working to counter far-right rhetoric by

<sup>14</sup> Veugelers, W. (2021): *Implementation of citizenship education action in the EU: European Implementation Assessment*. (A. Zygierevicz, Ed.). European Parliament.

<sup>15</sup> Folk high schools are non-formal adult education institutions which focus on personal growth, social engagement, and lifelong learning. They emphasize experiential learning, democratic values, and community living rather than standardized curricula or exams. These schools often offer courses in arts, humanities, sustainability, and social issues, attracting students of various ages.

<sup>16</sup> European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) (2017): *Citizenship education at school in Europe*. Luxembourg: Publications Office (Eurydice Report).

encouraging youth participation in democratic processes.

The war in Ukraine has reshaped the civic education landscape in post-Soviet states. In Ukraine, civic education has shifted its focus towards national identity and resilience, with NGOs developing online courses and volunteer-driven initiatives. Estonia emphasizes the importance of digital literacy and military education as part of its civic education strategy, addressing the challenges of security, disinformation, and cultural diversity. In Moldova, civic education programmes are grappling with balancing identity politics and democratic principles, reflecting broader regional tensions. The country faces challenges in aligning civic education with its dual identity as a post-Soviet state and an aspiring European Union member. This balancing act often places civic education at the centre of debates about language, culture, and geopolitical orientation, complicating efforts to create inclusive and forward-looking curricula. In Germany, discussions about integrating civic education into a post-migration society highlight how formal and non-formal systems must adapt to new realities. As the country grapples with demographic shifts and increasing multiculturalism, civic education faces the challenge of addressing social cohesion while countering far-right populism and anti-democratic narratives. This involves integrating topics like cultural pluralism, migration, and historical responsibility into both formal curricula and non-formal initiatives. Research by Veugelers highlights the potential of civic education to build resilience against authoritarian tendencies and foster critical engagement with democratic ideals<sup>17</sup>.

### Structural and pedagogical barriers to effective civic education

A significant barrier to effective civic education is the lack of systemic support for educators and CSOs. Most countries struggle with insufficient or **inadequate teacher training**, which undermines the quality of civic education in formal settings. The same goes for **the lack of adequate capacity building** for CSOs and non-formal educators. Some countries face challenges with **outdated curricula and limited capacities** hindering efforts to engage students meaningfully in civic activities. The **competitive nature** of project-based funding further complicates the landscape for non-formal civic educators. In many countries, short-term funding cycles discourage long-term planning, while, in others like the Nordics, an over-reliance on government priorities creates risks if non-democratic governments take over and compromise the autonomy of non-formal civic education providers.

Restrictive political environments amplify these challenges. In countries like Belarus and Turkey, CSOs face limited operational freedom, with government policies curtailing their ability to deliver civic education. However, countries like Denmark provide a counterpoint, where strong traditions of civic engagement through folk high schools demonstrate the potential of sustained investments in non-formal education. In Sweden, debates over funding for civic education reflect tensions between societal priorities and long-term investments in democratic resilience. In Latvia, where civic education relies heavily on CSOs, the lack of integration with formal education systems creates barriers to sustainable impact. EACEA identifies teacher training as a critical area for improvement across Europe, emphasizing the need for systemic investments to enhance civic education delivery<sup>18</sup>.

### Innovation and success stories in civic education

Despite these challenges, several countries demonstrate innovative approaches which can inform broader reforms. In Luxembourg, mandatory training on teaching controversial issues equips educators to navigate complex societal debates. Estonia's emphasis on digital citizenship highlights the potential of technology to enhance democratic engagement.

In Finland, civic education has historically been well-integrated into societal structures, though recent shifts towards project-based funding pose new challenges. In Portugal, initiatives have focused on integrating environmental and gender issues into civic education, leveraging support from NGOs and influencers to engage broader audiences. North Macedonia demonstrates how CSOs can fill gaps left by government inaction, creating targeted youth programmes despite limited funding. Veugelers highlights how these models underscore the importance of context-specific strategies which leverage existing strengths while addressing systemic weaknesses<sup>19</sup>. These examples demonstrate that with innovation and collaboration, civic education can effectively respond to diverse societal needs.

<sup>17</sup> Veugelers, W. (2021).

<sup>18</sup> EACEA (2017).

<sup>19</sup> Veugelers, W. (2021).

## 2.2. Pan-European trends – aggregated data analysis

This section examines the aggregated data from 583 entities across Europe, analyzed by THE CIVICS team in collaboration with researchers from the University of Potsdam. Using a mixed-methods approach (see Appendix D), this analysis identifies key trends, regional patterns, and systemic challenges in civic education, providing a comprehensive overview of its current state across the continent.

### A. Profiles of civic Education initiatives in Europe

Civic education initiatives across Europe exhibit a wide array of organizational approaches, missions, funding models, and methods. By examining the variables “type of entity” and “main field of work”<sup>20</sup> and then applying Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) (see Appendix D), we identified six profiles:

#### 1. Specialized yet diverse organizations

This profile consists primarily of NGOs and associations dedicated to fostering civic awareness. Representing 43% of respondents, these organizations are diverse in their methods and fields of work but share a specialized focus on a limited number of topics, though the specific topics vary between them. Their most used methods are awareness campaigns (48%) and teaching and lecturing (48%), while their main fields of work include civic engagement (56%), environmental sustainability (22%), and social inclusion (21%). On average, they work with 9 employees and 7 independent contractors; public funding serves as the backbone of their budgets (43%).

#### 2. Engagement, inclusion, and rights organizations

These organizations – predominantly NGOs – account for 26% of respondents. Strongly advocacy-oriented, their work spans civic engagement, social inclusion, and civil rights. They often balance public and various other funding sources and operate with an average number of employees (9), independent contractors (9), and volunteers (22). The majority use awareness campaigns (70%) and capacity building (66%) as their primary methods.

These first two profiles represent the largest share of the surveyed entities. The following four are smaller in size and more complex in terms of organizational structure, integrating a wider range of fields of work than the larger profiles.

#### 3. Foundations with civic and economic priorities

Making up 10% of respondents, this profile is led by well-resourced foundations (93%). Organizations in this group focus mainly on civic goals (civic engagement, social inclusion, and community building) as well as economic priorities like social entrepreneurship and employability. Their operations are based on a stable mix of public (32%) and self-generated (29%) funding. This indicates that they have access to diverse funding, including more specific sources due to their focus on economic aspects. This profile has the highest number of employees (12 on average) and typical numbers in terms of external contractors (9 on average) and volunteers (19 on average). Capacity building (66%) and publications (54%) are the tools and methods most actively used by organizations in this profile.

#### 4. Global multi-focus organizations

Accounting for 9% of respondents, these organizations operate across numerous fields, including civic engagement (92%), sustainability (69%), social entrepreneurship (69%), and many more. They bridge local and global efforts mostly through community building (73%) and training of trainers (71%). Their diverse funding sources and reliance on volunteers (89 on average) highlight their adaptability and a more complex organizational approach. This diversification also presents a potential model for enhancing financial stability in the field.

#### 5. Knowledge-focused organizations

Representing 5% of respondents, these organizations – mostly research institutes (69%), educational institutions (48%), and think tanks (45%) – prioritize research and knowledge production. They rely in equal amounts on foreign and national public funding (both 31%) and work with the smallest teams – on average 7 employees, 6 external contractors, and 11 volunteers. This suggests that they have the most limited capacities in terms of collaborators and organizational stability. Organizations in this profile are highly specialized in terms of their main field of work, which is knowledge production and dissemination, with a primary focus on civic engagement and a strong emphasis on knowledge-driven activities such as research and history remembrance. This combination indicates that they can function as a bridge between academia and grassroots action.

<sup>20</sup> These two variables were chosen as key structural elements distinguishing organization types.

## 6. Community centres, initiatives, and networks

This profile, working close to communities and comprising 5% of respondents, includes community and cultural centres (both 67%) focusing on civic engagement (85%), community building (82%), culture and arts (70%), and social inclusion (56%). With 44% relying on self-generated income and only 26% on public funding, they face significant resource constraints. They have a small number of employees (7 on average), a typical number of contractors (8 on average), and a high reliance on volunteers (44 on average). In terms of methods, they focus on community building and public events in person (both 82%).

Taken together, these profiles illustrate the diversity of civic education initiatives across Europe. Two larger profiles – “Specialized yet diverse organizations” and “Engagement, inclusion, and rights organizations” – account for 69% of surveyed actors and primarily focus on civic engagement, awareness raising, and advocacy. These organizations are predominantly NGOs and rely heavily on public funding and volunteer contributions. While they differ in thematic specialization, both face financial instability and resource constraints.

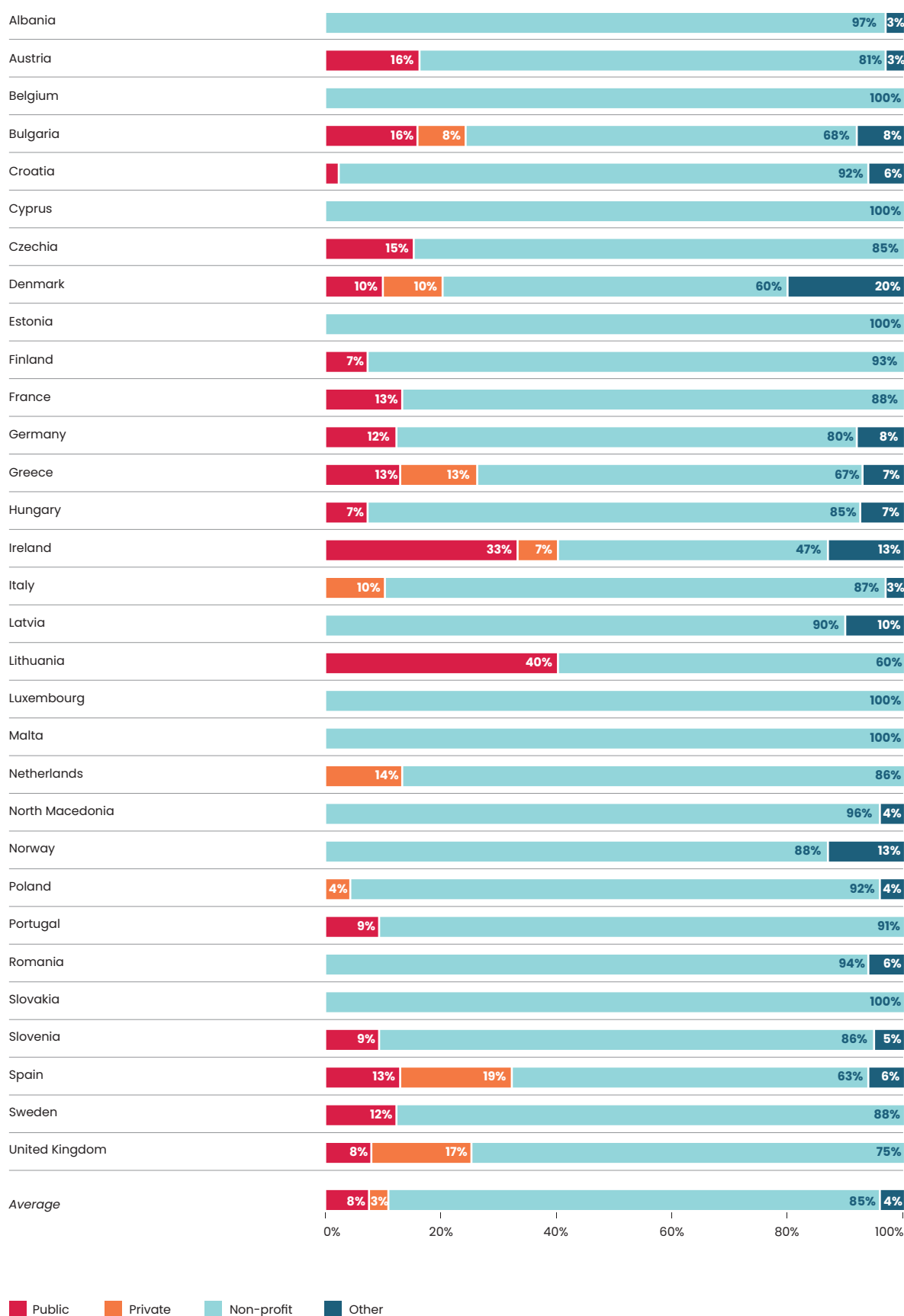
The remaining four profiles (29%) represent smaller, more structurally complex organizations which integrate multiple fields of work. These include “Foundations with civic and economic priorities,” which have stable funding; “Glocal multi-focus organizations,” which bridge local and global civic efforts through training and community building; “Knowledge-focused organizations,” which produce and disseminate research but face funding challenges and limited staffing; and “Community centres, initiatives, and networks,” which work closely with local communities and rely on self-generated income but operate under significant resource constraints.

Despite their differences, all profiles share common challenges related to financial sustainability, reliance on volunteers, and the need for diversified funding sources. While the two largest profiles tend to focus on advocacy, civic awareness, and engagement, the smaller profiles exhibit greater structural complexity, integrating economic, research, and cultural dimensions into their civic education work.

## B. Legal status, organizational types, and geographical reach

### Legal status

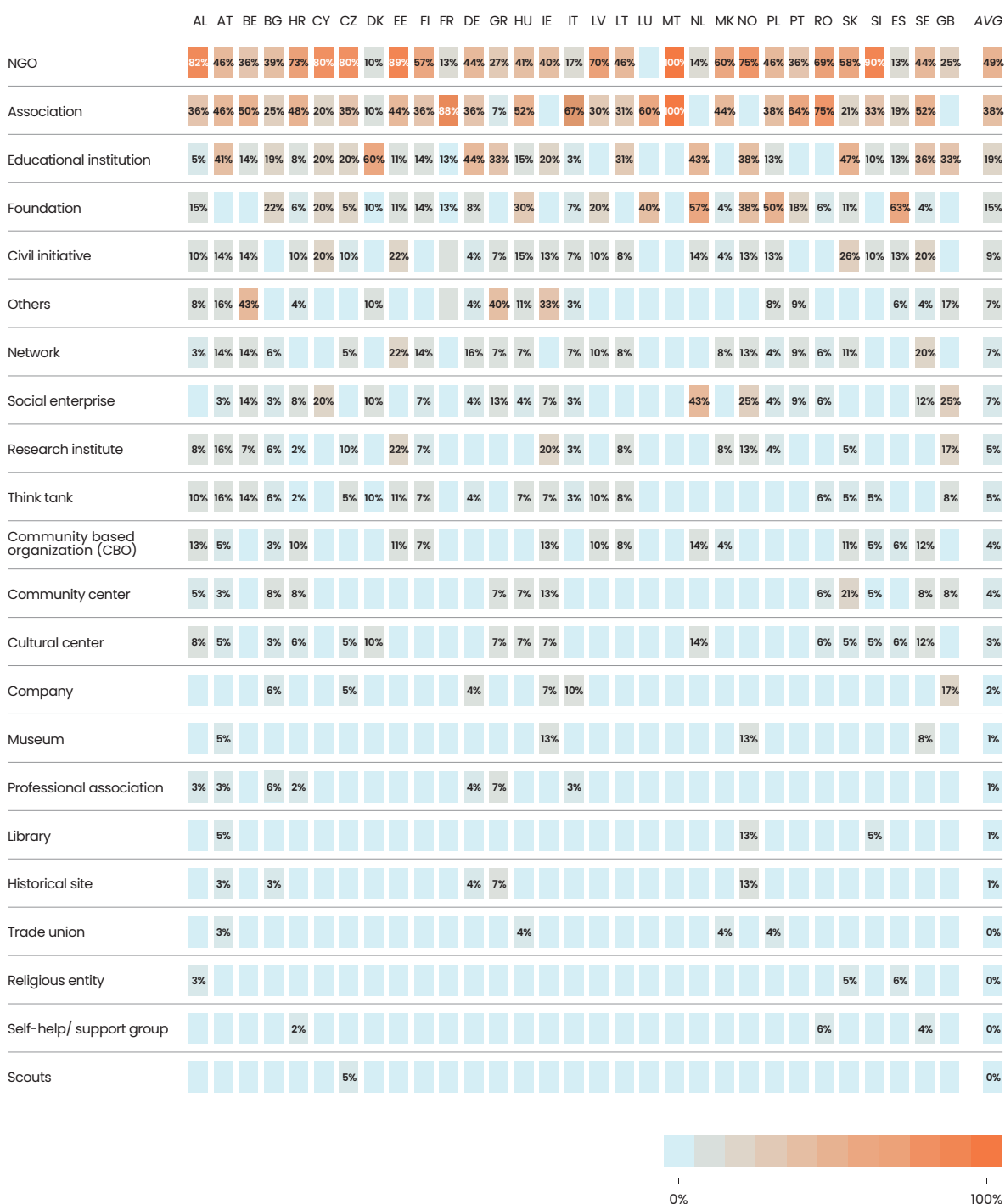
Most mapped civic education organizations in Europe (84%) operate as **non-profits (Figure 2)**, highlighting the sector's emphasis on social and charitable work. **Public entities**, which are government-owned and provide public services, are relatively uncommon (13.7%). They are most visible in **Lithuania (40%) and Ireland (33.3%)**. Among the respondents, **8.3% are registered as private entities**, referring to for-profit businesses engaged in civic education. They have a limited overall but notable presence in **the UK (16.7%), Spain (18.8%), and Italy (10%)**. The **Others** category, representing unique or undefined legal forms, is moderately present in countries like Ireland (13.3%) and Denmark (20%).

**Figure 2. What is the legal status of your entity?**

### Types of Civic Education Organizations

Beyond their legal status, organizations differ in **operational identity** – whether they function as NGOs, associations, foundations, or other forms (**Figure 3**). **NGOs** emerged as the most common organizational type, representing 48.4% of respondents, followed by **associations** (35.6%). Educational institutions accounted for 20.3%, while **foundations**, primarily philanthropic, comprised 14.6%. **Civil initiatives** and **social enterprises** made up less than 10% of the sample. **Other organizational profiles**, including think tanks, research institutions, community-based organizations, religious entities, and cultural centres, were notably underrepresented.

**Figure 3. Type of entity, what fits best?**



### Geographical reach

Civic education efforts predominantly focus on the **national** (73.0%) and **local levels**, i.e. villages, cities, neighbourhoods (64.3%). The strong presence at the national level indicates an emphasis on shaping public discourse, education policies, or large-scale programmes, while the local-level focus highlights direct engagement with communities, schools, and municipal initiatives. **Regional initiatives** in one or more countries account for **46.8%** of the sample, while **international engagement** is the least common at **35.9%**. The latter indicates that most civic education programmes prioritize domestic concerns over cross-border or global collaborations, possibly due to resource limitations, national policy priorities, or contextual differences in civic education across countries.

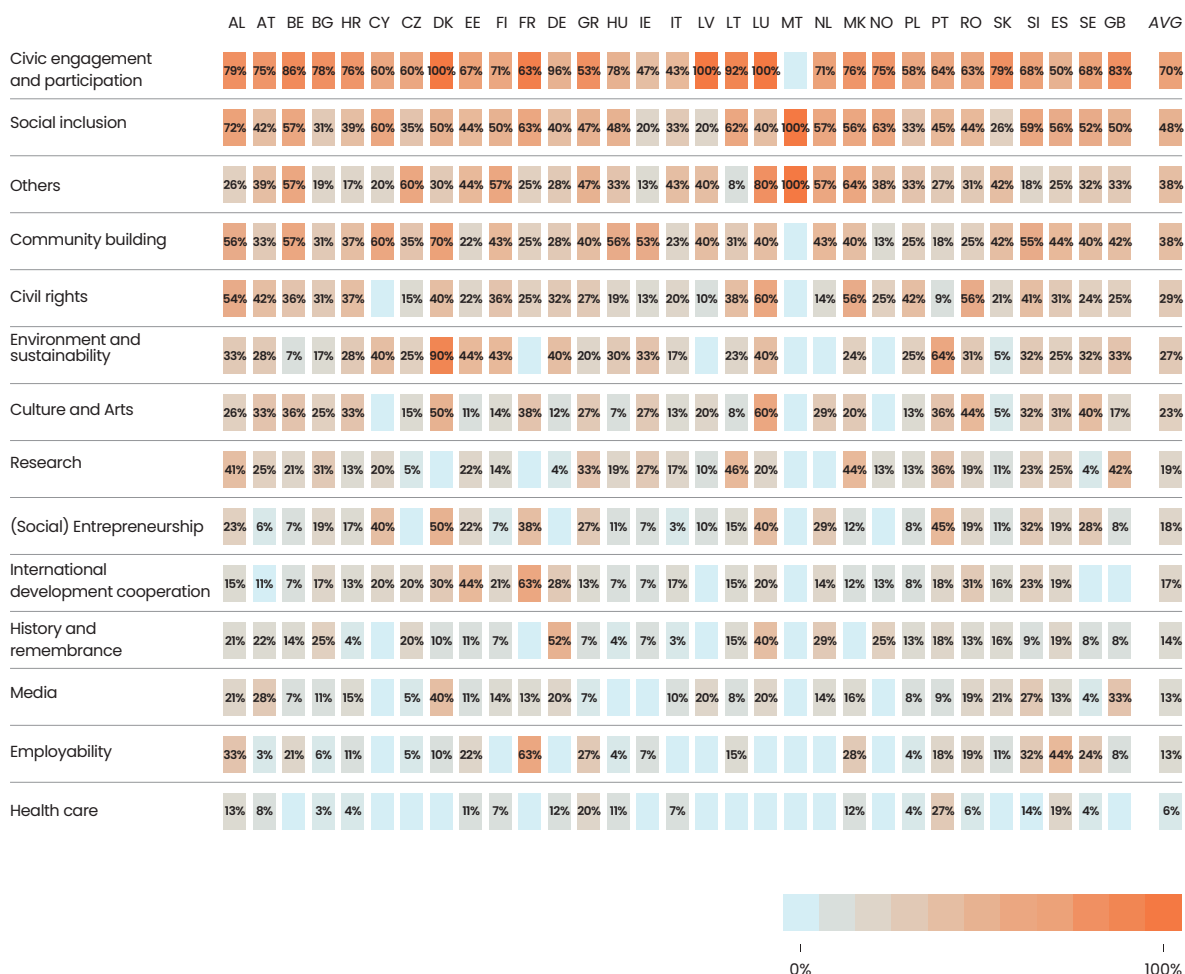
### C. Focus areas in European civic education

**Civic engagement and participation** emerge as the most prominent focus area, with 70.3% of all organizations engaged in this field. While some countries show near-universal participation, others fall below half, indicating varying national priorities (**Figure 4**). **Social inclusion** is the second most common focus area at 48.5%, with half of the surveyed countries exceeding 50% engagement, highlighting a strong commitment to inclusive civic spaces.

**Community-building** efforts rank third, with 37.9% of organizations involved, though with more variation across countries. Most prioritize strengthening local ties, while a few report notably lower engagement. The **Others** category, the fourth most commonly selected at 35.8%, highlights the breadth of civic education work, which extends beyond the predefined categories in the questionnaire. It reflects unique initiatives that were not fully captured, particularly in some Central and Eastern European countries.

**Civil rights initiatives**, at 28.7%, show regional contrasts, with strong representation in certain countries but significantly lower engagement in others, suggesting differing national approaches to rights-based civic education. Beyond these core areas, fields like **environmental sustainability**, **culture and arts**, and **research** see moderate engagement but remain secondary priorities overall. This fact, once more, points towards the blurred definition of the field and suggests that many actors would not identify themselves and their activities as civic work.

At the lower end, **entrepreneurship**, **employability**, **international development**, **media literacy**, and **history and remembrance** are far less represented. While some countries show leadership in specific fields – such as sustainability in Northern Europe or history and remembrance in Germany – these remain niche areas in most countries.

**Figure 4. What is your main field of work?**

## D. Who benefits from civic education in Europe?

Civic education efforts in Europe overwhelmingly focus on **young individuals aged 16–29**, with **82.5%** of surveyed organizations engaging with this group (Figure 5). **Adults aged 30–65** form the second most prominent target group, addressed by **52.8%** of organizations. **Children under 16** are a priority for **49.9%** of surveyed organizations, **while women (44.4%)** represent another significant group. **Teachers (42.2%)** are a key audience. Their central role in civic education in countries like **Norway (62.5%)**, **Ireland (53.3%)**, and **Estonia and Hungary (both 44.4%)** highlights their importance as multipliers of civic knowledge. Engagement with **men** made up 38.5% of the sample.

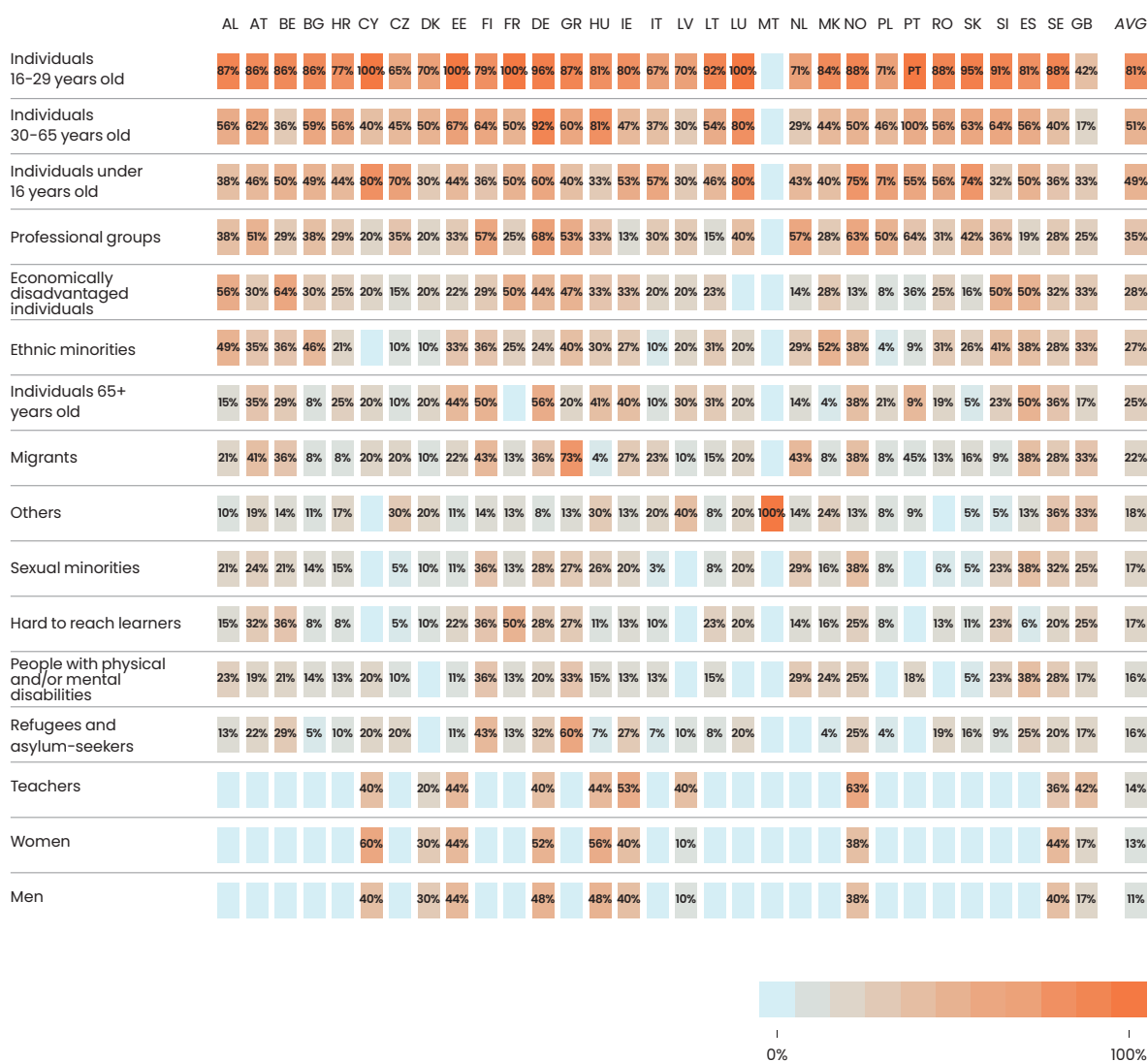
Civic education also extends to various professional, socio-economic, and marginalized groups, though engagement levels vary: **Professional groups (excluding teachers)** are in the focus of 36.5% of surveyed organizations, while **economically disadvantaged individuals** and **ethnic minorities** represent around 29% of the sample each. Among respondents, 26.5% target **individuals over 65**, followed by 24.1% working with **migrants**.

Some groups receive relatively limited attention, with significant variations across countries. Among these groups are **LGBTQIA+ individuals (19%)**<sup>21</sup>, **hard-to-reach learners (17.8%)**, **individuals with physical or mental disabilities (17.6%)**, **as well as refugees and asylum seekers (17.0%)**. Finally, the **Others (15.9%) category** – capturing groups not explicitly listed in the questionnaire – sees the highest engagement in **Latvia (40%)**, **Sweden (36%)**, and **the UK (33.3%)**, while **Cyprus, Romania, and Portugal** report no focus.

21 In the first mapping cycle, these target groups were referred to as “sexual minorities” and in the second as “LGBTQIA+”.

The data reveals a **clear prioritization of youth**, followed by **working-age adults, children, and women**. Teachers emerge as a **significant target group**, too. While some marginalized groups receive strong engagement in specific countries, others – such as LGBTQIA+ individuals, refugees, and those with disabilities – see **limited** or **highly uneven** support across Europe. These patterns suggest that while civic education is broadly inclusive, there are **significant gaps** in outreach to certain vulnerable populations.

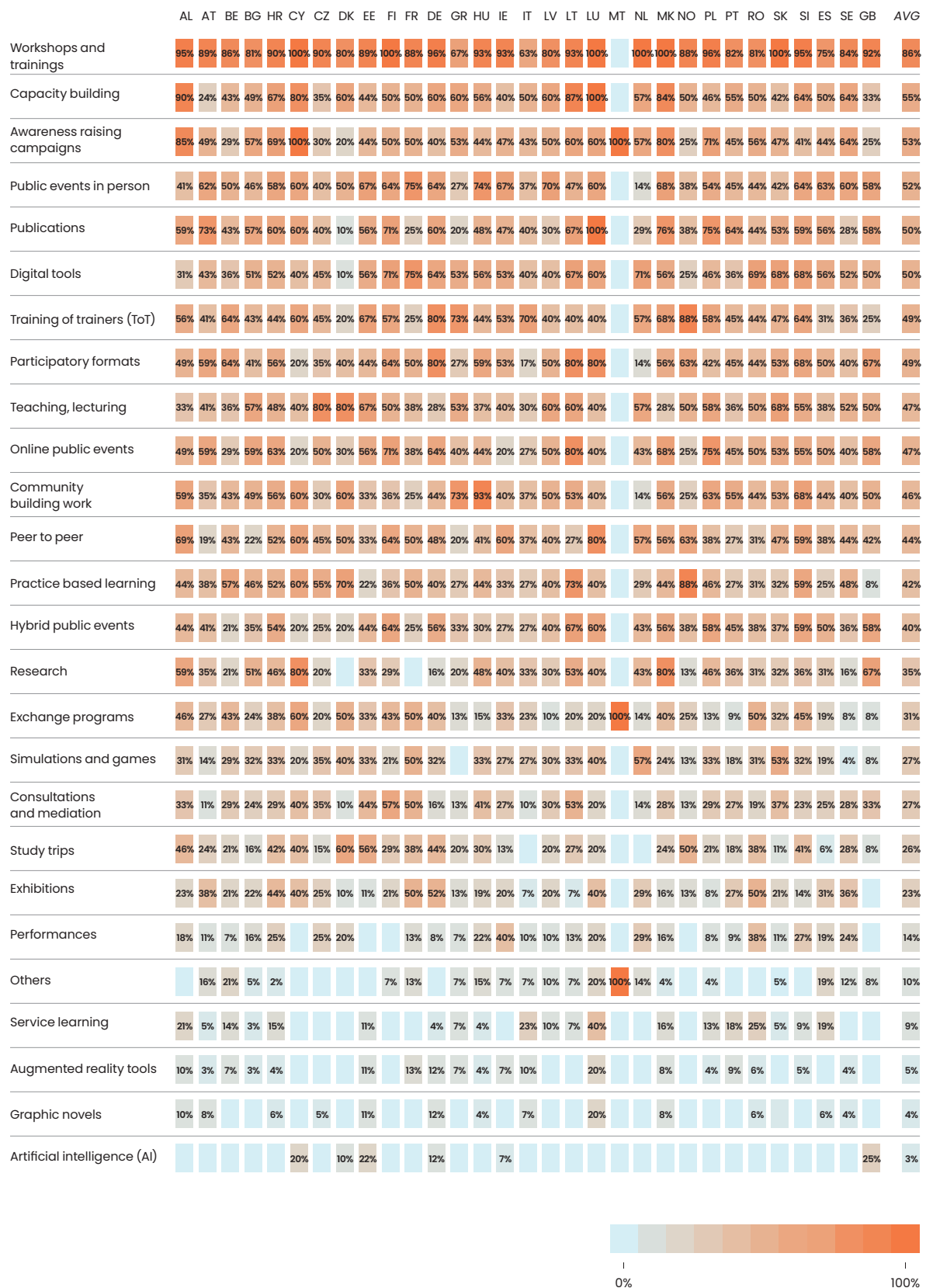
**Figure 5. Which are your main target groups?**



## E. Methods, tools, and innovation in civic education

The choice of methods and tools in civic education significantly influences how organizations engage their audiences, achieve their objectives, and address the unique needs of their communities.

According to the aggregated data (**Figure 6**), the most applied methods and tools in civic education among surveyed actors are **workshops and trainings**, with 88.2% of respondents engaging in such activities. **Capacity building** is another significant focus, with 56% of respondents active in this area. **Awareness-raising campaigns** also see strong participation, with around half of the respondents (53.2%) focusing on this method. The same applies to **public events in person** (52.1%), the use of **digital tools** (50.8%), **publications and teacher trainings** (both 49.8%), and **participatory formats** (49.2%). More innovative tools like augmented reality or graphic novels rank the lowest (3–4%).

**Figure 6. Please select the methods and tools that you are actively using in your civic education work.**

Apart from the aggregated data analysis, Latent Class Analysis (LCA) (see Appendix D) in **Table 1** allows us to group organizations into four clusters depending on their choice of methods: **Participation and events**; **Generalists**; **Community skills**; and **Community events** clusters.





Organizations in the **Participation and events** cluster, which accounts for 35% of the total, demonstrate a high reliance on public events and participatory formats. These organizations frequently organize workshops and trainings (96%) and host public in-person events (74%), hybrid events (72%), and online events (90%). They also make significant use of digital tools (65%). Their activities often focus on national-level engagement, supported by national public funding. This focus reflects their emphasis on broad outreach and accessibility, leveraging events to engage large audiences within their geographic context.

The **Generalists** cluster comprises 31% of organizations and reflects a less structured approach to civic education. While, again, workshops and trainings (71%) are the most used methods, other tools and activities see lower engagement. Awareness-raising campaigns (42%) also play a role, but, overall, these organizations demonstrate limited methodological focus and engagement with innovative tools. This cluster often operates with smaller teams and budgets, which may constrain their capacity for experimentation.

In contrast, the **Community skills** cluster, comprising 23% of organizations, prioritizes capacity building and skill sharing. Activities such as community building (72%), peer-to-peer learning (61%), and participatory formats (68%) are central to their work. These organizations emphasize fostering practical knowledge and skills within local communities, aligning their methods with a commitment to empowerment and grassroots development. They operate mainly based on national public and EU funding and mostly on the national level.

Finally, the **Community events** cluster, which represents 12% of organizations, is characterized by its innovative and community-driven approach. These organizations demonstrate high levels of activity across various participatory methods, including community building (91%), public events (88%), and workshops and trainings (98%). Their widespread use of digital tools (75%), simulations and games (68%), and online events (90%) reflects a strong emphasis on interactive and engaging formats. Compared to the aggregated data, these methods are less commonly used overall, highlighting this cluster's significant innovation potential. With an international and regional focus, these organizations benefit from diverse funding sources which enable their dynamic and impactful approaches.

**Table 1. Organization typology by combinations of methods and tools used**

Cluster	Participation and events 	Generalists 	Community skills 	Community events 
Size of cluster	35%	31%	23%	12%
Methods and tools used				
Main	96% Workshops and trainings	71% Workshops and trainings	95% Workshops and trainings	98% Workshops and trainings
Second	90% Online public events	42% Awareness raising campaigns	72% Community building work	92% Participatory formats
Third	79% Publications	35% Capacity building	68% Capacity building	91% Community building work
Regional and economic context				
Central and Eastern Europe	44%	42%	48%	70%
Northern Europe	18%	14%	17%	10%
Southern Europe	10%	22%	13%	7%
Western Europe	28%	22%	22%	12%
Top country, weighted average	Finland, 79%	Malta, 67%	Denmark, 50%	Croatia, 29%
Avg. GDP <sup>22</sup> in cluster	35,172	38,064	35,126	26,489
Avg. budget in cluster <sup>23</sup>	3.71	3.14	3.54	3.54
Avg. number of employees in cluster	18.58	13.31	19.49	21.51
Founding year	1998	2001	1999	1999
Methods and tools				
Augmented reality tools	5%	1%	5%	15%
Digital tools	65%	27%	46%	75%
Online public events	90%	15%	19%	90%
Simulations and games	22%	5%	45%	68%

22 International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database, October 2023. Available at: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/weo-database/2023/October>. GDP was originally measured per person in US dollars and converted based on the present-day exchange rate (1.0545 US dollars on 20 November 2024).

23 The values refer to question 20 in the questionnaire: "What is your average annual budget? (Please, choose a single option): 1. Up to EUR 5000, 2. EUR 5001 – 50000, 3. EUR 50001 – 100000, 4. EUR 100001 – 500000, 5. Greater than EUR 500001." A value of 3.0 would be EUR 50001 – 100000.

### Regional and economic context

Geographical location and resource availability play a significant role in shaping the methods and tools organizations use (Table 1). For example, the **Community events** cluster is most prevalent in Central and Eastern Europe, where it accounts for 70% of organizations in this category. These organizations tend to operate with larger teams (average staff size of 21.51 employees) and benefit from diverse funding sources, including national public funding (75%), EU funding (73%), and income generated by the organization itself (60%). In contrast, the **Participation and events** cluster is more evenly distributed geographically, with notable representation in Western Europe (28%). This distribution reflects the broader appeal and applicability of event-based methods, which are often supported by national-level funding structures. Similarly, the **Generalists** cluster is more common in Southern Europe, where limited resources and smaller team sizes (an average of 13.31 employees) may hinder the adoption of more structured or innovative methods.

### Methods and tools in practice

The choice of methods and tools is closely tied to an organization's funding sources and the geographic scope of its activities (Figure 7 and Tables 1 and 2). The **Community events** cluster, for instance, exemplifies the use of diverse and innovative methods, supported by strong funding streams. While focusing their activities on the national level, these organizations frequently operate at international and regional levels, too. This reflects their broader engagement and capacity to address complex needs in civic education. Their use of digital tools, simulations, and participatory formats allows them to foster meaningful interactions across diverse audiences.

By contrast, the **Participation and events** cluster focuses primarily on national-level activities. Leveraging hybrid and participatory event formats, these organizations excel in engaging audiences within their immediate geographic contexts. Their methodological choices reflect a balance between accessibility and impact, ensuring broad participation through widely applicable tools.




The **Community skills** cluster demonstrates a strong commitment to community-based approaches, emphasizing practice-based learning (63%), peer-to-peer activities (61%), and community building (72%). These methods align with their focus on fostering skills and knowledge within local communities, creating opportunities for empowerment and collaboration.

In comparison, the **Generalists** cluster shows minimal engagement with digital tools and innovative practices. With only 27% of organizations in this cluster adopting digital methods, their reliance on workshops and trainings suggests a need for targeted support to enhance their methodological diversity and capacity for innovation.

**Figure 7. Summary of the proportions and activity levels of the clusters**



Table 2. Use of methods and tools

Cluster	Participation and events 	Generalists 	Community Skills 	Community Events 
Size of cluster	35%	31%	23%	12%
Augmented reality tools	5%	1%	5%	15%
Awareness-raising campaigns	59%	42%	48%	88%
Capacity building	58%	35%	68%	85%
Community-building work	38%	30%	72%	91%
Consultations and mediation	31%	13%	23%	63%
Digital tools	65%	27%	46%	75%
Exchange programmes	20%	7%	54%	68%
Exhibitions	25%	15%	24%	52%
Graphic novels	5%	2%	1%	16%
Hybrid public events	72%	10%	16%	83%
Online public events	90%	15%	19%	90%
Participatory formats	60%	23%	53%	92%
Peer to peer	39%	22%	61%	75%
Performances	10%	9%	20%	48%
Practice-based learning	34%	20%	63%	87%
Public events in person	74%	28%	39%	88%
Publications	79%	32%	26%	91%
Research	54%	26%	19%	68%
Service learning	3%	6%	9%	39%
Simulations and games	22%	5%	45%	68%
Study trips	22%	8%	34%	74%
Teaching lecturing	55%	32%	41%	73%
Training of trainers	52%	27%	65%	82%
Workshops and trainings	96%	71%	95%	98%

### Digital tools and innovation

The aggregated data presents a nuanced view of digital and innovative engagement across various countries. As mentioned above, **digital tools** are applied by half of the surveyed entities (50.8%), while other innovative formats like **simulations and games** (28.4%), **exhibitions** (23.2%), or **performances** (15.3%) are less represented. **AI engagement**<sup>24</sup> is adopted in less than 10% of organizations, while even less than 5% work with **augmented reality tools** (4.3%) or **graphic novels** (3.4%).

Looking at the clusters reveals that the adoption of digital tools varies widely, reflecting differences in resources, priorities, and organizational focus. The **Community events** cluster leads in digital engagement, with high use of online public events (90%), simulations and games (68%), and digital tools (75%). Similarly, the **Participation and events** cluster demonstrates significant digital adoption, leveraging hybrid event formats (72%) and online methods (90%) to enhance reach and engagement.

In contrast, the **Generalists** cluster lags in digital innovation, with only 27% of organizations incorporating digital tools into their work. This digital divide highlights the potential for capacity-building efforts to bridge gaps and enable greater adoption of technology across under-resourced clusters. Meanwhile, the **Community skills** cluster integrates interactive and practice-based methods, emphasizing the value of peer-to-peer learning and community-driven approaches.

These distinctions underscore the importance of aligning digital tools with organizational objectives and capacities. For organizations in the **Community events** and **Participation and events** clusters, digital tools provide a means to enhance engagement and scalability. For those in the **Generalists** and **Community Skills** clusters, targeted investments in technology and training could unlock new opportunities for impact.

**Several key observations emerge from this analysis:** **workshops and trainings** are a cornerstone of civic education methods, used by over 90% of organizations across all clusters. These formats provide structured opportunities for knowledge sharing and skill development, making them a universal choice for engaging diverse audiences effectively.

The **Community events** cluster excels in adopting innovative and participatory methods. Organizations in this cluster benefit from diverse funding streams and a strong international focus, which allows them to implement tools like simulations, games, and digital platforms more effectively. Their success demonstrates how access to robust resources fosters creativity and impact.

Resource availability significantly shapes an organization's ability to diversify its methods. Clusters with larger budgets and staff sizes, such as the **Community events** and **Participation and events** clusters, are better positioned to experiment with and adopt varied approaches. This relationship highlights the crucial role of financial and human resources in driving methodological flexibility and innovation.

In contrast, the **Generalists** cluster faces notable challenges. Limited resources and lower engagement with digital tools constrain these organizations' ability to adopt diverse methods. This digital divide underscores the need for targeted support to bridge gaps in capacity and foster innovation within under-resourced organizations.

## F. Choosing between in-house and external expertise

Across Europe, most civic education organizations primarily rely on their own teams' knowledge and experience when deciding on both topics and didactical methods. **In-house expertise** consistently exceeds 90% usage in nearly every country, underscoring how crucial internal skill sets are to the sector. Yet **external expertise** and **peer exchange** also play important roles – commonly in the 70–80% range and around 60%, respectively – demonstrating that educators frequently seek additional insights beyond their immediate teams.

The use of **academic literature** and **online sources** tends to be more moderate, averaging between 50% and 65%. Some countries, such as Romania and Austria, draw heavily on research and digital tools, whereas others, like Italy and Spain, show lower figures for one or both. Regionally, Central and Eastern Europe (e.g. Bulgaria, Romania, North Macedonia) favours strong in-house expertise with higher online engagement; Northern and Western Europe (e.g. Finland, The Netherlands, France) pairs in-house knowledge with more consistent external and academic inputs; and Southern Europe (e.g. Italy, Portugal, Spain) generally reports moderate reliance on in-house staff alongside varied usage of online materials and scholarly sources.

## G. Funding strategies and their influence on organizations

Funding shapes the capacity, innovation, and sustainability of organizations. Examining funding sources not only reveals where organizations derive financial support but also how these choices impact their operations, adaptability, and long-term resilience. This chapter explores organizational funding behaviours by analyzing aggregated data and examining four distinct clusters: Public, Self-generated income, Mixed, and EU/foreign funding.

<sup>24</sup> The question on using AI was included only in the second mapping round.

**National public funding (67.3%)** and **EU funding (57.2%)** are the most common financial sources for civic education organizations in Europe (**Figure 8**). Interestingly, **self-generated income** ranks third, reported by 46.2% of organizations. **National private funding** and **individual contributions** are each used by around 40% of organizations, while **national funding from private companies** accounts for 25.4%. Funding from **foreign public institutions (excluding the EU)** and **foreign private sources** ranges between 18% and 21%. At the lower end of the spectrum, **national funding from public companies** and **other** unspecified sources account for 7% to 9%.

	AL	AT	BE	BG	HR	CY	CZ	DK	EE	FI	FR	DE	GR	HU	IE	IT	LV	LT	LU	MT	NL	MK	NO	PL	PT	RO	SK	SI	ES	SE	GB	AVG
National public funding	36%	84%	93%	57%	85%	60%	80%	80%	78%	100%	88%	88%	53%	37%	53%	60%	70%	87%	100%	100%	57%	44%	63%	38%	55%	38%	68%	86%	63%	72%	42%	68%
EU funding	64%	32%	43%	57%	83%	60%	70%	20%	100%	64%	88%	44%	80%	52%	40%	43%	90%	80%	60%	100%	29%	84%	25%	63%	45%	63%	74%	73%	44%	16%	17%	58%
Your entity's generated income	21%	41%	50%	46%	46%	20%	70%	60%	67%	50%	25%	28%	47%	63%	40%	47%	70%	27%	40%		57%	56%	75%	58%	45%	38%	53%	64%	38%	40%	75%	47%
Individual contributions	41%	49%	36%	43%	33%	60%	45%	20%	11%	36%	50%	28%	33%	78%	47%	47%	40%	27%	60%	100%	29%	32%	13%	50%	55%	63%	53%	50%	38%	16%	58%	43%
National private funding	33%	19%	50%	46%	27%	40%	55%	30%	22%	64%	50%	60%	40%	15%	27%	70%	10%	27%	80%		71%	36%	75%	71%	27%	19%	68%	14%	38%	48%	67%	42%
National funding from private companies	15%	14%	43%	38%	19%	60%	40%		11%	29%	25%	16%	20%	37%	20%	27%	20%	33%	40%	100%	14%	12%		33%	27%	44%	47%	27%	31%	16%	25%	29%
Foreign public funding, other than EU	54%	3%	14%	46%	48%		15%	20%	22%	7%		8%	13%	22%	7%	7%	60%	40%	20%			84%	13%	46%	18%	25%	26%	27%	13%			21%
Foreign private funding	28%	11%	21%	41%	19%	20%	15%	10%	22%	14%	25%	20%	27%	30%	20%	13%	10%		20%			40%		38%	9%	44%	26%	9%	25%	4%	17%	19%
National funding from public companies	8%	5%	14%	8%	10%				11%	7%	13%		13%		7%	13%	10%	33%			14%	4%	13%	8%	18%		11%	5%	13%	20%	17%	9%
Others	10%	11%	7%		6%	20%		10%		7%	13%			15%	27%		20%							8%	18%				6%	8%	8%	7%

### Exploring the four clusters

The organizations studied fall into one of four funding clusters (**Table 3**). Each cluster offers insights into funding strategies, their relationship with geography and economic contexts, and their impact on organizational innovation and sustainability.

Organizations in the **Public funding** cluster (36% of all) are overwhelmingly reliant on national public funding, with 98% of their budgets coming from this source. Additionally, EU funding plays a significant role, contributing 62% of their income. These organizations are typically older and operate with the largest budgets, reflecting their long-standing roles and established structures. However, relying heavily on public funding can limit an organization's ability to adapt, as they must follow government rules and priorities. This dependence also makes them vulnerable to shifts in government leadership, particularly if far-right, far-left, or anti-establishment parties introduce agendas which conflict with the organization's civic goals.





In contrast, the **Self-generated income** cluster (24% of all) represents organizations which operate on self-generated funds (52%) and individual contributions (64%). This funding composition drives entrepreneurial thinking, as these organizations must consistently prove their value to retain supporters. Despite smaller budgets, the self-generated income cluster displays high levels of innovation, particularly in adopting digital tools and engaging audiences in creative ways.

The **Mixed funding** cluster (23% of all) stands out for its balanced approach to funding. These organizations draw on both public and private sources, with 88% of their income from national public funds and 70% from private contributions. This diversity provides resilience against economic fluctuations and allows for greater flexibility in resource allocation. As a result, the Mixed funding cluster is a leader in innovation, adopting advanced digital tools like simulations and interactive events to engage diverse audiences. Mostly Central and Eastern European countries (56%) fall into this cluster, and particularly Slovakia (47%). For countries in Western (17%), Southern (16%), and Northern Europe (11%), this funding approach is less prominent.

Finally, the **EU and foreign** funding cluster (17% of all) reflects a reliance on external support, with 61% of funding coming from foreign public sources and 66% from EU grants. These organizations often operate in lower gross domestic product (GDP) regions where domestic funding is scarce.

While external funding enables organizations to sustain their work, the dependency on donor priorities can limit their ability to innovate or respond effectively to local needs. Moreover, with the growing threat of foreign agents legislation which stigmatizes funding from abroad, these organizations face existential threats, underscoring the need to foster local civic philanthropy and build more sustainable domestic funding sources.

Table 3. Four main funding clusters

Cluster	Public funding 	Self-generated income 	Mixed funding 	EU and foreign funding 
Size of cluster	36%	24%	23%	17%
Funding sources				
Main	98% National public funding	64% Individual contributions	88% National public funding	66% EU funding
Second	62% EU funding	52% Entity generated income	84% EU funding	61% Foreign public funding
Third	35% Entity generated income	42% National private funding	70% National funding from private companies	37% Foreign private funding
Geographical distribution				
Central and Eastern Europe	36%	37%	56%	79%
Northern Europe	22%	17%	11%	4%
Southern Europe	12%	19%	16%	9%
Western Europe	29%	27%	17%	8%
Top country, weighted average	Denmark, 70%	UK, 67%	Slovakia, 47%	North Macedonia, 52%
Economic context and organizational capacity				
Avg. GDP <sup>25</sup> in cluster	37,173	36,078	26,999	17,223
Avg. budget in cluster <sup>26</sup>	3.73	2.94	3.70	3.27
Avg. number of employees in cluster	23.25	11.26	19.95	7.95
Founding year	1994	2003	2001	2005
Methods and tools				
Augmented reality tools	6%	3%	6%	3%
Digital tools	53%	44%	55%	48%
Online public events	48%	47%	59%	52%
Simulations and games	26%	14%	43%	28%

<sup>25</sup> International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database, October 2023. Available at: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/weo-database/2023/October>. GDP was originally measured per person in US dollars and converted based on the present-day exchange rate (1.0545 US dollars on 20 November 2024).

<sup>26</sup> The values refer to question 20 in the questionnaire: "What is your average annual budget? (Please, choose a single option): 1. Up to EUR 5000, 2. EUR 5001 – 50000, 3. EUR 50001 – 100000, 4. EUR 100001 – 500000, 5. Greater than EUR 500001." A value of 3.0 would be EUR 50001 – 100000.

### Funding and geography

As already indicated by the data above (**Table 3**), geography emerges as a factor in shaping funding behaviours. Organizations in **higher-GDP countries**, such as those in Northern and Western Europe, benefit from **robust domestic funding ecosystems**. National public funding and self-generated income dominate in these regions, reflecting strong government support and well-developed philanthropic cultures. The stability provided by domestic resources enables organizations to invest in long-term planning and explore innovative methods.

In Central and Eastern Europe, however, the picture is different. With **limited domestic resources**, organizations in these regions **rely primarily on external funding**. According to the data, 78% of these organizations depend on EU and foreign sources, which play a crucial role in filling the funding gap left by weak government support. While this reliance sustains their operations, it also creates vulnerabilities, as external funding is subject to geopolitical shifts and donor agendas which may not align with local priorities.

Southern Europe is presented with unique challenges. Organizations in this region are underrepresented across all funding clusters, pointing to structural barriers which inhibit their access to both domestic and external funding. Factors such as economic instability, lower trust in institutions, and fragmented civic infrastructure may contribute to this gap. These challenges highlight the need for targeted interventions to strengthen the funding ecosystems in Southern Europe.

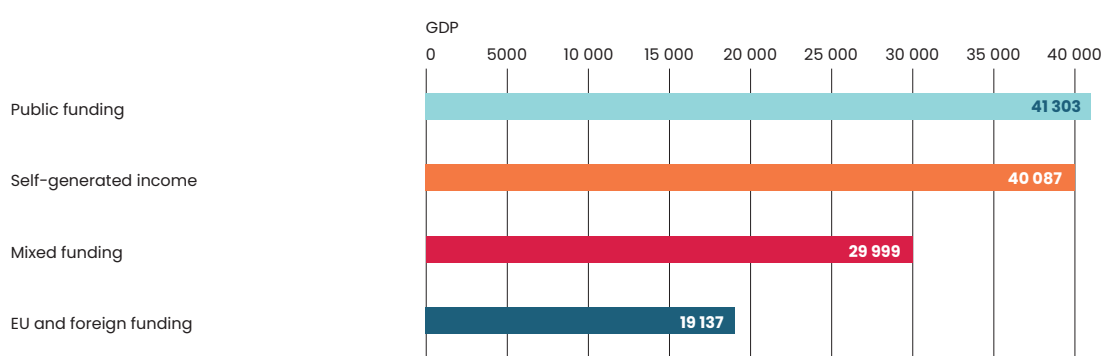
### Economic context and organizational capacity

The relationship between economic context and funding strategies is evident in the correlation between GDP and funding reliance (**Figure 9**). Organizations in wealthier countries, particularly those in the **Public funding** and **Mixed funding** clusters, tend to have larger budgets and employ larger teams. These resources allow them to maintain consistent operations and possibly achieve higher impact. However, publicly funded organizations, despite their financial stability, often operate within rigid frameworks which prioritize compliance with government requirements over experimentation. This rigidity can stifle creativity and limit the adoption of innovative approaches.

In contrast, organizations in lower-GDP countries often face economic pressures which drive them to innovate. The **Self-generated income** cluster, for example, demonstrates how financial constraints can sometimes spur entrepreneurial thinking and the adoption of creative strategies. These organizations, reliant on individual contributions and self-generated income, must continuously adapt to meet the expectations of their supporters.

Yet, not all economic pressures lead to innovation. The **EU and foreign funding** cluster, which relies on external funding, often faces strict donor conditions which limit flexibility. These constraints highlight the dual-edged nature of economic pressures: while they can drive creativity under the right conditions, they can also inhibit innovation when tied to restrictive funding requirements.

**Figure 9. Average GDP<sup>27</sup> based on the types of funding an organization receives**



### The role of digital tools and innovation

Digital tools are a key area where the clusters diverge in their capacity and focus (**Table 3**). The **Mixed funding** cluster leads the way in adopting advanced technologies, with high usage rates for simulations (43%) and online public events (59%). This reflects their ability to leverage diverse funding sources to invest in innovative engagement strategies. The **Self-generated income** cluster also shows significant digital adoption, driven by the need to attract and retain individual contributors. By contrast, the **Public and the EU**

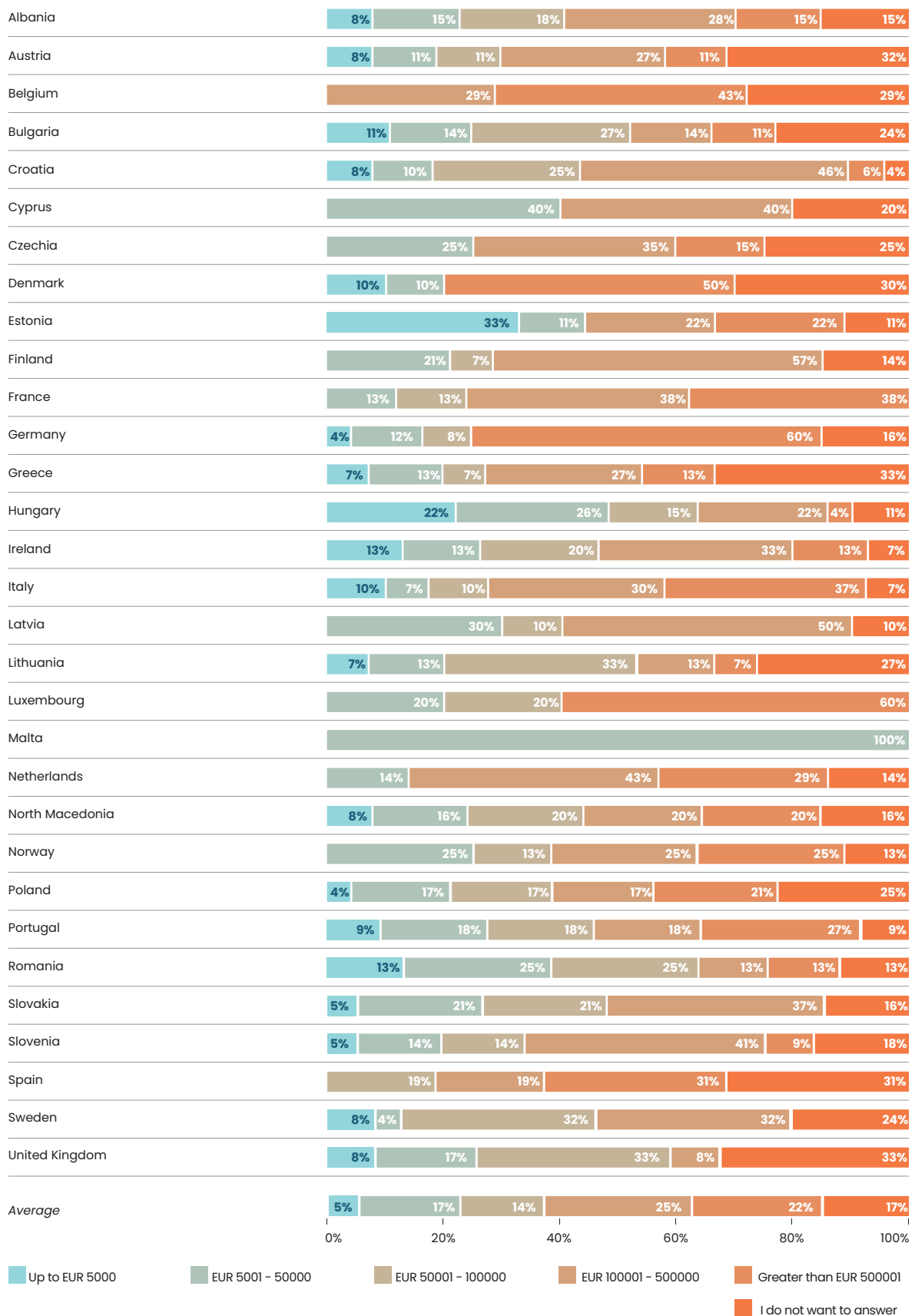
<sup>27</sup> Source: International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database, October 2023. Available at: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/weo-database/2023/October>.

**and foreign funding** clusters lag in digital innovation. Augmented reality tools, for instance, are adopted by only 3–6% of organizations in these clusters. This underutilization reflects the constraints imposed by their funding structures, which prioritize compliance over experimentation. The varying levels of digital tool adoption highlight the critical role of funding diversity and flexibility in fostering innovation. Organizations with more balanced funding portfolios or self-reliant income streams are better positioned to explore new technologies and methods.

**Several important insights emerge from this analysis.** First, funding diversity is a key driver of resilience and innovation. The **Mixed funding** cluster demonstrates how a balanced portfolio can reduce dependency on any single source, providing both stability and flexibility. Second, economic pressure can be a double-edged sword. While it drives creativity in self-reliant clusters like the **Self-generated income** cluster, it can stifle innovation when paired with restrictive funding conditions, as seen in the **EU and foreign funding** cluster. Third, geography matters because it reflects broader structural inequalities. Higher-GDP countries benefit from strong domestic resources, while lower-GDP regions depend on external funding, which often limits flexibility. Addressing these disparities requires systemic changes which go beyond individual organizational strategies. Finally, digital tools have the potential to equalize opportunities across clusters, but their adoption depends on the availability of flexible resources and a culture of experimentation.

## H. Budget distribution of civic organizations

**Figure 10** provides insights into the financial capacity of civic organizations based on their annual budgets. It highlights that the largest group (26.8%) operates within a mid-range budget of **100,001–500,000 EUR per year**, suggesting a relatively stable financial position. A significant portion (23.8%) has **budgets exceeding 500,000 EUR**, indicating strong financial resources and potentially greater operational capacity. However, a smaller but notable percentage (9%) functions with **less than 5,000 EUR annually**, implying significant financial constraints which could limit their sustainability and impact.

**Figure 10. What is your average annual budget?**

## I. Balancing core costs and programmatic spending

When analyzing how civic organizations allocate their budgets to core costs – such as staff, infrastructure, communication, and administration – a diverse yet relatively balanced distribution emerges. In most cases, budget allocations fall within similar proportions, with around 20% of organizations in each category. Organizations in the **largest group (30.6%) spend 11–30%** of their budgets on core costs, aligning with the commonly referenced 30–70 rule, where organizations allocate roughly 30% to operational expenses and 70% to programmatic activities.

Another portion **(23%) of organizations dedicate 31–50%** of their budgets to core costs, indicating a stronger emphasis on maintaining internal operations. Meanwhile, **22% allocate 51–70%**, suggesting they may have larger in-house teams and rely less on external contractors. Notably, **21.7% spend 71–100% on core costs**, implying that their internal teams have the expertise to cover most or all activities directly. On the other end of the spectrum, **19.4% of organizations allocate only 0–10%** to core costs, likely meaning they operate on a fully volunteer-driven model and can prioritize direct programmatic spending with minimal administrative overhead.

## J. Funding for civic education activities

Civic organizations allocate their budgets to programmatic activities in varying proportions, reflecting different operational models. Of the respondents, **26% dedicate 51–70%** of their budgets to programmatic work, aligning with organizations which allocate 30–50% to core costs. Another **25% allocate 71–100%**, indicating fully programme-driven operations, likely with lean administration.

At the other end, **20% allocate only 0–10%** to programmatic activities, corresponding to organizations which spend the bulk of their budgets on core costs, likely covering in-house expertise and full-scale operations. Meanwhile, **22% allocate 11–30%**, and another **22% dedicate 31–50%**, showing a more balanced approach between sustaining internal structures and delivering activities.

## K. The role of volunteers and interns

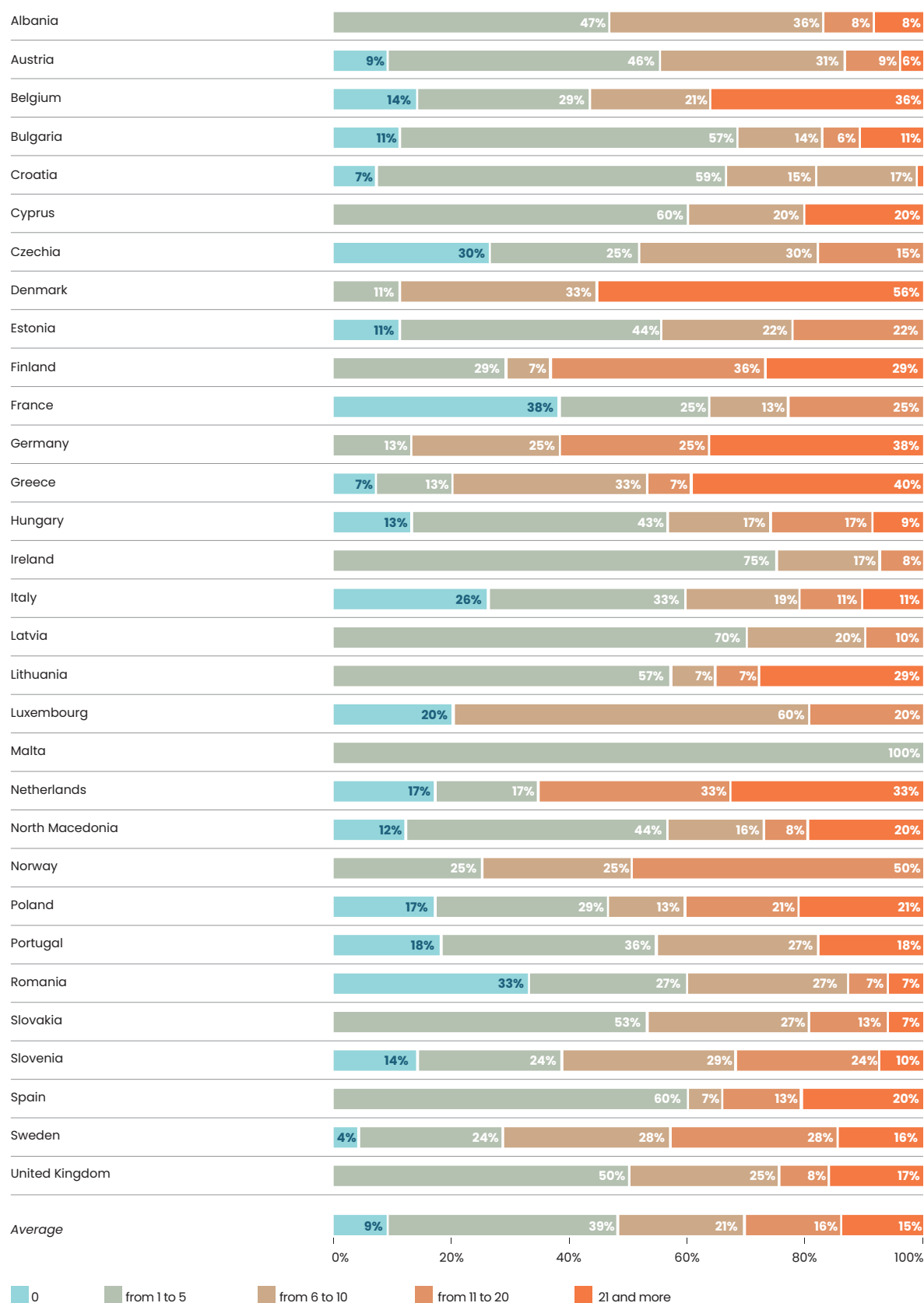
Volunteers and interns play a crucial role in civic education across Europe (**Figure 11**). The **largest group (35.2%)** of organizations relies on a **small team of 1–5 volunteers or interns**, suggesting that many organizations integrate volunteers into their operations but on a limited scale. A **significant portion (26.4%) engages 21 or more volunteers**, indicating that some organizations depend on volunteer support for their activities. **Only 11.7%** operate **without any volunteers or interns**. **Around 20%** of organizations have **11–20 volunteers**, while another **20% work with 6–10**, demonstrating an even distribution across medium-sized teams.

**Figure 11. What is the size of your core team? Volunteers & interns.**

## L. Exploring team sizes

The composition of core teams in civic organizations varies significantly across the surveyed actors, reflecting different operational capacities and organizational structures (**Figure 12**). The **largest group (39%)** operates with a **small core team of 1–5 employees**, indicating that many organizations function with minimal staff, likely relying on volunteers, partnerships, or external experts to sustain their work. Among the respondents, **23%** have **6–10 employees**, suggesting a slightly larger but still relatively lean team structure, which may allow for greater specialization while maintaining flexibility. A further **17%** work with **11–20 employees**, and another **20% have teams of 21 or more**, showing that a notable portion of organizations have substantial staff, likely enabling them to manage larger projects and more complex operations. Interestingly, **15% report having no employees at all**, implying that these organizations function entirely through volunteer efforts or alternative staffing models, such as outsourcing certain tasks.

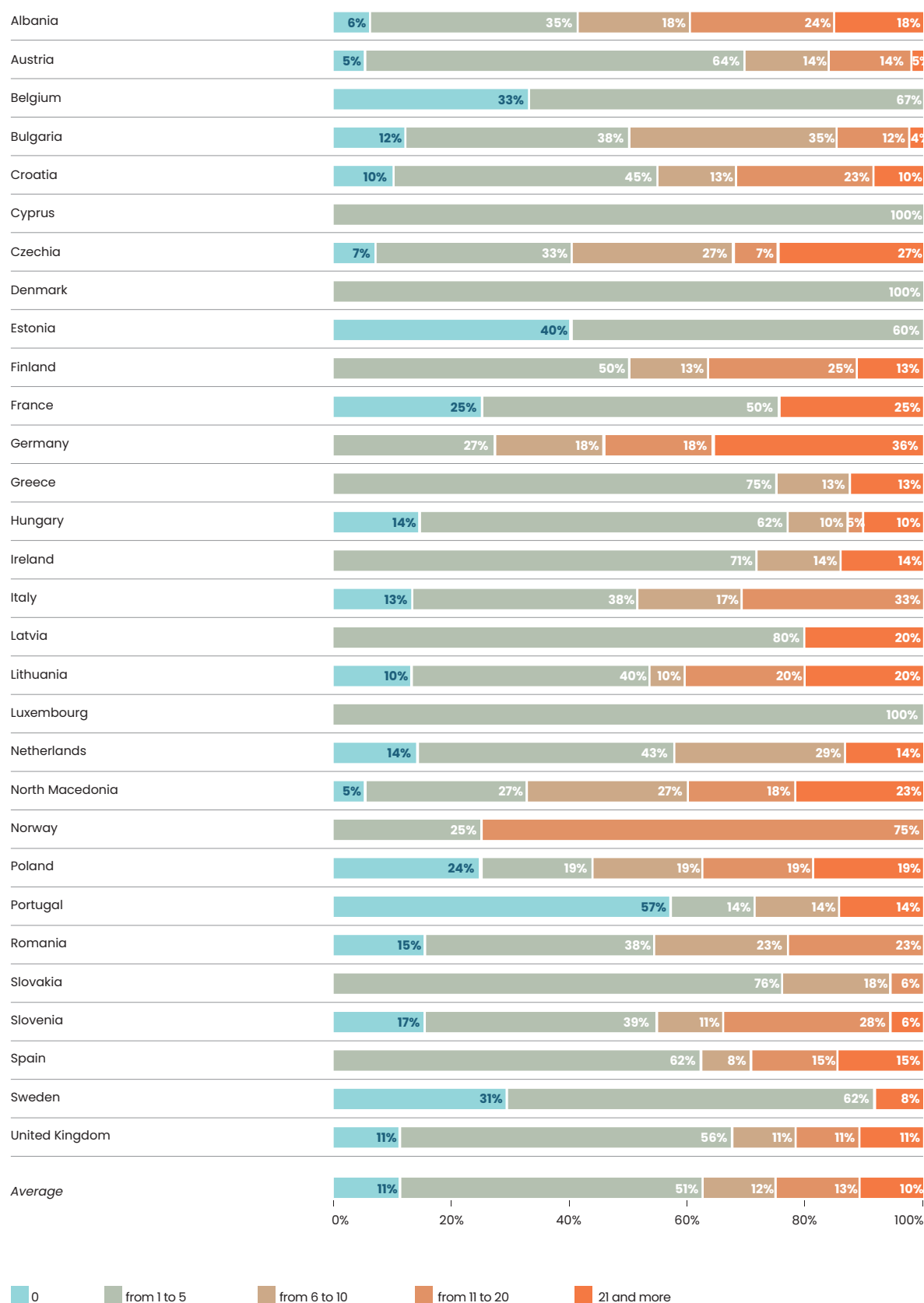
This data highlights a diverse landscape of civic organizations in Europe, ranging from fully volunteer-driven initiatives to well-staffed entities. The prevalence of small teams (1–10 employees) suggests that many organizations operate with limited financial resources but still manage to drive civic engagement. At the same time, the presence of larger teams (11–21+) indicates that some organizations have secured the funding and infrastructure needed for more extensive activities. The 15% without employees underscores the role of volunteerism in the civic sector, where passion and commitment often replace traditional employment structures.

**Figure 12. What is the size of your core team? Employees.**

## M. Use of independent contractors

The data indicates that independent contractors are widely utilized by civic education organizations in Europe and play a crucial role in supporting their operations. The **majority (53.7%)** engage a **small number of 1–5 independent contractors (Figure 13)**, suggesting that outsourcing is a common practice, though often on a limited scale. A further **16.8% work with 6–10 contractors**, while **19.8% engage 11–20**, showing that a significant portion of organizations depend on external professionals for a substantial part of their activities. Among the respondents, **15.1% of organizations hire 21 or more independent contractors**, which suggests they operate on a larger scale and require extensive external support, possibly for large projects or international collaborations. On the other hand, **18.3% report working with no independent contractors**, meaning they rely entirely on in-house staff or volunteers for their activities.

This distribution suggests that while many civic education organizations maintain a core team of employees, they often supplement their expertise with independent contractors. The reliance on external professionals may be due to financial constraints which prevent hiring full-time staff, the need for specialized skills, or the flexibility that contract work provides. The fact that over half of organizations use 1–5 contractors indicates that outsourcing is a strategic tool rather than a dominant staffing model. However, the presence of organizations which engage 21 or more contractors might reflect a segment of the sector operating on a much larger, possibly international, scale. Conversely, the organizations which do not work with contractors at all may either have strong internal capacities or limited funding to afford external assistance.

**Figure 13. What is the size of your core team? Independent contractors.**

## N. Understanding and meeting organizational training needs

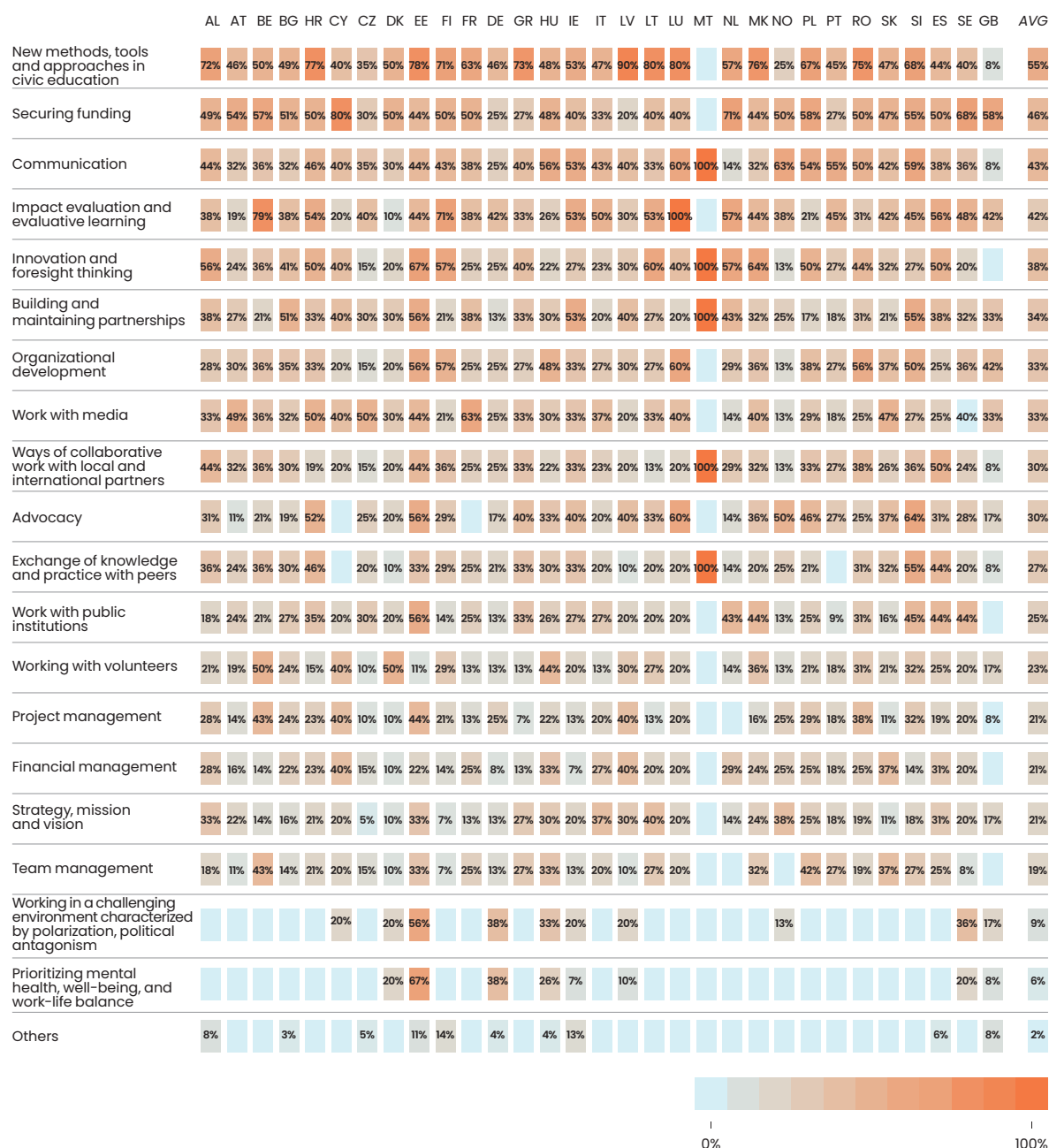
The data highlights the diverse capacity-building needs of civic education organizations in Europe, reflecting the challenges they face in sustaining and improving their work. The key areas of required support range from methodological development to financial sustainability, communication, and organizational growth (**Figure 14**).

- **The highest priority (54.4%)** is the need for **new methods, tools, and approaches**, indicating that many organizations seek innovation and updated strategies to enhance their effectiveness in civic education.
- **Nearly half (46.3%)** require **training in securing funding**, which suggests financial sustainability remains a major concern for many organizations, potentially limiting their long-term impact.
- **42.6% express a need for more knowledge in impact evaluation and evaluative learning**, pointing to a growing emphasis on measuring effectiveness and demonstrating results to funders, stakeholders, and policymakers.
- **41.1% believe they need to improve their communication skills**, which could relate to outreach, stakeholder engagement, or advocacy efforts.
- **37.2% are interested in learning more about innovation and foresight thinking**, implying a need to stay ahead of societal and technological trends which affect civic education.
- **33.6% seek further training in organizational development**, and **31.9% in building and maintaining partnerships**, highlighting a focus on strengthening internal structures and external collaborations.
- **33% want to improve their work with media**, while **29.8% aim to enhance advocacy skills**, suggesting that many organizations are striving to increase their public visibility and policy influence.
- **27.4% need guidance on collaboration with local and international partners**, reflecting the interconnected nature of civic education initiatives.
- **27.2% identify a need for training in working within politically polarized and hostile environments**, indicating the growing challenges NGOs face due to political pressures and public scepticism.
- **26.8% want to improve their engagement with public institutions**, pointing to the importance of governmental partnerships in civic education efforts.
- **24.4% seek better ways to exchange knowledge and best practices with peers**, suggesting a need for stronger networks and learning communities.
- **23% want to improve their work with volunteers**, showing that while volunteers are widely used, organizations may lack effective strategies to engage and retain them.
- **21.7% recognize the need to refine their strategy, mission, and vision**, which could indicate a need for more structured long-term planning.
- **20.8% require training in financial management**, and **20.6% in project management**, both crucial for the effective and sustainable operation of organizations.
- **19.5% highlight the need to prioritize mental health, well-being, and work-life balance**, reflecting concerns about burnout in the sector.
- **18.8% want to improve their team management skills**, emphasizing the importance of leadership and internal team dynamics.

This data reveals that civic education organizations in Europe face a broad range of challenges, requiring both technical skills and strategic development. The strong demand for new methodologies, funding strategies, and impact evaluation suggests that organizations are actively seeking ways to enhance their effectiveness and financial resilience. Additionally, the focus on communication, advocacy, and media relations points to the need for greater public engagement and influence.

The fact that more than a quarter of organizations need support in navigating politically hostile environments highlights growing external pressures on NGOs, requiring them to develop resilience and adaptability. Meanwhile, the demand for training in partnership building, collaboration, and knowledge exchange suggests a desire for stronger networks and cross-sector cooperation.




Notably, mental health and work-life balance are emerging concerns, indicating that staff and volunteers in the sector may be facing high levels of stress and burnout. Strengthening team management, strategic planning, and financial oversight could help organizations become more sustainable and resilient in the long run.

**Figure 14. Please mark all fields where your entity needs further training.**

Beyond the aggregated data, Latent Class Analysis (LCA) (see Appendix D) provides deeper insights into the training needs of civic organizations, highlighting their capacities, challenges, and growth potential. Based on data from **Table 4**, organizations fall into three clusters: those with fewer training needs, those requiring some training, and those with extensive training needs.

The largest group, the **Fewer training needs** cluster, accounts for 75% of all organizations. These organizations report minimal training needs, with their focus on foundational areas such as organizational development (45%), new methods in civic education (34%), and financial management (32%). While their requirements are modest, addressing these needs is important to ensure their functionality and long-term sustainability. The **Some training needs** cluster, representing 21% of organizations, demonstrates a broader range of needs. These organizations require more substantial support in areas such as organizational development (78%), partnership building (68%), and project management (66%). At the other end of the spectrum, the **More training needs** cluster comprises just 3% of organizations. This group reports extensive training needs across nearly all areas, with universal gaps (99%) in organizational development, partnerships, and project management. Additionally, they face challenges in engaging media and securing funding, reflecting systemic barriers which hinder their ability to scale and sustain their activities.

Table 4. Further training needs of organizations

Cluster	Fewer training needs 	Some training needs 	More training needs 
Size of cluster	75%	21%	3%
Further training needs			
Strongest	45% Organizational development	78% Organizational development	99% Organizational development
Second	34% New methods, tools and approaches in civic education	68% Building and maintaining partnerships	99% Building and maintaining partnerships
Third	32% Financial management	66% Project management	99% Project management
Regional and contextual influences			
Central and Eastern Europe	46%	53%	55%
Northern Europe	15%	18%	15%
Southern Europe	15%	12%	15%
Western Europe	24%	18%	15%
Top country, weighted average	UK/Malta, 100%	Romania, 50%	Spain, 13%
Avg. GDP <sup>28</sup> in cluster	31,907	31,358	24,258
Avg. budget in cluster <sup>29</sup>	3.53	3.29	3.47
Avg. number of employees in cluster	17.32	18.81	15.79
Founding year	1999	2001	1999
Digital tools and innovative approaches			
Augmented reality tools	4%	7%	15%
Digital tools	48%	61%	60%
Online public events	46%	66%	60%
Simulations and games	25%	31%	55%

The clusters highlight not only the diversity of organizational training needs but also the foundational gaps common across all groups. The data emphasizes the importance of prioritizing areas such as organizational development and project management, which are critical to operational success.

#### Regional and contextual influences on training needs

Training needs are not evenly distributed across regions, with Central and Eastern Europe standing out for its higher proportion of organizations in the **Some training needs (53%)** and **More training needs (55%)** clusters. This pattern suggests that organizations in these regions face distinct challenges, such as limited access

28 International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database, October 2023. Available at: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/weo-database/2023/October>. GDP was originally measured per person in US dollars and converted based on the present-day exchange rate (1.0545 US dollars on 20 November 2024).

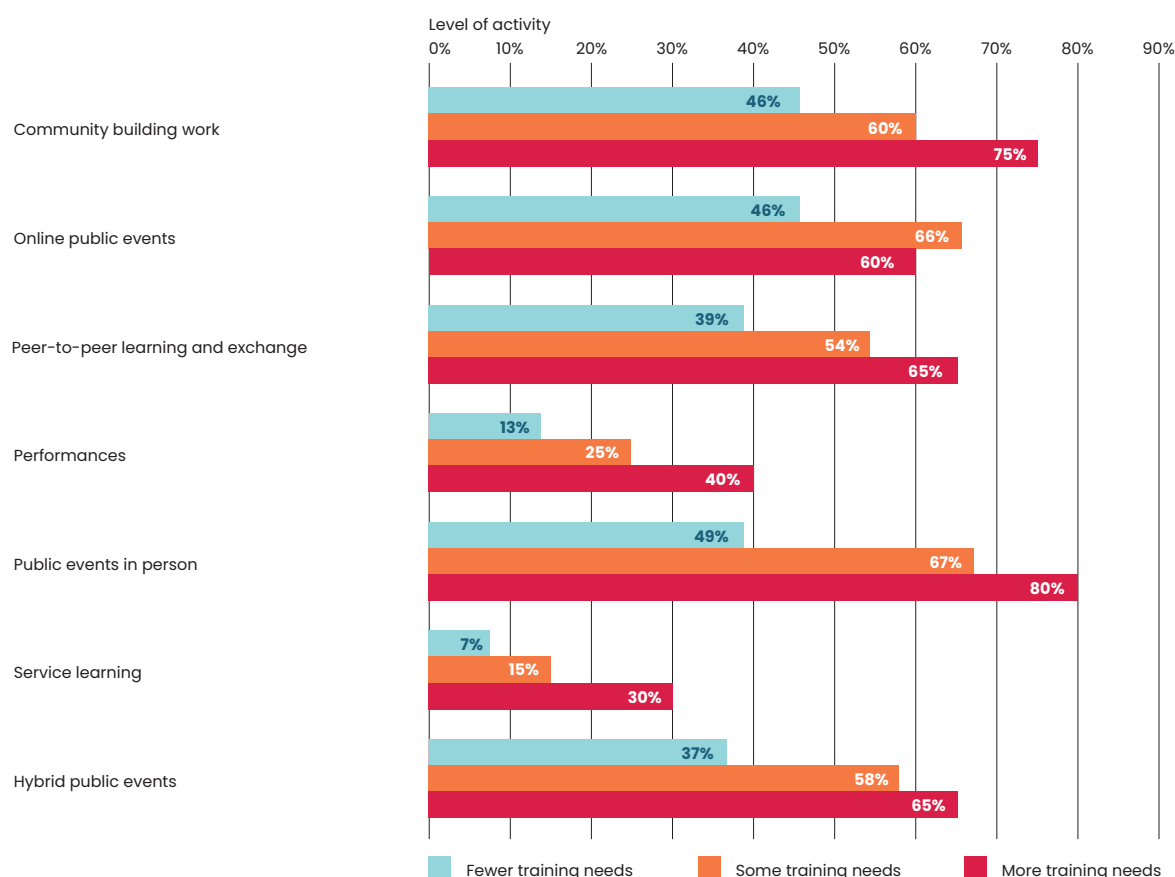
29 The values refer to question 20 in the questionnaire: "What is your average annual budget?" (Please, choose a single option): 1. Up to EUR 5000, 2. EUR 5001 – 50000, 3. EUR 50001 – 100000, 4. EUR 100001 – 500000, 5. Greater than EUR 500001. A value of 3.0 would be EUR 50001 – 100000.

to resources, partnerships, and institutional support. While these disparities are notable, it is important to recognize that training needs do not correlate directly with a country's GDP. Instead, they appear to be shaped by organizational dynamics and the specific contexts in which these groups operate.

#### Activity levels and their impact on training needs

Organizations with greater training needs are often among the most active in their fields (**Figure 15**). This heightened activity likely amplifies their need for capacity building, as they face increased operational demands and greater complexity in their work. Those in the **Some training needs** and **More training needs** clusters frequently engage in civic education initiatives, including performances, events, and training activities.

**Figure 15. Activities of an organization based on the type of training needed**



These active organizations demonstrate significant potential for impact. Their involvement in educational initiatives positions them as key players in the civic education landscape. However, to fully realize their potential, they require targeted support in areas such as project management, partnership development, and strategy implementation. Addressing these gaps could enhance their ability to manage their activities effectively and scale their impact.

#### Digital tools and innovative approaches

The adoption of digital tools shows a modest correlation with training needs, offering insights into how technology can play a role in organizational development (**Table 4**). Organizations in the **More training needs** cluster are more likely to adopt advanced technologies such as simulations, games, and augmented reality. For example, augmented reality is used by 15% of organizations in this cluster, compared to just 4% in the **Fewer training needs** cluster. Similarly, the use of simulations and games rises from 25% among organizations with fewer training needs to 55% among those requiring extensive support.




This trend suggests that organizations with greater training needs are also more willing to experiment with innovative methodologies to enhance their impact. Digital tools such as simulations and games can address specific gaps in project management and collaboration, offering creative solutions to longstanding challenges. Their growing adoption highlights the importance of integrating technological tools into training initiatives, particularly for organizations operating in complex or resource-constrained environments.

### Shared and specific training areas

While the clusters vary in the extent of their training needs, certain areas emerge as universal priorities. Organizational development, partnership building, and project management are critical across all groups, reflecting shared foundational gaps which must be addressed to ensure operational success. However, the depth and scope of these needs differ by cluster (**Table 5**).

Organizations in the **Fewer training needs** cluster prioritize foundational improvements, focusing on organizational development (45%) and new methods in civic education (34%). In contrast, the **Some training needs** cluster identifies additional needs in team management, strategy development, and innovation. Meanwhile, the **More training needs** cluster requires comprehensive support across almost all areas, including engaging media and securing funding.

**Table 5. Training needs**

Cluster	Fewer training needs 	Some training needs 	More training needs 
<b>Size of cluster</b>	75%	21%	3%
<b>Communication</b>	26%	51%	99%
<b>Building and maintaining partnerships</b>	29%	68%	99%
<b>Exchange of knowledge and practice with peers</b>	19%	53%	94%
<b>Impact evaluation and evaluative learning</b>	25%	44%	89%
<b>Innovation and foresight thinking</b>	31%	58%	94%
<b>New methods, tools, and approaches in civic education</b>	34%	63%	99%
<b>Organizational development</b>	45%	78%	99%
<b>Project management</b>	18%	66%	99%
<b>Securing funding</b>	19%	44%	99%
<b>Financial management</b>	32%	57%	89%
<b>Strategy, mission, and vision</b>	13%	41%	94%
<b>Team management</b>	10%	43%	94%
<b>Working with volunteers</b>	13%	46%	89%
<b>Ways of collaborative work with local and international partners</b>	14%	41%	85%
<b>Work with public institutions</b>	20%	48%	90%
<b>Work with media</b>	21%	44%	99%

### Towards a holistic approach to capacity building

The findings reveal a **diverse and complex landscape of training needs** among organizations. While most report minimal requirements, a significant proportion faces foundational challenges which hinder their ability to operate effectively. These challenges are not driven by economic factors but are shaped by organizational contexts, regional influences, and levels of activity. Organizations in the **Some training needs** and the **More training needs** clusters represent significant opportunities for impact. Their active engagement in civic education highlights their potential to drive meaningful change if provided with adequate support. Tailored training initiatives which integrate technological tools, address regional disparities, and focus on shared foundational gaps can enhance their capacity and amplify their effectiveness.

## O. Key priorities for a pan-European civic education network

When considering the establishment of a pan-European network for civic educators, respondents identified various priorities which reflect their key needs and aspirations. The strongest preferences highlight a focus on collaboration, knowledge exchange, and skill development (**Figure 16**), indicating a demand for stronger connections across Europe.

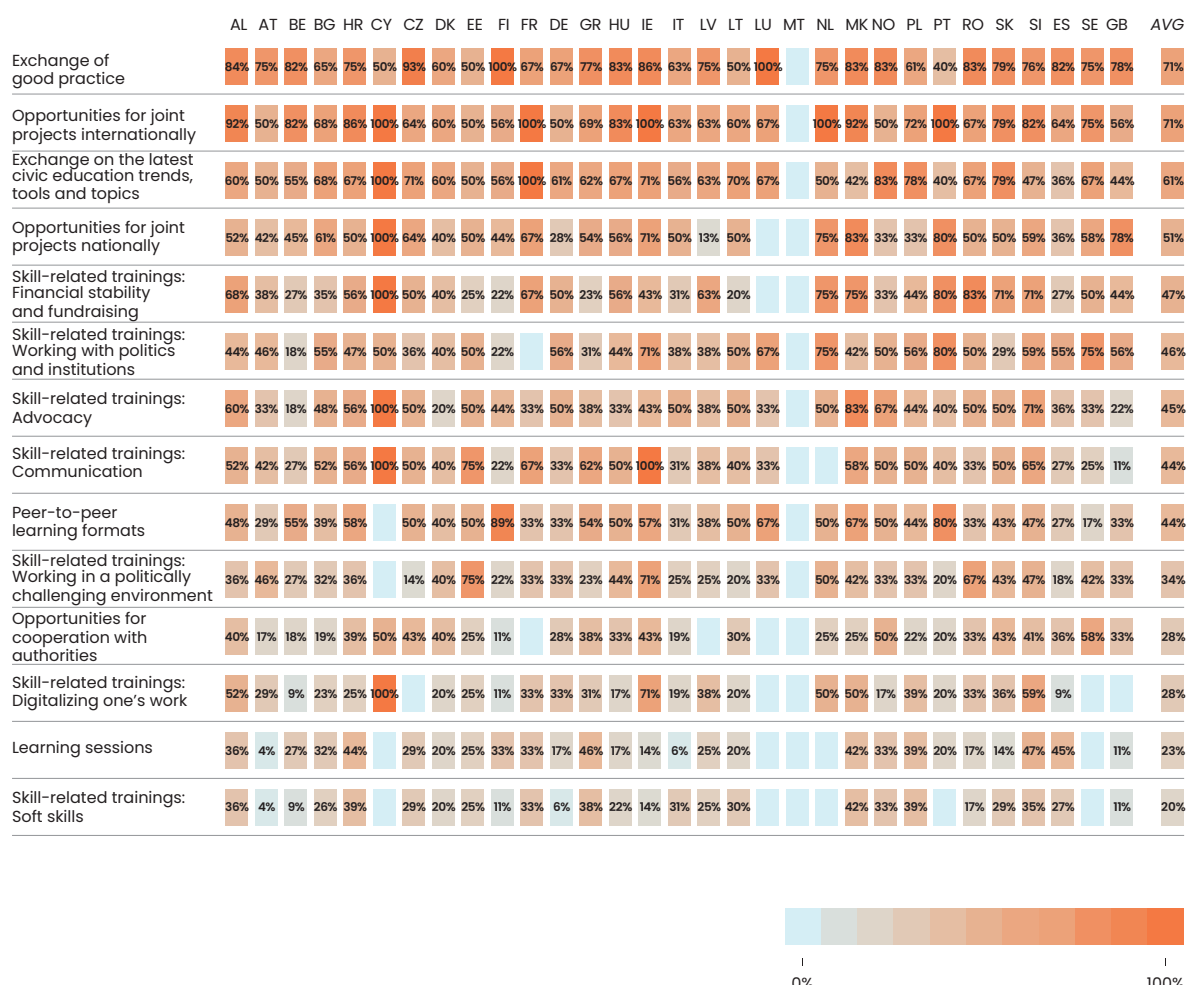
- **The main priority (73.9%)** is the **exchange of good practices**, demonstrating that civic educators highly value learning from each other's experiences to improve their approaches.
- A **nearly equal number (73.2%)** prioritize **opportunities for joint international projects**, suggesting that cross-border cooperation is seen as essential for strengthening civic education initiatives.
- **62.8% would focus on exchanging insights into the latest trends, tools, and topics**, indicating a need to stay up-to-date with evolving civic education methods and societal developments.
- **Around half (52.4%)** express interest in **joint national projects**, showing that while international collaboration is key, many organizations also see the benefit of networking within their own countries.
- **Skills-related training is in high demand**, particularly in areas such as:
  - **Financial stability and fundraising (48.9%)**, highlighting the ongoing challenge of securing resources.
  - **Working with politics and institutions (47.6%)**, reflecting the need to navigate governmental relationships effectively.
  - **Advocacy (46.5%) and communication (46%)**, emphasizing the importance of public engagement and influence.
- **Peer-to-peer learning formats rank highly (45.5%)**, indicating that many educators prefer interactive, experience-based learning over traditional training models.
- **35.5% see value in skills-related training for working in politically challenging environments**, recognizing the growing pressures and hostilities which civic educators may face.
- **29.4% prioritize opportunities for cooperation with authorities**, suggesting a strategic interest in fostering constructive relationships with decision-makers.

The results reflect a strong demand for collaboration, innovation, and professional development within the European civic education sector. The emphasis on good practice exchange and international projects suggests that organizations view networking and shared learning as critical to improving their effectiveness. The high interest in skills-related training points to the practical challenges which many organizations face, such as financial sustainability, advocacy, and engagement with political institutions.

Notably, the focus on working in politically challenging environments signals concerns about increasing polarization and hostility towards NGOs, reinforcing the need for strategies to navigate such difficulties. Meanwhile, the interest in peer-to-peer learning highlights a preference for participatory and experience-based capacity-building methods.

Overall, the data suggests that a pan-European civic education network should prioritize collaboration, knowledge exchange, and capacity-building initiatives which help organizations strengthen their work, overcome challenges, and create a greater impact on civic engagement across the region.

**Figure 16. If there were a pan-European civic education network, what would you expect from it/what should it primarily focus on?**

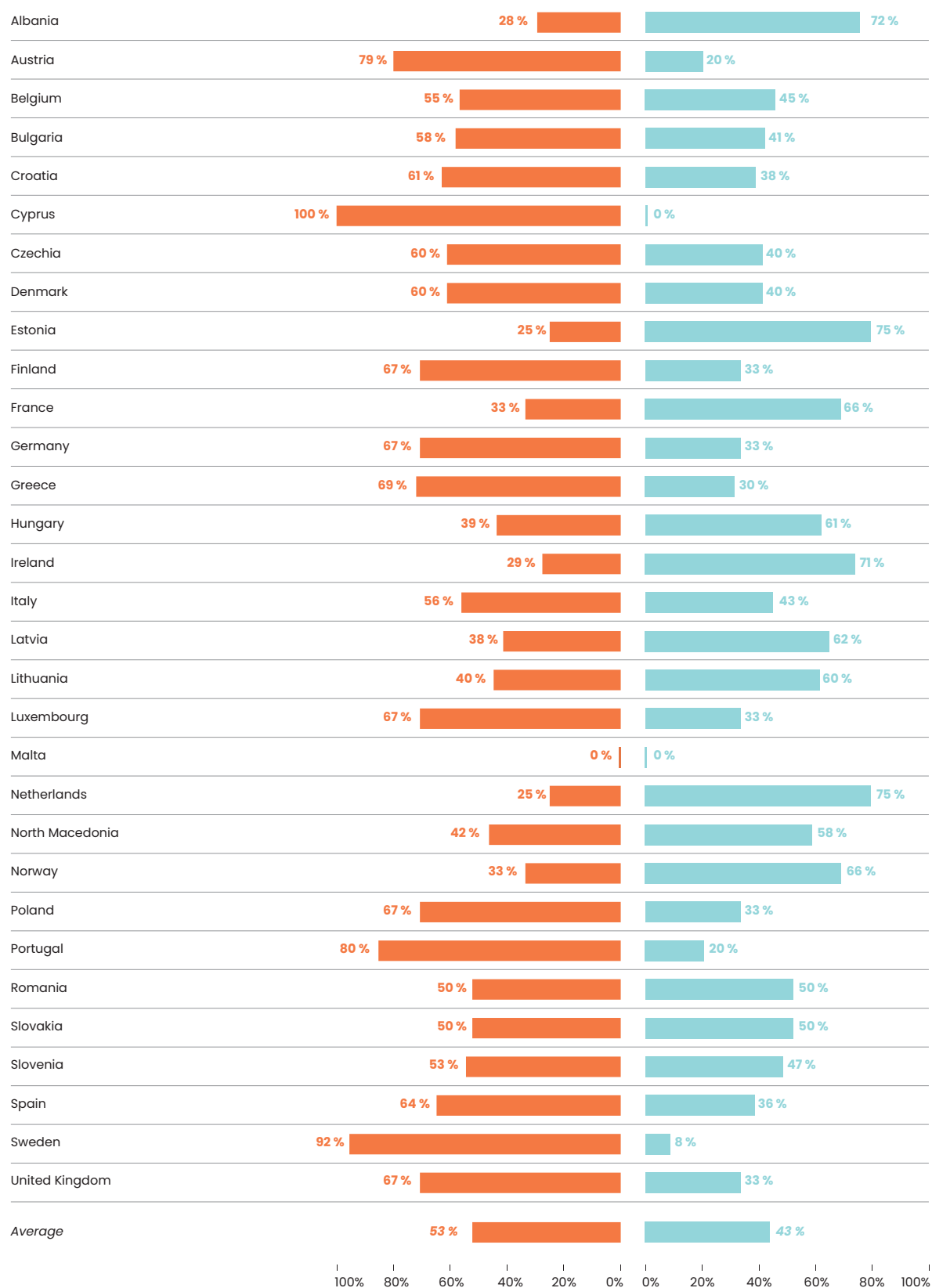


## P. The need for peer-to-peer learning opportunities

The data indicates a strong interest among civic educators in peer-to-peer learning opportunities, highlighting the importance of collaborative knowledge exchange and shared experiences in the field (Figure 17). Among the respondents, **55%** expressed a desire for **more peer-to-peer learning opportunities with actors from their own country**, suggesting that many civic educators see value in strengthening national networks. This preference could stem from the fact that organizations working within the same country often face similar legal, political, and societal challenges, making locally relevant insights particularly useful. A further **45%** of respondents showed interest in **peer-to-peer learning with actors from other European countries**, indicating a strong demand for cross-border exchanges.

The results suggest that civic educators value both national and international learning exchanges, with a slightly stronger preference for domestic collaboration. This could be due to the immediacy and relevance of local knowledge, as well as the practicality of engaging with peers within the same legal and cultural framework.

At the same time, the significant interest in international peer learning highlights the recognition that civic education issues – such as democratic engagement, misinformation, and polarization – are often transnational in nature. Learning from best practices in other European countries could help educators adapt innovative methods, expand their networks, and find inspiration for addressing common challenges.

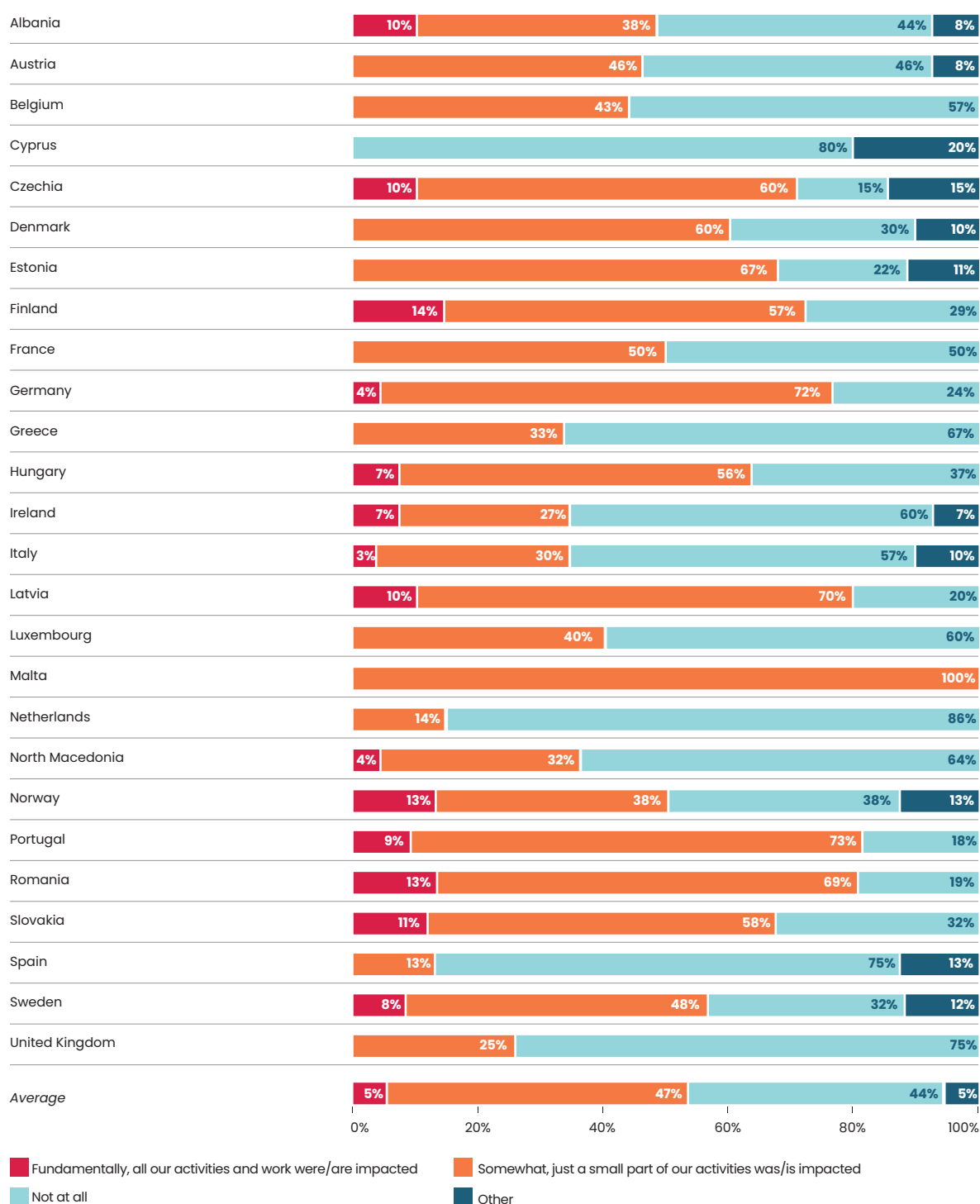
**Figure 17. Would you like to have more peer-to-peer learning opportunities with civic educators? If yes, where?**

## Q. The effects of the Ukrainian war on civic educators' work

Following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine in February 2022, an additional question was added to assess its impact on civic educators. Only those who received the questionnaire after this date responded to this question (**Figure 18**).

**Nearly half (48%) reported a minor impact** on their work, while **44% experienced no effect**. However, **10% indicated a significant disruption**, mainly in countries closer to Ukraine and Russia, such as Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia.

**Figure 18. Did the war in Ukraine change your work?**



## R. Barriers and constraints in civic education activities

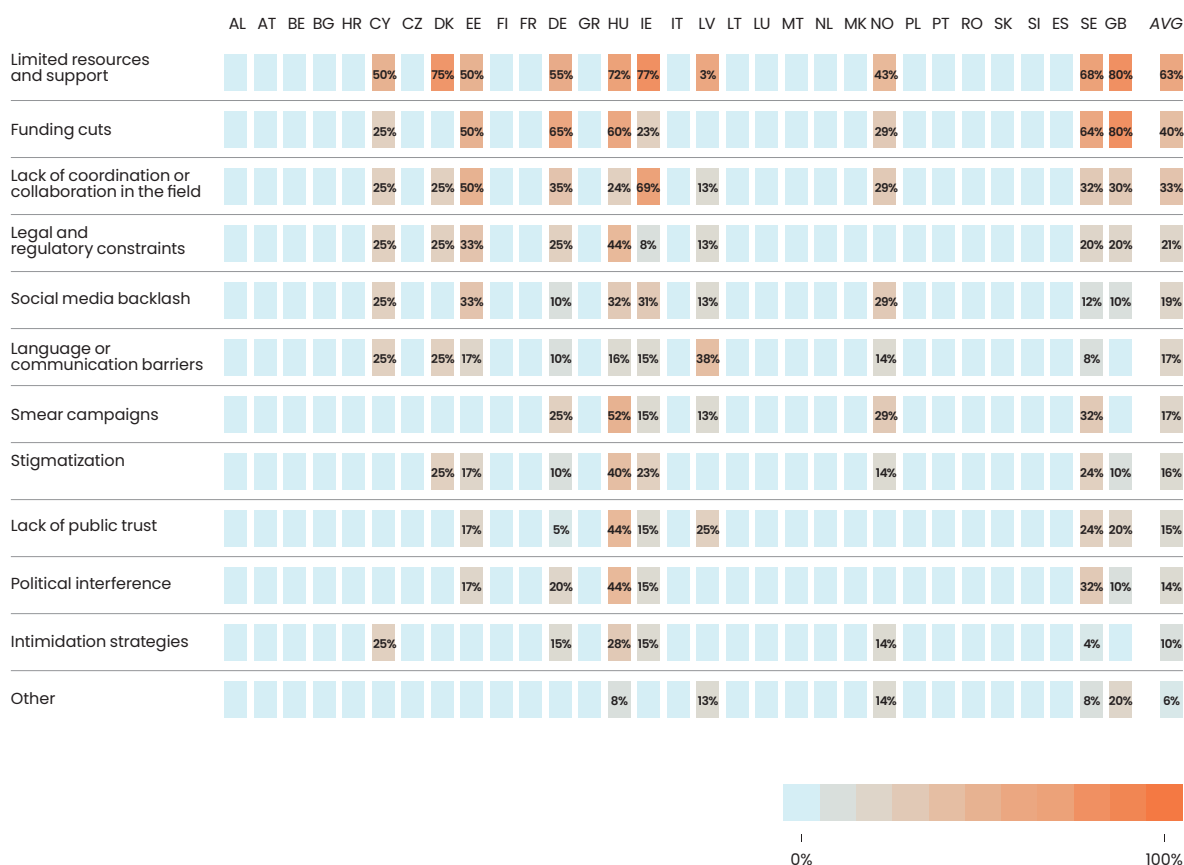
In the second mapping cycle (autumn 2023), a new survey question – introduced only in this phase<sup>30</sup> – examined the barriers civic educators faced over the past 6–12 months (**Figure 19**).

The most common challenge was **limited resources and support** (63.4%), reflecting financial and operational constraints. **Funding cuts affected** 40.5% of respondents, further destabilizing their work. Additionally, 33.2% cited a **lack of coordination or collaboration** in the field, while 21.5% **faced legal and regulatory restrictions**.

**Social and political pressures** also played a role. **Social media backlash** (19.4%), smear campaigns (17.4%), and stigmatization (16.7%) signalled public and online hostility. **Communication barriers** (16.5%) and **public distrust** (15.5%) further complicated outreach. **Political interference affected** 14.6% of respondents, and 10.4% **reported intimidation tactics**.

These findings highlight financial instability, lack of coordination, and political interference as the most pressing concerns. Funding cuts threaten sustainability, while legal, political, and social pressures – ranging from regulatory restrictions to online attacks – create an increasingly challenging environment for civic educators.

**Figure 19. In your daily civic education work, have you in the past 6–12 months encountered the following:**



30 Mapped countries: Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Norway, Sweden, and the UK.

## CHAPTER 3.

# Recommendations: Strengthening Europe's civic education landscape

Europe's civic education landscape spans a broad spectrum – from small community-based groups to large, well-funded organizations – all navigating similar challenges in funding, collaboration, and legitimacy. The first cycle of the mapping from two years ago exposed significant gaps in resourcing and recognition, which still resonate today. With trust in institutions faltering and democracy under strain, civic education actors must not only address immediate operational hurdles but also develop the flexibility and resilience to adapt. This chapter weaves together recommendations for philanthropy, policymakers, and civil society, arranged around four overarching themes which emerged from the data: **funding and sustainability, quality and innovation, collaboration and partnerships**, and **policy and structural reforms**. Though each set of recommendations speaks to specific stakeholders, they are best understood as interdependent strategies which can reinforce one another.

## Rethinking funding and sustainability

A recurring concern across countries and organizational profiles is the instability introduced by short-term project grants and narrow revenue streams. Public and foreign funding have long been the backbone for many civic educators, and though they can ensure steady resources, they often come with strict guidelines and fluctuate with political leadership or changing international priorities. In parallel, some organizations have found creative ways to generate income themselves. Despite these innovations, the search for reliable long-term backing remains a significant preoccupation for nearly all actors.

To meet this challenge, philanthropic donors and policymakers are encouraged to move beyond project-based support and embrace more flexible multi-annual funding models. Civic education often yields nuanced, long-term social outcomes – such as increased democratic participation or critical thinking skills – which do not fit easily into short-term logic. By offering core-funding grants or simplified multi-year frameworks, philanthropic foundations and public agencies can stabilize core teams, strengthen organizational resilience, and foster the kind of experimentation that leads to more impactful learning programmes.

At the same time, civic actors themselves can expand on promising strategies for diversifying their income. Some are already experimenting with fee-based training or “consulting for good,” where paying clients subsidize free initiatives. Others have created public events which attract sponsorships from local businesses. Through a greater emphasis on financial literacy and revenue-generating strategies – bolstered by training and peer-learning opportunities – CSOs can cultivate robust financial health and reduce overdependence on a single source of funding. This can be especially crucial in regions of Central and Eastern Europe which rely heavily on external donors: homegrown civic philanthropy and local funding circles can be galvanized by showing that civic education does not merely serve “abstract” democratic values but yields tangible benefits to businesses, communities, and municipalities alike.

These points echo the 2023 report's warning about “the hidden cost of democracy” – in which **non-formal civic educators remain chronically underfunded**. Back then, up to 42.4% of respondents operated on budgets under 100,000 EUR, a figure which still resonates in parts of Europe. The older recommendations emphasized that **core funding or multi-year grants** would allow civic educators to plan strategically and meet high societal expectations rather than be forced into patchwork project cycles. They also raised the question of whether the **30–70 rule** (30% for core costs, 70% for activities) truly reflects the reality of civic educators' work – an issue which still calls for more discussion.

## Ensuring quality and fostering innovation

Much of the civic education work mapped across Europe takes place in workshops, seminars, and traditional lecture-based formats. While these remain essential, many actors are eager to adopt more interactive, technology-driven, or otherwise creative methodologies – yet they often lack the know-how or the financial leeway to experiment. The mapping reveals that organizations employing digital tools, simulations, or hybrid events tend to have more diversified funding profiles, suggesting that innovation is closely tied to the ability to secure resources for experimentation and adaptation.

Investments in pedagogical innovation must therefore come hand in hand with support for organizational capacity. A robust ecosystem for civic education starts with systematic training opportunities which keep pace with rapidly evolving social and technological contexts. National and EU-level policymakers can expand professional development programmes for educators, social workers, and civil society staff, updating skills not just in the latest digital platforms but also in facilitation techniques and impact evaluation. Philanthropy, for its part, can continue funding pilot projects which introduce simulations, gamification, and AI-driven approaches into civic education. By lowering the financial risks of trying something new, donors encourage bold experimentation, while the resulting evidence base helps the entire sector identify effective practices.

Organizations themselves play a pivotal role by embracing monitoring and evaluation as a means to learn and adapt rather than merely fulfil reporting requirements. When they conduct in-depth evaluations – ideally in partnership with research or knowledge-focused organizations – civic actors can refine their methods and better articulate successes. This, in turn, makes a stronger case to donors and policymakers for sustained investment. Public recognition of innovative approaches (through awards, accreditation, or official endorsements) can also spur educators, schools, and CSOs to explore more dynamic strategies for engaging citizens, particularly in a world where digital literacy and critical thinking are increasingly vital.

Older recommendations noted that **beyond funding**, civic educators need **capacity building** to achieve systemic impact – particularly training in **new methods, tools, and approaches**, plus support for **evaluating impact** and **securing funding**. The **latest mapping** also uncovered specific gaps in **organizational development** and **project management** – especially among organizations in the Some training needs and the More training needs clusters. Strengthening these capacities, alongside innovative pedagogy, remains crucial for achieving higher-quality programmes which address challenges like disinformation and polarization.

## Strengthening collaboration and partnerships

The mapping highlights two seemingly contradictory realities: on one hand, civic actors benefit immensely from exchanging practices, co-creating projects, and forming thematic alliances; on the other, intense competition for resources often leaves them working in isolation or in a fragmented manner. Many expressed a desire for structured peer-to-peer learning – both within their own countries and across borders – yet such cross-pollination remains sporadic if not adequately supported.

To break this cycle, donors and policymakers can reshape their funding calls to reward collective bids and joint initiatives. Multi-actor consortia, for instance, can pool their expertise to tackle shared challenges – such as addressing disinformation or polarization – at a scale that smaller organizations might not achieve independently. Equally, a strengthened pan-European civic education network could offer a space where local success stories, training materials, and innovative tools are traded freely, reducing duplication of efforts and fragmentation. By deliberately convening organizations with varying capacities – smaller grassroots groups and large-scale foundations, for example – such a network fosters an environment of horizontal learning and mutual reinforcement.

Local partnerships are equally critical, particularly in bridging the gap between formal and non-formal education. Schools, universities, libraries, cultural centres, and youth clubs all provide arenas where civic competencies can be cultivated outside standard classroom hours. Many successful examples already exist, from after-school clubs which use participatory games to city-level hackathons focused on democratic engagement. Policymakers can help by establishing safe-entry routes for civic educators into state institutions, setting clear guidelines and responsibilities and thus building trust between schools, municipalities, and CSOs. Civil society organizations can also cultivate relationships with local businesses or grassroots clubs – both to diversify funding sources and to anchor civic education in the everyday realities of citizens' lives.

In the 2023 report, these ideas appeared under the call for “regional and international collaboration,” noting that cross-border partnerships create “meaningful connections” and help civic educators “explore novel and effective approaches” to emerging societal challenges. The recommendation to form a **pan-European civic education network** – where stakeholders can **exchange good practices**, pursue joint projects, and learn from each other – remains highly relevant. **Peer-to-peer learning experiences** were also emphasized as a key means of improving the effectiveness and impact of civic education initiatives. Furthermore, organizations with Some training needs and More training needs consistently pointed to **partnership building** as an essential priority for scaling up their work and accessing diverse resources.

## Advancing policy and structural reforms

Amid diverse contexts, several structural barriers consistently surface: legal restrictions which limit NGOs' access to schools or label them as "foreign agents," political interference that destabilizes funding, and public scepticism towards civil society's legitimacy. These constraints threaten not only the sustainability but also the credibility of civic education in the eyes of learners and the wider public.

Efforts to protect civic space are therefore integral to any strategy aimed at empowering educators. A straightforward yet critical step is maintaining alignment with international human rights standards – those set by the Council of Europe and the European Union – about freedom of association and expression. Pro-democratic policymakers, especially in countries where civic freedoms are fragile, must ensure that any legislation affecting NGOs does not inadvertently drive out legitimate and constructive civic actors. Here, businesses, philanthropic donors, and international institutions can provide legal aid or advocacy support to local organizations under threat, bolstering community-led campaigns which protest restrictive laws.

Strengthening civic education's place in the public domain also rests on better integrating non-formal and informal learning with formal schooling. Legislation which accredits or at least formally recognizes NGO-led programmes – particularly when linked to national curricula – would open channels for more systematic cooperation. Policymakers in countries with successful models of integration can share guidelines and roadmaps for building teacher training schemes which incorporate civic competencies. Coupled with the recognition of youth and adult learners' achievements through these non-formal programmes, such reforms signal that civic education is a societal priority, not an optional add-on.

Finally, efforts to counter stigma and misinformation need to be woven into policy frameworks and public discourse. Civic educators often become the target of online smear campaigns or are accused of undermining national values. Governments and civil society can challenge these narratives by proactively showcasing examples where civic education tangibly improves social cohesion or fosters a sense of shared responsibility – whether by reducing polarizing language in local debates or facilitating dialogue among different community groups. If civic education is consistently highlighted as a constructive force for societal well-being, it becomes more resilient to hostile rhetoric and legislative clampdowns.

Earlier recommendations also stressed the need to **enhance formal civic education**, especially through **teacher training** which addresses contemporary issues like disinformation, AI, or civic disengagement. Countries such as Italy, Finland, and the Baltic states provided examples of how out-of-school competence-based approaches or practical learning methods could be integrated into classrooms. The previous report specifically proposed raising the **perceived seriousness** of civic education – through grading or stand-alone subjects – and encouraging a **collaborative approach** between formal and non-formal actors. By adopting such measures, policymakers ensure that civic education is given its due weight and that educators are equipped to meet 21st-century democratic challenges.

# Conclusion

These recommendations underscore that civic education's future in Europe depends on coordinated, strategic efforts at multiple levels. Organizations need reliable and flexible funding to invest in quality programming; they require encouragement and support to innovate with new tools; and they benefit from alliances – whether national or pan-European – which amplify their efforts and protect their space. At the same time, overarching policy frameworks must defend basic civic freedoms, ensure equitable access to schools, and recognize non-formal learning as an integral component of democratic life.

By committing to long-term, collaborative thinking, philanthropic foundations, state authorities, businesses, and civil society can collectively shape a civic education ecosystem which meets the challenges of our era – rising polarization, digital transformation, and a persistent sense of political disconnection – and steers European societies towards greater participation, critical awareness, and inclusivity.

In both the older and newer findings, we see a shared vision: when provided with **sustainable funding, capacity building, research and monitoring**, and **cross-sector collaboration**, civic education stands as a powerful pillar for democratic resilience. Ensuring alignment between formal school systems and non-formal civic initiatives, developing a “common language,” and keeping pace with fast-evolving societal changes remain crucial steps in bridging the persistent gap between needs and realities and empowering citizens for the future. Notably, the most active organizations – often in the Some training needs or More training needs clusters – urgently require support in **organizational development** and **project management** to solidify their operations and scale their impact.

# Disclaimer

This publication is not the result of scientific research, and the activities carried out under the “Mapping Civic Education in Europe” project should not be considered as such. The project aimed to map the actors in the civic education field across 31 European countries and their connections rather than achieve a representative sample in each country. The project team is aware of the limitations of small sample sizes and potential biases which can arise as a result. It is important to note that small samples may not accurately represent the whole population of a country.

As with any collection of personal data, such as names, addresses, and emails, data collected must be processed lawfully and transparently. THE CIVICS Innovation Hub gGmbH processed the data provided by survey respondents on the basis of their consent. Respondents can revoke their consent at any time and request that their data be deleted. A link to the detailed GDPR policy is available in Appendix A.

The mapping project involves 35 local project partners, and a survey was conducted in 31 countries, with Belarus, Moldova, Turkey, and Ukraine being the exceptions. However, the report includes expert opinion pieces for all 35 countries which offer valuable analyses of the countries' contexts regarding civic engagement. Lastly, considering the plan to continuously add new entities to the map, it is anticipated that a future discrepancy will arise between the total number of questionnaire respondents and the total entries on the map, which is regularly updated.

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### **THE CIVICS INNOVATION HUB**

THE CIVICS Innovation Hub is a pan-European non-profit organization with offices in Bonn, Sofia, and Zagreb. It was founded in February 2021 by three professionals with extensive backgrounds in democracy development and civic education. THE CIVICS is supported by partners in different European countries and advised by stakeholders, philanthropies, professionals, and civic education agencies in Europe. The organization's mission is to strengthen the democratic competence, self-efficacy, and resilience of citizens across Europe in a bottom-up manner by supporting both citizens and civic educators to deal with major challenges of our time, such as threats to democracy, causes and effects of climate change, and social divides. For more information, see <https://thecivics.eu/>.

### **UNIVERSITY OF POTSDAM**

The Professorship for Educational and Socialization Theory at the University of Potsdam, led by Prof. Dr. Nina Kolleck, conducts interdisciplinary research at the intersection of education and political sciences. The group specializes in democracy education, social networks and network analysis, and environmental and education policy, among other areas. For more information, visit: <https://www.uni-potsdam.de/en/erziehungstheorien/index>.

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## Appendix A. First questionnaire<sup>31</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

THE CIVICS Innovation Hub, a transnational non-profit organisation, is conducting a mapping of civic education in Europe. We would like to invite you / your organization to join us by filling out the questionnaire below. The survey takes approximately 10 minutes.

Our Mapping Civic Education in Europe programme is a dynamic initiative that is continuously evolving by adding new countries to the first ever pan-European virtual map of civic educators. Currently, we have been able to reach out to civic education actors from 21 countries, both in non-formal and informal education, together with partners. We identified the topics they cover, the groups they target, and their cooperation with others. Additionally, we analysed their needs to help inform the work of those supporting civil society in Europe. In 2023 and 2024 we are continuing with further development our map by adding 10 new countries. For additional information, please refer to our FAQ<sup>32</sup>.

While there are multiple definitions of civic education, we in this survey understand civic education in accordance with the wording and recommendation of the Council of Europe<sup>33</sup>.

Civic education equips citizens with the competencies that enable them to actively participate in society. These civic competencies are:

- **knowledge** (i.e., concepts of democracy, institutions, identity, and politics)
- **skills** (i.e., communication, discussion culture, thinking critically, problem solving, (self-) reflection, awareness of bias and blind spots)
- **democratic values** (i.e., valuing human dignity and human rights, equality, transparency, cultural diversity)
- **attitudes** (i.e., openness to otherness, trust, respect, tolerance, responsibility, self-efficacy).

In our mapping, we encompass both non-formal and informal civic education. Whereas formal education covers activities prescribed by the curricula, in elementary, secondary, high-school and tertiary education, **non-formal education** refers to planned, structured programmes and processes of personal and social education primarily for young people designed to improve a range of skills and competencies, outside the

formal educational curriculum, while **informal education** refers to lifelong learning processes, whereby each individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from educational influences and resources in his or her own environment and from daily experience.

THE CIVICS Innovation Hub gGmbH processes the data you provide for the purpose of your participation in the project „Mapping civic education in Europe“ on the basis of your consent pursuant to Art. 6 para. 1 sentence 1 lit. a EU-GDPR. You can revoke this consent at any time with effect in the future. Detailed information on data protection and the rights of data subjects can be found on our website<sup>34</sup>.

☐ I have read and agree to the privacy statement.

If you require any further information, do not hesitate to contact us via email: [mapping@thecivics.eu](mailto:mapping@thecivics.eu)

Thank you for your participation,  
THE CIVICS team

### PROFILE OF THE ENTITY

#### 1. What's the full name of the entity you represent?

*\*This data will be publicized on the map.*

#### 2. Where is it located? (name the city/town/village and country)

*\*This data will be publicized on the map.*

#### 3. When was your entity established? (year dropdown)

*\* This data will be publicized on the map but also used for data analysis purposes in an aggregated and anonymized way.*

#### 4. Website or Facebook or Twitter page if a website is not available:

*\*This data will be publicized on the map.*

#### 5. Contact person (s): (First name, last name, position) (optional)

*\*This data will be publicized on the map.*

#### 6. E-mail of the entity to be published in the mapping profile:

*\*This data will be publicized on the map.*

#### 7. Phone contact of the entity to be published in the mapping profile: (optional)

*\*This data will be publicized on the map.*

#### 8. What is the legal status of your entity?

<sup>31</sup> This is the questionnaire for the second cycle of the mapping. Differences from the first cycle questionnaire are marked with footnotes.

<sup>32</sup> Available at: <https://thecivics.eu/mapping-faq/>.

<sup>33</sup> Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/edc/what-is-edc/hre>.

<sup>34</sup> Available at: [https://thecivics.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/CIVICS\\_Information-1.pdf](https://thecivics.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/CIVICS_Information-1.pdf).

*\*This data will be publicized on the map but also used for data analysis purposes in an aggregated and anonymized way.*

- A. public
- B. private
- C. non-profit
- D. other (text box)

**9. Type of entity, what fits best? (Please, select all that apply)**

*\*This data will be publicized on the map but also used for data analysis purposes in an aggregated and anonymized way.*

- A. Association
- B. Civil initiative
- C. Community based organization (CBO)
- D. Community centre
- E. Company
- F. Cultural centre
- G. Educational institution
- H. Foundation
- I. Historical site
- J. Library
- K. Museum
- L. Network
- M. NGO
- N. Professional association (i.e., teachers' association, firefighters' association etc.)
- O. Religious entity
- P. Research institute
- Q. Scouts
- R. Self-help/ support group
- S. Social enterprise
- T. Think tank
- U. Trade union
- V. Others

**10. What is your main field of work? (Please, select all that apply)**

*\*This data will be publicized on the map but also used for data analysis purposes in an aggregated and anonymized way.*

- A. Civic engagement and participation
- B. Civil rights
- C. Community building
- D. Culture and Arts
- E. Employability
- F. Environment and sustainability
- G. Health care
- H. History and remembrance
- I. International development cooperation
- J. Media
- K. Research
- L. (Social) Entrepreneurship
- M. Social inclusion
- N. Others

**11. What specific type of civic education do you focus on? (Please, select all that apply)**

*\*This data will be publicized on the map but also used for data analysis purposes in an aggregated and anonymized way.*

- A. Consumer education

- B. Controversy and conflict resolution
- C. Critical thinking, analytical and problem-solving competences
- D. Culture and arts education<sup>35</sup>
- E. Education for sustainability and green literacy
- F. Financial and economic literacy
- G. History education
- H. Human rights education
- I. Intercultural competences
- J. Interreligious education
- K. Media literacy and digital competences
- L. Skills for civic engagement
- M. Vocational education
- N. Others

**12. Where are your activities mostly taking place? (Please, select all that apply)**

*\*This data will be anonymized and aggregated before publishing.*

- A. Local (i.e., villages, cities, neighbourhoods)
- B. Regional (i.e., one or more counties)
- C. National
- D. International (i.e., other countries, Europe, worldwide etc.)

**13. In what context/setting are your civic education activities mostly taking place? (E.g., if you are an organization working with schools as part of the official curricula, you are working in the formal context; if you are providing activities outside of the curricula and formal system, you are working in the non-formal context) (Please, select all that apply)**

*\*This data will be anonymized and aggregated before publishing.*

- A. Formal (civic education topics taught in schools/units of higher education, following an official curriculum)
- B. Non-formal (planned, structured programmes and processes of personal and social education primarily for young people designed to improve a range of skills and competencies, outside the formal educational curriculum)
- C. Informal (lifelong learning process, whereby each individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from educational influences and resources in his or her own environment and from daily experience)

**14. Which are your main target groups? (Please, select all that apply)**

*\*This data will be anonymized and aggregated before publishing.*

- A. Individuals under 16 years old
- B. Individuals 16–29 years old
- C. Individuals 30–65 years old
- D. Individuals 65+ years old
- E. Women
- F. Men
- G. LGBTQIA+<sup>36</sup>
- H. Ethnic minorities
- I. Economically disadvantaged individuals

<sup>35</sup> Only „Culture education“ in the first cycle questionnaire.

<sup>36</sup> „Sexual minorities“ in the cycle 1 questionnaire.

- J. Hard to reach learners
- K. Migrants
- L. Refugees and asylum-seekers
- M. People with physical and/or mental disabilities
- N. Teachers<sup>37</sup>
- O. Professional groups (excluding teachers)
- P. Others

## APPROACHES

### 15. Please select methods and tools that you are actively using in your civic education work. (Please, select all that apply)

*\*This data will be anonymized and aggregated before publishing.*

- A. Artificial intelligence (AI)<sup>38</sup>
- B. Augmented reality tools
- C. Awareness raising campaigns
- D. Capacity building
- E. Community building work
- F. Consultations and mediation
- G. Digital tools
- H. Exchange programmes
- I. Exhibitions
- J. Graphic novels
- K. Hybrid public events
- L. Online public events
- M. Participatory formats
- N. Peer to peer
- O. Performances
- P. Practice based learning
- Q. Public events in person
- R. Publications
- S. Research
- T. Service learning
- U. Simulations and games
- V. Study trips
- W. Teaching, lecturing
- X. Training of trainers (ToT)
- Y. Workshops and trainings
- Z. Others

### 16. What are the sources you use when deciding on methods, didactical tools and topics of your civic education activities? (Please, select all that apply)<sup>39</sup>

*\*This data will be anonymized and aggregated before publishing.*

- A. In-house expertise
  - B. External expertise
  - C. Peer exchange
  - D. Academic literature
  - E. Online sources
- If you wish, you can share example here: (optional)  
(Only if academic literature or online sources is answered to question 16).*

## ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITIES

<sup>37</sup> This option was not included in the cycle 1 questionnaire.

<sup>38</sup> This option was not included in the cycle 1 questionnaire.

<sup>39</sup> In the cycle 1 questionnaire, this was split into two separate questions asking A. for the sources they use when deciding on topics and B. for the sources they rely on when deciding on methods and tools for civic education activities.

### 17. What is the size of your core team? (People you work with on a regular basis) (Please, insert a number)

*\*This data will be anonymized and aggregated before publishing.*

- A. Employees \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Independent contractors \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Volunteers & interns \_\_\_\_\_

### 18. Please mark all fields where your entity needs further training. (Please, select all that apply)

*\*This data will be anonymized and aggregated before publishing.*

- A. Advocacy
- B. Communication
- C. Building and maintaining partnerships
- D. Exchange of knowledge and practice with peers
- E. Impact evaluation and evaluative learning
- F. Innovation and foresight thinking
- G. New methods, tools and approaches in civic education
- H. Organizational development
- I. Project management
- J. Securing funding
- K. Financial management
- L. Working in a challenging environment characterized by polarization, political antagonism, and hostility towards NGOs<sup>40</sup>
- M. Strategy, mission and vision
- N. Team management
- O. Working with volunteers
- P. Ways of collaborative work with local and international partners
- Q. Prioritizing mental health, well-being, and work-life balance<sup>41</sup>
- R. Work with public institutions
- S. Work with media
- T. Others

### 19. Which are your funding sources? (Please, choose all that apply)

*\*This data will be anonymized and aggregated before publishing.*

- A. EU funding
- B. National public funding
- C. National private funding (i.e., Foundations)
- D. Foreign public funding, other than EU (e.g., Public agencies, Foundations)
- E. Foreign private funding (e.g., Foundations)
- F. National funding from public companies
- G. National funding from private companies (i.e., donations, sponsorships, investment)
- H. Your entity's generated income (i.e., membership fees, sale of services and products, etc.)
- I. Individual contributions (i.e., donations, crowdfunding)
- J. Others

### 20. What is your average annual budget? (Please, choose a single option)

*\*This data will be anonymized and aggregated before publishing.*

<sup>40</sup> This option was not included in the cycle 1 questionnaire.

<sup>41</sup> This option was not included in the cycle 1 questionnaire.

before publishing.

- A. Up to EUR 5000
- B. EUR 5001 – 50000
- C. EUR 50001 – 100000
- D. EUR 100001 – 500000
- E. Greater than EUR 500001
- F. I do not want to answer

**21. A) How much of your annual budget is devoted to your core costs (staff, infrastructure, communication, and administration)? Please provide an approximation.**

\_\_\_\_\_%  
(Please provide an estimate in percentages)

**B) How much of your annual budget is devoted to your activities? Please provide an approximation.**

\_\_\_\_\_%  
(Please provide an estimate in percentages)

*\*Optional question*

*\*This data will be anonymized and aggregated before publishing.*

**22. Did the war in Ukraine change your work? (Please, choose a single option)<sup>42</sup>**

*\*This data will be anonymized and aggregated before publishing.*

- A. Fundamentally, all our activities and work were/are impacted
- B. Somewhat, just a small part of our activities was/is impacted
- C. Not at all
- D. Other

**23. In your daily civic education work, have you in the past 6-12 months encounter the following? (Please, choose all that apply)<sup>43</sup>**

*\*This data will be anonymized and aggregated before publishing.*

- A. Stigmatization
- B. Political interference
- C. Smear campaigns (Misinformation shared about civic education work)
- D. Funding cuts
- E. Legal and regulatory constraints
- F. Intimidation strategies
- G. Limited resources and support
- H. Social media backlash
- I. Lack of public trust
- J. Language or communication barriers
- K. Lack of coordination or collaboration in the field
- L. Other
- M. None of the above

## NETWORKS AND PARTNERS

In a two-step process, THE CIVICS is updating the map of civic educators which depicts relationships in the field. As a first step, we are collecting as many civic education organisations as possible. We kindly ask you to help us by naming as many other entities (NGOs, public institutions, informal groups, private companies etc.) as possible that play a role in supporting civic engagement, community building, or democratic participation in your country or in Europe. A second step will follow in the next months when you will receive a list of organizations in your country and will be asked to note if you are cooperating with them.

*If you do not know all the information asked, please fill in as much of the information asked as possible.*

*Due to data protection, you are advised only to enter contacts who agree to the distribution of their address. None of the collected data will be used for any other purposes except for the "Mapping civic education" project nor publicized on the map without the consent of the other party.*

### Add organization:

1. Entity name:
2. Where is it located? (name the city/town/village and country)
3. Website/Facebook page:
4. Contact person name:
5. Email:
6. Phone number:

*Respondents can add as many organizations as they like by clicking on "Add organization" dropdown opens.*

## CLOSING

Thank you for participating in the survey.

*To be able to conduct social network visualization and create a useful map, we will need your help in the second step of the research. In the next months, you can expect a link to a short questionnaire where you will confirm relationships with actors in your country of operation.*

For more information about our work, subscribe to our newsletter at the bottom of our webpage and follow us on LinkedIn & Twitter.

<sup>42</sup> This question was added after February 2022.

<sup>43</sup> This question was only part of the second mapping cycle (2023-2024).

## Appendix B. Second questionnaire

We would like to sincerely thank you for taking part in the previous mapping survey. We promise this one will take up to 5 minutes of your time, but will ensure that you/your organization are visible on the map of European civic educators.

As you already know, THE CIVICS Innovation Hub, a pan-European non-profit organisation, is conducting a mapping of non-formal and informal civic education in Europe. More information on the mapping and how we define civic education can be accessed [here](#).

While there are multiple definitions of civic education, we in this survey understand civic education in accordance with the wording and recommendation of the Council of Europe ([link](#)).

The short questionnaire ahead of you will show and confirm relations with other actors in your country and help us get essential information for our map of civic educators in Europe.

We thank you for your time and help!

THE CIVICS Innovation Hub gGmbH processes the data you provide for the purpose of your participation in the project "Mapping civic education in Europe" on the basis of your consent pursuant to Art. 6 para. 1 sentence 1 lit. a EU-GDPR. You can revoke this consent at any time with effect for the future. Detailed information on data protection and the rights of data subjects can be found [here](#).

☐ I have read and agree to the privacy statement.

If you require any further information, do not hesitate to contact us via email: [mapping@thecivics.eu](mailto:mapping@thecivics.eu)

### RELATIONS WITH OTHER ACTORS

In the following table, please select those individuals/ organizations with whom you currently cooperate?

	Cooperation (Y/N)
Name of the organization	Yes
Name of the organization	Yes
Name of the organization	Yes

(Mandatory)

*\*This data will be publicized in the map with a line connecting your entity to the other entity.*

### General questions

#### 1. Would you like to have more peer-to-peer learning opportunities with civic educators? If yes, where? (Select all that apply)

*\*This data will be anonymized and aggregated before publishing.*

- A. In your country
- B. In other countries in Europe (Please tell us which).  
IF B then (text box)

#### 2. If there were a pan-European civic education network, what would you expect from it/ what should it primarily focus on? (Select all that apply)

*\*This data will be anonymized and aggregated before publishing.*

- A. Skills-related trainings
- B. Advocacy
- C. Communication
- D. Digitalizing one's work
- E. Financial stability and fundraising
- F. Working with politics and institutions
- G. Working in a politically challenging environment
- H. Soft skills
- I. Learning sessions (acquire knowledge)
- J. Peer-to-peer learning formats
- K. Exchange of good practice
- L. Exchange on the latest civic education trends, tools and topics
- M. Opportunities for joint projects nationally
- N. Opportunities for joint projects internationally
- O. Opportunities for cooperation with authorities
- P. Other (text box)

## Appendix C. Data sample

This table outlines how many organizations participated in the questionnaires (Q1 and Q2) within each cycle.

COUNTRY	Cycle 1 – Q 1	Cycle 2 – Q 1	Cycles 1 & 2 – Q 2
Albania	39	0	25
Austria	37	0	24
Belgium	14	0	11
Bulgaria	37	0	30
Croatia	48	0	36
Cyprus	0	5	5
Czechia	20	0	15
Denmark	0	10	10
Estonia	0	9	9
Finland	14	0	9
France	8	0	3
Germany	0	25	25
Greece	15	0	13
Hungary	0	27	27
Ireland	0	15	15
Italy	30	0	16
Latvia	0	10	10
Lithuania	15	0	10
Luxembourg	16	0	3
Malta	4	0	0
The Netherlands	7	0	4
North Macedonia	25	0	12
Norway	0	8	8
Poland	24	0	18
Portugal	11	0	5
Romania	16	0	6
Slovakia	19	0	14
Slovenia	22	0	17
Spain	16	0	11
Sweden	0	25	25
The UK	0	12	12

## Appendix D. Data analysis methods

For the independent data analysis conducted by researchers from the University of Potsdam, a mixed-methods approach was employed. However, qualitative and quantitative methods were analyzed separately to ensure clarity and depth.

The 35 expert opinion pieces underwent qualitative content analysis. Using a hybrid methodology which combined deductive and inductive approaches, categories were derived from the texts. Challenges emerged as the most prominent theme, further divided into three sub-categories. Relevant studies were integrated to contextualize the findings and facilitate comparisons.

The quantitative analysis was conducted using four primary methods: bivariate correlations, Latent Class Analysis (LCA), Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA), and hierarchical clustering.

- **Bivariate correlations** measure the relationship between two variables (questions or scales). A correlation coefficient ( $R$ ) above 0.2 typically indicates a significant result.
- **Latent Class Analysis (LCA)** is a statistical method used to identify latent subgroups within a population. Organizations were classified into types (classes) based on response patterns, representing shared characteristics. LCA simplified the interpretation of organizational responses across multiple dimensions, including legal status, challenges, expertise, activities, target groups, funding sources, and tools/methods used. The resulting typologies enabled observations on organizational characteristics, such as predominant location, budget, home country GDP, number of employees, and organizational age. Special emphasis was placed on identifying innovative tools utilized by each organizational type.
- **Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA)** examines relationships among multiple qualitative (non-numeric categorical) variables, reducing complexity and revealing underlying data structures.
- **Hierarchical clustering** groups observations based on similarity, offering insights into patterns and commonalities among organizations.



