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# Together, Moving Forward

A regranting scheme promoting inclusion of young people with refugee and migrant backgrounds and student's empowerment

**KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND 6 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE**

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# INTRODUCTION

Since 1982, the European Students' Union has represented, defended and strengthened students' educational, democratic, political and social rights. Through its 45 members in 40 European countries, ESU is working for sustainable, accessible and high-quality higher education in Europe.

Today, **only 3% of the young people with refugee backgrounds are enrolled in Higher Education** (UNHCR). Barriers remain extremely high when it comes to access, participation and success: recognition of qualification, language barriers, financial, legal and administrative burden, lack of social interaction, access to decent living conditions and (mental) health services, university methodology, discriminations, etc.

ESU has decided to act and propose concrete solutions.

From 2016 to 2021, the European Students' Union ran the Together, Moving Forward [TMF] programme, with the kind support of the Open Society Foundations.

**TMF empowered students to develop creative solutions to overcome educational barriers and reshape the narrative behind migration in order to move toward a more inclusive society.**

Throughout the programme, we were inviting and supporting young people & students [with and without refugee and migrant backgrounds] to get the system 'unstuck'!

# THE 'TOGETHER, MOVING FORWARD PROGRAMME

For 6 years, TMF provided ESU with the vehicle to support student and youth-led actions around Europe aimed at breaking educational and societal barriers, and to amplify the voice of students advocating for a better perception of EU citizens toward migration challenges.

**The programme was articulated around three pillars:**

✳ **Regranting scheme and small grants for students and youth-led groups:** open call targeting students and youth to develop, with grants up to 10.000 euros, their own ideas supporting access to education and social inclusion of young people with refugee background in their local communities.

✳ **Capacity building and networking activities:** workshops, seminars and capacity building where students and youth could share experiences, knowledge, friendship while developing concrete skills such as project management, public speaking, advocacy, preparation for job interviews, etc.

✳ **Advocacy work:** develop and defend the position of ESU on topics such as social inclusion, access to education for refugees and migrant students, recognition of qualification, etc. Development of the Campaign "Students and Youth in Action for World Refugee Day".

**(This publication will focus on the regranting scheme.)**
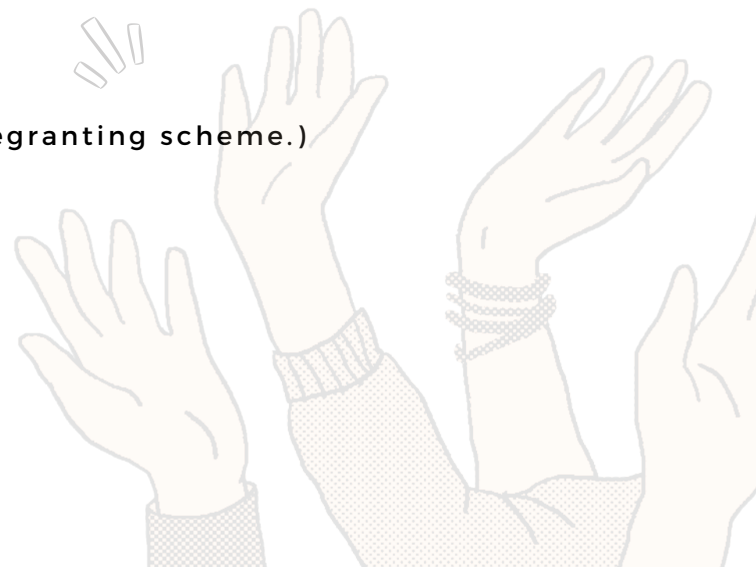
# THE REGRANTING SCHEME AND SMALL GRANTS FOR STUDENTS AND YOUTH-LED GROUPS

Over the past 6 years, ESU has built sound expertise when it comes to the implementation of a small grant programme supporting the social inclusion of young refugees and students' empowerment.

## 6 YEARS OF SMALL TMF GRANTS:

- **136 applications** received

- **62 students and youth-led projects** successfully funded in more than 25 countries

- **Hundreds of students with refugee and migrant backgrounds could access higher education,** improve self-confidence, develop various skills (public speaking, language skills), create connections with local youth and improve their sense of belonging, access housing and health services, etc.

- **A flexible and result-oriented financial support, tailored by students for students and youth,** including refugee-led groups to help them develop their own ideas and support their communities.

By empowering students to develop their own ideas, we were actively contributing in to creating a generation of active citizens, better aware of migration and inclusion challenges, and ready to build open and welcoming communities.

## WHY HAVE WE DECIDED TO WRITE THIS SMALL HANDBOOK?

With the project coming to an end in July 2021, we, the European Students' Union, have decided to share our views, experiences and knowledge collected over the years to support future organisations and foundations that would be willing to work on a similar approach.

While we will be eternally grateful for the trust and support from the Open Society Foundations over the years, we would like to also take this chance to highlight that very few similar opportunities currently exist. Today most of the funding goes to projects encouraging the "participation" of young people and young refugees in activities fostering inclusion.

**WITH THIS PUBLICATION WE CALL FOR MORE FOUNDATIONS AND PUBLIC AUTHORITIES, IN EUROPE, TO MAKE RESOURCES AVAILABLE AND FLEXIBLE TO YOUNG PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY YOUNG REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS, TO IMPLEMENT THEIR OWN PROJECTS AND IDEAS. TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO STAND UP AND SPEAK UP FOR THEMSELVES.**

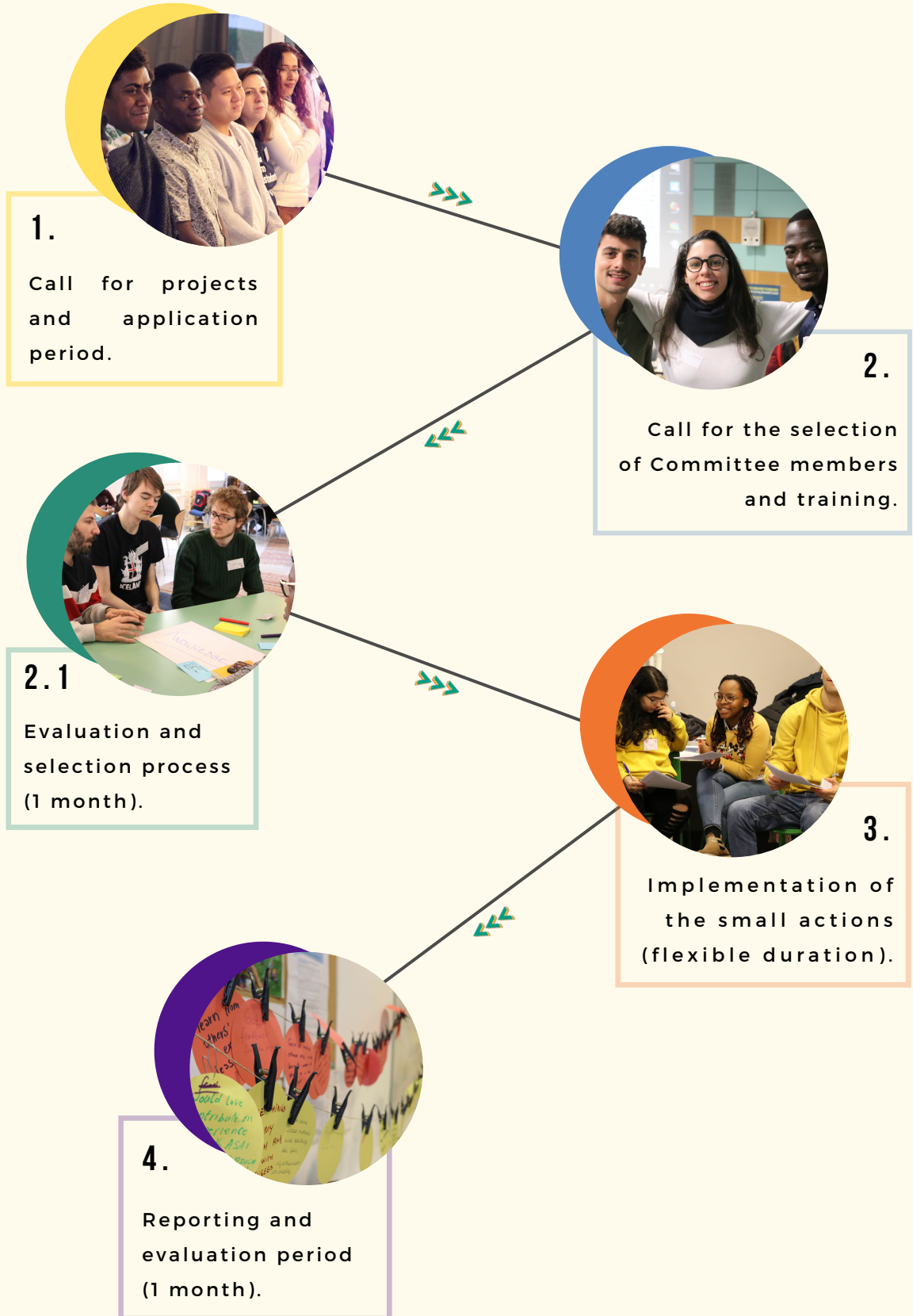**THE IMPACT CAN BE BIGGER AND MORE BENEFICIAL FOR ALL, INCLUDING THE HOST SOCIETY.**

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**1.**

# CALL FOR PROJECTS

## ELIGIBILITY AND TARGET GROUP

The programme was open to:

- **All non-for-profit (student) organisations,** not just ESU members. We encourage student-led groups, ESU members, local student unions, and refugee-led or migrant-led organisations to apply for a grant.

- **Informal groups of students** - as we fully understand the complexity of having a registered organisation, which implies a good level of organisation and structure, we also supported informal groups of young people to apply. For this, they only needed the support of an **umbrella organisation,** who will officially sign the contract and receive the grant. Then, the informal groups of students are encouraged to sign an agreement with this umbrella organisation to fully run the project on their own and use the grant as planned.

### WHAT IS THE ADDED VALUE OF WORKING WITH AN UMBRELLA ORGANISATION?

- To learn from them, get their expertise in terms of project implementation, evaluation, and finances.
- An effective way of trying and experiencing activities and concepts, without taking risks of creating an organisation with all the costs that may imply.

Applications from a single individual were not accepted.

It is also worth mentioning that we never considered projects "ineligible" owing to the fact they already got our support. Due to the specific focus of the programme, it can be hard for some organisations to receive other sources of funding (e.g. lack of public funding available on this topic, trust issues from public authorities/foundations toward youth and refugee-led initiatives).

- It is also the role of the programme to help informal organisations/ groups develop their capacity and credibility to hopefully be able to apply to other sources of funding and be sustainable.

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**1.**

# CALL FOR PROJECTS

## OBJECTIVES FROM THE CALL

- Inspire student-led initiatives addressing refugees' and asylum seekers' living conditions and their access to education;
- Reshape public discourse around forced migration and confront hate speech in our societies;
- Build capacity for students to be more responsive to the issues related to forced migration, focusing on social inclusion and access to education;
- Empower National Student Unions to promote and advocate for clear policies that ease the access of refugees and asylum seekers to Higher Education;
- Open up to new student groups and other stakeholders active in refugee issues, especially education;
- Build long-lasting links between newcomers and student communities.

## 8 CALLS FOR PROJECTS IN 6 YEARS!

1. Call 2016: only open to National Student Union organisations, members of ESU
2. Call 2017: open to all, general TMF objectives
3. Call 2018-1: open to all, general TMF objectives
4. Call 2018-2: joint call ESU-OBESSU to support partnerships between secondary schools and university students to work together to support social inclusion of young people with refugee and migrant backgrounds
5. Call 2019: open to all, general TMF objectives
6. Call 2020-1: open to all, general TMF objectives
7. Call 2020-2: open to all, focusing on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on refugee and exiled students
8. Call 2021: open to all, for local activities to organise a small project for World Refugee Day 2021

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# CALL FOR PROJECTS

## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

In order to apply for the programme, some documents were requested. However, we tried to keep the right balance to avoid administrative burden while ensuring the success and credibility of the actions.

**The following documents**[1] **needed to be sent:**

- Application form explaining the project's objectives, activities, partnerships, the role of refugee students, communication, etc. Guiding questions helped applicants organise their answers.
- Budget
- Timeline
- Statutes of the organisation (applicant organisation or umbrella organisation supporting informal groups of students and youth)
- Balance sheet

Both the application and budget forms are standard templates that the applicants had to fill.

On purpose and to avoid IT challenges, the application form was a basic Word document and the budget an Excel spreadsheet with a few automatic formulas already integrated.

## FREQUENCY AND DURATION OF PUBLICATION OF THE CALL FOR PROJECTS

We typically published a call for projects every 6 months for the duration of one month.

## COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION OF THE CALL FOR PROJECTS

The calls for projects were mostly disseminated on ESU and TMF social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter) via promoted posts.
The network built over the years (volunteers, Selection Committee, partner NGOs) also helped to share the call.
The newsletter of the European Council for Refugees and Exiles frequently disseminated the call to their partner organisations.

Over the years, we kept receiving applications from new organisations, based in all European countries.

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# 1.

# CALL FOR PROJECTS

## CAPACITY BUILDING SEMINARS

We organised capacity building seminars with young people interested in applying for TMF grants to discuss and build skills in project management and inclusion before or in the early days of the publication of the call.

The objectives:

- To help participants understand the main challenges related to the implementation of a project.
-  Share experiences,
- Improve the quality of their application and be more aware of what a "meaningful project" means (eg. needs analysis, active participation, avoiding tokenism, etc...)

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Prepare clear and user-friendly application documents (call for projects, application form, budget, etc.)
- Reduce to the minimum the administrative requirements and paperwork
- Support informal groups of students and youth to apply to give them the chance to build their capacities
- Build a strong network of partner organisations to share the call for projects

# SELECTION COMMITTEE

## CALL AND SELECTION OF EVALUATORS

We published a call for evaluators (online, through promoted posts) for a duration of one month. The call for evaluators presented:

- The main tasks and responsibilities: to review and score the project applications, online and remotely.
- An estimated workload and timeline

-The evaluators did not receive any compensation fees, and were fully volunteering. However, we fully supported the evaluators whenever needed with a certificate of volunteering, recommendation letter, etc.

The selection of the volunteers was based on motivation, previous experience in the field of migration, education or inclusion and/or strong motivation to develop knowledge and skills on this topic.

## PROFILES AND TRAINING OF THE EVALUATORS

Between 2016 and 2021, we had 3 different Selection Committees, with 6-8 evaluators each.

We ensured to have a diversity of profiles that reflect the programme's spirit; we also encouraged more young people with refugee backgrounds to join the Selection Committees.

- The first Selection Committee was composed of people with high expertise on migration and education topics.
- Over the years; we moved to a more "students to students" and "students for students" approach.
- The second and third rounds of evaluators were exclusively composed of students and young people, including young people with refugee and migrant backgrounds.

Once selected, the Selection Committee members had an introductory meeting where we were able to create a sort of group dynamic, but also present the programme's objectives and the evaluation tool. We invited the members to share their preferred topics and/or countries to cover (eg. access to education, cultural activities, language development, mental health, etc..)

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## 2.

# SELECTION COMMITTEE

As part of the programme, we always valued curiosity, skills development and engagement. When possible, we invited Selection Committee members to parallel activities of the programme (capacity building events, introduction meeting of grantees, and other volunteering aspects of the programme) in order to extend skills, experience and network.

## ADDED VALUE OF AN EXTERNAL SELECTION COMMITTEE

- Young people were able to volunteer for a meaningful project
- It was particularly valuable for people who do not have the necessary time, network and possibility to fully engage at a local level.
- It also offered a possibility to volunteer in English, be part of a group of young people based all around Europe, and develop knowledge about the migration and integration situation in various countries while also getting inspired by the project applications!

## VOLUNTEER WORK STIMULATES FLEXIBILITY, SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT!

The Selection Committee was only composed of unpaid volunteers, fully dedicated to the cause. However, it is important to keep in mind that when working with young volunteers, life plans and priorities can quickly change. It is also our role to encourage and celebrate those changes! If someone could not fully review all the attributed projects, other volunteers were always ready to take some extra onboard. Having a strong community can also assist in asking for last-minute support to review a few projects.

* Regular, but not too frequent emails, were important to update the Selection Committee about the different phases. We also sent kind reminders about upcoming deadlines and updates on the final results.
* The evaluators were working independently and remotely. Over a period of 3 weeks, evaluators could choose the best time to review the projects based on their personal agenda.
* Only an Internet connection was needed.

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# 2.

# SELECTION COMMITTEE
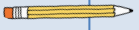
## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Inclusive Selection Committee representing diversity in terms of expertise and backgrounds.
- Depending on financial resources: we would encourage financial reimbursement to value the work of volunteers, including young refugees. In case it is difficult for people seeking asylum to receive volunteer fees, supermarket vouchers can also be an option.
- Importance to organise an online introduction meeting to present the programme, tools and expectations and a closing meeting to discuss specific cases and present the final rankings.
- Ideally one of these two meetings should be in real life to create a group dynamic, discuss selection criteria and projects, and to share experiences.
- Invite the Selection Committee members to other programme activities (capacity building events, as project ambassadors, etc.)
- Develop an online, automatic and interactive platform to review the project applications
- To define the selection criteria together with the Selection Committee
- To give space for the evaluators to share their views, suggestions and recommendations about the local projects and the evaluation process.

Adrian, Cypriot living in the UK, was part of the Selection Committee from 2016 until 2021
- "I learnt a lot about the difficulties refugees and asylum seekers face, but also about the amazing work happening across Europe to help those in need. Ideally, there would have been a budget to enable at least 1 or 2 in-person meetings of the selection committee at ESU's HQ, probably at the beginning (to get to know each other) and in the end (to summarise, wrap up the selection etc.)".

Fares, Syrian refugee living in Romania, was part of the Selection Committee from 2016 until 2020
- "I found the criteria quite good, I really enjoyed that they are really inclusive and general. It also allowed the evaluator to express their point of view. I also think that the evaluator has genuine authority on the project call as it was possible to question some of the points, suggest them or ask for reviews or re-doing".

# SELECTION PROCESS

## A TWO-STEPS PROCESS

A two-step approach helped the applicants to avoid writing long applications in case they were not eligible, and prevent the evaluators from doing unnecessary work.

* **Step 1: Light application form**
  Applicants had to send the application form with four main questions and a provisional budget.
  The Programme Coordinator was in charge of reviewing this step: checking main eligibility criteria (fitting objectives of the call, status of the main applicant, etc).
  The Programme Coordinator drafted a notification letter. For the ones who passed the first steps, they were invited to answer additional questions clarifying certain points of their application.
  Duration: a few days.

* **Step 2: Full application pack**
  Applicants had to send the second part of the application form with more detailed answers to certain questions. They also had to submit a final budget, a timeline, the statutes of the (umbrella) organisation and the latest balance sheet.
  The Selection Committee was in charge of reviewing the completed application forms, timeline and budget, during a period of 3 weeks.

## EVALUATION TOOL AND SELECTION CRITERIA

Two evaluators assessed each project in order to ensure a fair process. If the scores were very different at the end, a third person would have been consulted.
The evaluation tool is a "homemade" tool created on an Excel spreadsheet and it included:

- An overview of all projects with the name of the applicant, name of the project, budget requested. The evaluator could see the projects they were allocated to.

- A different tab exists for each project, both evaluators would review the projects against a set of criteria, each criterion would be scored from 1 to 5. The evaluator would have to justify their score with a short sentence. The weighted average score would give a score between 1 to 100 which would help rank and select the final projects, based on the budget available.

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# 2.1 SELECTION PROCESS

The selection criteria were the following:

| Selection criteria | Guiding questions | Matching answers in application |
|---|---|---|
| 1) Eligibility check | Does the application fit in with our call for applications? | yes/no |
| 2) Quality of needs assessment | Does the applicant demonstrate a reasonable knowledge of the situation/context they are addressing, including other initiatives present in the filed? | 20% |
| 3) Cooperation with refugee-led formal or informal groups | To what extent does the initiative originate from a dialogue with the refugee and asylum seekers, and how much would you rate their involvement? | 10% |
| 4) Relevance of the approach proposed | To what extent does this project seem relevant given the context in which it takes place? | 15% |
| 5) Impact and sustainability of your project | How would you rate (in terms of being relevant and realistic) the change the projects wants to make, and can you build on it once the project is over? | 15% |
| 6) Quality of the project | To what extent is the project well planned and defined (realistic and comprehensive activity plan, justified budget, cost-effectiveness, clearly defined target group, measurable outcomes etc.) | 15% |
| 7) Inclusion of diversity and gender equality | Are gender and diversity visibly incorporated at all levels of the project? | 5% |
| 8) Appropriate use of media for visibility and dissemination | Has the applicant developed a relevant strategy to give a good visibility and a broad dissemination of the projects results? | 5% |
| 9) Organisational capacity | How would you rate the applicant's ability to manage the logistical and financial implications of the project, based on the organisational size, experience and internal organisation? | 5% |
| 10) Inclusion of relevant stakeholders | Why is this partnership the best for this project, and what are the partners' strenghts and roles? | 5% |
| 11) Overall quality | How would you rate the overall quality of the application? | 5% |

The level of English language and grammar were not taken into consideration. Instead, we reviewed the feasibility and honesty of the proposals. Experienced applicants that used to apply to European or national calls for projects using buzzwords did not have more chances to receive funding compared to new groups of students!

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# SELECTION PROCESS

## FINAL SELECTION

- The Programme Coordinator was following the ranking proposed by the Selection Committee. However, based on experience, requested budgets are often reduced and rearranged.

- The Programme Coordinator prepared a detailed notification letter, with constructive feedback to support unselected applicants to improve their application.

| TIMELINE | Duration | Who |
|---|---|---|
| Call for projects (Stage 1) | 1 month | Applicants |
| Evaluation of Stage 1+ Notification of applicants | 1 week maximum | Programme Coordinator |
| Application Form (Stage2) | 1 week | Applicants |
| Evaluation of Stage 2 | 2 weeks | Selection Committee; 4 to 7 applications per evaluator |
| Notification to applicants and preparation of grant agreements | 3 weeks | Programme Coordinator |

## GRANT AGREEMENTS AND PAYMENTS

After being successfully selected, ESU was preparing the Grant Agreement/ contract between the European Students' Union and the grantee. It includes various key and legal aspects (e.g. duration, legal representatives, grant, payment plan, exchange rate if applicable, reporting requirements) and three annexes: a short description of the project, the detailed budget and the timeline.

**IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT THE TMF SMALL GRANT AGREEMENTS:**

Projects and needs varied consequently from one project to another (e.g. workshop to get information on how to access university, create a CV; series of workshops to co-create collective gardening; creation of a guidebook on university methodology; mental health support sessions with a psychologist, etc.)

**"One size does not fit all" and flexibility should remain**, in terms of:

- **Budget:** depending on the project, the budget could vary from 1.000 to 10.000 euros maximum.
- **Duration**: varied from a few months to a year.

**Results-oriented, we preferred to allow grantees to adapt their projects whenever and wherever needed to reach a positive impact rather than continuing in the wrong direction.**

- Changes (budget, activities, duration, etc.) could be made as long as they were in line with the programme objectives and upon agreement with the TMF Programme Coordinator.

**In the framework of the Students and Youth in Action for World Refugee Day Campaign, we distributed a fixed amount between 300 to 500 euros for grantees to implement their local activities.**

- **Budget**: the grantees received their one-time payments in advance in order to ensure they have enough financial means to implement their activity since most of them were newly-created organisations that did not receive major donations.
- **Duration:** the grantees implemented their local activities during one of the Sundays in June as part of World Refugee Day, while the preparation of the activities took up to a month
- **Reporting**: since the grants were smaller and made for a shorter period, the reporting aspect was adapted accordingly.

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The payment of the grant was done two times (exception being the local activities) after submission of a payment request form[2] by the grantee.

| First Payment | 75% of the overall grant | At the beginning of the project, after the signature of the grant agreement and payment request form |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Balance payment | Maximum 25% of the overall grant | At the end of the project; after receiving the final report and submission of the balance payment request form. <br><br> The final payment depended on the final and real costs declared by the grantee. |

In certain situations, when it was difficult for the grantee to advance with the project without the leftover amount of 25%, we agreed to pay the final amount in advance. Nonetheless, the need to pay the grantee in advance was evaluated on a case to case basis.

## TEMPLATES AND KEY DOCUMENTS

Over the years we created a set of templates[3] to ease the administrative part. It includes:

- The Grant Agreement.
- The payment and balance request form: documents that should be signed by the grantee requesting the payment to be made.
- Interim report template, including the budget template: to be sent halfway through the project.
- Final report template, including budget template: to be sent at the end of the project.
- Amendment approval template: filled by ESU to confirm the changes requested by the grantee (financial, duration, content).

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## KICK-OFF OF THE SMALL PROJECTS

Together with the selected grantees, we organised a 1,5 hour online meeting with the objective to:

- Connect the grantees so that they are aware of other initiatives
- Develop the feeling of being part of a network of positive and similar projects
- Present the administrative requirements in terms of reporting and financial rules
- Create some "human connection" between the project coordinator and the grantees - which would support smooth communication during the grant period.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SMALL PROJECTS

We had several systems in place to monitor, support and evaluate the grantees' projects.

**\* Field visits and online meetings**

We organised whenever possible field visits to meet the grantees. It helped strengthen connections and built trust as well as better understand the local reality and meet the project participants. It was also the occasion to answer some questions from the grantees, and readapt the project if needed.

When it was not possible to visit the local projects, we organised online calls to get to know the team and the current project development better. Such meetings were usually organised after the evaluation of the interim report in order to clarify certain points, review or adapt some activities.

**\* Capacity building and training seminars**

As part of the programme, we were supporting capacity building and skills development, through different dimensions:

- by receiving a grant, grantees recognised that they gained various skills: project management and finance-related skills, problem-solving skills, conflict management, facilitation and communication skills, etc.
- by participating in capacity building events organised by ESU at the European level to develop knowledge on social inclusion, migration and student activism.
- by participating in tailor-made training given by professional trainers at the European level, in English (e.g public speaking, EU advocacy, CV/cover letter, skills mapping)

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Feedback from the grantees:

"The main asset of the TMF funding was that it made it possible to engage more volunteers and cover their costs and fees. It was much more flexible and approachable compared to the other donors".

"The added value of TMF was the feeling that someone sees value in our projects and wants to support us was very welcomed. We enjoyed the pleasant and easy-going communication with the project manager, who was very willing to answer questions and be involved in what we were doing. The flexibility of TMF was a very welcome change from some other grants I've worked with".

"To put it simply, the theme for World Refugee Day was an eye-opener and given this short time to discuss with people, we saw just how much a "status" could limit a human experience in a country. Personally, it gave perspective, context, and the zeal as an individual/body to advocate for more initiatives that support refugees and asylum seekers".

## A RESULT-ORIENTED APPROACH BASED ON TRUST AND FLEXIBILITY

By essence, projects are changing. While it was always important for the local projects/grantees to keep the spirit of their original project, we also encouraged them to reflect and adapt their methodology and approach whenever needed to reach a greater impact! Grantees were always encouraged to submit amendments[4] in order to reorganize the budget, their activities or even to extend the project.

The possibility to adapt and slightly change their projects was based on the principle that the grantees know best what should be done in the field to reach positive results. These good results will ultimately support the sustainability of the organisation and the project.

By being flexible and supportive, the grantees were also able to develop a creative mindset and problem-solving skills.

[4] See Annex 'Amendment form'

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# TMF SMALL GRANTS:
# KICK-OFF AND MONITORING

For example, a project had the initial plan to organise a LinkedIn workshop to help young people with refugee backgrounds to look for job opportunities. However, after a few weeks, the team noticed that the participants did not have enough IT skills. The LinkedIn was then considered pointless and it was better to reinvest the available funds to organise another activity, better connected to the realities of the participants.

If a grantee managed to organise all their activities in time and budget but still had resources available, we always encouraged them to experiment with new activities (eg. proposed an additional workshop, develop new texts, develop a partnership or communications, etc.)
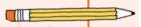
## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Introduction meetings help the grantees to understand the reporting and financial requirement but also to feel like part of a community
- Flexibility and trust - projects can change quickly, and even more when they are not implemented by professionals but by young volunteers; Flexibility is absolutely crucial in the way to organise themselves and rearrange the budget to maximise the project's success
- Value the learning approach by sharing tips and experiences from other grantees
- Organising events where all grantees are invited can be very valuable to share experiences and develop friendships
- A small budget to support grantees to visit each other could be an activity to consider
- Consult the grantees on the skills they would like to develop. Based on their proposal, organise training sessions (online or offline) to help them build various skills, eg. project management, facilitation techniques conflict management, group dynamic, etc.
- To organise an event at the start or at the end of the programme to create connections and synergies between grantees.

# 3. REPORTING AND EVALUATION OF THE PROJECTS

## TMF: A LEARNING TOOL WITH CONCRETE AND VALUABLE IMPACT

For most of the grantees, the small grants were the first-ever financial support they could get. It implies some challenges for the donor organisation:

- On one hand, we had to deal with groups of people not necessarily structured and aware of project management issues and challenges, and how to run a budget (up to 10.000 euros)

For new organisations and projects, and based on experience, we often started with a smaller budget (between 1000 and 5000 euros).

- On the other hand, the small grants and a pedagogical approach could be seen as a way for the grantees to build their capacities in order to apply to other sources of funding after the project duration.

We had to find the right balance between assertiveness, pedagogy and empathy.

**Feedback from the grantees:**

"TMF helped to develop my association and share ideas and experiences with other project leaders. I personally learnt a lot on reporting, organising activities, being patient, etc."

"It is the first time we presented a full project, since the beginning of the idea, looking for funding, for the development. It has been a completely new experience that has taught us how to manage the development of projects."

"TMF was the first funding programme which actually believed in what we are doing, it gave us the boost needed to highlight our practice and to be recognized by other agencies in the field...Visiting our facilities and meeting us in person at the initial steps of the project was an excellent choice from TMF's side and it made us feel included and non-intimidated by the donor".

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# 3. REPORTING AND EVALUATION OF THE PROJECTS

## REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

When receiving a grant, the grantees had to submit two reports:

- An interim report halfway through the project
- A final report with proof of payments for expenses above 200 euros – condition to receive the final payment

Both reports[5] documented the project developments' and achievements, while also encouraging the project teams to reflect on their activities: what worked or did not work, how they had to adapt their project?

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Straightforward and simple reporting documents: one or two reports maximum depending on the duration of the project and the amount of the grant
- When reviewing reports and supporting grantees during the project implementation it is important to find the right balance and approach between flexibility and being strict
- Share success stories on social media and website

# RECOMMENDATIONS
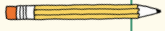
## Call for projects

- Prepare clear and user-friendly application documents (call for projects, application form, budget, etc.)
- Reduce to a minimum the administrative requirements and paperwork
- Support informal groups of students and youth to apply to give them the chance to build their capacities
- Build a strong network of partner organisations to share the call for projects

## Selection of the project and Selection Committee

- Inclusive Selection Committee representing diversity in terms of expertise and backgrounds
- Depending on financial resources: we would encourage financial reimbursement to value the work of volunteers, including young refugees. In case it is difficult for people seeking asylum to receive volunteer fees; supermarket vouchers could also be an option
- Important to organise an online introduction meeting to present the programme, tools and expectations and a closing meeting to discuss specific cases and present the final rankings
- Ideally one of these two meetings should be in real life to create a group dynamic, discuss selection criteria and projects, and share experiences
- Invite the Selection Committee members to other programme activities (capacity building events, as project ambassadors, etc.)
- Develop an online, automatic and interactive platform to review the project applications
- To define the selection criteria together with the Selection Committee
- To give space for the evaluators to share their views, suggestions and recommendations about the local projects and the evaluation process

# RECOMMENDATIONS
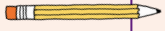
**Monitoring and evaluation of the project**

- Introduction meetings helped the grantees understand the reporting and financial requirements but also feeling part of a community
- Flexibility and trust - projects can change quickly, and even more when they are not implemented by professionals but by young volunteers. Flexibility is absolutely crucial in order to organise themselves and rearrange the budget to maximise the project's success
- Value the learning approach by sharing tips and experiences from other grantees
- Organising events where all grantees are invited can be very valuable to share experiences and develop friendships
- A small budget to support grantees to visit each other could be an activity to consider
- Consult the grantees on the skills they would like to develop. Based on their proposal, organise training sessions (online or offline) to help them build various skills, eg. project management, facilitation techniques conflict management, group dynamic, etc.
- To organise an event at the start or at the end of the programme to create connections and synergies between grantees

**Reporting requirements:**

- Straightforward and simple reporting documents: one or two reports maximum depending on the duration of the project and the amount of the grant
- When reviewing reports and supporting grantees during the project implementation it is important to find the right balance and approach between flexibility and being strict
- Share success stories on social media and website

# RECOMMENDATIONS

**General**

- Full time staff members help monitor and support applicants and grantees in all stages of the process but also develop the programme, and propose side activities
- A good project management tool (such as BaseCamp), collaborative documents and IT systems increase productivity and interaction with the volunteers and the grantees
- Canva Pro (free for NGOs) helps to create quickly attractive visuals to promote the activities online

## Special thanks

The Together Moving Forward programme would have been impossible without the invaluable and infallible support of the Open Society Foundations. Their trust allowed students of all backgrounds to work together for a common goal-inclusion.

We wish to thank these students and young people who have shown that their creativity and motivation can result in simple solutions creating more inclusive, educated and open-minded societies.

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# ANNEXES

**APPLICATION PACK**
- CALL FOR PROJECTS
- APPLICATION FORM – STAGE 1
- APPLICATION FORM – STAGE 2
- BUDGET
- TIMELINE
- . GLOSSARY

**GRANT AGREEMENT, PAYMENT REQUEST AND AMENDMENT**
- GRANT AGREEMENT
- PAYMENT REQUEST
- AMENDMENT FORM

**REPORTING DOCUMENTS**
- INTERIM NARRATIVE REPORT
- FINAL NARRATIVE REPORT
- . FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT