DDP-YD/ ETCD (2026)108 Strasbourg, 12 June 2026

COMPASS

Training Courses on Human Rights Education with Young People

ANALYTICAL REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION IN 2025

LEARNING EQUALITY,
LIVING DIGNITY.

The views expressed in the analytical review are the sole responsibility of their author and shall not be considered as constituting the official position or opinion of the Council of Europe.

This analytical review has been prepared by Barbara Santibanez, Consultant with the Youth Department of the Council of Europe.

Table of contents

Executive Summary 4

I. Aim and scope 6

Evaluation design 7

II. Main findings 8

a. Planning phase 9

b. Implementation phase 11

c. Evaluation and follow-up phase 14

III. Lessons learned and areas for improvement 16

a. Lessons learned 16

b. Areas for improvement 17

IV. Conclusions and recommendations 18

Executive Summary

This review is the second evaluation of the Compass NRTC courses, following the first one conducted in 2025. The first review focused on the Compass activities implemented in 2024 across 12 countries (Albania, Andorra, France, Greece, Italy and Switzerland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, North Macedonia, Portugal and Slovak Republic, Ukraine and the United Kingdom). The present 2026 review analyses the Compass courses implemented in 2025 across 7 countries (France, Moldova, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Ukraine, and United Kingdom).

Compass NRTCs are an integral component of the Human Rights Education Youth Programme led by the Youth Department, which includes also the following initiatives:

- Provision of educational resources for human rights education for youth work and non-formal learning, notably through Compass, Compasito and Mirrors;
- Advocacy for the inclusion of human rights education youth policy and youth work;
- Renewing the informal networks of trainers and multipliers and supporting the qualitative development of training for human rights education at national and European level;

The Human Rights Education Youth Programme is inserted in the Strategy 2030 of the youth sector Priority 2 "young people's access to rights" and provides a unique opportunity for organisations in the non-formal education and youth sectors to implement projects and activities with multipliers and advocates for human rights education through the Compass NRTCs. Up until 2024, the Council of Europe supported Compass activities with institutional, educational, and financial support (in the form of grants when necessary to secure seed-funding or the feasibility of the activity).[1] A new cooperation format was launched in 2025 within the Compass programme, aiming to "be smaller in number but targeted in a national or regional context to which the courses will bring a unique added value" (Call for Partnerships for National Activities, 2025). Under this new cooperation format, the institutional and educational support are strengthened, whereas the financial support was discontinued.

Therefore, the present review focuses on **what changed** in terms of collaboration with the CoE Youth Department, as well as the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the NRTCs for partner organisations under this new format and what were the main factors that enabled or hindered the implementation of activities.

Key lessons learned reported in this review are:

- Anticipating the funding aspect (and knowing about available options) is fundamental
- Working in partnership with different stakeholders requires clear roles and responsibilities from the start
- Having the possibility to organise the training at the EYC represents an added value for partner organisations as well as for participants
- Decolonising human rights is an increasing priority for partner organisations

[1] https://www.coe.int/en/web/human-rights-education-youth/national-training-courses-in-human-rights-education

- Knowing the target group and managing expectations accordingly is essential
- Achieving a sustainable change requires time and commitment

As for the main areas for improvement, the role of the trainers from the Youth Department pool under the new partnership-based framework has important implications in terms of institutional visibility and influence on the outcomes of the Compass activities. Other no less important areas for improvement identified were:

- Strengthening the presence of the Youth Department across the project cycle
- Ensure that certification happens within the training course lifecycle
- Thinking of a long-term follow-up strategy would help understand the impact of Compass trainings better

The review is organised around the three following sections. The first section describes the aim and scope, as well as the evaluation design. The second section discusses the main findings categorised into three main areas: planning, implementation, and evaluation and follow-up phases. The third section outlines some lessons learned and areas for improvement. Finally, the fourth section provides some conclusions and recommendations.

I. Aim and scope

The main aim of this review is to assess the organisation, implementation, and follow-up of the Compass NRTC courses, as well as the support provided by the Youth Department to the partner organisations. The review highlights good practices and identify areas for improvement for future training courses, considering the new framework of partnership-based cooperation.

Traditionally, the Compass national training courses are initiated by national or regional organisations and/or institutions that are committed to providing and ensuring the quality of EDC/HRE, with the support of the Council of Europe Youth Department. The cooperation in 2025 was envisioned in a new format that relies on strategic partnerships. This means that the programme of Compass courses in 2025 was smaller in number but targeted in a national or regional context to which the courses will bring a unique added value. Strategic partnerships and activities are those that have the potential to advocate for, mobilise, and initiate processes at national level that are likely improving the recognition, support for, provision and quality of human rights education with, for and by young people.

The partnerships for Compass activities in 2025 were support measures put into place by the Youth Department of the Council of Europe to encourage national or regional organisations or institutions in initiating or extending human rights education activities with young people through Compass activities. The support measures are on-demand provision of assistance and cooperation by the Council of Europe Youth Department, which means that upon reception of the expression of interest, the secretariat assesses the type of support, expertise and cooperation that can be envisaged, together with the partner organisation or institution. The support measures made available to partners were educational and institutional support.

In 2025, Compass NRTCs were implemented across 7 countries, as follows:

- France: organised by the International Institute for Human Rights and Peace, the Directorate for Youth, Non-Formal Education and Voluntary Organisations of the Ministry in charge of youth and the development of voluntary organisations, and the National Consultative Commission on Human Rights.
- Moldova: organised by the National Youth Agency and the National Youth Council of Moldova
- Norway: organised by The European Wergeland Centre, No Hate Speech Movement Norway, and the island of Utøya
- Portugal: organised by the Lisbon Youth Centre and Associação para a igualdade AEQUALITAS
- Romania: organised by Timis County Youth Foundation Timiș (FITT) and The National Youth Foundation
- Ukraine: organised by the Center for Educational Initiatives (CEI), the Donetsk Youth Debate Centre, and the European Wergeland Centre (Norway)
- United Kingdom: organised by London Borough of Newham, Compost London, the Network of human rights educators UK, and AICEM UK

Evaluation design

This review was designed keeping in mind the goals of the Youth Department, as well as the data made available. Three questions guided the review according to its aim and the scope, as follows:

- What is the perceived impact of the new partnership format of Compass NRTCs activities? (in terms of quality, guidance and support)
- What are the main factors that facilitated/made difficult the implementation of the strategic partnerships?
- What were the lessons learned during the evaluation, assessment, implementation, and reporting phases under this new format?

The primary source of information were 1) documents provided by the partner organisations related to the activity (e.g. agenda, participants' feedback, final reports, etc.) and 2) evaluation and/or feedback forms prepared by trainers of the Council of Europe Youth Department that supported the implementation of the Compass NRTCs. Additional data were collected during seven individual interviews conducted with the lead implementing partners, held online. The purpose was to complement and enrich the results from the desk-based research.

In order to answer the guiding questions, data were analysed using the Qualitative Content Analysis method, supported by the Lumivero NVivo software. This method is appropriate when there is a need to focus on certain aspects of the data, trying to understand 'what is written between the lines'. The "Quality criteria and standards in education and training activities developed by the Council of Europe Youth Department" (Box 1), were used as a framework of analysis, since these criteria are a mandatory component of educational activities organised by the Youth Department, including the Compass NRTCs.

Box 1: Quality criteria and standards in education and training activities, Council of Europe Youth Department

1. A relevant needs assessment
2. Concrete, achievable and assessable objectives
3. The definition of competences addressed and learning outcomes for the participants
4. The relevance to the Council of Europe programme and the Youth Department priorities
5. An adequate and timely preparation process
6. A competent team of trainers and facilitators
7. An integrated approach to intercultural learning, participation, and human rights education
8. Adequate recruitment and selection of participants
9. A consistent practice of non-formal education principles and approaches
10. Adequate, accessible, and timely documentation
11. A thorough and open process of evaluation
12. Optimal working conditions and environment
13. Adequate institutional support and an integrated follow-up
14. Relevant visibility and communication
15. Concern for innovation and research.

II. Main findings

The 2025 Compass NRTCs analytical review examined the quality of the training courses implemented, focusing on the added value and contribution of the Compass programme to the core mission of the Council of Europe to promote and protect human rights by supporting the implementation of the Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (EDC/HRE). The report looked into three main areas of quality:

- **structures and context:** institutional context; resources, and training staff
- **processes:** aims and objectives; contents and methods; implementation of the training course (i.e. preparation, selection of participants, evaluation, follow up, etc.).
- **outcomes:** development of competences (i.e. knowledge, skills, and attitudes) and values of multipliers for human rights education with young people.

A new cooperation format was launched in 2025 within the Compass programme, aiming to "be smaller in number but targeted in a national or regional context to which the courses will bring a unique added value" (Call for Partnerships for National Activities, 2025). Therefore, the present review focuses on **what changed** for partner organisations under this new format and what were the main factors that enabled or hindered the implementation of activities. The three areas of quality abovementioned were pivotal to identify the different aspects that are influencing the implementation of Compass activities under the new format.

Strategic partnerships are the foundation of the current Compass programme. The 2025 call for partnerships included specific aspects to be addressed by organisers, such as linking the training to the publication and launching of a new language version of Compass or Compasito; having the recognition and/or support from public authorities in charge of youth and/or education matters; address a specific group of multipliers and advocates; and implement the training course in cooperation between formal and non-formal education providers. All of the 7 training courses organised in 2025 addressed one or more of these aspects. Although no new language versions of Compass or Compasito were launched, some partner organisations are working on translations of the latest edition of Compass (e.g. Portugal and Romania).

With regards to the involvement of public authorities, in most cases representatives of the Ministries of Education and/or Youth, youth agencies, and local or regional authorities (e.g. city halls, municipalities, etc.) were committed to some extent in the organisation and implementation of the training courses, which helped enhance the visibility of the activities. Also, the involvement of representatives from European youth bodies (e.g. Advisory Council on Youth) and Council of Europe representatives (e.g. country offices) was seen as "highly valuable" by most organisers and participants.

During the interviews, several partner organisations acknowledged that because there wasn't direct funding from the Youth Department, they partnered with other NGOs, local authorities and/or other education providers in order to afford the expenses of the activity. For one of the interviewees, more involvement of local authorities was a positive outcome of this strategic partnership format:

The results are more tangible because it's not just about political will; something is actually happening in a specific location, the real impact is felt locally. Especially because, as we know from our experience, when you run a national course few people stay in touch. People who live locally, together, tend to network more easily.

Among the specific groups of multipliers and advocates, some partner organisations decided to work with teachers, school leaders, youth work professionals, and young minors with mixed abilities. One of the factors that allowed partner organisations to reach different target groups, including young people with less opportunities, was that they formed partnerships with other non-governmental organisations before applying to the Council of Europe call. Therefore, combining strengths allowed applicant organisations not only to ensure funding for the implementation of the Compass activity, but also to widen the reach to "non-traditional" audiences and put to work formal and non-formal education providers on the same goal of raising awareness about HRE.

The following subsections provide an overview of the main observations drawn from the analysis of data collected, organised across three key phases of the Compass activities: planning, implementation, and evaluation and follow-up. In each of these subsections, different aspects that are influencing the implementation of Compass activities under the new format are discussed.

a. Planning phase

The new format of the Compass programme provides partner organisations with **educational and institutional support**, based on the demand of assistance and cooperation presented to the Youth Department. Also, the Youth Department offers to take on directly the costs of some measures (i.e. missions and advice of experts, provision of trainers or educational resources), which benefited most of the partner organisations.

During the **planning** phase, most partner organisations had several online meetings to prepare the training course, and in some cases, also in-person meetings when the time and budget allowed. As noted in the reports and during the interviews, the meetings helped organisers to "build a shared understanding" and "ensure that everyone (including the trainers) were on the same page." One of the interviewees highlighted that anticipating as much as possible helped them to fully align with the Youth Department requirements for this new format: "we had enough time to get in contact with the team, to get acquainted with each other, and learn more about internal rules and procedures of the Council of Europe so that we could align."

The support provided by the Youth Department was ad-hoc, and the 'Feedback forms on preparatory meetings' that organisers had to fill out helped anticipate and identify the specific support required to ensure a smooth implementation of the activities. Most partner organisations stated that the planning phase went well and that they received the materials and support requested (including the trainers), although in a couple of countries they didn't have the newest version of Compass translated in the local language (Portugal and Romania). One issue raised by some organising partners was that the transition in the Youth Department

team coordinating the Compass activities affected their direct involvement in the preparatory phase; however, the help from experienced trainers helped overcome this gap.

A particular example in terms of planning was the Compass activity organised for French-speaking learners, co-organised between a French NGO, French governmental youth bodies, and the Youth Department. An interviewee highlighted that hosting the activity at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg facilitated greatly the planning and implementation, because organisers could easily reach the Youth Department (which is located in the European Youth Centre) and for the participants it meant *"being heard and involved among young people in a more formalised way; they felt that institutions listen to them more when they were within the Council's premises."* A similar example was the Nordic Compass NRTC co-organised in the Utoya island by a Norwegian NGO with the European Wergeland Centre (an organisation that supports the work of the Council of Europe in HRE). These examples underline the importance of having a direct communication with the Youth Department throughout the whole process, from the planning phase onwards.

On another note, some of the specific challenges that partner organisations identified in the planning phase were:

- **A "mismatch" between the trainers provided by the** Youth Department **and the needs of partner organisations:** for some organisations, having a trainer that wasn't completely familiar with the context in which the activity took place made the cooperation a bit difficult. Also, in some cases the trainer was not fully committed to the process, which then affected the implementation of the activity: *"(the trainer) didn't have the capacity to attend all the meetings that we were having, came late for the preparation meeting, and also was a bit detached during the training and didn't show up for the evaluation meeting."*

- **Securing funding for all the expenses engaged:** for one of the partner organisations, the planning phase also included applying for funding at the local level to be able to cover the expenses of hiring two trainers. However, a different focus of the local call for grants meant a good deal of extra work: *"the truth is that it was even more challenging this year because they (the local authorities) changed a bit the call. They were focusing a lot on culture, so we had to adjust a bit the training, in order for it to also fit in the objectives of the open call from the municipality."*

- **Selecting participants in alignment with the activity objectives and with inclusion and diversity criteria:** although partner organisations sought to have a balanced representation in terms of gender, background, age, level of experience in HRE, etc. it wasn't an easy task to accomplish. As noted in one of the evaluation reports, "*while the group was diverse, it was not diverse enough. For example, Roma organizations and some other groups working closely with human rights were not represented, which limited the range of perspectives in the discussions. Another challenge was the different levels of experience among participants. Most of them were new to human rights education, while a few had more advanced knowledge and practice. This created a bit of imbalance, as*

some participants needed more time to grasp the basics, while others were ready to go deeper." Another report emphasized: "*The training also showed the importance of having the focus on work more with issues of Roma & Sinti people in Ukraine (countering stereotypes and discrimination) and LGBTQI+ people and their rights, especially in formal education."* This issue was flagged in the previous report as well, and it seems to be a persisting challenge for partner organisations.

b. Implementation phase

This review aims to understand what has changed for partner organisations under the new format of the Compass programme. One of the main observations drawn from the analysis is that, under this new format, **the quality of trainers** provided by the Youth Department becomes critical for the success of the activities. On the one hand, trainers sent by the Youth Department have the responsibility of "representing the institution." On the other, if there is a "mismatch" between the needs of partner organisations and the trainer's profile, there is an increased risk of encountering issues during the implementation phase. However, if the trainer responds to the requirements from the partner organisations, a sense of trust between stakeholders emerges during the preparation phase which makes things easier.

Other relevant aspects identified by partner organisations as enablers of a successful Compass activity were, among others:

- **One or more previous experiences organising activities with the** Youth Department **increased the sense of self-efficacy among partners:**

  "We're very familiar with the Council of Europe's manuals and the Compass. And I have been working with it for ages."

  "It was really easy because we had a partnership with another association that already worked with the Council of Europe. We have previous experience with the Council of Europe training courses. So all the process was really easy, meeting the requirements as well."

- **Having members of the trainers' team that have participated in HRE trainings at the Council of Europe:**

  "Personally, for example, I've been part of different trainings of the Council of Europe. I'm also part of the advisory council on youth."

  "We included one of the participants from last year (in a Compass activity) and had them take part in the training as a trainee, which was a good thing because it turned out to be an empowering experience."

- **Having trainers that are knowledgeable about the local context, the methods, and the target groups:**

  "Having an external trainer appointed by the Council was very useful, in order fill the gaps in knowledge and experience."

"It's very important for the person who participates in these training courses to have the knowledge and the accreditation that the Council of Europe has; this is very important because the Council of Europe is the number one in human rights education."

"We have a good trainers team. They have a very good history with the Council of Europe. So they know all the values of the Council of Europe. They knew all the approaches of Council of Europe. Not only Compass."

"The person (trainer) needs to know the national and local context. I mean the youth policy, educational system."

"Because of her background, (the trainer) has a very interesting perspective on how other cultures view human rights, because our perspective is quite Eurocentric"

- **Adapting the training to a local or regional reach helped organisers to cater more specific needs:**

  "It was very useful to have this Nordic training because we're quite close in Scandinavia, distance wise. We have this idea of what it means to be coming from Nordic countries…I think it was a good opportunity for young people from different places in Scandinavia to come and meet because a lot of people do not know much about each other as countries and have never met someone from a specific area in a specific country. That was very positive actually"

  "I think that when there's a genuine intention, and the initiative is promoted in the right way and has a certain impact, local authorities are interested in doing it... I think this is much more important than money, the willingness to do these things. I think it's a good move on the part of the Council of Europe, also because if these activities aren't carried out at the local level, things won't change. Because it's at the local level that people face the most difficulties. It's at the local level that people are angry; it's at the local level that there are a whole lot of problems."

- **There is a real (and unwavering) demand for EDC/HRE knowledge:** partner organisations highlighted in their evaluation reports and interviews (explicitly or implicitly) that in the local contexts where the NRTCs were implemented there is a strong demand for human rights education from different groups of learners (not only from young people).

Partner organisations also shared the challenges they faced during the implementation phase. Similar issues that were observed in the past review were also identified in the present analysis, including the length of the training (deemed too short in most cases); the lack of resources in the local language (in particular for Moldova, Portugal, and Romania); and managing expectations from participants and the organising team, among others:

- **Length of training (including the preparation phase):** the three-day format influenced the participants' perception of their learning experience and also presented some challenges at the management level.

  "Participants mentioned that they would have appreciated having more time for certain exercises, particularly those allowing for a deeper exploration of the Compass manual

and its activities, as well as more opportunities to reflect on different perspectives and steps for implementing activities"

"Adding one more day would also be valuable, either to further develop specific knowledge and group work or to provide some free time for reflection and exploration of the surroundings"

"Given the limited duration of the course, not all expectations could be explored"

"I'd say it's very intense, and three days—two days for preparation—isn't enough. It's very intense. There were also some difficulties because the Council of Europe has a fairly intense schedule"

"It's also a financial question. It was four days, but that includes travel. So we should have had one more day. I think if we did it again, we would add one more day because the time limitation makes it very difficult to go in depth. And it also stresses the program a lot."

- **Availability of the Compass manual in the local language (and other educational resources):** the reviewed version is not yet available in all the languages. It would be worth to keep this issue in mind for the selection/preparation of future editions.

  "The course would also have benefited from the availability of the translated version of the new Compass edition, which would have increased its impact and enabled participants to explore the manual more independently"

  "the timing of this NTC coincided with the Romanian-language edition of Compass not yet being finalised, which created some challenges for work with Romanian-speaking participants in Moldova"

  "Not having a copy of the Compass manual to distribute to participants"

  "I think a repository by CoE would be welcome. It could include links to educational resources, MOOCs, videos, pages/newsletters to follow, etc."

  We only have one issue with the translated version of the Compass training manual in Romanian, which wasn't available at that time…We wanted to have a translated version of the entire manual or some parts of it that are more relevant to us, including some hands-on, some leaflets, some flyers for participants to have in their hands so that they could bring them home and maybe, physically follow up on what they got."

- **Managing expectations:** in some of the Compass activities organised, participant groups were quite mixed, including young people, teachers, and other educational staff. When most of these groups are new to human rights education, it could become difficult to manage the expectations from all participants (and sometimes, from the organising team).

  "A number of participants initially expected short, ready-made lesson plans rather than adaptable experiential methods, which required additional explanation about the Compass approach and its emphasis on contextualisation. The diverse profile of participants—teachers, deputy school directors and youth workers—enriched the group

but at times made it difficult to fully tailor all sessions to each subgroup's expectations and working realities."

"For those with experience, it was important to have new trainers, because the new perspectives and new approaches, new ways of delivering, new charisma, and all that. For newbies, the positive feedback was again the fact that we try to link and to make sense of the youth policy together with the education policies in general."

Some new issues also emerged; first, the change of staff in the Youth Department was felt by some partner organisations as having to "start over" the planning phase. As noted by one of the interviewees, *

at some point there was this change in the staff within the department who was taking care of the of the courses, as far as I remember. So there were some changes but I would say that they did not affect us so much again because we did not ask for so much support. But there were some weeks that we did not have any communication and updates.

Further, one of the partners raised their concerns about safeguarding and risk-assessment procedures when working with minors. This is a new, but no less important issue, worth considering in the organisation of future Compass NRTCs. It is also suggested to include data privacy guidance, especially for organisations working with vulnerable groups that could be exposed to safety issues. As stated in one of the evaluation reports, "*when working with minors, safeguarding policies and risk-assessment procedures are essential. It would be important for the Council of Europe to provide guidance or take steps to strengthen these areas"*

It is worth noting that context-specific issues are also influencing the capacity of partner organisations to implement and achieve the results expected. As noted by one of the interviewees from Ukraine*,*

in the last training we feel that for people it's very hard to learn these materials. I think maybe because of the war and because all people in Ukraine now live with a trauma and have a traumatic experience. It's not only for Compass training, but also for many of our educational activities. We just feel that for people it's very hard to understand and to try to do something and to learn.

c. Evaluation and follow-up phase

While evaluating the training outcomes with participants is a standard practice across partner organisations, following up after the Compass training is still work in progress. It appears that even though the intention to keep in touch with participants after the training is present, there is not enough clarity on what is expected for this phase of the training. Also, some partner organisations raised the concern of not having enough resources to sustain a follow-up in the medium and long term.

Since the training programme include a "taking action" component, participants in Compass activities are asked to work on their ideas on how to implement a HRE activity in their own

communities. While this is a valuable element in the training, not all partner organisations have managed to follow-up in the long term to verify whether these actions took place or the impact these actions may have had: *"we count how many participants, how many activities, and how many participants were involved in this activity. But after training it's very hard to understand what is the impact."* In some cases, when the partner organisation stays in contact with the participants, the follow up is organised around online meetings. As noted by one of the interviewees, *"we remain in contact with the group of participants to explore possibilities for including future projects and initiatives in its activity programme. An online meeting with the participants is planned for December."*

However, organising the follow-up meetings online seems to be challenging for some organisations due to the multi-partnership nature of the Compass activities: *"when it came to following up with participants after the training on how to organise a video conference, it took us a while to find a date that worked for everyone's schedules. That's also part of having a diverse team made up of people from different organisations",* shared one interviewee. In this sense, it would be worth exploring together with the Youth Department a more structured approach to the follow-up phase, with clear aims and expected results. As one of the partner organisations stated in their evaluation report, *"rather than assumptions about follow-up needs, it may be helpful to invite organisers of NTCs to fill in a short, structured feedback note by organisers themselves after the implementation period — for example, a brief report with concrete questions."*

One of the interviewed partners suggested that **consistency** also in terms of evaluating the impact of the Compass NRTCs is key, and this is why they intend to commit to implement Compass activities every year (if possible):

> *"It's an engagement and investment into an objective from many dimensions, from training, research, communication and advocacy, and of course the financial part. You invest for a couple of years and then you can really measure some immediate to medium range impact…*
>
> *We want to make this a tradition even when the Council of Europe won't be able to pay the trainers... so it becomes an étalon, it's like an example for the youth workers and they know that this happens every year., I want to feel like motivated to work in this regard."*

The discussion presented in this section aimed to provide an overview of the perceived changes that partner organisations experienced during the 2025 Compass NRTCs cycle, as well as the key factors that facilitated or made difficult the implementation of their training programmes. The following section will address the main lessons learned, areas for improvement, and overall recommendations stemming from the analysis, to be considered along the overview.

III. Lessons learned and areas for improvement

This section summarises the main lessons learned and areas for improvement identified by partner organisations, which complete the findings presented in the previous section.

a. Lessons learned

- **Anticipating the funding aspect (and knowing about available options) is fundamental: "***In our case, we don't have regular sustainable or secured funding. I think that maybe it would have better to have more options of funding. We had to be very flexible and to adapt it to the open call (from the municipality). If we would have planned it more in advance we could have, for example put it under the Erasmus accreditation that we have on the field of youth so that we could have covered the expenses."*
- **Working in partnership with different stakeholders requires clear roles and responsibilities from the start:** *"the lesson learned is that you tend to work harder when you have to organise things because people basically don't want to do anything, especially when it comes to logistics…maybe we need to clarify things a bit more at the start with the local authority"*
- **Having the possibility to organise the training at the EYC represents an added value for partner organisations as well as for participants:** *"it's still important for participants to come to the European Youth Centre and engage with the institutions. There was also a visit to the ECHR, and it was important for them (participants) to be at the heart of these institutions that protect human rights."*
- **Decolonising human rights is an increasing priority for partner organisations:** *"this training also allowed us to have a less colonial perspective, or at least to step back from our Eurocentric view and thereby become aware of the colonial remnants that are still invisible in our minds."*
- **Knowing the target group and managing expectations accordingly is essential.** Partner organisations are still learning from their experience, in particular in relation to working with participants coming from very diverse backgrounds: *"We had a very different group, and it was really nice. But it is necessary to know the group before making the programme…some of our participants are very experienced, so some of the activities were not what they expected. But other participants didn't have any experience with this kind of training course, so I think they need to adjust that better."*
- **Achieving a sustainable change requires time and commitment:** Some partner organisations stressed on the importance of thinking about the Compass NRTCs in the long-term: *" if you want to achieve some sort of change…you need to make it consistent, for 5 years, maybe 10 years, maybe just forever, because it's something that so many countries in Europe lack – the strategic injection of expertise from the Council of Europe, the pragmatic, concrete intervention (on human rights)."*

b. Areas for improvement

A key area for improvement is **the role of the trainers from the Youth Department pool** under the new partnership-based framework. For most partner organisations, trainers "represent" the Council of Europe, which has important implications in terms of institutional visibility and influence on the outcomes of the Compass activities:

- The trainer's participation in all phases of the project influences the perception of success among partner organisations*: "A good team of trainers, it's very important they have contact earlier to work on the sessions."*
- The trainer gives visibility to the Youth Department and the Council of Europe during the activity, and therefore attention should be paid as to how the institution is represented – especially during the training itself: *"it's usually just a presentation which can last very, very long and it's a very like this kind of school format…I understand the need for it, people do not know what is the Council of Europe, but there should be within the Council of Europe more competence on how to do that in a more engaging way."*
- The trainer's knowledge about the context of the activity influences – negatively or positively – the perception from partner organisations.

Other no less important areas for improvement identified by partner organisations were:

- **Strengthening the presence of the Youth Department across the project cycle:** *"they (Youth Department) should make their presence known online as well…getting involved with local authorities is important; it's important from an institutional PR perspective. It's not just about signing the partnership agreement and exchanging emails, it's important to meet in person, to talk face-to-face, even online."*
- **Ensure that certification happens within the training course lifecycle:** *"Certificates did not arrive by the closure of the course, which is a recurring issue in NTCs. A streamlined and predictable certificate-delivery process would be beneficial for organisers. Certificates co-signed by the Council enhance the importance of the course and the motivation for participants."*
- **Thinking of a long-term follow-up strategy would help understand the impact of Compass trainings better:** *"it will be really good if we organise some activities or some event for participants from the last three trainings. And they come and tell their story, how they use the methodology. Maybe they can tell us some stories of success. What happened with the young people after these activities? How did they change their behaviour? For us it's very hard to understand what happens with the young people and what is the impact for our beneficiaries."*

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

The questions guiding this report aimed to provide an understanding of the perceived impact of the new partnership format of Compass NRTCs activities, as well as identifying the main factors that facilitated/made difficult the implementation of the strategic partnerships. A key finding is that even though the lack of direct financial support under the new format puts a strain on smaller organisations, the activities implemented throughout 2025 were nonetheless successful. Another observation is that perceptions of partner organisations about the main change with regard to the previous format is more about the formalities (e.g. signature of a Memorandum of Understanding) than about the quality of the experience. However, other aspects became more visible, namely the quality and motivation of trainers, the guidance provided by the Youth Department across the project cycle, and the need to ensure a proper follow up after the activity. The recommendations below are addressed to the Youth Department. These were shared by partner organisations through their evaluation reports and the interviews conducted:

- **Connect less experienced or smaller organisations with more experienced/bigger ones to organise Compass activities.**
- **Streamline forms (e.g. feedback form, evaluation form) that are shared with partner organisations so that they reflect the new partnership format.** This could also include a "roadmap" with key milestones/outputs for the different stages of the activity: preparation, implementation, and evaluation, which would be useful in particular for small/less experienced organisations.
- **Consult with partner organisations about the suitability of the trainer(s) proposed by the** Youth Department**.** This recommendation refers to the issue of "mismatching" discussed previously, which ultimately can affect the perception of success among partner organisations. Several interviewees highlighted the importance of having trainers familiar with the local context and/or the target groups.
- **Having a debrief meeting (online) with the trainers and the** Youth Department **after the Compass activity.** Some partner organisations felt that sending an evaluation form was "not enough" as a debriefing exercise (especially if there are external trainers hired for the activity).
- **Provide direct support during the follow-up phase.** For example, organising online check-in meetings with all Compass NTC organisers to review progress, challenges, and good practices in their follow-up activities.
- **Consider recognising the preparatory days as paid working days** (**for trainers).** The preparation phase involves intensive work essential to ensure the quality and consistency of the training course.
- **Support emerging local/national networks of human rights educators.** For some partner organisations this is a sustainability measure worth being explored with the Youth Department. And a general recommendation, no less relevant, is to **find ways to further involve Member States in human right education implementation.** For some partner organisations, the current lack of trust in democracy and in politicians, in authorities and institutions begs for a stronger commitment to promote values of human rights and democracy from governmental bodies.