

EDUCATION, YOUTH AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT HUB

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2024-25



Consulting

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# FOREWORD

**ELISABET VIVES**

**Lead | Education, Youth and  
Civic Engagement (EYCE) Hub**

*Dear colleagues,  
partners, and friends,*

It is my pleasure to open this year's annual report of the EYCE Hub, which we hope will be the first of many. Looking back on the past year, I feel both proud and humbled by what we have achieved together.

This has not been an easy year. We operate in a highly competitive landscape, where the distinctive value of academic knowledge is not always easy to demonstrate alongside the offerings of private consultancy firms. At times, this has challenged us to rethink how we present our expertise and to reflect critically on the role we want to play in this space.

And yet, it has also been a year of real progress. We have built new partnerships, expanded our network, and deepened our engagement with both long-standing collaborators and new clients. These connections not only affirm the importance of the Hub's work but also lay the foundation for further growth and impact.

As we move forward, we do so with a clear awareness of the world around us. Young people, in particular, are navigating mounting pressures: the rising cost of living, declining investment in education, shrinking spaces for political participation, and an environment saturated with products competing for their attention.

These realities remind us why our work matters. At the EYCE Hub, we bring academic insight and evidence-based approaches to bear on these pressing issues, offering perspectives that go beyond short-term solutions.

One area we are especially eager to explore further is the role of media and social networks in the democratic sphere, particularly how they shape young people's opportunities for engagement and voice. By convening researchers, practitioners, and policymakers, we are uniquely positioned to generate knowledge and foster dialogue that can support more inclusive and resilient democratic practices.

One of the highlights of the year was our first hybrid EYCE workshop, hosted at The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) in April 2025. This event brought together colleagues from across disciplines and sectors, demonstrating the strength of our community and the value of creating spaces where ideas can be exchanged openly and constructively.

As we look ahead, I am excited about the opportunities before us. Thank you for being part of this journey. I look forward to continuing to build, learn, and grow with you in the year ahead.

*Best wishes,  
Elisabet Vives*

**HUB  
SUPPORT**



**JAVIERA  
MENCHACA**  
Programme Manager  
& Researcher |  
EYCE Hub



**ERIKA HUARTOS  
CASTANEDA**  
Researcher &  
Bidding Assistant |  
EYCE Hub

# Democracy

## HUB OVERVIEW

The EYCE Hub focuses on the interconnected challenges of Education, Youth, and Civic Engagement.

**Our mission is to generate rigorous, actionable knowledge that helps societies invest in young people and strengthen democracy.**

We work on issues that matter today: from access and equity in education, to the pressures facing young people in a changing economy, to the ways media and social networks are reshaping civic participation.

Drawing on interdisciplinary expertise and consultancy experience, we bring together academics and practitioners to bridge the gap between research and real-world needs.

Our work includes programme evaluations, policy advice, and co-designed workshops that turn evidence into strategies clients and partners can use.

At the heart of our approach is collaboration: building networks across sectors and borders so that insights travel further and impact lasts longer.

# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

## CAPACITY-BUILDING ON DEMOCRATIC INNOVATIONS

In partnership with the European Partnership for Democracy, the EYCE Hub delivered two training sessions designed to strengthen capacity in the field of democratic innovation.

The first session brought together young researchers and equipped them with cutting-edge methods and strategies to study digital democracy — helping a new generation of scholars explore how technology is reshaping participation.

The second session engaged civil society organisations from across the globe, offering

practical tools to incorporate democratic innovations into their work and amplify citizens' voices in decision-making.

Through these trainings, we not only shared knowledge but also built bridges between research and practice, empowering both emerging academics and frontline organisations to experiment, adapt, and lead in the democratic sphere.

**9**

**Completed and ongoing projects**

**50+**

**Members in our network**

**30+**

**Countries reached with our projects**

## **EMPOWERING YOUNG SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS**

Through the Student Women Economic Empowerment Programme (SWEEP), the EYCE Hub and LSE Generate supported aspiring female entrepreneurs in South Africa. The programme introduced students and recent graduates to the UK's entrepreneurial ecosystem and offered capacity building, mentorship, and co-created content. Designed to be inclusive and gender-transformative, SWEEP helped young women gain skills, confidence, and networks to develop sustainable businesses and shape South Africa's innovation landscape.

## **BREAKING BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION IN EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS**

For this project, the EYCE Hub studied the obstacles that keep underrepresented groups from voting in European Parliament elections. The research highlighted challenges faced

by first-time voters, disadvantaged communities, EU mobile citizens, and people with disabilities, while noting recent gains in youth turnout. The study delivered evidence-based recommendations to EU institutions, governments, and civil society, guiding efforts to strengthen democratic inclusion across the Union.

## **NEXT GENERATION KAZAKHSTAN**

A mixed-method research study involving over a thousand participants and stakeholders, this report concluded with actionable recommendations for Kazakhstan policy makers on youth issues. This is just one example of the many opportunities the EYCE Hub has had to influence youth policy discourse and programming worldwide by adapting academic methods to practical, real-world situations. The report has been well-received and will be presented in London soon.

## WON PROJECTS

The EYCE Hub recently secured an exciting new project with the Electoral Reform Society to evaluate the citizens' assembly process in Dunfermline next winter.

The Dunfermline pilot is part of the Scottish Government's initiative to empower communities and renew democracy. Its goal is to strengthen local democracy by ensuring that people's hopes and concerns are heard.

This initiative could enable people to take greater control of their communities and help rebuild trust in the democratic process.

The EYCE Hub will play a key role by mapping the participation landscape in the local area, evaluating the process and providing insightful recommendations to maximise the pilot's impact.

## IMPACT AND PRESENCE

**House of Lords (Autumn 2024):** A presentation of the report "Understanding needs and hopes of Young Ukrainians", authored by Max Fras and Mariya Zolkina.

**In-house expert workshop (Spring 2025):** Creating spaces for self-assessment to foster excellence and knowledge through dialogue.



# PARTNER & EXPERT TESTIMONIALS

“LSE Consulting delivered an excellent, well-managed and insightful research project. The research and analysis were rigorous, their writing was clear and compelling, and their collaboration with the British Council team was professional throughout. The resulting report is high-impact and has been well received in Kazakhstan. It was a pleasure working with such a professional and responsive team.”

## **ROBERT TAYLOR**

Country Director | British Council  
Kazakhstan



“I enjoyed working with the EYCE Hub on our report for the European Commission on the participation of citizens with disabilities in elections. At a time of growing institutional distrust and democratic backsliding it is more important than ever to produce and support evidence-based approaches towards making elections, and democracies, more inclusive.”

## **SANDRA OBRADOVIC**

Assistant Professor | LSE Department of  
Psychological and Behavioural Science  
Researcher | Electoral Psychology  
Observatory



# LOOKING AHEAD

At the EYCE Hub, we believe change is driven from the ground up. By working closely with communities, non-profits, and civil society groups, we aim to build collective intelligence that supports more inclusive societies and ensures no one is left behind.

This coming year, we are expanding our focus on youth engagement, exploring how media and democratic participation intersect in today's rapidly evolving context. Through targeted research, collaboration, and practical interventions, we seek to strengthen channels of interaction and respond to emerging challenges in education, youth, and civic participation.

Our ambition is for the Hub to be both a responsive partner to stakeholders and an



independent, critical voice when needed. We are developing new models of advocacy and action across our three core areas, translating research into tangible impact.

Looking ahead, our growing network of experts and partners will continue driving progress towards fairer, more inclusive societies. We invite you to connect with us, share ideas, and explore opportunities for collaboration.

**For inquiries or  
collaboration opportunities,  
get in touch.**

**Email Elisabet Vives**

[E.Vives@lse.ac.uk](mailto:E.Vives@lse.ac.uk)

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