

INTERNATIONAL DEBATE
EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL REPORT



DARE TO THINK



ARGUE TO LEARN



On behalf of the entire team at the International Debate Education Association (IDEA), we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the dedicated volunteers, coaches, debaters across IDEA's network. We would also extend our gratitude to IDEAs board members and member organisations for their support and commitment throughout 2022. Your collective efforts have been instrumental in advancing our mission to foster critical thinking and active citizenship through debate-based education. The success of our programs, including the 2022 IDEA Youth Forum, would not have been possible without your passion, expertise, and belief in our cause. Thank you for being an integral part of our journey, and here's to continued collaboration and success in the years to come!

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A world that needs free debate now more than ever

The European debate community returned to populate classrooms and IDEA followed suit. The pandemic taught our organisation that online debate can greatly expand access and connect communities, but that bonds are strengthened further through physical activities. We have followed suit and in 2022 we operate on both dimensions, organising physical and online activities and supporting our members on both avenues.

But whilst the world opened up from lockdowns, the country of Ukraine and our member NGO New Vision were shocked by an act of aggression from Russia. The debate community reacted resiliently, helping organise a fundraiser that donated 19.000 euros to the war relief effort administered by New Vision from their base in Dnipro. The following months showed that threats of fake news, troll farms, and media illiteracy are most dangerous in times of conflict. Hence , we redoubled our efforts through our Teaching Media Literacy Analytics (MeLiTa) programme. Reactions to the war differed across countries and continents and showed that the European worldview was not dominant. Helping students understand the complexity of our divergent but diverse global world, we launched two programmes to support Global learning.

As a membership organisation, we primarily support our members in their activities to spread active citizenship and increase learning outcomes amongst their youth through debate. We were excited by the success of the 2022

Youth Forum in Ljubljana, with largest attendance since 2013. Bolstered by this demand, we are branching out to host three events: an event for training, an event for organising, and an event that'll bring young people across our network together.

We support both our members and the wider debate community. In line with this mission we launched our new website in 2022. This is not just a static page that echoes an internet before Web 2.0. Our ambition is to make www.idebate.net a new hub for debate learning. To that end we launched several initiatives, including an open access e-learning course called Learningbase; a selection of educational materials to help youth workers and teachers use debate in the classroom called Resourcebase; and an interactive tool for finding motions called Motionbase.

We supported the wider debate community actively by stepping in to host the 2022 edition of the Worlds Schools Debating Championships when no other host could be found. 323 speakers from 66 teams participated, with the team from Hong Kong being crowned overall champion, losing finalist team China being recognised as best English as a Second Language team, IDEA member Lithuania taking home the award for best English as Foreign Language Team and Finland being recognised as best new nation.

The work that we do was made possible through various grants from the European Commission through its Erasmus+ and Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) Programmes. We are also thankful to our individual donors, especially our donors who helped provide relief to

Ukrainian citizens through the fundraiser set up by IDEA and member NGO New Vision.

Our method

Why debate? Unlike other forms of discussions, debating makes teams of young people learn to build and use fact-based arguments to support different positions on relevant issues. Those issues must be debatable, meaning v. Further, participants do not necessarily get to represent the side they personally agree with - the sides are determined randomly. This helps in:

- *Developing critical thinking and analysis abilities;*
- *Sharpening research skills;*
- *Improving argumentation skills*
- *Learning to build and deliver persuasive arguments*
- *Understanding more than one side of any issue;*
- *Learning to disagree and understand other peoples' point of view;*
- *Gaining the confidence to stand up and speak in a room full of people and for different audiences;*
- *Practicing how to structure and order thoughts and to identify, introduce, and summarize key points;*
- *Developing a sense of timing and prioritizing most relevant argumentation within the time allotted for speaking;*
- *Gaining the flexibility needed to quickly and precisely react to new ideas and critical examination of arguments, strategy, and evidence.*

A large range of academic publications attest to these and other benefits of debate. IDEA itself has commissioned two studies that bring together impact analysis and literature review to prove the impact that debate education can give to young people. The latest of these two reports, carried out by the Institute for Social Research at the University of Zagreb, show that participation in debate activities lead to the following positive effects on a personal and societal level.

Personal development	Ability to think and critically assess information
	Emotional capabilities and tolerance
	Soft skills development
	Academic skills
	Ability to navigate new media landscapes
Societal development	Openness to deliberative processes
	Intercultural competencies

	Citizenship awareness and citizenship skills
	Understanding of human rights and inclusion

Our organisation

IDEA is a membership organisation, governed by 20 members. Through the General Assembly they direct a Board of Governors, who in their work are assisted by an Executive Office. In 2022, the Executive Office employed six members of staff and volunteers. We are headquartered in Utrecht, The Netherlands, with staff members and volunteers working across the European continent.

According to our latest member survey our members reach at least 20.920 young people annually. They work in primary schools, secondary schools, and in tertiary institutions. They organise training events for young people, staff and volunteer trainings, summer camps, debate competitions, and public debates. Many young people don't come by for a single event – they stay within the programme for two to three years.

In 2022 we established a new strategic plan for 2022-2026 under the header “**dare to think, argue to learn**”. This strategic plan contains an overview of strategies and goals which define that IDEA will be a key organization that:

- *supports current debate programs and engages with key stakeholders in order to expand access to debate for young people all over the world;*
- *provides support to existing and new members through transfer of knowledge and experience while developing innovative new educational approaches; and*
- *advocates for expansion of debate programs and use of debate methodology as tools forempowering young people and achieving sustainable development goals.*

In order to reach these goals, we work towards seven different objectives:

Program Development Objectives

- *Empowering young people through use of debate methodology and expanding opportunities for young people to engage with society;*
- *Applying debate methodology in education, youth work and citizen engagement as a means of advancing sustainable development goals;*
- *Providing professional and development support to existing and emerging debate programs, securing sustainability and advancing their community impact*
- *Enhancing IDEAs role as a key actor in the global debate community, providing networking opportunities for organisations, educators, youth and youth workers*

Organisational Development Activities

- *Ensuring the institutional and organizational sustainability of the network, ensuring knowledge transfer and quality standards, defining IDEA as a recognizable actor in the field of debate, education, youth and civic engagement*
- *Establishing a model for including new members in order to increase the membership of IDEA and expand access to debate across the globe*
- *Capacity building of IDEA and member organizations*

Our internal organisation

Our board is headed by its president Aaron Fishbone. Other board members include Gedmine Marija Rackiene, Raminta Dereskeviciute, dr. Sharmila Parmanand, Radka Pudilova, Blerina Guga-Kurrizo, Jan Novotny, and Vaclav Soukup.

The Executive Team is led by our Executive Director Bojan Marjanovic. Other staff members include Anastazija Stupar, Devin van den Berg and Daan Welling. In 2022 we ended our long-standing cooperation with Annemarie van Ede and Paul van Dijck. Our finances are controlled externally by GoedOpOrde B.V.

Our office is located at the Mariahoek in Utrecht. Starting in 2022 we initiated office sharing together with VOF DebatUnie and Stichting Dutch Schools Debating College, the selectors of the Dutch national team for WSDC. This strategic

cooperation helps cement IDEA's mission in The Netherlands.

Our partners

Our programmes are supported by donors. We are proud to be financed by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union, and to be recognised as an accredited organisation in the field of youth by the Dutch National Agency. We are furthermore supported through the CERV programme of the European Commission. We are finally grateful to our individual donors.

Alongside our members, we work together with other debate organisations across the globe that further our mission. We are also a proud member of the European Youth Forum.

Our finances

We provide our financial report as an annex to the annual report.

Our activities

We group our activities in line with four different aligned visions of IDEA.

IDEA as a debate training center

In 2023 we launched our e-learning centre at learningbase.idebate.net. In this e-learning centre students are able to learn about the essentials of debate. This tool can be used to promote learning for young people and is especially valuable for students and teachers from smaller debate communities. This centre was built via the programme IDAC.

Recognising the need for teachers and youth workers to be assisted in providing debate education, four projects were started or continued to help these target groups increase their impact in a wide variety of themes.

MeLiTa helps teachers strengthen media literacy amongst their students. Importantly, by encouraging critical thinking and viewing issues from multiple sides, this project help students become active learners and assessors. Creative Writing Digital Communities helps students to become more fluent in written argument, an increasingly vital skill in todays online spaces. Both projects will reach their conclusion in medio 2023 and will publish their results then.

Global citizenship education, a vital tool to understand our increasingly connected and complex world, is tackled through two related projects. Both projects aim to build an innovative set of learning resources, including e-learning courses for practitioners and mental models and

lesson plans that help encourage critical thinking and research skills amongst students. The project Global Education across Subject Areas works in the field of secondary education, and aims to be applicable for teachers across a range of subject disciplines. The project New Global Learning translates global citizenship education for the first time to the field of youth work and informal education.

All programmes were financed through the Erasmus+ programme.

In August 2022 IDEA hosted the 2022 online edition of the Worlds Schools Debating Championships, and introduced various debate education initiatives to 66 countries. The multi-week event, also considered the Olympics of debating, ended with a final in which the national team of Hong Kong was awarded the world champion title. IDEA received assistance from volunteers from Croatia and Slovenia to make the tournament a massive success.

IDEA as a think tank

Under the project IDAC the University of Zagreb produced a literature review that highlighted the various impact of debate education. This key document is vital to help bring support for more use of debate-centred education in formal and informal educational settings. Additionally, the project supported the development of training manuals for youth workers and lesson plans that can help teachers and youth workers new to debate, which can be accessed through resourcebase.idebate.net.

IDEA as a capacity builder

IDEA promoted the capacity-building of our member organisations through the Youth Forum 2022, where 78 participants from 13 countries gathered for a week of training on organizing, fundraising, advocacy, and training. The event was hosted in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Participants after the event expressed overwhelming satisfaction, with their learning objects having been met.

Teachers and students joined in events throughout the year to help provide feedback and implement debate-based programmes to combat media illiteracy and enhance global citizenship education. In April teachers and students from The Netherlands, Estonia, Poland, and Slovenia gathered in Tallinn, Estonia for MeLiTa. In November teachers, students, and academic experts from Slovenia, Italy, Czechia, and The Netherlands underwent a training on global education in Gozd Matuljek in Slovenia via the project GEASA. With the project NGL the concept of global citizenship education was translated to the youth work field, with a training event held in Warsaw in November for participants from Poland, Czechia, and The Netherlands.

IDEA as a force for empowering youth, democracy, and human rights

The day after the Dnipro Open Tournament, the longest-running debate tournament in Ukraine, concluded, Russian airstrikes heralded the start of the war in Ukraine. In the weeks and months that followed the debate community showed

international solidarity. In an effort mediated by IDEA, 19.000 euros was raised by the debate community for direct relief aid, coordinated by NGO New Vision from their base in Dnipro.

Debate has long been seen as an important force to help promote active citizenship, especially through its capacity to have participant approach issues from multiple side. This raises youth's appreciation for inclusive deliberative processes. The program Dealing with EUroSkepticism (DEUS) was recognised and funded by the CERV programme of the European Commission to help promote these citizenship values and combat the disinformation that underpins contemporary Euroskepticism. IDEA will lead a consortium of 14 organisations, a majority of them members of the IDEA network, which will commission studies, build a toolkit, and execute citizenship training activities across the European Union.

Youth forum 2022

The International Debate Education Association (IDEA) recognizes the immense positive impact that debating can have on young people, fostering critical thinking and active citizenship. With a strong belief that debate-based education should be accessible to all, especially to those with fewer opportunities and in underserved areas, IDEA successfully held its annual Youth Forum in 2022. The gathering of debate experts, organizers, and volunteers took place in Ljubljana, Slovenia, aiming to support the capacity of debate-focused organizations across Europe and beyond.

Objectives

The primary goal of the Youth Forum 2022 was to make debate-based education as accessible as possible, particularly targeting young people with fewer opportunities and educators in underserved areas. With support from the European Commission and the Erasmus+ programme, the forum aimed to gather participants from various countries to deliver and attend workshops, focusing on diversifying teaching styles, using debate-based methods, and making youth clubs and classrooms more inclusive.

Implementation

The event hosted 65 participants from 17 countries, involved in running debate programs in professional or volunteering

capacities. The forum was divided into two tracks: the "trainer track" aimed at helping youth workers, teachers, and educators diversify their teaching styles and make their environments more inclusive; the "organizational track" offered insights into developing projects, grant proposals, and supporting key personnel in member organisations. Participants included members from various debate societies and associations across Europe.

Results

The Youth Forum 2022 achieved significant success in moving closer to the goal of accessible debate-based education. The event served as a platform for sharing thoughts, experiences, and ideas, fostering growth among associations and individuals. Testimonials from participants highlighted the forum's impact on improving skills, awareness of new coaching strategies, and building networks. The event also provided access to online resources, materials, and knowledge in handling group dynamics.

Conclusion

The IDEA Youth Forum 2022 marked a significant step towards supporting accessible debate-based education worldwide. By gathering experts, organizers, and volunteers, the forum facilitated the exchange of ideas, skills, and strategies, contributing to the sustainability and growth of national debate organizations. The event's success underscores the importance

of debate in fostering critical thinking, community building, and active citizenship. The continued support and collaboration of the IDEA network promise exciting teaching and learning materials, digital tools, and in-person events for educators and young people in the future. The forum's positive impact and the enthusiastic participation of members reflect the growing recognition of debate as a vital tool for education and civic engagement.

Concluded projects

Innovate debate

In response to the rise of populism, political apathy, and undermined notions of equality and inclusion, the project was conceived to fill the gap left by formal education. The focus was on emphasizing critical thinking and communication skills while providing a foundation for civic engagement, democratic principles, equality, and inclusion. A needs analysis revealed a lack of structured, high-quality content for debate-based youth work, leading to the project's initiation.

Objectives

The project aimed to create a comprehensive set of tools for anyone willing to use debate-based methodology to develop transferable skills for young people. The objectives included increasing the availability of debate-based youth work, moving it into the digital realm, and enhancing its quality, with a particular focus on recruiting and training new volunteers.

Implementation

The project was implemented through problem-based learning (PBL), a student-centered teaching method. Twenty youth debate clubs were organized as training, development, and testing hubs, working on the project for 36 months. Activities included the development of key outputs

such as a curriculum, online education resource, E-learning platform, and an impact study. These were supported by two LTT events and a dozen multiplier activities, both online and in real life.

Results

The project produced concrete outputs, including:

- **Applied Debate Curriculum:** Seventy ready-to-use lesson plans, organized in four different curriculum proposals, ranging from 3 months to 2 years of activities (available on resourcebase.idebate.net).
- **E-Learning Portal:** A portal with 65 individual lessons arranged in 12 courses (learningbase.idebate.net).
- **Online Educational Resource:** A resource providing easy access to developed resources, manuals, training plans, quality standards, and supporting content (resourcebase.idebate.net). This includes various manuals and guides related to debate-based youth work.
- **Motionbase:** An online educational resource offering educators a list of topics for debate-based youth work (motionbase.idebate.net).
- **Outreach:** The project reached over 4000 young people and disseminated results in more than 20 countries, where the outputs are being adapted and used.

Conclusion

The project successfully addressed the identified needs by creating a comprehensive set of tools and resources for debate-based youth work. By organizing youth debate clubs and employing problem-based learning, the project fostered critical thinking, communication skills, and civic engagement among young people. The creation of an applied debate curriculum, E-learning portal, and online educational resources has significantly enhanced the availability and quality of debate-based youth work. The project's impact has been widespread, reaching thousands of young people and extending to over 20 countries. The innovative approach and tangible results have made a meaningful contribution to the field of youth work and education, promoting democratic principles, equality, and inclusion.

Digital creative writing communities

Objectives

The project's objectives were multifaceted, aiming to create an open-source creative writing teaching methodology, an implementation toolkit, and a user-friendly e-learning platform. The goal was to support youth workers in adopting engaging teaching styles and provide young people with opportunities to explore their creativity. Collaboration among youth workers, teachers, and IT organizations was also

fostered to promote the exchange of ideas and best practices.

Implementation

The project was implemented through a series of interconnected activities, including the creation of a creative writing manual, an implementation toolkit, and an online platform designed following gamification principles. Staff training, youth mobility events, workshops, and focus groups were organized to engage with the project materials. The project outputs were widely disseminated to reach as many educators and young people as possible.

Results

The project produced concrete outputs such as a Creative Writing Manual, an E-Learning Platform (startwriting.eu), and an Implementation Toolkit. Continuous feedback led to the refinement of all project outputs, ensuring wide applicability and ease of use. Key achievements included the development of a creative writing manual, a toolkit with various activity ideas, the startwriting.eu platform, education of youth workers, organization of workshops, and mobility events.

Conclusion

The project has been successful, achieving its objectives and exceeding expectations in many areas. It has not only enhanced teaching methods but also inspired young

people to explore their creativity. The creation of the interactive e-learning platform represents an innovative way to deliver creative writing education, making it more engaging and accessible. The project's outputs have had a profound impact on organizations, strengthening their capacity to deliver high-quality creative writing education and broadening their reach. The innovative and complementary nature of the project has contributed to the growing trend of using digital tools for education, specifically tailored for creative writing, and has made working with creative writing more accessible and easier through step-by-step guides.

Ongoing projects

List of projects IDEA is currently involved in.

Detailed descriptions can be found on

idebate.net

Project name	Acronym	Leading organisation	Start year	End year
Teaching media literacy analytics	MELITA	IDEA	2021	2023
Updating Global Education Across Subject Areas	GEASA	ZiP	2021	2023
Dealing with Euroscepticism	DEUS	IDEA	2023	2024
Active Youth Hub	AYH	Erasmus University Rotterdam	2023	2025
New Global Learning - Youth Workers as Global Learning Facilitators (NGL)	NGL	FPD	2022	2024
Empowering Youth Work for the Green Debate	GD	IDEA	2022	2024

GOVERNANCE IN 2022

The organization is run by the members through the General Assembly, where they direct the Board. The Board directs the Executive Director and the Office.

IDEA Board

Aaron Fishbone, president

Gedmine Marija Rackiene, Vice president

Raminta Dereskeviciute, General Board Member

Dr. Sharmila Parmanand, General Board Member

Blerina Guga-Kurrizo, General Board Member

Jan Libicek, General Board Member

Radka Pudilova, General Board Member

Vaclav Soukup, General Board Member

IDEA Staff

Bojan Marjanovic, Executive Director

Daan Welling, Head of Office

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