



# Towards a Circular Economy: Competences for Youth

*CESCY final conference*

1<sup>st</sup> June 2022 | 9:30-17:00 CEST

## **Organised by:**

AEGEE-Europe, Lowmerism, Common Gold, Rete Educare ai Diritti Umani,  
Mentes Empreendedoras, Zink Asturias

## **Introduction**

The worsening climate crisis and the growing scarcity of natural resources have increasingly demonstrated the limits of our predominantly linear economy. It is now undeniable that our business models and practices must become more sustainable and circular. In this context, it is essential that young people be prepared to contribute and lead the way towards a more circular economy in Europe and beyond.

- *What kind of competences are needed for the transition to a circular economy?*
- *How can young people acquire and develop the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes?*
- *What can education institutions, but also youth organisations, decision-makers and companies do to support young people in acquiring and developing such competences?*

These are a few of the questions that the CESCY consortium has researched and addressed together with young people since the [Circular Economy – Sustainable Competences for Youth](#) project was launched in 2019.

The CESCY partners have been working on the following outputs:

- **Mapping of the status quo** on circular economy and sustainability implementation in several European countries

- **Research on competences for youth** in the circular economy labour market
- **Recommendations** for circular economy and sustainable practices implementation
- **Competence framework** on circular economy and sustainability for youth work
- **Manual for practitioners** to work with the competence framework
- **MOOC** on Circular Economy and Sustainability competences

The aim of the conference *Towards a Circular Economy: Competences for Youth* was for participants from different backgrounds to learn more about the outputs from the CESC project, but also to be given the opportunity to share their views on the topics at stake, as well as to hear from experts from different sectors.

## Report

### Introduction and opening speeches (9:30-9:45)

The conference was chaired by **Maria Nikolopoulou** (EESC).

- Maria Nikolopoulou opened the conference, welcomed the participants and briefly introduced the organisers. She also highlighted the relevance of this event, as it brings together two topics of high importance for the EESC, namely circular economy and youth. She subsequently gave the floor to Tatjana Babrauskiene (EESC) and Mayri Tiido (leader of the CESC project & Founder of Lowmerism).
- **Tatjana Babrauskiene** (EESC) pointed out that too little progress has been made so far to achieve the SDGs and that it is essential that young people bring their attitudes, skills and knowledge to different sectors. She also highlighted the importance of circular economy with regards to new technologies as well as to tackle food waste, particularly in the context of the war in Ukraine which is disrupting food supply chains.
- **Mayri Tiido** (leader of the CESC project & Founder of Lowmerism) started her speech by reminding the audience that the circular economy is changing the ways we produce, consume and relate to things, and that the EU is making progress in this field. She pointed out that young people have, however, for too long been left out of the conversations, while young people need to be among the ones to embrace the circular concept. Mayri Tiido is convinced that there has to be a systemic approach to engaging youth in this discussion, transition and transformation. She concluded her speech with the positive realisation that initiatives around youth and circular economy have become more common in the last few years.

### Presentation of the CESC project and main findings: Circular Economy Competences for Youth (9:45-10:45)

The CESC consortium presented the CESC (Circular Economy – Sustainable Competences for Youth) project along with the different intellectual outputs they developed and the events

they organised throughout the project, while highlighting key findings. Interaction with the audience was also ensured through the use of Slido.

The following intellectual outputs and events were presented:

- *Mapping of status quo on circular economy and sustainability implementation* – presented by Liisa Aavik (Lowmerism)
- *Research on competences for youth in the circular economy labour market* - presented by Sjaak de Beer (Common Gold)
- *Competence framework on circular economy and sustainability for youth work* - presented by Silvia Volpi (REDU - Rete Educare Diritti Umani)
- *Manual for practitioners & MOOC on Circular Economy and Sustainability competences* - presented by Mayri Tiido (Lowmerism)
- *Learn&Hack hackathons* - presented by Mayri Tiido (Lowmerism) and Nathalia Gaiarim (Mentes Empreendedoras)
- *Seminar for youth workers and youth & Training of Trainers* - presented by Silvia Volpi (REDU - Rete Educare Diritti Umani)
- *Recommendations for circular economy and sustainable practices implementation* - presented by Marie-Céline Falisse (AEGEE-Europe)

The participants were invited to share their views by answering the following questions:

- *What comes to your mind when you think of a circular economy?*
- *Do you think there are enough opportunities for youth to engage in the circular economy?*
- *What kind of companies do you think are implementing the circular economy vision the most?*
- *In your opinion, what are the most important circular economy competencies that young people should have/acquire?*
- *What kind of opportunities do you think should be sustained, improved and/or developed for young people to acquire circular economy competencies?*

The ppt presentation can be found via [this link](#).

Screenshots of the participants' responses to the Slido polls can be found via [this link](#).

After the presentation itself, the audience was invited to ask questions to the presenters. The following topics were addressed and key points shared:

- *Challenges due to the short-term vision of companies* - Companies often want to see gains fast although we want to think long-term. It is important to change the paradigm of what we want from society and to focus on value-based leadership. Companies that do not take sustainability into account will also become irrelevant, especially when appropriate legislative frameworks are put in place and when investors take sustainability into account. Companies should agree to make less profit and have a lesser impact on the environment.
- *Advantages of the circular economy for companies* – What encourages companies to change is strong financial incentives (e.g. from European funds), but also crisis such as

the COVID pandemic. Employers often need something to happen from outside, as change is not happening from inside. Young people can contribute to leading this by bringing their willingness to make a change from inside the companies they work for.

- *Getting the circular economy topic into schools* – There are opportunities in schools, e.g. through civic education, but sometimes we don't know what exists. Being curious can lead us to look for these opportunities. Despite compulsory education, it appears that in some areas (especially outside of large cities) people do not know about the circular economy. It is important to properly prepare teachers. According to reports from EU member states, sustainable development is already included in education, but this segment is not so stressed in school education (rather in higher education). It is also important to see how this translates in practice, also outside of the school system.

### Panel discussion: How can different stakeholders support young people in acquiring and developing circular economy competences? (11:15-12:30)

Five panellists took part in the discussion:

- **MEP Malte Gallée**, European Parliament (Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance);
- **Tatjana Babrauskiene**, EESC Member;
- **Valentina Guerra**, Policy Adviser for social affairs and training, SMEUnited;
- **Giuseppina Tucci**, OBESSU Secretary General and LLLP President;
- **Julian van Loo**, Sustainability Committee of AEGEE-Europe.

The panel discussion was facilitated by **Mayri Tiido**, Lowmerism.

Mayri Tiido introduced the panellists and invited them to give an opening statement.

- **MEP Malte Gallée**: Circular economy is about extracting resources from the planet and about how to use resources sustainably, not only material resources but also human resources, while not exploiting them. We must shift away from a culture where we have to burn out in order to move towards a system that gives people the time, abilities and skills to really be part of the circular economy. The competences we need include the sustaining ability to acquire new skills and engage. Companies are disabling people in similar ways they are using devices, so on the design side, it is up to companies to make a shift. On the other side, it is also for people to be part of the circular economy with the skills needed.
- **Tatjana Babrauskiene**: When looking at the attitudes of employers and workers, we see that they are a bit scared because they don't know what would be the impact of a circular economy on their jobs and they don't know what new opportunities would be created. Circular economy is also about affecting labour relations and legislation to regulate labour. Awareness raising is important to explain why a shift is necessary. Key topics to address include working conditions, time and salaries. For companies to make a shift, it is required to change the whole system. Education started to change, but the training system is not adjusted yet, though changes are ongoing. When

speaking about systems, we need to think about the global system because it is all very interconnected. We see this happening now in Europe but also on other continents.

- **Valentina Guerra:** SMEUnited is active on social dialogue at European level, and our members too. We are discussing implementation of the green deal and sustainability. This is a change that can happen starting from individuals, trying to implement this in all aspects of life including education and business. It is a burdensome change for businesses especially after the pandemic and with uncertainties around Ukraine, so businesses are not in good shape and have more difficulties to implement change. To tackle change and uncertainties in such time, they need to invest more to implement more sustainability services and types of production. We also worked on a project on circular economy and we are trying to anticipate changes. What we learnt through this project: 1) In order to provide young people with skills, there need to be a good system for casting, 2) We need modern vocational education and training systems, adaptable to the labour market, as well as cooperation with businesses to have a real image of the labour market in real time. We also need quality training that is relevant for companies and not outdated. 3) Quality training needs to be provided in parallel with work-based learning opportunities.
- **Giuseppina Tucci:** I got a bit stuck when thinking about what circular economy competences are, because these are competences for lifelong competences for lifelong learning. We live in individualistic societies where we are expected to know what we need and to develop it ourselves, and on the other hand we lose the sense of collectivity and collective actions. We expect a lot from young people but we cannot put everything on young people and expect them to do everything and not even listen to them. We develop competences for ourselves, to be good citizens and to bring change, not for the labour market. Citizenship competences are important. I agree that we need relevant school subjects, but we also need professional and lifelong learning in ways that are free, of good quality, and recognised. What we learn is not what we do. Co-creation is needed. Attitude is needed but we cannot do this if we don't have lifelong learning competences.
- **Julian van Loo:** It is not enough to have a small group of people focusing on circular economy, we need to know why you are doing it and to have everyone on board to make a change. It is not enough to have a specific topic on circular economy. It needs to be mainstreamed in any discipline and every student should know how they can implement the change with what they learn. People tend to think that the circular economy is recycling but there is so much more to that. We should explain why we are doing that, be critical and question what we do in a society. Competences are also more than learning and skills, it is about attitudes. The more social competences such as communication and collaboration were low on the list [referring to the Slido poll and online survey]. In business, it is much more difficult than closing a loop. It is a social transition more than a material transition. Young people should be able to explain to co-workers and stakeholders why they can also be involved. Social skills are key in this change. Youth organisations are already developing such competences and this is

where social skills are developed, but youth org don't have capacity to develop competences in all their members. We need other institutions to provide support. We need space to develop competences further and implement them in practice. Young people are motivated and institutions should enable them.

Mayri Tiido thanked the speakers for their opening statements and continued with the following question: *Whose responsibility is it to prepare youth for the circular economy? The youth themselves? Youth organisations? Education institutions? Business? Policy-makers? Any other stakeholders?*

- **Tatjana Babrauskiene:** We cannot put responsibility on one actor, but I would say it is especially on educators. Teachers are inspiring pupils and bringing attitudes. The personality of the educators and what they will put in the souls of the children is crucial for them to navigate their whole life. It is more difficult to change mindsets when people are above 18 years old.
- **MEP Malte Gallée:** I see the main responsibility at the level of policy. This is what democracy is about; we decide about the rules we give to ourselves. This includes what we want educators to teach, and we have to put it on the agenda. I agree with Julian that it should be mainstreamed, but I disagree that it is only a social transition. The main task is in the rules and policies, so we still need to follow economic logic. We need to build a complex industry and we will not get there if we just teach children to fix their own clothes and recycle. We need to push the whole sector from the political level.
- **Valentina Guerra:** Cooperation and dialogue are key. Cooperation between policy-makers and social partners, companies, education, and all stakeholders at the level of society. Social partners and policy makers because they know what is happening in the labour market, education and companies to enhance the learners' experiences through traineeships, and also cooperation among all actors in society. It is the political will, our will to decide for society. We need to have a significant dialogue.
- **Giuseppina Tucci:** I agree that cooperation is essential. I would put an emphasis on public institutions and policy-makers to make sure there is also a dialogue with civil society organisations, students, providers, everyone. A problem when going by political will is that we go a step forward or back every 5 years depending on who is elected.
- **Julian van Loo:** I agree that we need a political framework and that there is a responsibility on policy-makers, but the rules that we create stem from our values. It is a mindset and social transition at core. When it comes to whose role it is, I would say education institutions and the private sector. It is also important that students understand what it means to change.

Sjaak de Beer (Common Gold) then asked a question to Valentina Guerra and MEP Malte Gallée: *When interviewing companies [as part of the CESC project], we saw that the legislative*

*framework was hindering them in implementing changes. Is it also your experience? Do you think it would be possible to give these people more leverage?*

- **Valentina Guerra:** Yes, the legislative framework is often an issue for companies. Administrative and financial burdens are also hampering change in companies sometimes. I can put you [Sjaak] in contact with a colleague of mine who can elaborate. There is an actual problem. It is not just companies using this as an excuse not to act. This is happening because there are also legislations about safety and other areas. We call for less burdens on some types of requirements.
- **MEP Malte Gallée:** The way to give more leverage to companies for circular economy is by giving rules that they have to fulfil and setting sustainability requirements, as it is for instance being done through the batteries and packaging directive or the sustainable product initiative.

Sjaak de Beer asked for a clarification on MEP Malte Gallée's statement: *Is it a real leverage if new standards are added? Isn't it rather hampering?*

- **MEP Malte Gallée:** No, I don't think so. The idea is to push and encourage enterprises that do a good job and to kick out those that exploit people and the planet.

Miguel Bernardo (Junior Enterprises Europe; conference participant) also asked a question to the panellists: *During this panel and also during the previous session, it was mentioned that there is a higher focus on short-term gains especially in the economic side. Instead of having a focus on money, how can we shape the vision of the youth to become more focused on sustainability?*

- **Tatjana Babrauskiene:** It should be mentioned that new jobs will be created. This can motivate young people for the circular economy shift, especially if we consider the high unemployment rates and the impact that the pandemic also had. We should also keep in mind that a number of young people who are employed are not in good working conditions. Solving this issue and creating decent jobs is also part of the package.
- **Julian van Loo:** Meaningful jobs are important, as are decent and paid internships, but values are not shaped when getting a job. It is important to have teachers but also youth organisations to support young people and shape their views and mindsets. Youth organisations also play an important role in young people having sustainable mindset and values, and this can be enhanced by supporting youth organisations.
- **Giuseppina Tucci:** We should stop education being a constant competition. It is very toxic. We become part of it so much that we cannot look outside, so we need to shift to working in cooperative ways in education. People in vocational education and training are too often seen as cheap labour and companies do not pay attention to what they think although they have a lot of ideas. We perpetuate a way of privilege where people who have been to university become even more privileged. We need to talk with people in technical schools.

Mayri Tiido continued with a question building up on the latest statements: *How can we engage young people from less privileged backgrounds and empower them to become future leaders?*

- **MEP Malte Gallée:** The whole idea of the circular economy is how to get rid of the concept of waste. It is crucial because with the concept of waste it means we give a value of zero to things, but this is not the way we want to live, we want everything to have a value. A solution is to give value to everything. We would not have waste if there was a deposit on everything. We cannot leave it to individuals only. We need to create a system that is sustainable in itself.
- **Giuseppina Tucci:** Trade unions have the force to reach out to a high amount of people, also in rural areas. It would be good to put them together but also to upskill them and give opportunities and a voice to these people. Involving trade unions would be a massive chance to involve more people.
- **Tatjana Babrauskiene:** But in some sectors less than 10% of workers are in trade unions. Inequality should be looked into at the system level. There are many initiatives to reach less advantaged people and reduce inequalities. Many things are happening in parallel and progress at the system level in several areas is needed.

Wouter Boerjan (AEGEE-Eindhoven; conference participant) asked a final question to the panel: *How different are the competences that we acquire currently and those that we would need for a circular system? Isn't it a mindset change that should be pushed for instead of focusing on specific competences? How do we put our current competences into practice?*

- **Julian van Loo:** I agree that mindset change is a big part in the sense that we need to think bigger than our own bubble and discipline, but new skills are also needed, for instance challenging the way we learn things. We also need skills to debate and collaborate, and these competences are not focused on in the education system, as it is very individuality and it is not about going together.
- **Tatjana Babrauskiene:** Lifelong learning competences are important. Critical thinking in society also affects political processes and is crucial in any area of life. Disinformation is dangerous as well, and skills to recognise fake information are also needed.

Mayri Tiido thanked the panellists and the participants and closed the panel discussion.

### Parallel workshops (14:00-15:15)

Two parallel workshops were organised:

- *Change management and systems thinking for a circular economy* - led by Mayri Tiido (Lowmerism) and Nathalia Gaiarim (Mentes Empreendedoras)

- *The Youth worker's role in supporting circular economy* - led by Silvia Volpi (REDU - Rete Educare Diritti Umani)

### ***Change management and systems thinking for a circular economy***

The aim of this workshop was to introduce to participants the elements of change management, and give them an experience in understanding the connections between those elements, as well as make them understand what a system is and how systems can be influenced.

The workshop started with an energizer to get participants energised and grab their attention.

After that, the facilitators discussed with participants what makes people or systems change. The facilitators presented a change management model that entails the following parts:

- Values - what do people/organisations value
- Knowledge - what kind of knowledge they have or need to have
- Things - what kind of physical things or processes are in place

There are connections between all these elements. For changing something, there must be an understanding of which part is being changed and how that change influences other elements.

After that, participants were divided into three groups where they got to represent one of the three stakeholders in society:

- Public sector / state
- Businesses
- Citizens

The central question of the task given was "who is responsible for pushing towards implementing a circular economy?"

Participants were given time to work in small teams and come up with arguments why the stakeholder they represent is clean from responsibility and the other two have to take care of the CE implementation. For example, if you were representing the state, then the task was to come up with arguments about why businesses and citizens are responsible for making a circular economy happen.

The workshop continued with presentations by each group where the goal was to give their arguments and convince others that the stakeholder they represent is clear of the responsibility. Some of the arguments presented were the following:

- State - they have levers of legislation and can shape the business environment;
- Businesses - they create products for the market, so it's their responsibility to put circular products and solutions to the market.
- Citizens - the market reacts to the demand, so citizens should demand and consume sustainable and circular products and services.

At the end of the presentations, a vote took place on who should take the responsibility. The participants voted that the responsibility is with the state.

After this part, the facilitators moved on to the systems thinking activity. Participants were asked to move around in the room, and choose secretly two people to keep an eye on and then try to form with them an equally-sided triangle. The goal of the activity was to find a balance point. After finding a balance point we explored the system and connections we had created a bit in-depth. For example, the facilitators asked one person to move. This gave us an opportunity to see how much the whole system had to change to find the balance point again.

The conclusion of the activity was that each of us is influencing the systems we are part of, but often we don't even know that we're "being followed" and who and how exactly we are influencing the system.

### ***The Youth worker's role in supporting circular economy***

The aim of this workshop was to stimulate participants to reflect on the role and the competences of the youth workers while supporting young people to acquire/improve competences in circular economy and sustainability.

The workshop started with a name game activity to let participants introduce themselves and create a comfortable working environment.

After this first activity, participants were asked to work in groups (3-4 persons each) and share their "how did they relate to youth work".

At the end of the working groups, participants reported their discussion in plenary, and the facilitators appreciated the diversity of the group, as some of them defined themselves as youth workers, some other as youth leaders, some others as youth activity organisers, and some others not really engaged into youth work, but contributing to it.

Finally, the facilitators asked participants to work again in groups to identify the role of the youth workers, their competences and challenges while supporting young people in acquiring/improving competences in circular economy and sustainability.

The results of the working groups were shared in plenary as follows:

#### COMPETENCES OF THE YOUTH WORKERS:

- Will to change the society
- Passion
- Patience
- Circular economy knowledge
- System thinking
- Adaptability
- Empathy skills
- Communication

- Unconventional learning
- Suspending judgement

#### ROLE OF THE YOUTH WORKERS:

- Mentoring young people
- Providing/Designing learning materials
- Organising events (Flashmob, practical training courses, workshops)
- While working with marginalised young people, first establish trust, connect with them, and later introduce the topic, relating with their needs and interests.
- Provide a “new perspective” and support young people to have a critical thinking and reflection on changes they want to see in their lives and in society.

#### CHALLENGES:

- Time: sometimes youth workers do not have enough time to work with young people and care about their learning processes, but they are “forced” to implement sessions or activities as foreseen by the organisations.
- Need of resources: human and financial resources.
- Collaboration and communication with formal education system
- Self-care A strong need for supervision and self-care kits

#### **World café: Policy recommendations for circular economy competences (15:45-16:45)**

During the world café, the participants were invited to move between different tables in small groups in order to discuss and comment on recommendations which were prepared by the CESCY consortium based on in-person consultations with young people and youth workers and on an online survey. On each table, recommendations to a specific target audience were displayed on pieces of paper. Facilitators from the consortium invited the participants to comment on each recommendation and facilitated the group discussions. Different aspects could be considered, such as feasibility, relevance, impact, good practices, expected challenges and possible solutions to the challenges identified.

The following sets of recommendations were discussed:

- *Recommendations to businesses* - facilitated by Sjaak de Beer (Common Gold)
- *Recommendations to youth organisations* - facilitated by Marie-Céline Falisse (AEGEE-Europe)
- *Recommendations to education institutions* - facilitated by Liisa Aavik (Lowmerism)
- *Recommendations to policy-makers* - facilitated by Mayri Tiido (Lowmerism)

The recommendations can be found via [this link](#).

#### **Conclusions from the world café and closing of the conference (16:45-17:00)**

Following the world café, the facilitators shared the conclusions from their respective tables with the audience.

***Recommendations to businesses*** - report by Sjaak de Beer (Common Gold)

In general, the participants were in favour of the recommendations. They supported the idea that embracing the recommendations would increase the resilience of the company in the long term. Although this added value was clear to the participants, the question was raised how to convince businesses of this.

With respect to job inclusion, a discussion came up on the benefits of job inclusion for businesses. It was argued that engaging a higher diversity of employees in the decision-making process would foster the generation of creative and innovative ideas and spread-out risk. Besides, it is a way for a company to achieve their CSR goals. A critical note was placed on the feasibility of job inclusion. Once a critical mass is reached that wants to actively contribute to the decision-making process, the process would become too messy and time-consuming. In a later session, the participants thought of ways on how to tackle this issue. These included the use of IT systems in decentralised decision-making, and the formation of an elected committee that could be the liaison for the workforce and the higher management in the context of bigger corporations. In order to raise the response rate of employees, the idea of an organisational contest came up, in which all employees could submit ideas on how to improve the organisation and its societal impact. The winning idea receives budget to implement the idea. In more general terms, the importance was stressed to create a safe space for employees to raise their voice and actively listen to it.

Participants supported the recommendations to increase the collaboration with universities and youth organisations. In order to increase the career perspective of students and improve the connection to the labour market, companies and universities should engage in a continuous dialogue about their needs for knowledge, skills and talent. Together with youth organisations, events such as sustainability hackathons can be organised to bridge the gap between science and practice.

Finally, a comment was made with respect to embracing circularity. The participant pointed out that when a company is pursuing circularity, they cannot do so on their own account. They need to seek circular opportunities within the value system that consists of other parties in the value chain. Collaboration is key.

***Recommendations to youth organisations*** - report by Marie-Céline Falisse (AEGEE-Europe)

The participants were generally in favour of the recommendations to youth organisations prepared by the CESC consortium.

The recommendation that was likely debated the most among participants was the recommendation strongly encouraging youth organisations to reach out to young people from

diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Although participants agreed that it is essential to reach out to young people from diverse backgrounds, it was highlighted that young organisations should not be expected to achieve this goal alone. For instance, policy-makers should support youth organisations in this regard by providing them with space and resources.

Another recommendation that received quite some comments from participants was the recommendation encouraging youth organisations to lead by example and show the way towards a more sustainable economy. Several participants involved in youth organisations shared examples and good practices on how to achieve this goal. On the other hand, it was also pointed out that being a perfect example and for instance organising a perfectly sustainable event was not realistic. It was once again highlighted that youth organisations would need more resources in order to fully aim for this goal.

The recommendation on capacity building opportunities also led to interesting discussions. It was mentioned that some capacity building activities were very specific and therefore tend to attract mostly young people who are already engaged in this kind of topic, while other training activities are rather broad and more inclusive but appear rather superficial to some young people. It was then concluded that taking the target audience into account is essential, and that youth organisations organising capacity building activities should set objectives and agree on whether they want to focus on raising awareness or on providing young people with more specific competences.

Finally, the participants strongly agreed that cooperation is essential and welcomed the recommendation aiming at developing and reinforcing cross-sector collaboration, including collaboration with education institutions and the business sector.

### ***Recommendations to education institutions*** - report by Liisa Aavik (Lowmerism)

In our original recommendations, we suggested implementing circular economy at all curriculum levels, broad and specific perspectives as well as creating mandatory education subjects. Participants discussed the pros and cons of both methods. In a way, the study programmes are already packed and everyone wants to fit something additional into them. At the same time, circular economy is interconnected with so many subjects and should be included in all subjects. Mandatory subjects would allow for a deeper understanding of CE. Sustainability and CE should especially be included in all higher education fields.

Initiatives supporting the competencies gained on sustainability and circular economy (such as Learn&Hack, challenge-based learning, experience-based learning, hackathons) were very much supported. Practical opportunities to learn by doing were very much supported in the world cafe discussions.

Creating special curriculums and degrees related to the field of sustainability to prepare people for the labour market was mostly supported. The existing opportunities depend on a country - e.g. there are already many opportunities in Sweden and the Netherlands.

The original recommendations also included “walking the talk” by implementing circular and sustainable practices in the educational institutions' premises. It was suggested that when engaging different age groups in these activities (like kindergartens), the activities should be age-appropriate and match with the development level and opportunities of the kids.

Internships and learning by doing were considered valuable in learning about circular economy.

***Recommendations to policy-makers*** - report by Mayri Tiido (Lowmerism)

Participants gave feedback on the recommendation about establishing special funding and programmes for young people related to circular economy competences and for business model innovation. The feedback was that supporting circular economy competences and business model innovation are two different things and this might dilute the funding. The suggestion was to include young people in the business model innovation indeed.

There was support for the recommendation of putting in place state-wide long-term strategies related to circular economy implementation. This can give certainty and help young people and youth organisations in their planning.

Recommendation about supporting youth organisations that work on circular economy and non-formal education got a lot of feedback. The questions that arose were mainly about why the funding should be especially for youth NGOs, why only for the ones working on NFE and if it's good to recommend regular funding. Feedback advised taking a wider scope and recommending to point out prioritisation for youth organisations, circular economy and non-formal education.

To conclude the conference, **Frederick Ryan Wallace** (AEGEE-Europe) gave a short closing speech and thanked all the participants, speakers and partners involved.