OBESSU Implementation plan 2021
Approved by the Council of Members 2020
5-6 December 2020

As stated in the OBESSU Work Plan for 2021-2023, OBESSU commits to working mainly in three areas: Education reforms and funding, learning for 21st century and sustainable development. On each of these topics, OBESSU wishes to reach a certain number of objectives. Moreover, this Implementation Plan reflects on other documents that are relevant to the strategic development of the organisation, such as the Development Strategy, the Advocacy Strategy, the Political Platform and the needs that arise on education and societal matter as time develops.

With this document we highlight the activities and topics OBESSU will work on and summarise which objectives will be achieved. A summary of the activity over the year is annexed at the end of this document.

Thematic cluster: Education reforms and funding

The activities proposed under this thematic cluster contribute to the achievement of several of the goals laid out in the 2021-2023 Work-Plan. Namely, the research on the impact of Covid-19 and its taskforce and the WG on education funding and reforms help us putting school students at the centre of discussion on long-lasting sustainable educational reforms, as well as foster a strong cooperation between Member, Candidate and Affiliate organisations. All the activities highlighted in this cluster build on the advocacy strategy and strength of OBESSU and its membership and better inform student mobilising and campaigning across the continent.

Working group on education funding and reforms

Building on the work of the Working Group on Education Funding during 2020, the working group will continue exploring the landscape of funding in and for education on national and European level, and will expand on their work to further investigate and monitor education reforms happening on the national level. This latter aspect is particularly important in the post Covid-19 scenario. With regards to this Working Group, OBESSU will specifically work towards achieving the objectives related to fostering a space for cooperation among OBESSU members in order to create impactful policies in education, as well as understanding the impact of education funding
on wider policies. The work of this WG will be built with a specific mandate to also strengthen OBESSU and its members’ advocacy capacity, efforts and strategies.

Covid 19 research and Taskforce

The spread of a global pandemic throughout the western world has shown us the incredible amount of flaws that our education and welfare systems have. The Covid-19 health crisis is rapidly becoming a social crisis, a budgetary crisis and it has the potential to rapidly develop into a generalised democratic crisis. The Covid-19 response has led to many classes being moved online, causing several disruptions for school students: from internet access to lack of tools and actual infrastructure for learning online, from lack of alternative welfare measures to a complete lack of involvement of school students in restructuring the school curriculum. We fear it won’t be long until education budgets will start being cut to ensure higher budgets for healthcare and welfare and social measures, and while these are all fundamental we fear this will be the start of a conflict especially in communities of lower incomes. We consider education to be at the forefront of combating crisis, and we want to be able to play a strong role in this debate.

School student unions have always played a key role in European societies and are now undermined by the lack of activities, the potential losses in terms of knowledge management and resources, and the need to move their energies to an emergency response. School student unions are currently working tirelessly to support school students, directing them to learning resources, working with teachers to ensure smooth learning, and fighting for quality possibilities when it comes to assessment and access to further learning.

In 2021 we will continue conducting research on the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on education and school student activism. The research will support the already existing Working Group on Quality of Education Funding. Some of the aims of the WG are to compile research and information on the status quo of education funding in Europe and to explore the possibility of a specific evidence-based policy paper on the topic. The outcomes will be used to advocate for necessary changes on the European and national level. Among others, we will explore impact on national budgets, on personal study paths in general education and VET, as well as changes on activities of school student unions, impact on the civic space and perceptions of challenges and solutions through the eyes of school students and their representatives.

Thematic cluster: Learning for the 21st century
The activities proposed under this heading are aimed at targeting all of the specific objectives outlined in the Work-plan. In particular, with the Education 4.0 activities we will focus on targeting the objectives related to advocacy, capacity building for stronger advocacy, lobbying institutions and ensuring a rights-based approach. With the Pluriverse study session, moreover, we will tackle the objectives of ensuring student participation in the development of quality curricula and guaranteeing that education remains a safe, cultural and social space for the individual and the collectivity.

**Education 4.0: Rights and activism in the digital era - European Youth Foundation Annual Work Plan**

In a century when the digital realm has overwhelmingly taken over our daily lives and has shaped our learning and working habits, it is of crucial importance to employ the benefits of digitalization to the functioning of the school student unions, but also the educational system as a whole. By acknowledging the need to digitalize the educational environment we create the space for young people to further engage and participate, but also to create solutions to current challenges in terms of the way we learn and get information, the methods for learning and the access to rights of all young people in the digital era.

The specific objectives of the work plan are:

01: To promote exchange of ideas and practices for greater digitalization of the way young people learn;

02: To explore alternative ways of how young people use and shape their learning with digital tools and technology;

03: To build capacity for advocacy of the School Student Unions (SSU) for young people’s access to rights through digitalization of the educational programmes and environment (both in terms of formal and non-formal education);

04: To promote accessibility of education for all young people based on the opportunities provided by the new digital tools;

05: To support the advocacy of SSU through a toolkit on young people’s access to digital rights in the school environment.

The work plan will be coordinated by a Task Force composed of member organisations as well as ad-hoc external experts. The work of the Task Force is collecting inputs from members of OBESSU and from the different activities hereafter described to create an advocacy toolkit on young people’s access to digital rights in the educational environment. The task force will meet 2 times: once at the beginning of the Work Plan to set the basis for the work on the toolkit, and once at the end of the activities in November for an editorial meeting.
Other activities of the work plan, other than task force meetings and consultations are:

**Summer school – Access Granted! Ctrl from A to Z**

The summer school will gather participants from member organisations and will focus on exploring different ways of how young people learn in the digital era, it will also promote the exchange of different tools and methods for greater access to rights of young people in the digital environment. The work done during the summer school will feed into the work of the Task force, bringing the inputs gathered in the toolkit.

During the summer school the participants will develop follow up activities to be implemented in their school, community or organization.

**Training course – Advocacy for education! Ctrl+F**

The training course will focus on capacity building for advocacy for accessibility of education for all young people based on the opportunities provided by the new digital tools.

The TC will gather 20 people, members of school student unions, who will be testing out the draft toolkit and providing feedback on it. It will take place during the University for Youth and Development, providing a space for dissemination of the project results, but also wider consultation with other organizations present there.

**Study session “Pluriverse - Peaceful societies with an oppression-free education” (bridging with sustainable development)**

The main aim of this activity is to provide participants with the necessary competences (i.e. knowledge, skills and attitudes) to critically analyse educational contents from an intercultural perspective, including decolonisation, privileges and oppressions, and use this knowledge to influence a more just education system.

The objectives of the Study Session are the following:

- To provide participants with knowledge on privileges, oppressions, intercultural dialogue/learning and cooperation with other world regions.
- To provide participants with the skill of critically reviewing their school content and enable them to make recommendations, fostering active participation of young people and access to rights for all.
- To create peaceful and equal society and opportunities for all, by deconstructing the school curricula, content and how young people learn.
- To create a map of realities in Europe on the matter, representing the main strengths and weaknesses of school curricula in order to foster the sharing of practices and intercultural learning/dialogue.
- To develop a toolkit/guide for school student unions and school student activists on the
topic to build capacities for influence among school student unions and student activists on the topic, disseminating the results of the Study Session

This activity corresponds with OBESSU’s mission of striving for the end of all discrimination and injustice within the educational systems; promoting active citizenship in all forms; and promoting solidarity and understanding between young people. More specifically, OBESSU is part of the Global Students Forum, at the core of its development, so working from a strategic point of view in promoting global education, global cooperation and student representation and rights globally. Furthermore, as part of the Global Education Network of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, OBESSU has actively been involved in the global dimension of education and would like to work further on and explore new horizons, more specifically how privileges and oppressions reflect on education and how global education can be an active contributor to a more open, peaceful and inclusive society. As part of the network, OBESSU developed a policy paper on the topic of Global Citizenship Education and its need to be present in the curriculum. As a continuation of our efforts toward Global Citizenship Education, the study session ensures that global education is one of the key contributing factors for synergies of change. Learning for the 21st century, one of the strategic pillars of OBESSU, aims at understanding the current status quo of the educational systems in Europe and foresee which skills, attitudes and values are able to respond to such a fast changing world. Intercultural dialogue, citizenship education, a balance of genders and a global dimension of education should be present in all educational systems and should be values deeply developed within the educational system. OBESSU believes there is a need to review how the current state of curricula in Europe and observe how school student unions can be the engine of change, towards a more inclusive and human-rights oriented education.

Informal network on VET

VET is a topic that OBESSU has widely explored in the past years, also with the support of the European Apprentices Network. The cooperation between OBESSU and EU Institutions and stakeholders on this matter is wide and increasing every year. Therefore, in 2021, we will offer an informal network for organisations in the OBESSU Membership working - and willing to work - with VET students to tackle policy issues, as well as engagement and outreach issues specific to VET.

Thematic cluster: Sustainable development

This thematic cluster focuses on sustainable development and the role of global cooperation and partnerships in achieving the goals outlined in the 2121-2023 Work-Plan. Specifically, we will address the matters of environmental sustainability and advocacy on the matter, as well as on cooperating globally
with other organisations and platforms to reach the objectives related to SDGs and to ensuring that school students have a seat in global decision-making process on issues related to sustainable development.

MOOC on advocacy for the environment

In January 2021, OBESSU will launch a Massive Online Open Course (MOOC) on advocacy for the environment. This builds on the work done throughout the #EcoFighters WP funded by the European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe. Through this MOOC and the involvement of experts from the field of environmental justice, OBESSU will build its capacity and those of members advocating for more just policies in the field of climate change. This MOOC will also further expand on the engagement of OBESSU and its members with the attainment of SDG targets in Europe in the domain of environmental justice.

Working with GCE

Climate action comes on a broad level, and is influenced by broad coalitions backed up by facts and democratic organising. During 2021, OBESSU will focus it’s climate advocacy through active engagement with organised youth and climate activists in a coalition Generation Climate Europe. OBESSU will actively take part in GCE leadership and activities, influence the advocacy work from a school student point of view and co-create statements and activities.

Global Students Forum

In 2019 a cooperation between different organisations from regional and national representation started to create a Global Students Forum to share information, to build solidarity, and structure in an organised way the Global Cooperation between Student Unions and Organisations. In June 2019 regional student organisations including the All Africa Student Union, the Commonwealth Student Association, the European Students’ Union and the Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions met, together with many other national student unions from Denmark, Ireland, Chad, Australia, New Zealand, Zimbabwe and South Africa, in Accra - Ghana - and started a discussion on the need for a global platform for cooperation on policy, practices and capacity building. Following this meeting, OBESSU has engaged in several activities with the Cooperation, including one fact-finding mission in Europe and one in the United States of America that opened the path of further cooperation with Student Unions and Organisations in Latin America and in the U.S.

GSF formalised in 2020, and OBESSU nominated one member to their Steering Committee. In 2021, OBESSU will engage in the different activities proposed by GSF and will strive to involve its membership in the different structures (working groups and standing committees) and its
activities (trainings, seminars and more). The nominated SC member will also report back to OBESSU and its governance bodies where appropriate.

GSF’s work will also be crucial in coordinating the first International Students’ Day since its establishment. OBESSU commits to working with GSF on developing and implementing such actions for the 17th November and will explore its declination in the European continent.

100 Million campaign

The 100 Million campaign is a call to action for a world where all young people are free, safe and educated. The campaign was started by the Kailash Satyarthi Children’s Foundation (KSCF) and launched in India in December 2016 by thousands of youth activists, including former child labourers, Nobel Laurates, Kailash Satyarthi, and world leaders. Since then the campaign has grown rapidly, growing to 10 countries in the first year and 30 the year after that. The campaign has worked in partnership from the outset and followed the direction of the young campaigners involved. As the campaign has grown, the commitment to working with youth representative organisations particularly has strengthened, leading a meeting in June 2019, co-hosted by the All-Africa Students Union, in Accra of major international student union bodies, alongside national unions and grassroots activists.

OBESSU is a founding member of the 100 Million campaign as a structure and has nominated a member for the Steering Committee. OBESSU will continue engaging in the activities of the 100 Million campaign to promote a world where every child has the right to quality education.

Overarching: Achieving the goals of the Development strategy through organisational capacity and governance

Topics and activities explored under this heading also reference objectives outlined in the Development Strategy of OBESSU, not solely on the Work-Plan. The following are activities and structures supporting the achievement of wider organisational goals. As such, they encompass several of the thematic clusters above explored and go beyond the topics into organising sustainable organisations and structures, both with regards to OBESSU and its membership.

Stronger School Student Unions

The “Stronger School Student Unions” programme is a tailored-made programme to foster the capacity of OBESSU’s Member Organisations in different fields with a tailor-made approach. In 2021, the project highlights the aspect of School Student Structure Development, membership
enlargement and offers additional opportunities for exchanges between the OBESSU Membership.

- The project objectives and expected outcomes are as follows:
  - To keep providing continuous support to our membership following the Stronger Pilot project
  - To provide more opportunities for OBESSU membership and other school student movements in Europe for sharing and learning
  - To increase membership development and school student structure development support
  - To continue providing structural support to our members, both financial and via capacity building
  - To facilitate exchanges amongst our membership, for both, school student activists and staff
  - Continue cooperation with the already established Alumni network

Through the different tailor-made actions of the programme we aim at:

- Fostering the sustainability of student organising in our membership through mutual learning and sharing
- Enabling in person sharing and learning of organisations in regions with similar issues
- Giving concrete benefits to the constituency and enlarge the reach out OBESSU currently has
- Developing ideas for further student organising development and cooperation strengthening
- Enabling exchange for staff members of our membership who very often face very specific challenges (working with school students, working with volunteers)
- Fostering cooperation with emerging school student unions not involved with OBESSU yet and strengthen such movements

In 2021, OBESSU will continue to work on the following challenges in student organising:

1. Knowledge and turnover management
2. Sustainable finances and human resource management
3. Political impact and outreach
4. Representation: structure and constituency
5. Democratic decision making and inclusion
6. Digital technologies in activism and education

Overall the project will include:

**Field visits**, through which we will visit existing or potential members at their request to assess their needs or deliver specific capacity building sessions and trainings with the involvement of the OBESS Staff, Board, Pool of Trainers or Alumni network;
Study visits, through which we will get to know developing organisations and strengthen cooperation with student movements and structures throughout the European continent;

Job shadowing, through which we would like to give the change to staff members of member organisations to visit another organisation for a week to learn, share experiences on how to best support student activism and develop professionally;

Grants for structural and organisational support, thanks to which we will continue supporting organisations in their development and structural organising with a similar experience as in 2020;

Webinars, continue connecting and exploring discussions online.

Training Course for International Officers

The training course for International officers to be held in 2021, will focus on outreach to grassroots organisations and on the importance of connecting every level of organising to policies and policy making, to achieve bigger representativity and therefore impact. Moreover, this training course will be a chance to learn more joint advocacy and will specifically be aimed at strengthening this aspect within OBESSU and its members.

The Training Course - thought as a residential activity - builds upon and complements the work of handover for International Officers that can be done through the IO guide and the work of Board Members and of the Secretariat.

Governance

As part of general governance, four types of statutory meetings will be organised throughout the year, namely:

- The General Assembly (GA)
- The Council of Members (COMEM)
- Board Meetings (BM)
- Monitoring Committee Meetings (MCM)

Both the GA and the COMEM will be organised as face to face assemblies. The BMs and the MCMs, apart from face to face forms, will also be complemented by video conferences, when necessary. The Board Meetings will, to the extent possible, include a visit to one of OBESSU Member / Candidate / Affiliate organisations or a prospective contact organisation.
Pool of trainers

OBESSU will continue investing in the Pool of Trainers and aim in 2021 to further guarantee quality standards in OBESSU events. The Pool of Trainers will be engaged in Stronger School Student Unions and other processes. Their role will be clarified thanks to the development of the Events 101 document for OBESSU events and the Code of Conduct.

European Apprentices Network and work on VET

OBESSU will continue co-sponsoring the European Apprentices Network and being an engaged partner of the European Commission on the work concerning Vocational Education and Training. In this field, OBESSU shall support the EAN in fundraising for a project manager to further work for the creation of an independent EAN.

Projects in which OBESSU is involved

OBESSU is currently involved in several projects, either as a lead applicant or a partner. Some of them include members, candidates and associates directly, others simply foresee a consultation and a free usage of tools. At the time of writing this Implementation Plan, OBESSU is still waiting for a number of results from different applications, however, information on the projects that the OBESSU Secretariat is managing in cooperation with the Board are available here: https://obessu.org/what-we-do/projects/

Among already approved projects, in 2020 OBESSU will be engaged in:

- European Change Makers Academy (ECMA) as a lead partner.
- Brave New You as a partner of Youth for Exchange and Understanding
- Europe@Home: European Civic Education through the mobile as a partner of JEF Europe
- CITIZED as a partner of the International Institute of Humanitarian Law (IIHL)

These projects cover topics like skills for changemakers, participation of disadvantaged people in communities and civic and active citizenship education.

Covid 19 and residential events

In 2021, OBESSU has planned some residential activities. Their implementation, however, will heavily depend on the development of the Covid-19 pandemic and its impacts on travel restrictions. The main concern is personal and collective safety, so activities might shift online. However, for some activities,
a consultation with the membership will be run, to make sure that there is the time and the commitment to attend the events foreseen in digital form.

Provisionally, in the calendar in the appendix, dates are specified for the convenience of the membership. However, these dates are provisional and changes might occur.
Appendix 1 - Calendar of activities

In **BLACK** are all process of OBESSU as an organisation

In **GREEN** are events involving all membership

In **BLUE** are the events in which part of the membership (e.g. selected members through call or partners in projects) are involved

In **RED** are consultations processes.

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<tr>
<th>Education reforms and funding</th>
<th>Learning for the 21st century</th>
<th>Sustainable development</th>
<th>Organisational Capacity and governance</th>
<th>Comments and Covid-19 contingency plan</th>
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<td><strong>Long-term processes/ongoing processes</strong></td>
<td>Covid-19 research</td>
<td>Advocacy on the mutual recognition of study-abroad diploma</td>
<td>Global student forum and cooperation with 100 million campaign</td>
<td>Stronger School Student Unions (job shadowing, field visits, regional study visits and webinars)</td>
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<td>WGV on Education funding and reforms</td>
<td>Informal group on VET</td>
<td>Cooperation and active participation in Generation Climate Europe</td>
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<td>Code of Conduct consultation and shaping</td>
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<td><strong>Taskforce on Covid-19 research</strong></td>
<td>Taskforce on Digitalisation</td>
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<td><strong>January</strong></td>
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<td>Online MOOC launched on advocacy for the environment</td>
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<td>February</td>
<td>Ecofighters Implementation Month</td>
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<td>Climate Advocacy GCE</td>
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<td>Meeting 1 of taskforce on digitalisation (2-7/03/2021)</td>
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<td>ECMA project Ideathon</td>
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<td>May</td>
<td>European Youth Event and YOIFest (28-29/05/2021)</td>
<td>Study session: Pluriverse - oppression-free curricula in schools (17-22/05/2021)</td>
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<td>June</td>
<td>European Youth Climate Summit (GCE)</td>
<td>Training Course for International Officers and General Assembly (13-21/06/2021)</td>
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<td>July</td>
<td>Summer school &quot;Access granted! Ctrl from A to Z&quot; (14-21/07/2021)</td>
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<td>University on Youth and Development - Training course</td>
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<td>October</td>
<td>“Advocacy for education!” (dates tbc)</td>
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<td>Meeting 2 of taskforce on digitalisation (9-12/11/2021)</td>
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<td>ECMA final conference (dates tbc)</td>
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<td>November</td>
<td>17th November campaign</td>
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