

RYTA - Rural Youth Training Activities

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1. Introduction

Welcome to the **RYTA project**, an exciting new endeavor that aims to give rural youth in Europe the tools they need to take an active role in shaping their futures and in democratic life. It's critical to provide young people with the knowledge, tools, and chances necessary to participate actively in their communities and influence decision-making in today's quickly evolving rural settings.

Recent studies have demonstrated the enormous potential that rural youth have to be key players in democratic processes. Still, there is a big difference between young people's goals and their actual civic engagement. By promoting youth engagement and empowerment through a range of focused interventions and activities, the RYTA initiative aims to close this gap.

Our partnership brings together expert organizations in youth development and community engagement from across the broader Mediterranean region. Together, we are dedicated to crafting and executing innovative strategies that empower rural youth to fully engage as active citizens.

Throughout the project's duration, we'll undertake a journey of exploration and action, guided by key objectives: conducting thorough research to understand the needs and challenges of rural youth in participating in democratic processes, establishing an online platform for advocating policies and connecting young people to drive change, developing comprehensive training materials for youth organizations and trainers to effectively engage with youth on sustainability, energy, and democracy, and fostering dialogue between rural youth and decision-makers to ensure their voices are heard in policy development.

Our aim is to empower rural youth as catalysts for change in their communities, promoting inclusivity, solidarity, and cross-border collaboration. By investing in the future leaders of rural areas, we strive to create a more sustainable and democratic society for all.

We encourage you to explore the resources and tools available in this toolkit, designed to assist you in engaging rural youth and promoting democratic participation. Together, let's embark on this journey to unleash the potential of rural youth and foster positive change across Europe and beyond.

2. Aim of the Training Course Toolkit

The Training Course Toolkit aims to be a user-friendly resource tailored for young readers, encompassing the training contents and findings from previous project work packages. Specifically designed to meet the needs of young people, this toolkit provides guidance, tips, and methods to empower them to actively engage with the project's themes, with a special focus on sustainability and energy issues. Through the toolkit, young participants will deepen their understanding of the project's goals and main areas of focus. They will have access to practical tools and resources to improve their knowledge and skills in various areas such as community involvement, democratic participation, and sustainable development. Moreover, by offering the material online in the platform the toolkit ensures accessibility to a broad audience of young people, regardless of their location. Ultimately, the goal is to equip young readers with the necessary tools and knowledge to



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become effective agents of change in their communities, driving positive impacts in sustainability and energy conservation efforts.

3. Exploring Gaps and Crafting Solutions: Insights from Desk and Field Research

This section explores how to identify gaps in youth involvement in rural areas and provide remedies based on desk and field research findings. The significance of rural youth participation in policy advocacy is emphasized, underscoring the necessity of customized strategies. Through training and research programs, the RYTA partnership—which includes Greece, Italy, Tunisia, Jordan, and Lebanon—aims to empower young people living in rural areas. Our research was centered on investigating approaches for reaching out to youth in rural areas. This included creating a plan for the research technique and conducting desktop, focus group, and quantitative research.

The demands and difficulties in rural youth participation are identified with the use of research study results from partner countries. Research reports and data analysis help to clarify the situation of rural adolescents and provide guidance for the creation of policies. In order to give rural youth involvement in policy advocacy a complete framework, RYTA has produced a Best Practices Report and Guidelines. To support policy advocacy initiatives, it compiles creative solutions, successful projects, and lessons discovered in a range of circumstances.

Stakeholder consultations and the incorporation of research findings are integral to the creation and validation of the framework. Through policy advocacy, the framework seeks to meet the various needs and realities of rural adolescents. Monitoring and assessment systems as well as awareness campaigns are among the methods used to spread the guidelines. The goal is to guarantee that the framework for rural youth engagement in policy advocacy is widely adopted and implemented effectively.

In summary, effective tactics for involving rural youth in policy advocacy are shaped by the insights gathered from desk and field research, which in turn leads to more inclusive and participatory decision-making processes.

First, we took a detailed look at the policies, strategies, and initiatives pertaining to youth living in rural Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Jordan, and Tunisia. We study a wide range of government papers, reports from large organizations, academic studies, and summaries of previous research. Our goal was to determine which areas of the Mediterranean could benefit more from our current initiatives for youth assistance in rural areas.

Simultaneously, we conducted interviews with a wide range of individuals who had knowledge of youth in rural areas. We conducted interviews with youth, government employees, community service organizations, young leaders, educators, and experts in agriculture, education, employment, and community development.



We sought to gain a thorough understanding of the experiences, needs, and obstacles faced by young people living in rural areas. We also questioned the administration and those working on these issues about their perceptions of the issues and their current plans for solutions. We learned a lot about many crucial issues that are either absent or ineffective for young people living in rural areas from all these discussions and readings. We discovered several issues, including a lack of nearby employment or educational opportunities, a lack of voice in decisions that impact them, a lack of support to stand up for what they need, and significant obstacles resulting from the conditions in their families and communities.

We reviewed all the available literature and developed recommendations for improving the lives of young people living in rural areas. With the support of our ideas, we believe that young people would feel more empowered, have better access to education and employment possibilities, and be able to contribute to the betterment of their communities.

After conducting extensive research and consultations, we determined that addressing the needs and challenges of rural youth in policy advocacy necessitates a comprehensive approach. Each module plays a distinct role in equipping rural youth with the skills, knowledge, and tools required to effectively engage in policy advocacy and decision-making processes. After conducting extensive research and consultations, we decided that the following modules would be beneficial based on the insights gathered:

Module 1: Active Citizenship

We understood the significance of fostering active citizenship among rural youth, empowering them to play an active role in their communities and advocate for their rights and interests. This module aims to promote civic engagement, encourage community participation, and educate rural youth on becoming informed and involved citizens.

Module 2: Dialogue and Communication

Effective communication and dialogue are essential for bridging the gap between rural youth and policymakers, facilitating meaningful engagement, and fostering mutual understanding. This module provides training in communication skills, negotiation techniques, and conflict resolution strategies, enabling rural youth to articulate their viewpoints, build alliances, and advocate for change effectively.

Module 3: Diversity and Discrimination

Recognizing the diversity within rural communities and addressing issues of discrimination are crucial for promoting inclusivity and social justice. This module explores topics such as gender equality, minority rights, and social inclusion, empowering rural youth to advocate for policies that uphold diversity, equity, and human rights.



Module 4: E-participation Tools

In the digital era, leveraging e-participation tools and online platforms can amplify the impact of rural youth advocacy efforts. This module introduces rural youth to various digital tools, social media platforms, and online campaigning strategies, enabling them to amplify their voices, mobilize support, and engage with policymakers and communities effectively.

Module 5: Participatory Approach

Adopting a participatory approach ensures that rural youth's voices and perspectives are valued throughout the policy-making process. This module emphasizes involving rural youth in all stages of policy development, implementation, and evaluation, fostering ownership, accountability, and sustainable outcomes.

Module 6: Soft Skills

Soft skills such as leadership, teamwork, and problem-solving are essential for empowering rural youth to navigate complex policy environments and drive positive change. This module focuses on developing these essential soft skills to enhance rural youth's effectiveness as advocates, leaders, and agents of change.

Module 7: Sustainability, Climate Changes, and Quality of Life

Addressing environmental sustainability and climate change is critical for rural communities' livelihoods and well-being. This module equips rural youth with the knowledge and tools to advocate for policies that promote environmental conservation, climate resilience, and improved quality of life in rural areas.

Module 8: Vulnerable Groups

Recognizing the unique needs of marginalized groups within rural communities is vital for promoting social justice and inclusive development. This module raises awareness about the challenges faced by vulnerable groups and empowers rural youth to advocate for policies that address these issues and ensure equal opportunities for all.

In summary, these modules were developed based on a thorough analysis of the gaps and challenges in existing policy advocacy efforts for rural youth. Each module serves as a valuable resource for building rural youth's capacity, enhancing their engagement in policy advocacy, and fostering positive change in their communities.



4. Best Practices and Practical Tips for Youth Empowerment

This section explores strategies that work well and useful advice for encouraging young people, especially those who live in rural regions, to get involved in their communities. Given how important young people are in bringing about positive change and advancing sustainable development, it is imperative that we provide them with the tools, resources, and opportunities they need to succeed. We offer a thorough manual on youth empowerment that is suited to the particular requirements and circumstances of rural communities, drawing from programs that have been successful and knowledge obtained from study and fieldwork. These best practices and useful advice aim to inspire and empower young people to become change agents in their communities and beyond, by boosting leadership and entrepreneurship, civic participation, and social inclusion, among other things.

Here's a breakdown of insightful advice and strategies to help you participate meaningfully and make real differences in your communities:

Crafting Impactful Policies:

- Engage in policy hackathons or brainstorming sessions to contribute innovative ideas and shape policies addressing issues important to you.
- Participate in focus group discussions to share your experiences and challenges, helping policymakers understand the perspectives of young individuals like yourself.

Building Robust Youth Networks:

- Attend networking events or conferences to connect with like-minded peers and collaborate on impactful projects.
- Join online platforms or forums to engage with other young activists, exchange ideas, and plan advocacy campaigns conveniently.

Accessing Educational and Training Opportunities:

- Partner with local educational institutions or training centers to attend workshops tailored to your needs and goals.
- Explore scholarships or assistance programs to overcome financial barriers and pursue your educational aspirations.

Becoming an Entrepreneurial Leader:

- Seek guidance from mentorship programs to navigate your entrepreneurial journey and turn your business ideas into reality.



- Showcase your entrepreneurial spirit by participating in competitions or pitch events to secure funding for your ventures.

Navigating the Digital Landscape:

- Attend workshops on digital literacy and online advocacy tools to leverage technology for amplifying your voice and spreading awareness.
- Advocate for improved digital infrastructure in your community to bridge the digital divide and ensure equitable access to online resources.

Finding Guidance and Support:

- Join mentorship programs to benefit from the wisdom and support of experienced mentors.
- Engage in mentorship circles or peer-to-peer learning sessions to exchange experiences and grow together with your peers.

Getting Informed and Spreading Awareness:

- Access informational resources like toolkits or guides designed for young individuals to empower yourself with knowledge.
- Organize events or campaigns to raise awareness about pressing issues and mobilize others to take action.

Creating Youth-Friendly Spaces:

- Advocate for the establishment of community centers or youth hubs where you can collaborate and plan projects with fellow activists.
- Contribute to the development of digital platforms or mobile apps to facilitate virtual interactions and event organization among young individuals.

Leading the Change:

- Apply for grants or funding to initiate your own youth-led projects aimed at addressing local challenges and making a positive impact.
- Participate in training programs or workshops to enhance your leadership and advocacy skills, empowering you to drive meaningful change in your community.

Making Your Voice Heard:

- Participate in town hall meetings, roundtable discussions, or policy forums to directly engage with policymakers and advocate for your ideas and concerns.
- Attend training sessions or workshops to learn effective advocacy techniques and communication strategies, enabling you to become a compelling advocate for change.



Let's now explore the challenges intended to inspire and empower those involved in the **RYTA project**. The challenges are designed to correspond with the training material's theme areas, giving rural youth an engaging opportunity to put their newly acquired knowledge to use. As they explore subjects including conversation and communication, diversity, discrimination, participatory approaches, soft skills, vulnerable groups, and sustainability, participants will work on carefully selected assignments that use e-participation technologies to address difficulties that arise in the real world. In the end, these tasks improve and equip rural youth for active engagement in democratic life by reinforcing the training material and motivating participants to become proactive contributors in their communities.

The challenges that lie ahead of you are as follows:

Active Citizenship:

Get involved in activities that encourage civic engagement and responsibility, like volunteering, community service projects, or advocacy campaigns.

Dialogue and Communication:

Take part in discussions and conversations aimed at promoting understanding, collaboration, and effective communication among different groups.

Diversity and Inclusion:

Create initiatives that celebrate diversity, foster inclusivity, and combat discrimination in your local community.

Participatory Approaches:

Lead projects or activities that involve community members in decision-making processes and empower them to shape their own destinies.

Soft Skills Development:

Improve your soft skills, such as leadership, teamwork, problem-solving, and critical thinking, through practical projects and collaborative tasks.

Supporting Vulnerable Groups:

Develop programs or initiatives to assist marginalized or vulnerable groups in your community, ensuring their voices are heard and their needs are met.

Sustainability Initiatives:

Launch projects focused on environmental conservation, sustainable development, and climate action to build a more environmentally friendly and resilient community.



These challenges offer you the chance to not only demonstrate your knowledge and abilities but also to create real change in your community. The challenges cover a wide range of topics, from encouraging sustainability projects to aiding vulnerable populations and encouraging active citizenship.

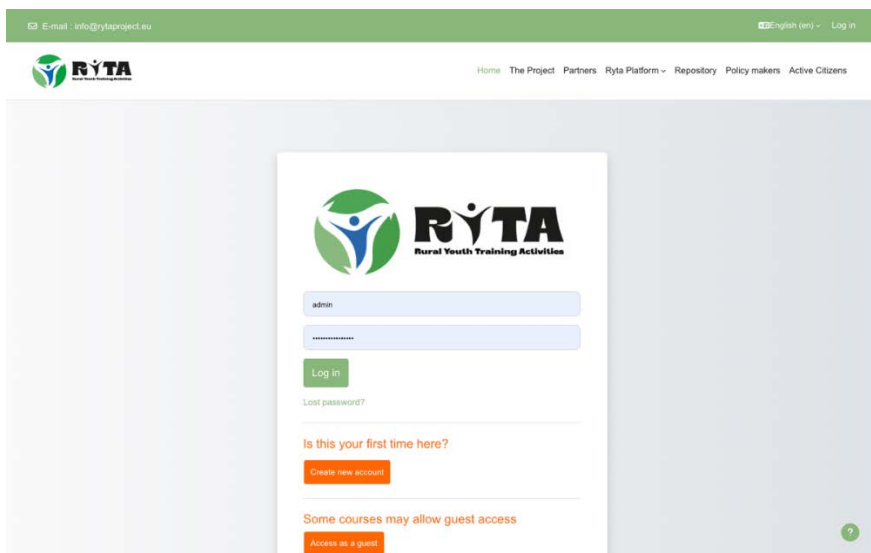
5. Navigating the RYTA Online Project Platform

To help you navigate the site and get the most out of your experience, this section provides a thorough introduction to all its features.

The RYTA platform serves as a virtual space where policymakers and engaged citizens from rural areas across five participating countries (Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Jordan, and Tunisia) can get together. Accessible via the URL <https://platform.rytaspace.eu/>, the platform offers training courses available in **four languages** (English, Arabic, Greek, and Italian) through the Moodle e-learning platform. Moodle is an open-source LMS (Learning Management System) used worldwide for blended learning, distance education, flipped classroom and other online learning projects in schools, universities, workplaces, and other sectors.

How do I log in?

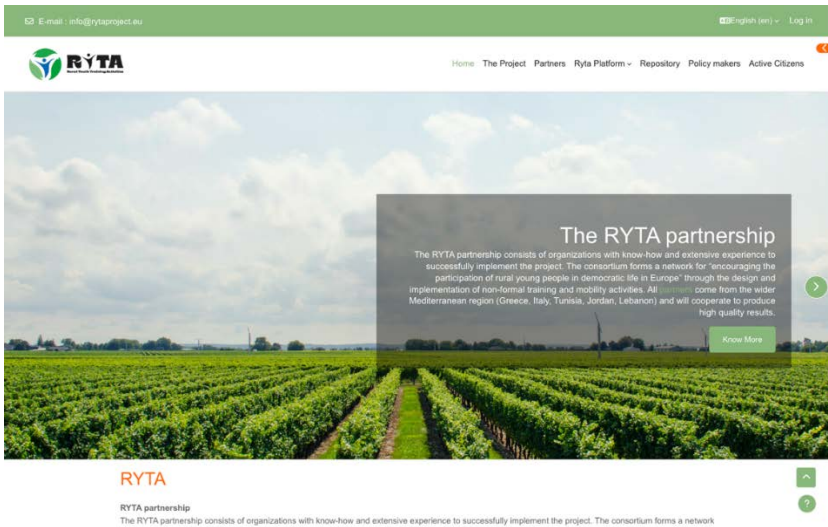
The RYTA Platform access mechanism regulates user and password login for management and course participation.



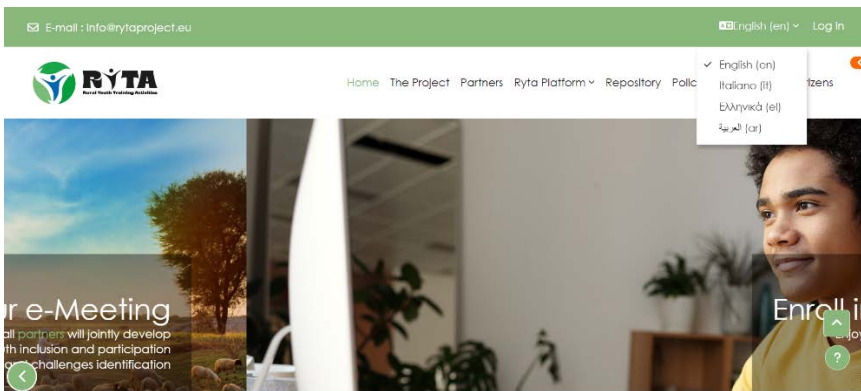
Login page



The RYTA platform offers language support in four languages: English, Hellenic, Italian, and Arabic. Users can navigate the platform in their preferred language, ensuring accessibility and inclusivity for all participants.



English home page



Home page

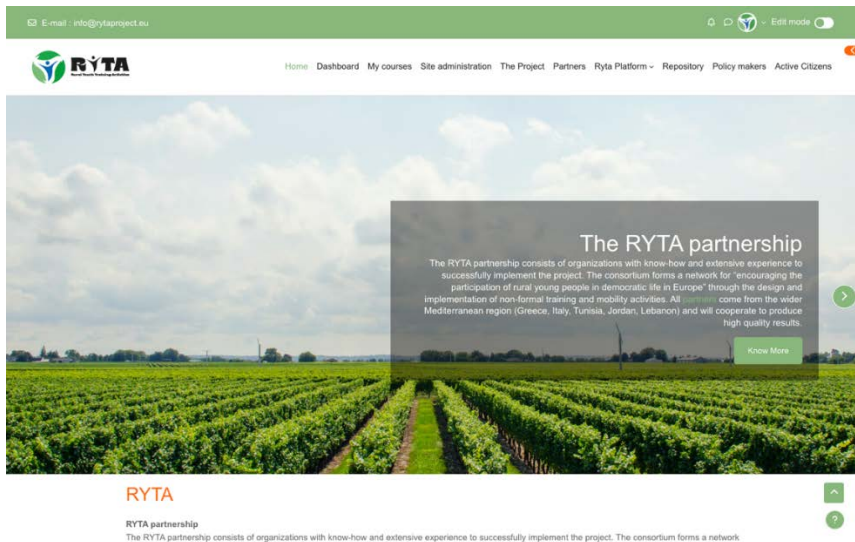
On the home page we find:

- a menu in the header at the top
- a slider, configurable from the site administration section, which contains a photo, a short description and a link referring to a specific resource/page of the platform (i.e. The RYTA Platform explanation, the invitation to participate in e-meetings or enrol the Courses, etc.)
- the list of the courses available in 4 languages



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The RYTA partnership

Modules

You'll find a diverse range of modules carefully curated by the project consortium to empower rural youth and active citizens across our participating countries. These modules cover essential topics aimed at enhancing your knowledge, skills, and engagement in various aspects of community development and democratic participation.

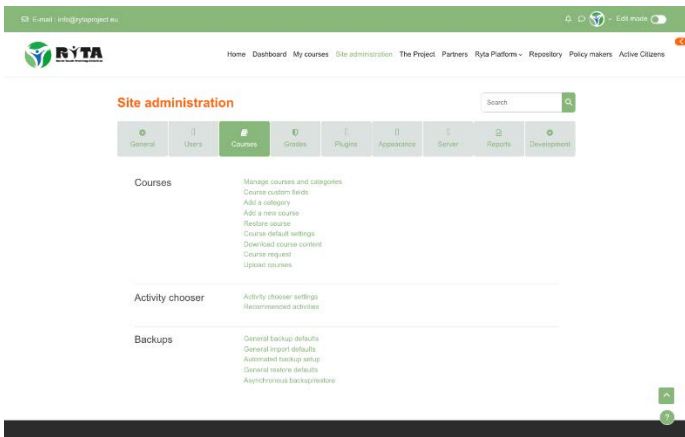
Available Courses:

1. Active Citizenship
2. Dialogue and Communication
3. Diversity and Discrimination
4. E-participation Tools
5. Participatory Approach
6. Soft Skills Development
7. Sustainability, Climate Change, and Quality of Life
8. Soft Skills Development
9. Vulnerable/Disadvantaged Groups

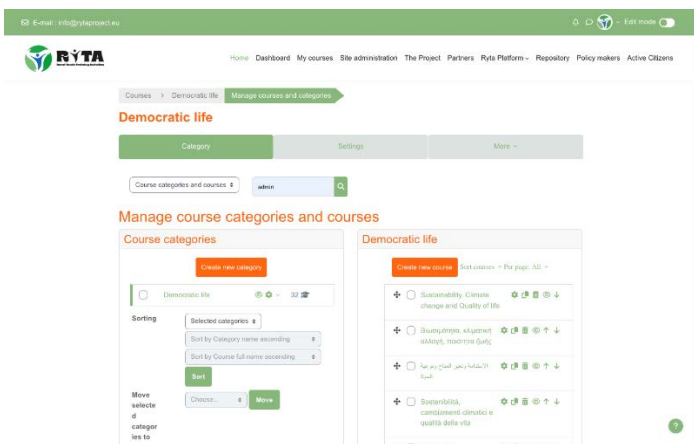


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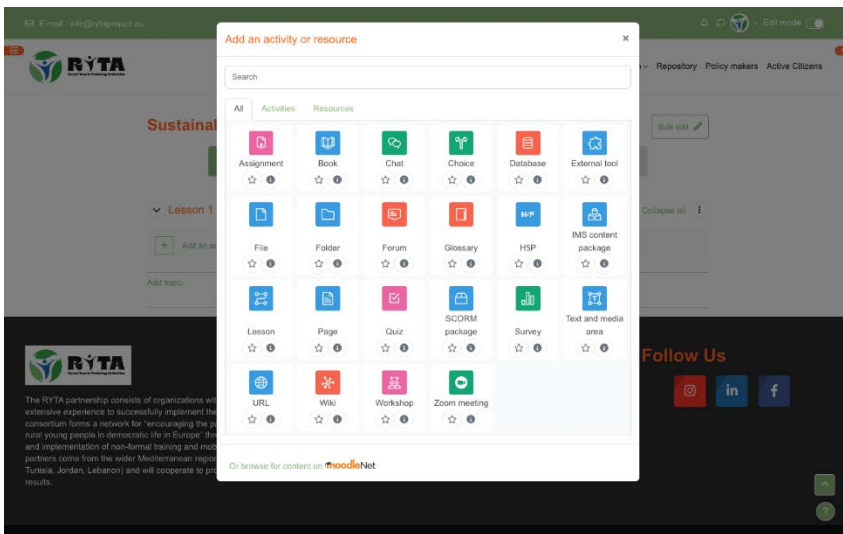


Courses administration



Courses administration

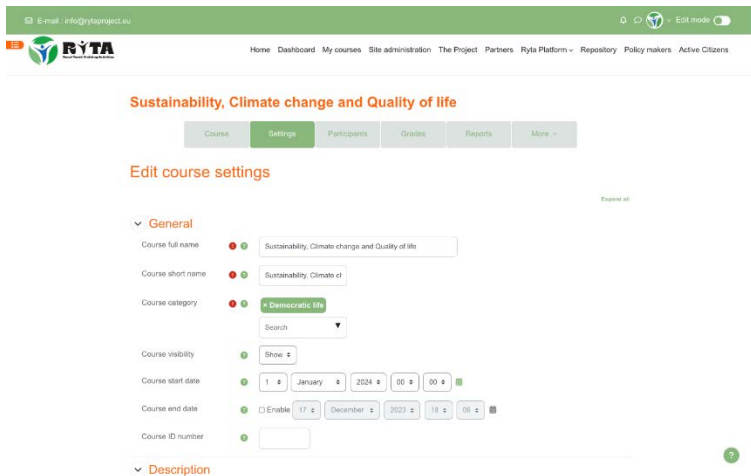
Each course offers a wealth of learning materials, including text resources, PowerPoint presentations, videos, audios, and more. You'll have access to comprehensive teaching resources designed to deepen your understanding of the topic and quizzes to assess your learning progress.



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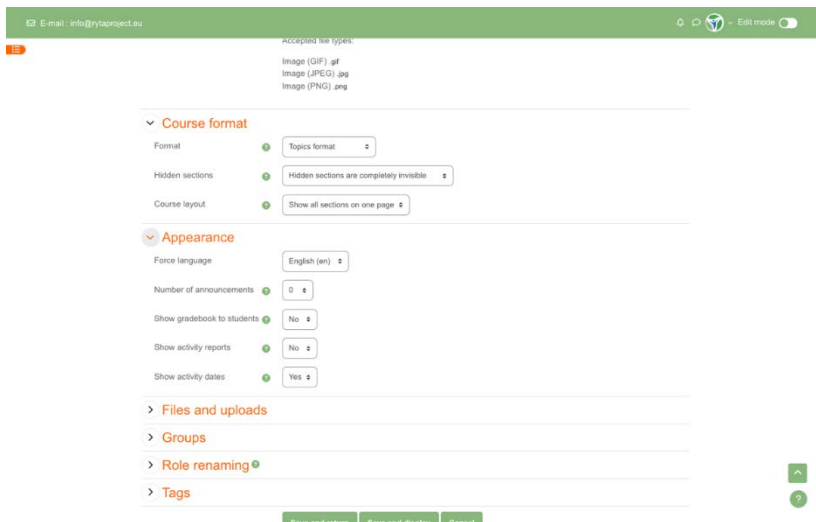
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Add an activity or a resource to a Course



The screenshot shows the 'Edit course settings' page in the RYTA platform. The course title is 'Sustainability, Climate change and Quality of life'. Under the 'General' section, the course full name, short name, and category are set. The course is visible and starts on January 1, 2024. Under the 'Description' section, there is a text area for the course description.

Course settings



The screenshot shows the 'Course format' and 'Appearance' sections of the course settings. Under 'Course format', the format is set to 'Topics format', hidden sections are 'completely invisible', and the layout shows 'all sections on one page'. Under 'Appearance', the force language is 'English (en)', and the number of announcements is 0. Other options for showing gradebooks, activity reports, and activity dates are also visible.

Course settings

You just need to pick a course from the list to get started on your learning adventure. After selecting a course, you will have access to its materials and learning resources, enabling you to study and interact with the information at your own speed.

All users of the project platform can participate in asynchronous conversations, or dialogues that develop gradually, in a dedicated forum section. Users can select from a variety of forum styles in this section based on what best fits their needs: question-and-answer forums for structured interaction, conventional forums for open debates, and single-post forums for individual contributions.

Uses of Forums:

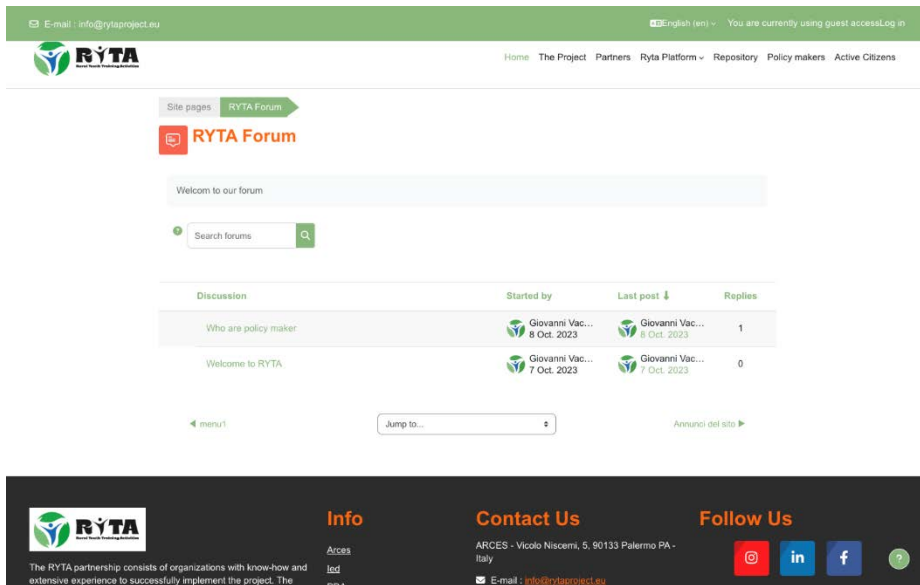


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- Connect with fellow RYTA users and build relationships in a relaxed environment.
- Stay updated on course-related news and announcements through designated forums.
- Engage in discussions about course content, readings, and assignments.
- Extend conversations from face-to-face sessions into the online realm.
- Facilitate one-on-one communication between citizens and policymakers in dedicated forum groups.

On the RYTA platform, forums are adaptable areas for interaction, cooperation, and support that improve learning and participation in general.



The screenshot shows the RYTA Forum website. At the top, there is a green navigation bar with the RYTA logo and contact information. Below this, a white header contains the RYTA Forum title and a search bar. The main content area displays a list of forum discussions with columns for 'Discussion', 'Started by', 'Last post', and 'Replies'. Two discussions are visible: 'Who are policy maker' and 'Welcome to RYTA'. The footer contains contact information, social media links, and a 'Follow Us' section.

Discussion	Started by	Last post	Replies
Who are policy maker	Giovanni Vac... 8 Oct. 2023	Giovanni Vac... 8 Oct. 2023	1
Welcome to RYTA	Giovanni Vac... 7 Oct. 2023	Giovanni Vac... 7 Oct. 2023	0

Forum settings



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6. Conclusion

As we come to the end of the Rural Youth Empowerment Training Course Toolkit, we find ourselves equipped with a roadmap for meaningful engagement and impactful community action. Delving into the gaps, unveiling solutions, and exchanging best practices, we've armed ourselves with the necessary tools to embark on our journey toward empowerment. Amidst the diverse terrain of youth empowerment, let's recognize the potent force within our voices, capable of sculpting the future we aspire to see.

With the RYTA Online Project Platform at our fingertips, we enter a rich in content with resources, courses, and forums fostering collaboration, learning, and unified action. As we stand on the edge of change, let's embrace the forthcoming challenges with resolve, fortitude, and a collective dedication to effecting positive transformation. Together, let's amplify our voices, kindle our passions, and forge pathways toward a future that is inclusive, sustainable, and empowered for all.

