

## **A recipe for an engaged academic community? We've got some hints and ready-to-use tools! | Results of the international UNICOMM Project**

Over 150 hours of workshops, nearly 800 participants involved in project activities, and more than 20 free materials to read, listen to, and watch! These are just some of the results of the **UNICOMM – University Community Active Participation Project**, carried out since 2022 by a consortium consisting of the University of Warsaw, the European Students' Union, Palacký University Olomouc, and the University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria.

**Now we invite you to explore our publications, infographics, podcasts, and videos – all containing ready-made tools and practical tips for building engaged academic communities where everyone feels heard, seen, and valued.**

The idea behind the UNICOMM project is based on the belief the potential of higher education institution extends beyond research and education and includes a strong community focus. It's also a space where everyone should have the opportunity to get involved in initiatives that matter to them. The main motivation for undertaking this project was the willingness to strengthen students' sense of agency and belonging within their university community. However, we also understood that to achieve this, it would be necessary to provide tools and enhance the competencies of university staff. Therefore, the project's goals included:

- identifying the factors that foster inclusive and active participation of students in extracurricular university activities;
- developing competencies that enable both students and staff to active engagement in academic community life;
- creating guidelines for higher education institutions across Europe on how to support student participation.

By pursuing these goals, the UNICOMM project aimed to redefine the meaning of the academic community in the context of everyday challenges. The project results allow for the introduction of reliable, yet flexible solutions that support the development of a sense of belonging and agency among students and employees of higher education institutions. This is especially important in today's dynamic and challenging times, which demonstrate just how vital solidarity and social responsibility truly are.

### **Project results**

The results of the UNICOMM project are primarily intended for university staff and student organisations. However, they may also prove valuable for institutions and non-governmental organisations working with students and young people. All materials are freely available online under the Creative Commons BY-NC-SA 4.0 licence.

We made it a priority to reach a broad and diverse audience who often share one common challenge: lack of time. For this reason, among our resources you'll find toolkits, infographics, podcasts, and videos – all designed to present information in a clear and accessible format.

- The report [“University as community: students’ perceptions of participation, engagement and belonging at European higher education institutions”](#) presents the results of a survey conducted among 465 students from more than 20 European countries.
- [“UNICOMM HintBook: Building Stronger Communities in Higher Education. Tools and Ideas for Navigating Student Engagement in a Changing World”](#) provides a summary of the project and includes 10 practical hits based on project activities and the insights gathered over nearly three years.
- [“Come for Cookies. Stay for Community.” A Toolbox for Community Building, Facilitating Participation, and Enhancing Belonging for Higher Education Communities](#) is a collection of insights, recommendations, and scenarios created from a series of workshops held in Poland, the Czech Republic, Austria, and Belgium.
- The podcast [The Student Voice](#) complements the Toolbox. In it, engaged students share their experiences and ideas for building active communities. It’s a chance to learn how young people from various countries are organising and what challenges they face.
- [The infographics](#) for university staff and the podcast [Voice of the employees](#) are the result of sharing diverse experiences among professionals supporting student engagement at European HEI. They contain valuable tips on fostering student involvement, acquiring useful skills and competencies, and taking care of personal wellbeing.
- [Video tutorials](#) – During the Summer Academy on Student Participation, students and staff from European HEI co-created a set of four video tutorials presenting important topics in student projects. These cover topics such as cultural diversity, working students' engagement, motivations, and creating safer spaces for participation.

**We encourage you to share the outcomes of the UNICOMM project with your institution’s or organisation’s community.**

**We’re happy to answer any further questions and provide more details about the project:**  
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**Visit our website and Instagram profile:**

[wolontariat.uw.edu.pl/unicomm](http://wolontariat.uw.edu.pl/unicomm)

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