

Presenter: Lolita COUCHENE, Nausicaa



WHY EMPOWER NEXT GENERATIONS ?

1. Ocean literacy gap

Lack of awareness of the ocean’s role in climate regulation, biodiversity, human well-being

Limited exposure to marine science & policy fields: marine biology, oceanography, international governance

2. Youth participation in governance

Youth feel excluded from decision-making processes

Influence perceived as minimal beyond local levels

Uncertainty about how to engage with policymakers and institutions

3. Advocacy and leadership skills

Need for training in: communication, project management, coalition building

Limited familiarity with key policy frameworks: UNFCCC, CBD, UNCLOS, High Seas Treaty, SDGs, EU Green Deal

4. Transnational ocean issues

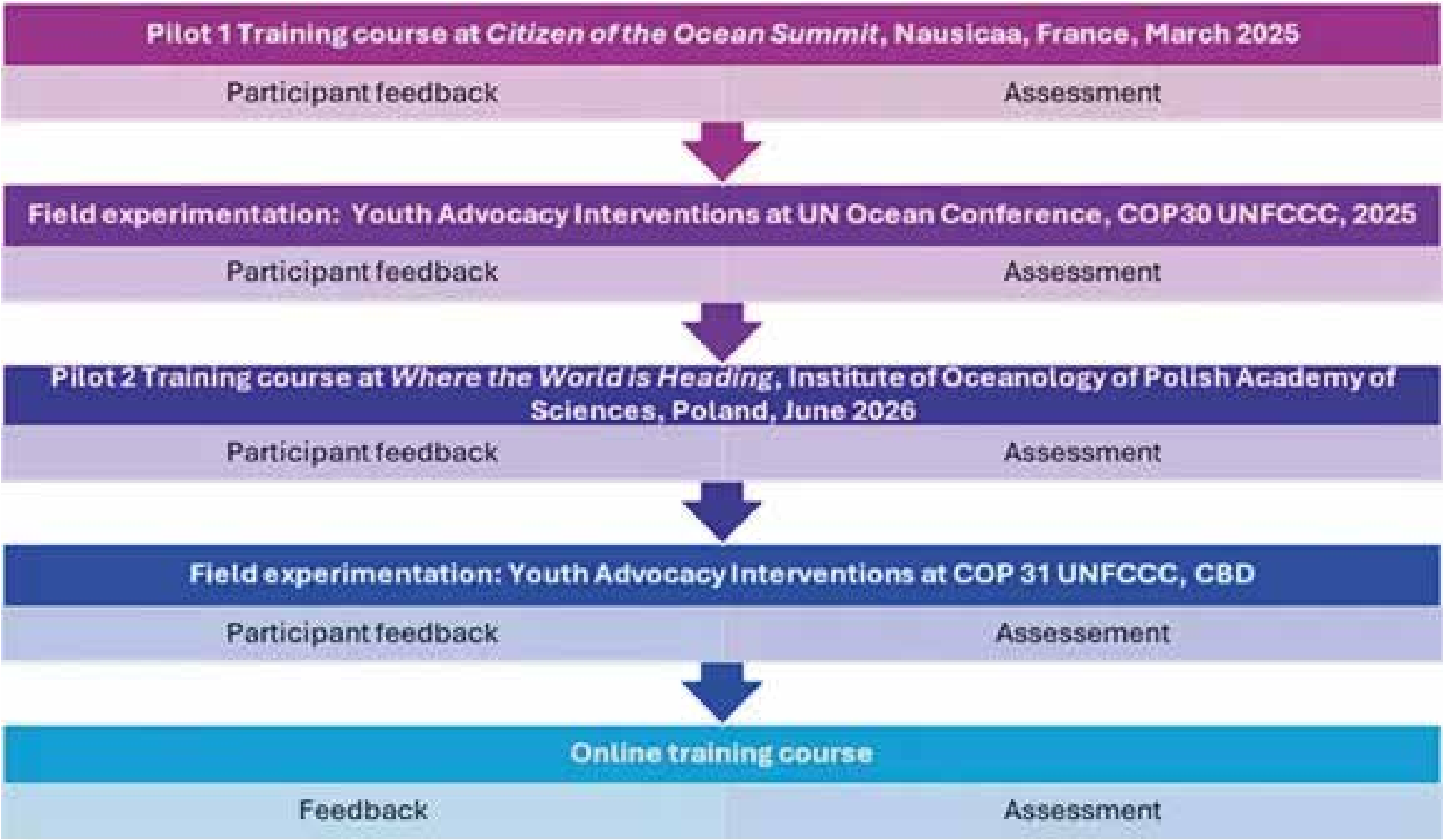
Ocean challenges require cross-border cooperation

Engagement in global forums: UN COPs, UN Ocean Conferences, EU marine platforms

Youth Ocean Advocacy and Leadership (YOLA)

project aims to equip young people with the knowledge, skills, and networks to drive ocean conservation, climate action, and sustainable development—locally and globally.

METHODOLOGY



Blue Survey

Ocean Literacy Baseline Assessment Purpose: To evaluate participants' knowledge and attitudes about ocean-related topics before the training.

Method: Online survey conducted the week prior to the onsite event.

Framework: Based on the Blue Survey (Paredes et al., 2022).

Survey Structure

Total Questions: 34

17 Multiple choice – Ocean knowledge

5 Ranking – Personal interest in ocean topics

9 Ranking – Attitudes toward ocean sustainability

3 Ranking – Views on ocean use

Ocean-friendly behavior – Lifestyle and habits

 Participation : 33 respondents

Pilot 1 Training course, 25-28 March 2025

Duration: 3.5 days of immersive learning and collaboration

Participants: 53 individuals 18-30 y.o. from 27 countries; selected from 300 participants in online workshops on 6 continents

A world map with countries colored in teal and light gray. Teal countries include: United States, Canada (Alaska), Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, Hungary, Switzerland, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Israel, Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Timor-Leste, East Timor, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji, Tonga, Samoa, Tokelau, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Nauru, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, and New Zealand. Light gray countries include: Russia, China, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Timor-Leste, East Timor, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji, Tonga, Samoa, Tokelau, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Nauru, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, and New Zealand.

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Training Modules

M1 Introduction to Ocean Literacy

M2 Ocean advocacy landscape: understanding power structures and decision making processes

M3 Research and evidence gathering. Turning data into a story. Developping a compelling campaign

M4 Writing Citizen of the Ocean Youth Manifesto. Part 1 & 2

M5 Networking and coalition building: Importance of partnerships in advocacy

M6 Engaging media and social networks: writing press releases and using social media for advocacy. Simulated media interviews.

M7 Voices of the Ocean. Pitch presentations and peer review.

Charting the Course: Young Advocates, Global Leaders. Panel discussion. Presentation of the Citizen of the Ocean Manifesto.

PILOT 1 RESULTS

Blue Survey key insights

A. Ocean awareness and sustainability

Theme	Important	Moderate	Mixed
Knowledge level	Ocean’s role in climate regulation Oxygen production Marine habitats		Sea level rise River transport to oceans Industrial & marine energy impacts
Interest areas	Ocean science & maritime careers	Marine energy & ocean aesthetics	Recreational use of the ocean
Economic Use of the Ocean	General support for economic use	Mixed views on stopping such use	Neutral stance on sustainability compatibility
Environmental Behaviour	High commitment to eco-friendly habits Frequent use of sustainable products	Conscious energy & water use	Low levels of neglect in environmental practices

Pilot 1 Training Course

	Training Content & Learning Objectives	Delivery & Interaction	Learning Impact
Strengths	Content was insightful, relevant, and well-prepared Speakers and case studies were engaging and practical Real-world application of skills appreciated	Facilitators were knowledgeable, kind, and inclusive Interactive sessions enhanced learning Active listening and communication praised	New skills gained in media, interviews, and coalition building Increased confidence in applying advocacy skills Useful Practical tools & templates Personal growth & motivation for ocean advocacy
Areas for Improvement	Learning objectives and instructions lacked clarity Sessions felt rushed and somewhat unorganized	Limited time for questions and deeper discussions Imbalance in participation during Q&A	Need for more actionable guidance in specific areas Limited time restricted deeper reflection

B.Sustainability attitudes

- Strong sense of personal responsibility
- Broad concern over human-caused ocean damage
- Ocean health seen as vital for human survival
- Shared responsibility: citizens & industries
- Sustainability prioritized over economic growth

FIELD EXPERIMENTATION 1 RESULTS

41 interventions in **12 side events** Endorsement of the Citizen of the Ocean Manifesto by 44 organisations (**1,6 million young people**)

Facilitation of the *Takeover of the Whale* side event with the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Handover of the Manifesto to **Peter Thomson**, UN Special Envoy for the Ocean, **Agnès Pannier-Runacher**, French Minister for Ecological Transition and Ana Elena Pinto Lizano, Ambassador of Costa Rica to France.

Manifesto included in the Nice Commitments for the Ocean official report of the French government

Participant feedback and assessment

- Gained key knowledge on ocean governance and advocacy tools
- Learned practical tips for impactful speeches and interviews
- Benefited from a supportive space to connect, exchange & build confidence

Biggest challenges

- Navigating the complexity of a large international conference
- Ensuring youth voices were heard in key spaces
- Overcoming doubts about legitimacy as young advocates

Lessons learned

- Advocacy needs preparation, strategy & alliances
- Networking & intergenerational dialogue are essential for inclusive solutions
- Every voice can drive change when united for the ocean

Advice to future Young Ocean Advocates

- Trust the value of your voice — it matters
- Be well-prepared & informed
- Build connections & collaborations
- Speak with courage & authenticity, even without all the answers

HAVE 1 MINUTE? HELP US SHAPE IMPACTFUL YOUTH TRAINING!



Citizen of the Ocean Manifesto Keywords





Support the Citizen
of the Ocean
Manifesto



CONSORTIUM & PARTNERS

YOLA Consortium



Partners



AUTHOR INFORMATION

Iwona GIN, Nausicaa

Iwona Gin is Head of International Relations at Nausicaá – National Sea Experience Centre in France. She holds Master’s degrees in Business Management, International Relations, Intercultural Cooperation, and Applied Linguistics.

Iwona has led numerous EU-funded marine science communication projects (Horizon Europe, Horizon 2020, Erasmus+, Interreg, EMFF), focusing on ocean literacy, youth engagement, and sustainable ocean use. She coordinates European partnerships, the Youth4Ocean Forum, and international events such as the Blue Planet Forum. She also sits on the boards of the World Ocean Network and EurOcean. Her expertise centres on stakeholder engagement and public empowerment to drive behavioural change for ocean sustainability.

Guillaume LHEUREUX, Nausicaa

Guillaume Lheureux holds a Master’s degree in Economics and Sociology, with a strong interest in social justice and democratic innovation. Since 2012, he has been involved in Mobilisation and Mutual Learning projects within Nausicaá’s International Cooperation Unit. He has served as a facilitator of the Youth4Ocean Forum since its creation in 2020, co-founded the Coalition of Emerging Ocean Leaders – the largest alliance of youth networks engaged in ocean action – and currently coordinates the YOLA (Youth Ocean Leadership and Advocacy) Erasmus+ project, which empowers young people (18–30) with advocacy skills to advance ocean conservation and climate policy.

Claudia DELGADO, Ghent University

Marine Training Unit coordination, specifically supporting customised training in the framework of several EU-funded projects, with special relevance to EMBRC training-related activities.

Training does not end when one graduates; on the opposite, it's a continuous, lifelong process. In the digital era, we should move beyond traditional classroom contexts and harness the potential of digital tools to promote and facilitate this continuous learning process, including on the job and specialized and advanced training, reaching out to wider audiences who cannot access training otherwise. Her research interests: Use of digital tools to facilitate the learning process in Marine Sciences, Lifelong learning, ...

Lolita COUCHENE, Nausicaa

As a young expert in advocacy and environmental diplomacy, Lolita combines a legal background with practical experience in international negotiations to promote ambitious environmental policies.

Her work with the United Nations Environment Programme in New York enabled her to follow closely the negotiations of the Pact for the Future and its two annexes: the Declaration for Future Generations and the Global Digital Compact. She also took part in major international events such as the Summit for the Future and the High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development. Her involvement with World's Youth for Climate Justice has enabled her to defend transgenerational justice, notably through a campaign before the International Court of Justice. Lolita has also developed skills in strategic advocacy and communication, with publications in Le Monde and appearances at COP28 and the European Parliament. In her thesis, she studies the right to peace from a transgenerational perspective, integrating climate issues and human rights. This work reflects her conviction that environmental justice is a cornerstone of world peace. Lolita is determined to contribute to ambitious projects to build a sustainable future for present and future generations.

Contact us

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