

D4.1 Report: Development of the READY Online Community Platform

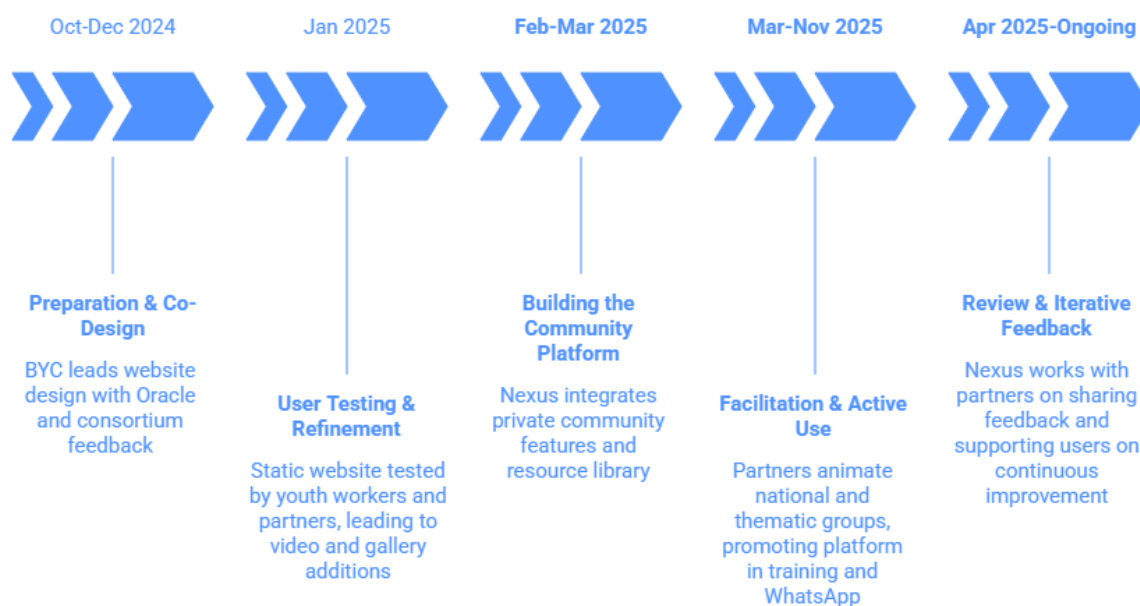
Executive Summary

This report details the collaborative process undertaken by the READY project consortium to develop a shared, trilingual online community platform. The platform serves as the central digital hub for the READY Community of Practice, designed to sustain peer learning, resource sharing, and professional networking beyond the project's lifetime. The development was characterised by a co-creative, capacity-building approach, leveraging both professional technical support and the direct involvement of youth work partners and end-users. The process successfully resulted in a fully functional website (www.readyproject.eu) with integrated community forums, member registration, and youth worker resources (with user guides in English, Swedish, and Slovenian), launched on schedule in March 2025.

Methodology: A Partnership-Based, User-Centred Approach

The development followed a five-phase iterative model, ensuring the platform was not a top-down technical deliverable but a partnership-owned tool shaped by its future users. The figure below presents the five-phase plan for the development, testing and roll out of the site and platform.

READY Project Website and Community Platform Development Timeline



Phase 1: Preparation and Co-Design (Oct-Dec 2024)

Lead: Belvedere Youth Club (BYC), supported by Nexus.

Process: BYC, as lead partner, initiated the process by engaging Oracle Ireland's Corporate Citizenship team to provide pro-bono expertise in online capacity building and user-centric web design. This partnership was crucial in bridging the gap between youth work needs and technical possibilities. A series of virtual workshops were held involving:

Tech Volunteers: Provided training on platform selection criteria, user experience (UX) principles, and content management systems (CMS), specifically focusing on Wix for its balance of flexibility and ease of use for non-technical partners.

BYC Youth Work and Admin Team: Actively participated in the Wix training, moving from passive recipients to active co-creators. They took the lead on drafting the site architecture and initial content.

All Consortium Partners (Young Souls, Ad Astra, Törnströmska, Nexus): Provided iterative feedback on design mock-ups, navigation structure, and branding via shared documents and monthly WP4 meetings. The consortium collectively decided on the visual identity, with BYC youth workers contributing to the logo design concept, which was then professionally refined.

Outcome: A fully designed, static project website (www.readyproject.eu) was created. This site acts as the public-facing introduction to the READY project, containing information about the partnership team, project objectives, and resources, forming the foundation for the community space.

Phase 2: User Testing and Refinement (Jan 2025)

Lead: BYC with Oracle support.

Process: Before adding member functionality, the static website was subjected to user testing. Oracle volunteers trained the BYC team on basic usability testing protocols. A test group consisting of BYC youth workers and representatives from other partner organisations was asked to complete specific tasks (e.g., "find information about restorative practice," "locate contact details").

Key Feedback and Implementation: Testers requested more dynamic and engaging content. In response, the team agreed to explore opportunities for new features such as a dedicated "Gallery" section for photos and videos from partner activities. A further proposal was linked to ensuring that text heavy sections would be made more concise and visually broken up with icons and graphics. These suggestions were acted on, through allowing for members to simply add media when posting in their groups. The site was also updated with more accessible language.

This phase ensured the public site was engaging and accessible for its target audiences: youth workers, young people, and stakeholders.

Phase 3: Building the Community Platform (Feb-Mar 2025)

Lead: Nexus Europe (technical lead), with all partners.

Process: This phase involved activating the members "Community" section of the Wix site. A crucial partnership discussion was held to define the platform's social architecture:

Registration and Access: It was unanimously decided that a simple registration process (name, email, organisation, country) was necessary to create a safe, confidential space for practitioners to share challenges and case studies openly.

Group Structure: Reflecting the project's transnational yet localised nature, the platform was structured with:

Country-Specific Groups: Private forums for discussion in English (Ireland), Swedish (Sweden), and Slovenian (Slovenia).

Thematic Groups: The possibility to create open forums on topics such as "Restorative Practice in Action," "Yoga and Mindfulness Tools," and "Working with Harder-to-Reach Youth."

Resource Library: A central repository where partners could upload tools and resources, such as the READY Toolkit (in all three languages), training slides, session plans, instructional videos on yoga sequences, and guides for restorative circles.

Outcome: A secure, multi-layered community platform integrated into the main READY website. All participants from the WP3 national pilot training were manually invited via email to join upon its launch. The resource library was created as a separate page within the website, where the admin team could add new tools as they were developed. This approach ensured that all users (whether members or not) could access these resource.

Phase 4: Facilitation and Active Use (Mar-Nov 2025)

Lead: All partners as community animators.

Process: To ensure the platform moved beyond a static repository to a lively community, a facilitated engagement strategy was implemented:

Training Integration: Platform registration steps were embedded into the WP3 training courses (A4.3). This created immediate utility, further feedback for the READY team and the emergence of an online community in each country..

Partner-Led Facilitation: Each partner took ownership of animating their national language group (BYC for English, Young Souls for Swedish, Ad Astra for Slovenian). Each partner aimed to promote regular posts within their groups, as well as sharing local case studies, and responding to member queries and posts.

Multi-Channel Promotion: The platform was consistently promoted in face-to-face training sessions and through the READY WhatsApp groups for each national cohort. Trainers would say, "Remember to share your experience with that activity on the READY platform!" creating a direct link between practice and online reflection. The youtube channel was also promoted as a means of creating further engagement.

Phase 5: Review and Iterative Feedback Loops (Ongoing from Apr 2025)

Lead: Nexus with partner feedback.

Process: Continuous improvement was built into the model.

Ongoing Review: Nexus provided updates to partner meetings on platform related issues, including new registrations, posts and resource uploads.

Partner Feedback: During these consortium meetings, partners shared challenges (e.g., "The Swedish group is quiet this month") and successes (e.g., "A member in Slovenia posted a great adaptation of the breathing exercise").

User Feedback: Feedback was gathered by the partners from the users during face-to-face sessions as well as by email, WhatsApp and through the online groups. This direct user engagement led to new ideas and features, such as new banners and tips being added on the homepage.

Outcomes and Outputs

A Fully Functional Platform: www.readyproject.eu with public-facing project information and a private, members-only community zone, all three project languages supported.

Sustainable Ownership: Capacity was built within the BYC team and all partners to manage, moderate, and update the platform without ongoing external technical support.

Active Community Foundation: By the end of the project, the platform hosted over 80 active registered members across the three partner countries and beyond, with consistent peer-to-peer interaction.

Integrated Resource Hub: The platform hosts the final READY Toolkit and additional practitioner-generated resources (videos, lesson plans, case studies).

Conclusion

The development of the READY online space stands as a testament to effective transnational cooperation. By combining professional pro-bono expertise (Oracle) with deep youth work insight (all partners) and a structured, user-centred design process, the consortium successfully co-created more than a website. We built a dynamic, sustainable digital ecosystem that embodies the project's core principles of readiness, collaboration, and peer support.

The platform supports an active READY Community of Practice, and ensures the project's methodologies and connections continue to evolve and are available to all as the funding period ends.