

Swedish Institute Academy for Young Professionals

Change and Negotiation for Democratic Integration (CANDI)



<https://www.hhs.se/en/research/departments/dmo/education/sayp/>

CANDI is part of the Swedish Institute Academy for Young Professionals (SAYP), a training programme developed to build awareness, capacity and resilience in the practice of democratic governance for EU integration. Are you a young professional in one of the selected countries and want to connect with like-minded peers? This is the programme for you. The programme is led by researchers and teachers from Stockholm School of Economics. It is developed to build and strengthen participants' competence and efficacy to contribute to change in the organisations they work for. In sum, this program offers a transformative learning experience for young policymakers from diverse backgrounds in the Eastern Partnership.

Background

In their reform work, the young democracies in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) are grappling with the challenge of aligning public sectors, civil societies, and private enterprises with EU values, governance principles, and economic frameworks.

For countries approaching the EU, a key challenge is ensuring that reforms meet EU standards, particularly in rule of law, equality, and environmental protection. Yet an arguably more formidable challenge is translating these formal reforms into sustainable change. Studies show that ~70% of organizational change efforts fail to meet their intended goals.

These failures often stem from two connected issues. First is a fragmented approach to change—emphasizing either diagnosis, solution design, or implementation at the expense of the others. Sustainable change demands a holistic process. Second, the way change is often executed: hierarchically, with centralised decision-making.

In contrast, a democratic approach to change often holds greater potential to be transformative. Key here is involving the stakeholders in all phases of change. An integral tool in this approach is value-creating negotiation, which, when used appropriately, manages conflict and supports collective decision-making that is aligned with EU ideals like broad participation, transparency, and the rule of law. This program equips young leaders with the skills and frameworks to lead democratic, inclusive change that delivers real results. By means of practicing democratic processes and negotiation strategies, it aims to contribute to democratic governance from within the work process itself.

Purpose of the Program

The program's goal is to empower young leaders in EaP countries to lead changes that reflect EU values, governance standards, and economic models.

The program is grounded in the Stockholm School of Economics' (SSE) proven methodology, ChangeLive, which has a 90% success rate across over 1,000 projects. ChangeLive links leadership development with actual change-making, encouraging participants to apply what they learn while also learning from each other. This shifts participants from passive recipients to active creators of change. Uniquely, the program draws on negotiation as a key democratic practice that is uniquely powerful to enable sustainable change.

Target Group

The program is designed for professionals aged 25–40 from EaP countries^[1] who want to lead impactful change within their organizations. Participants should come from diverse backgrounds: public administration, civil society, business, and government - but all should value participative problem-solving and seek to align their work with EU governance ideals. In addition, you will have to possess the mandate, ambition and potential to drive change within your organization and country.

Besides the class sessions, participants will work in small, supervised coaching groups of three to four teams. This group format will provide opportunities to apply new models in practice and engage in peer-to-peer learning across countries and organizations.

Strong English proficiency (spoken and written) is required to ensure participants can fully engage and contribute to the program.

This program is for those who see democracy not just as a belief, but as daily practice—something you do, continuously, to improve institutions and society.

About the Stockholm School of Economics

The Stockholm School of Economics (SSE) is a global leader in leadership development that combines academic excellence with hands-on, practical learning.

Central to SSE's educational philosophy is the **FREE framework**, which defines the values its programs promote:

- **Fact and science-based mindset** – Cultivating evidence-based reasoning to navigate today's complex, data-rich environments.
- **Reflective and self-aware** – Encouraging leaders to examine their assumptions, understand their motivations, and consider the impact of their decisions.
- **Empathetic and culturally literate** – Teaching the importance of understanding diverse perspectives and building relationships across cultural and organizational boundaries.
- **Entrepreneurial and responsible** – Emphasizing innovation that's paired with long-term responsibility and sustainability.

Program Structure

The program consists of four parts.

1. Part one is an online module of onboarding to the program.
2. Thereafter, there is an intensive six-day-long, on-site module in Stockholm, where participants engage in faculty-led sessions on change and negotiation, pitch their change projects in an idea bazaar, and form cross-functional teams. Peer-to-peer collaboration is central to the experience.
3. Following this, participants engage in 3-4 structured online coaching sessions focused on developing their change initiatives.
4. In the final online module, participants present their outcomes, reflect on key lessons, and solidify their new social networks.

A preliminary schedule of the modules is as follows:

Online introduction: TBC (May 2026)

Main programme in Stockholm: June 8-13, **2026**

Online coaching sessions: TBC (July 2026 forward)

Online final presentations and wrap-up: TBC (Late 2026)

Participation in the program is free of charge; meals, accommodation (possibly in rooms shared by two people), and round trip airfare is covered and arranged by the SSE. In addition, transport to and from the airport will be arranged by SSE at no cost during the arranged time. Health insurance coverage in Sweden will be provided by SSE.

The language of instruction is English and therefore a very high level of English is required.

Active participation in all parts of the program is required.

Application Information

To apply for the CANDI module, please submit the following documents:

1. EUROPASS CV
2. Letter of Reference (use the official SAYP template)
3. Motivation Letter explaining your interest and how you plan to apply your learning
4. English Certificate Template (use the SAYP English certificate template)

Send applications to: sayp2025@hhs.se

Application Deadline: 26th August

More details and document templates (1-5) are available at the [Swedish Institute website](#)

Only complete applications will be considered.

You may be interviewed in conjunction with your application.

1) The program is open to all EaP countries. However, applicants from Belarus, Azerbaijan and Georgia need to come from the civil society.

