



COMPETENCES FRAMEWORK AND LEARNING AND IMPLEMENTATION COMPASS

**EXPANDING NEW GENERATIONS' ACCESS
TO GOVERNANCE AND ENGAGEMENT**

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TABLE OF CONTENT

1	Introduction and Purpose	6
	1.1. Civic and Political Participation Competences	7
	1.2 Teaching and Learning Civic and Political Participation Competences	8
2	Conceptual Background	10
	2.1 A Working Definition of Civic and Political Participation	11
	2.2 Youth Agency	12
	2.3 Meaningful Engagement	13
	2.4 Competences Development (Approaches, Methods, and Supporting Theories)	15
3	The Joint Transnational (European) Civic and Political Participation Competences Framework	19
	CRITICAL THINKING: DIMENSION OF THE KEY COMPETENCE AREA	24
	ATTRIBUTES OF THE KEY COMPETENCE AREA: CRITICAL THINKING	
	Learning Activity: Critical Thinking	



TABLE OF CONTENT

CREATIVE RESOLVING: DIMENSION OF THE KEY COMPETENCE AREA 35

ATTRIBUTES OF THE KEY COMPETENCE AREA: Creative
Resolving

Learning Activity: Creative Resolving

NEWS VALIDATION: DIMENSION OF THE KEY COMPETENCE AREA 45

ATTRIBUTES OF THE KEY COMPETENCE AREA: Creative
Resolving

Learning Activity: Creative Resolving

ANALYTICAL REASONING: DIMENSION OF THE KEY COMPETENCE AREA 55

ATTRIBUTES OF THE KEY COMPETENCE AREA: Analytical
Reasoning

Learning Activity: Analytical Reasoning

RATIONAL DECISION-MAKING: DIMENSION OF THE KEY COMPETENCE AREA 66

ATTRIBUTES OF THE KEY COMPETENCE AREA: Rational Decision-
making

Learning Activity: Rational Decision-making

ETHICAL SOCIAL MEDIA: DIMENSION OF THE KEY COMPETENCE AREA 77

ATTRIBUTES OF THE KEY COMPETENCE AREA: Ethical Social Media
Learning Activity: Ethical Social Media

SENSE-MAKING: DIMENSION OF THE KEY COMPETENCE AREA 88

ATTRIBUTES OF THE KEY COMPETENCE AREA: Sense-Making
Learning Activity: Sense-Making



TABLE OF CONTENT

DATA ANALYSIS: DIMENSION OF THE KEY COMPETENCE AREA	98
ATTRIBUTES OF THE KEY COMPETENCE AREA: Data Analysis	
Learning Activity: Data Analysis	
SOCIAL INFLUENCE: DIMENSION OF THE KEY COMPETENCE AREA	108
ATTRIBUTES OF THE KEY COMPETENCE AREA: Social Influence	
Learning Activity: Social Influence	
COLLABORATIVE ACTION: DIMENSION OF THE KEY COMPETENCE AREA	119
ATTRIBUTES OF THE KEY COMPETENCE AREA: Collaborative Action	
Learning Activity: Collaborative Action	
4 Participatory Methodology for In-Person Youth Civic and Political Participation Forums Using the Living Lab Concept	129
4.1. Living Lab Methodology in Civic Education	130
4.2. Ten Key Competences and Their Integration	133
4.3. Specific Experiential Learning Activities for the ten Competences	138
4.4. One-Day Forum Agenda – Outline of Sessions (Provisional Example)	145



TABLE OF CONTENT

4.5. Online Pre-Briefing Session (Before the Forum)	148
4.6. Online Debriefing Session (After the Forum)	150
4.7. Ensuring Inclusivity, Youth Co-Creation, and Real-World Policy Engagement	152
4.8. Practical Advice for Implementation	154

5 Reporting on the Forum Experience 159

6 Bibliography 162

- OVERALL
- Critical Thinking
- Creative Resolving
- Analytical Reasoning
- Rational Decisionmaking
- Sense-Making
- Data Analysis
- Social Influence
- Collaborative Action
- Ethical Social Media
- News Validation

01

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE



1.1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

01

In today's changing sociopolitical landscape, supporting young people's active citizenship has become more crucial than ever. **Youth civic and political participation** – the ways in which young people engage in community life and democratic processes – is widely seen as vital for healthy democracies (Timreck & Emmons, 2025) (Council of the European Union, 2018). Declining participation and rising disengagement among youth have raised concerns, especially “in an era marked by democratic declines and rising authoritarianism around the globe”, where “a large cohort of motivated and engaged young people... could help tip the scales in favor of democracy” (Timreck & Emmons, 2025). The **purpose of this document** is to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding and developing Civic and Political Participation Competences among youth. It is intended for **youth workers, educators, and other practitioners** who support young people's learning and empowerment in civic life. By bridging academic insights and practical approaches, the framework aims to ensure that all young people have the necessary competences – knowledge, skills, and attitudes – to actively participate in society and democratic decision-making (European Commission, 2019). In alignment with the EU Youth Strategy's goals to “encourage youth participation in democratic life by supporting social and civic engagement” (Council of the European Union, 2018), this framework serves as a resource to guide educational and youth work initiatives that strengthen youth agency, meaningful engagement, and ultimately, youth contribution to their communities and the broader democratic process.

1.1 Civic and Political Participation Competences

Civic and political participation competences refer to the cluster of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that enable individuals – particularly young people – to actively engage in civic life and political processes. In essence, these competences are what empower someone to be an informed, responsible, and effective participant in society. Research literature defines civic competence as “the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed for active participation in civil society, political and community life” (Hoskins & Villalba, 2011). This means not only understanding one's rights, institutions, and democratic principles, but also having the practical skills to contribute (such as debating, voting, volunteering, community organizing) and the dispositions that underpin democratic culture (such as respect for others, sense of responsibility, and belief in equality). The European Commission similarly emphasizes that “citizenship competence is the ability to act as responsible citizens and to fully participate in civic and social life,



based on understanding of social, economic, legal and political concepts and structures, as well as global developments” (European Commission, 2019). In other words, civic and political participation competences encompass a broad **capacity to understand and influence public affairs**, from the local community level up to national and even global issues.

Importantly, possessing these competences empowers young people not just to improve their own lives but also to strengthen their communities and democracy at large. Developing civic and political competences *“is not only a tool for empowering the individual to take control over their own lives but it can also help by underpinning democracy and social and economic development”* (Hoskins & Villalba, 2011). A youth who has gained critical civic knowledge (for example, knowing how laws are made or what rights they have) and honed participatory skills (such as public speaking or digital advocacy) and who has cultivated democratic attitudes (like tolerance and solidarity) is better prepared to engage constructively with societal challenges. These competences form the foundation of **active citizenship**, enabling young people to voice their opinions, collaborate with others, hold leaders accountable, and drive positive change in line with democratic values.

1.2 Teaching and Learning Civic and Political Participation Competences



Fostering civic and political participation competences in youth requires intentional educational approaches. Research and practice agree that these competences are best learned through **active, participatory learning experiences**, rather than through passive or purely theoretical instruction (Timreck & Emmons, 2025). In educational settings – whether formal (schools, universities) or non-formal (youth clubs, community programs) – this means engaging young people in *learning-by-doing*. Effective civic learning environments often include **interactive activities** such as group discussions, debates, simulations of democratic processes, service-learning projects, community inquiries, and youth-led initiatives. Such methods allow youth to *“experience” the content and validate newly introduced concepts and approaches*. For example, instead of only reading about elections or community issues, young people might organize a mock election or plan a community service project, then reflect on what they learned. This experiential approach aligns with educational theories like Kolb’s Experiential Learning Cycle, which underscores the importance of concrete experience followed by reflective observation and conceptualization in order to truly internalize new competences.

As John Dewey famously noted, critical reflection on experience – the “*active, persistent and careful consideration*” of one’s activities – is what turns experience into genuine learning (George Mason University, n.d.).

Another key principle in teaching these competences is to provide a **supportive and relevant learning context**. Programs should meet young people where they are, connecting civic concepts to *their* lived realities and concerns (Timreck & Emmons, 2025). This might involve exploring current events that resonate with youth, leveraging digital tools and social media (since many young people engage civically online), and addressing topics like social justice, climate change, or other issues youth care about. Research by IFES suggests that “*civic education programming can generate new and increased interest in participating in civic and political life, especially in closed and closing societies where other forms of engagement are discouraged.*” (Ibid.). When done well, civic learning not only imparts knowledge but also builds enthusiasm and confidence to participate. It is also important to **avoid a purely lecture-based or didactic approach**; instead, educators and youth workers act as facilitators and mentors, guiding youth to discover information, form their own opinions, and practice skills in a safe environment. Providing **leadership opportunities** is particularly effective – for instance, letting young people take the lead in a community project or a student council – as this gives them real ownership of civic action. Indeed, experts recommend “*giving young leaders opportunities to design and implement their own activities*”, since such autonomy “*encourages their civic and political participation*” (Ibid.). Overall, the teaching and learning of civic competences should embody the very principles we want youth to learn: participation, dialogue, critical thinking, and inclusive engagement. By creating empowering learning experiences, educators help young people not only understand civic and political concepts intellectually, but also build **practical skills and a sense of agency** to apply them in the real world.



CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND



2. CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

02

To effectively discuss youth *civic and political participation* competences, it is necessary to clarify key concepts and theories that form the background of this framework. This section defines what we mean by civic participation and political participation, and explores the related ideas of **youth agency**, **meaningful engagement**, and **competence development**. These concepts provide a theoretical foundation, ensuring that the framework is grounded in established research and best practices in both civic education and youth work.

2.1 A Working Definition of Civic and Political Participation

Civic participation (often termed *civic engagement*) and political participation are closely related, overlapping concepts, but they emphasize slightly different domains of action. *Civic participation* generally refers to individual or collective activities aimed at addressing issues of public concern and improving community life, often through **non-governmental or informal means**. It can include volunteering, community organizing, participating in civil society organizations, advocacy campaigns, or any work intended to “*protect public values or make a change in a community*” (*American Psychological Association, n.d.*). A simple definition is that civic engagement is “*any individual or group activity addressing issues of public concern*”, whether through community service, initiatives for social improvement, or participation in civic organizations (*Ibid.*). The goal of civic participation is typically to promote the quality of life in a community and uphold values such as justice, solidarity, or sustainability. Importantly, civic engagement can be **non-political in form** (for example, a neighborhood clean-up or a youth volunteering project) while still contributing to the public good and, ultimately, to a healthy civil society. It is considered “*instrumental to democracy*”, because when citizens actively address community issues, they strengthen social trust and democratic culture (*Ibid.*).

It is important to note that civic and political participation are deeply interconnected. Civic acts (like community volunteering) can build skills and social capital that later translate into political action, and political acts (like voting or campaigning) often spring from a civic motivation to improve one’s community or society. In practice, young people engage in a **spectrum of participation** ranging from community service to protest to electoral politics. For example, a young person might volunteer in a local charity (civic participation), and this experience could spur them to vote or speak out on policy issues (political participation) – both dimensions reinforce each other. Indeed, recent research classifies youth engagement in four



quadrants: formal civic, formal political, nonformal civic, and nonformal political, noting that youth often participate in multiple ways simultaneously (Timreck & Emmons, 2025). In our framework, we use the combined term “**civic and political participation**” to encompass this full range of engagement. This working definition recognizes that whether youth are organizing a beach cleanup or canvassing for an election, they are exercising competences that contribute to democratic life. What binds all these activities together is the underlying aim to **influence the public realm** – to solve problems, represent interests, uphold rights and responsibilities, and have a say in the decisions that affect society.

2.2. Youth Agency

At the heart of any discussion about youth participation is the concept of **youth agency**. *Agency* refers to the capacity of individuals to make their own free choices and to act independently, exerting control over their life circumstances. In the context of youth civic and political engagement, **youth agency** means that young people are not merely passive recipients of adult decisions or societal structures, but are **active contributors and protagonists** in shaping their communities and futures. One can define youth agency as “*the capacity of young people to actively participate in and influence decisions, policies, and actions*” that affect them and their society (Salinitri, 2020). This emphasizes recognizing youth as *key stakeholders and change agents*, whose ideas and actions can drive positive change. Crucially, youth agency involves both the **ability** to act (having the skills, confidence, and awareness to make choices) and the **opportunity** to act (having the right and the space to influence decisions). As noted in one discussion, the notion of youth agency implies not only that young people have the ability, but also the chance, “*to set goals and objectives*” and pursue them in the public arena (Mitchell, Lussier, & Keita, 2022). It reflects a shift from viewing youth as passive beneficiaries to seeing them as active citizens.

Fostering youth agency is essential for meaningful civic and political participation. When young people possess a sense of agency, they believe that their actions can make a difference – that they have a voice and some power over outcomes. This belief is closely related to the concept of **political efficacy** (one’s confidence in being able to influence political processes) and is a strong predictor of engagement. Programs that adopt a *Positive Youth Development (PYD)* approach often put a strong emphasis on building youth agency. PYD theory suggests that all young people have inherent strengths and capacities, and it aims to develop attributes like competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring (sometimes adding a sixth “C”: contribution). In terms of civic engagement, a PYD approach means giving youth real roles and responsibilities, and supporting them with mentoring and resources, so they can exercise leadership and feel ownership of projects. Research

confirms that *“PYD approaches recognize the need for young people to have agency, facilitated by strong enabling environments, to make contributions as leaders and engaged democratic actors”* (Timreck & Emmons, 2025). An **enabling environment** includes supportive adults (youth workers, teachers, mentors) who value youth input, as well as institutional willingness (in schools, local government, etc.) to let youth have a seat at the table. When such support is present, youths’ sense of agency grows – they see that their ideas are taken seriously and that they can indeed influence outcomes.

To illustrate, consider a youth council set up by a city government: if the council is given real influence (say, advising on community projects) and adults respect the council’s decisions, the youth members develop agency – they learn that *“I can propose changes and they might actually happen.”* On the other hand, if young people are constantly dismissed or tokenized, their sense of agency and motivation to participate diminishes.

Thus, **building youth agency** is both a means and an end: it is a developmental goal (we want empowered, autonomous young people) and it is a strategy for increasing participation (youth who feel empowered are more likely to engage). Successful civic education and youth programs often explicitly incorporate activities that boost agency: for example, allowing youth to lead a campaign, giving them choices in program design, or teaching advocacy skills that let them directly address decision-makers. Over time, these experiences create a feedback loop: empowered youth take initiative, see results, gain confidence, and become even more active citizens. In summary, *youth agency* is about **youth having the power, voice, and capacity to act** in the civic-political realm. Any competence framework in this field must prioritize agency, ensuring young people are not just learning about participation in theory but are actually practicing it as agents of change in their own right.

2.3 Meaningful Engagement

Not all participation is equal – the quality of youth engagement matters greatly. **Meaningful engagement** refers to forms of youth participation that are **authentic, effective, and valued**, as opposed to superficial or tokenistic involvement. In many initiatives, youth may be invited to the table simply to fulfill a requirement or present an image of inclusion, but they might not be given real influence (for instance, a youth representative in a committee who is never actually heard or whose input carries no weight). Meaningful engagement strives to avoid these pitfalls by ensuring that when young people participate, their participation *actually matters*. This involves a few key elements:



Voice and influence



Young people should have the opportunity to express their views (*voice*) and have those views genuinely considered in decision-making (*influence*). As one youth advocate described, youth feel participation is meaningful when they are “*given the floor and the voice to speak and [are] included as equal partners in the decision-making processes that directly affect them*” (UNOY Peacebuilders, 2021). In practice, this could mean youth and adults share power in a project – for example, co-creating a program or policy together, rather than adults unilaterally deciding and merely informing youth.

Beyond Tokenism



Meaningful youth participation “*includes youth visibility beyond tokenistic inclusion*” (UNOY Peacebuilders, 2021). Tokenism is when youth are included in name or number but not in substance (e.g., having one youth on a panel just for optics). In meaningful engagement, youth involvement is not just symbolic; it has concrete impact. A useful concept here is **Hart’s Ladder of Participation** (originally for children’s participation), which outlines levels from manipulation and tokenism at the bottom rungs (not meaningful) up to youth-initiated, shared decisions with adults at the top (most meaningful). The aim is to climb that ladder – to give youth real roles in shaping outcomes. It “*strives to remove the barriers that stand in the way of youth accessing opportunities to share their knowledge and experience, and influence positive change*” (Ibid.).

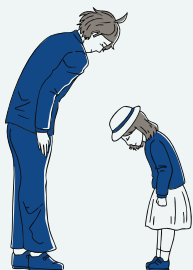
Preparation and Support



For engagement to be meaningful, young people often need preparation (e.g., orientation, training) and ongoing support. This ensures they can participate on equal footing. It’s not meaningful to put a young person in a complex policy discussion without any briefing or support and then conclude “youth participated”. Effective programs **build the capacity of youth** to engage – teaching them about the issues, developing their communication skills, and perhaps pairing them with mentors. Likewise, adults may need preparation to work effectively with youth, learning to listen and collaborate rather than patronize. As UN youth experts have noted, meaningful engagement requires time and resources devoted to making youth feel included, protected, and heard (UNOY Peacebuilders, 2021).



Mutual Benefit and Respect



Meaningful engagement is a two-way street – it values what youth bring, and in turn, youth gain from the experience (skills, confidence, sense of contribution). Engaging youth should not be a checkbox exercise; it should be founded on respect for youth perspectives and a genuine belief that those perspectives improve the outcome. When done right, *“meaningful youth engagement ultimately leads to sustainable and impactful change that has stemmed from the experiences, recommendations, and equal partnership of youth”* (UNOY Peacebuilders, 2021). This highlights that including youth in a meaningful way isn’t just good for the youth – it’s good for the project or community because it taps into their unique insights and energy, leading to more robust outcomes that youth will also carry forward.

In practical terms, ensuring meaningful engagement might involve measures like: giving youth decision-making authority appropriate to their role, creating youth advisory boards with real mandates, involving youth from the earliest stages of a project, and following up with them about how their input was used (closing the feedback loop). It also means being mindful of **inclusivity** – making sure that diverse youth (not just a privileged few) are engaged and that barriers (be they socio-economic, linguistic, disability-related, etc.) are addressed so that all willing youth can participate meaningfully. The United Nations and other bodies have developed guidelines and checklists for meaningful youth participation, underscoring principles such as respect, equity, accountability, and youth-centeredness. In summary, meaningful engagement is about quality over quantity: it’s better to have fewer youth genuinely driving a project than 100 youth who are just passive attendees. When youth are truly **partners and leaders** in civic and political processes, their engagement is meaningful – and this leads to stronger skills development, greater personal investment, and often more impactful social change.

2.4 COMPETENCES DEVELOPMENT (APPROACHES, METHODS, AND SUPPORTING THEORIES)

How do young people develop competences for civic and political participation? This question is at the core of both educational theory and youth work practice. Research suggests that competences – especially the complex mix of knowledge,

skills, and attitudes needed for active citizenship – are best developed through **participatory and experiential approaches**. Traditional classroom instruction (e.g. memorizing facts about government) has limited effect unless paired with active methods that let youth practice and internalize what they learn (Timreck & Emmons, 2025). In this section, we outline key approaches, methods, and theories that underpin the development of civic and political competences:

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

One of the foundational approaches is learning through experience. David Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory posits that knowledge is created through the transformation of experience – in a cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. In plain terms, young people learn civic competences effectively when they *do something* (an activity, project, real-world task), then *reflect on it*, derive lessons, and apply those lessons to new situations (George Mason University, n.d.). For example, a group of students might engage in a community service project (concrete experience), discuss what happened and why (reflective observation), draw broader insights about community needs or teamwork (abstract conceptualization), and then plan another improved project or action (active experimentation). This iterative process helps develop skills like problem-solving and collaboration, and deepens understanding of civic concepts. **Service-learning** – a pedagogical method that integrates community service with structured reflection – is a prime example of experiential learning in civic education. Studies have found that service-learning programs can improve civic attitudes and skills, as they allow youth to apply what they learn in a real community context and see tangible outcomes of their involvement (Kirlin, 2003).

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT & EMPOWERMENT APPROACHES

As discussed in section 2.2, approaches that focus on empowering youth – giving them real responsibilities, voice, and choice – not only respect youth agency but also serve as a developmental method. When youth are placed in the driver's seat of projects, they often rise to the occasion and acquire new competences in the process. For example, a program might encourage youth to identify an issue in their community and plan a project to address it, with adults simply supporting as needed. Through the process, the young participants may develop project management skills, teamwork, navigating local government or media, and so on. Research recommendations echo this: *“adapt trainings and courses to their audiences”, ensuring relevance, and provide “leadership opportunities... during and after the training to advance their engagement... beyond the classroom.”* (Timreck & Emmons, 2025). Additionally, *“create opportunities for young people to develop and lead activities directly”,* as this ownership is a strong motivator and learning experience. Such approaches are informed by theories of **youth empowerment**, which argue that youths build competence through real-world problem-solving and seeing the impact of their actions.

INTERACTIVE AND DIALOGICAL METHODS

Discussion, debate, and dialogue-based methods are crucial for developing competences such as critical thinking, communication, and openness to diverse perspectives. Organizing classroom or workshop activities like moderated debates on current issues, role-play simulations (e.g., simulating a city council meeting or a UN assembly), or youth forums gives participants a chance to articulate their views, listen to others, and collectively solve problems. Such methods also promote civic dispositions – for instance, learning to disagree respectfully and consider alternative viewpoints (a cornerstone of democratic culture). The “**open classroom climate**” approach, where students are encouraged to discuss political or social issues freely and teachers facilitate rather than dictate, has been linked to higher civic knowledge and engagement in multiple studies. In non-formal settings, youth workers often use tools like *World Café dialogues*, *workshops*, or *scenario games* to similar effect. The key is that youth are actively engaged in constructing knowledge, rather than passively receiving information (Hoskins & Villalba, 2011).

SUPPORTIVE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Several educational and psychological theories support the approaches above. Beyond Kolb and Bandura, we also draw on Vygotsky’s idea of the Zone of Proximal Development – youths can perform at higher levels of competence with guidance and then gradually on their own. This underlines the importance of scaffolding learning experiences (providing just enough support to challenge youth without taking away their agency). **Self-Determination Theory** (Deci & Ryan) also provides insight: it states that people are motivated when their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are met. In designing civic competence development activities, ensuring that youth have a sense of autonomy (choosing and leading activities), competence (feeling capable by building skills gradually), and relatedness (working as a team, feeling part of a community) will enhance their intrinsic motivation to participate and learn.

REFLECTION AND CRITICAL THINKING

Competence development is cemented by encouraging reflection at every step. As mentioned, Dewey’s concept of reflective thinking is central – youths should be guided to think about what they did, why it mattered, and what could be improved. Techniques like journaling, group debriefs, or guided questions after an activity help youth connect specific experiences to larger concepts (e.g., “*What does our successful neighborhood project tell us about how citizens can influence local issues? What obstacles did we face, and what does that say about community change?*”). Reflection helps in developing **critical consciousness** – an awareness of social, political, and economic forces – which is a goal of civic competence (as per Paulo Freire’s theory of education for critical consciousness). It challenges youth to link personal experiences with systemic issues, fostering deeper understanding and commitment.

MENTORING AND ROLE MODELS

Social Learning Theory (Albert Bandura) reminds us that people often learn new behaviors and norms by observing others. In competence development, having mentors or near-peer role models can significantly inspire and guide youth. For instance, a young person involved in a youth parliament might learn a great deal by shadowing a more experienced youth leader or by guidance from a supportive adult ally in the community. Mentors can provide feedback, encouragement, and networks for youth, thereby enhancing skills like leadership and efficacy. As one study highlighted, when youth see slightly older peers or adults who are actively engaged (contacting the mayor, organizing initiatives, etc.), it “*makes us look at it and be like, ‘I can do that too’*”, boosting their confidence and desire to participate (Nicotera, Brewer, & DesMarais, 2013). **Peer learning** is also powerful: activities that have youth teaching or leading other youth (e.g., a youth-led workshop on climate activism) reinforce the competences of the youth teachers while empowering the learners.

In summary, developing civic and political participation competences is not a one-off lesson but a process – ideally a cycle of action and reflection, supported by mentors and aligned with youths’ interests and contexts. Methods that incorporate **hands-on practice, real responsibilities, peer and mentor support**, and critical reflection are most effective. These approaches transform abstract principles of democracy and citizenship into lived experiences for young people. By engaging in such processes, youth not only learn about civic engagement – they become **competent, confident civic actors** capable of continuing that engagement throughout their lives.





THE JOINT TRANSNATIONAL (EUROPEAN) CIVIC AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION COMPETENCES FRAMEWORK



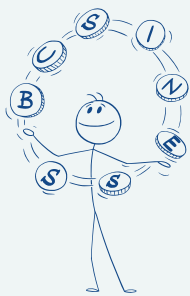
The Joint Transnational Civic and Political Participation Competences Framework presented in this document is a collaboratively developed model aiming to unify and articulate the core competences young people need for effective civic and political participation across Europe. This framework is “*joint*” and “*transnational*” in that it draws on insights and best practices from multiple European contexts – it is the product of a partnership among organizations and experts from various countries, ensuring that it reflects a broad, inclusive perspective rather than a single national view. The European dimension is key: the framework aligns with common values enshrined in European policy (like human rights, democracy, rule of law, and cultural diversity) and acknowledges the EU’s emphasis on active citizenship (for instance, it echoes the EU’s Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, particularly the Citizenship Competence). By developing this framework together, the partners sought to create a **shared reference point** that can guide youth work, education, and policy initiatives in different countries, facilitating a more coherent approach to building youth participation competences across Europe.

What does the framework consist of? In essence, it outlines the critical components of civic and political participation competence and provides descriptors or guidelines for each. The framework is comprehensive, covering multiple dimensions of competence:



Knowledge

The understanding and awareness that an active citizen should have. The framework emphasizes knowledge of democratic processes and institutions, human rights and European common values, socio-political contexts, and media literacy, among other areas. For example, this includes knowing how elections work, what the roles of local and EU institutions are, understanding current social issues, and being aware of one’s own cultural context and the diversity of society. It might also cover knowledge of civic spaces (like knowing where and how one can participate, such as youth councils, NGOs, online forums) and an understanding of concepts like justice, equity, and sustainable development. By grounding youth in solid factual and conceptual knowledge, the framework ensures they have a *robust foundation for critical analysis and civic engagement*.



Skills

The practical abilities that enable participation and civic action. According to the framework, key skills include “*effective communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, leadership, and digital literacy*,” among others. Communication skills might involve public speaking, writing persuasively, or dialoguing across differences. Critical thinking and media/information literacy are crucial for youth to navigate complex political information and make informed decisions (for instance, spotting misinformation or analyzing arguments). Problem-solving and collaboration skills enable young people to work with others to address community issues. Leadership skills empower youth to organize others, take initiative, and manage projects. Digital literacy, including the ability to engage in online civic spaces and use social media responsibly, is increasingly important in modern civic engagement. By highlighting these skills, the framework underscores that active citizenship is not just about what you know, but what you can do with what you know.



Attitudes and Values

The dispositions or mindsets that shape how young people approach civic and political life. The framework identifies core attitudes such as “empathy, respect for diversity, social responsibility, and a commitment to democratic values and environmental stewardship”. This dimension recognizes that effective participation relies on more than intellect and skills; it also requires a **democratic ethos**. For example, empathy and respect for diversity are vital in pluralistic societies so that youth appreciate different perspectives and are willing to work across divides. A sense of social responsibility (or the belief that one should contribute to the community and stand up for the common good) motivates active participation rather than apathy. Commitment to democratic values means valuing freedom, equality, and human rights – which can guide youth to act with integrity and challenge injustices. Environmental stewardship is included as well, reflecting the contemporary understanding that caring for the environment is part of responsible citizenship. Cultivating these attitudes helps ensure that young people not only engage actively, but do so in a **constructive, ethical manner**, aiming to uphold the values that democratic societies are built upon.

Together, these components form a holistic picture of civic competence, often framed as the triad of knowledge, skills, and attitudes (K-S-A). The **framework document** provides detailed descriptors for each of these components, often breaking them down into sub-competences. For instance, under a broad skill like “communication,” there might be specific sub-skills like *ability to articulate one’s opinion clearly, active listening, or negotiation skills*. Similarly, under knowledge, one might find specifics like *knowledge of national and EU institutions, understanding of local community issues*, etc. The purpose of such detail is to guide educators and youth workers in what to foster and to help young people self-assess and develop in each area.

Another feature of the framework is that it not only defines competences, but also suggests **progression levels** or benchmarks. In fact, an “*assessment tool was created to evaluate civic competence at three levels: beginner, intermediate, and leadership*,” built on a rubric and inspired by Bloom’s Taxonomy of learning. This means the framework acknowledges that competences develop over time and with practice. A beginner level might describe a youth who has basic awareness and can participate in guided activities, whereas an intermediate might take initiative in familiar contexts, and a leadership level youth could guide others and innovate in civic action. By outlining levels, the framework assists in both **educational planning** (designing age-appropriate or experience-appropriate learning experiences) and **evaluation** (helping youths and mentors recognize growth). For example, at a beginner level, “knowledge of democratic processes” might mean knowing that elections happen and officials represent us, while at a leadership level it might mean the ability to critically analyze electoral systems or even organize a voter registration drive.

The development of this joint framework was a rigorous process. It involved *initial research, expert meetings, and refinement of existing competency models*, ensuring that it builds on prior work rather than reinventing the wheel. Notably, it was “*informed by the European Union’s 8 Key Competencies*” (the EU’s reference framework for lifelong learning, which includes Citizenship competence) and by the Council of Europe’s competency frameworks (such as competencies for democratic culture). It also integrated contemporary insights from 2023, “*such as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine*”, acknowledging how these events shape the context of youth participation. This makes the framework particularly **relevant to current challenges**, recognizing, for instance, the importance of digital participation during pandemics or the need for critical media skills in an age of propaganda and online information wars.

In terms of usage, the **Civic and Political Participation Competences Framework** is



designed as a practical tool. It serves educators in formal education, youth workers in non-formal settings, curriculum developers, and even policy-makers interested in civic education. By providing a clear structure of what to aim for, it helps in curriculum **design of trainings and learning activities** – for example, a youth organization can design a series of workshops ensuring they touch on each major competence area (maybe a workshop on media literacy, another on project planning, another on intercultural dialogue, etc., all grounded in the framework). It also supports **assessment and reflection**: youth can self-assess where they stand in each competence and identify areas to improve, while program leaders can evaluate whether their interventions are leading to improvements (using the rubric levels as reference).

Ultimately, the framework's impact is envisioned to be empowering for young people. It *“serves as a valuable resource for educators, youth workers, and policymakers, providing a structured approach to fostering civic engagement among young people”*. By systematically developing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes described, the framework *“empowers youth to become informed, engaged, and responsible citizens who contribute positively to their communities and democratic societies.”* It embodies a holistic approach to civic education, one that couples individual competence development with an emphasis on collective responsibility and democratic values. Over time, the widespread adoption of such a framework across different countries and contexts can lead to a more common understanding of what it means to be an active young citizen in Europe and how to support young people in reaching that potential. In other words, this joint framework is not just a document, but a step toward **building a new generation of European youth** who are well-equipped to participate, lead, and innovate in civic and political life, safeguarding and invigorating democracy for the future.



CRITICAL THINKING

Dimension of the key competence area

Young people across Europe show a marked gap between everyday digital fluency and the ability to evaluate online information critically. Quantitative and qualitative studies indicate that basic navigation skills do not translate into robust verification practices. For example, Panagiotou et al. (2022) note that 58.3% of Generation Z report being influenced by disinformation, while Castellví Mata et al. (2021) describe secondary students who readily accept biased social media content. Antoliš et al. (2024) demonstrate that higher awareness of disinformation correlates with better information verification, yet Miller and Bartlett (2012) reveal that frequent digital use leaves many young people unable to distinguish reliable facts from manipulated narratives. Studies further indicate that digital practices affect democratic engagement. Bârgăoanu and Radu (2018) report that disinformation undermines transparency and participation in election, and D'Ambrosi et al. (2021) find that EU communicative actions can raise trust without strengthening civic belonging in the sense of being part of the society with rights and obligations. Interventions that stress critical thinking, communication, and interaction skills appear to mitigate misinformation risks, as Vissenberg et al. (2023) highlight that some digital skills reduce exposure while others—such as content creation—may heighten it. While young people are often seen as “digital natives,” their fluency in navigating online platforms does not automatically translate into critical literacy or civic resilience. On the contrary, the digital spaces they inhabit are increasingly saturated with manipulated content, polarising narratives, and algorithmically amplified misinformation that blurs the lines between fact, opinion, and propaganda. Despite their significant presence online, young people across Europe report growing confusion and distrust toward information sources. A 2024 European Commission study revealed that 83% of youth encounter disinformation weekly, and fewer than half feel confident in distinguishing trustworthy from false content. These trends are especially concerning in politically sensitive areas such as climate change, migration, health, and elections—topics where disinformation not only distorts debate but undermines public trust, fuels polarisation, and weakens democratic institutions. The result is a critical thinking “gap” limiting youth from meaningful and constructive participation in civic and political life.

How does it work?

Building Critical Thinking in Young People

Critical thinking is the foundation of independent thought, informed decision-making, and active citizenship. For young people navigating an increasingly complex digital world, it is not just a skill—it is a mindset. Critical thinking means the ability to question,

CRITICAL THINKING

evaluate, and reflect before reacting. It empowers youth to resist manipulation, understand diverse perspectives, and engage meaningfully with the world around them. But critical thinking doesn't happen automatically. It's a continuous process—one that requires practice, encouragement, and space to grow. It starts when young people begin to ask questions like: Is this information trustworthy? Who created it, and why? What evidence supports it? What's missing from the story? These are not just academic questions—they are civic ones. They help young people recognize bias, challenge stereotypes, and identify misinformation. In a digital world full of fast-moving content and polarising messages, critical thinking allows young people to pause, reflect, and respond thoughtfully instead of reacting emotionally or impulsively. It enables them to spot manipulation, compare sources, understand multiple viewpoints, and form their own reasoned opinions.

Developing critical thinking also strengthens young people's role as digital citizens. It helps them take responsibility for the content they share, engage in respectful dialogue, and stand up against falsehoods or hate speech. Most importantly, it encourages them to see themselves as agents of change—able to question the status quo, propose new ideas, and participate actively in democracy.

Ask yourself

- *How often do I question what I see online?*
- *Do I take time to verify before I share?*
- *What kinds of conversations am I encouraging in my digital spaces?*
- *What steps can I take to sharpen my critical thinking every day?*



The more we nurture these habits, the more resilient young people become—in both their digital and civic lives.

CRITICAL THINKING

Importance for civic and political participation: Critical thinking is an objective process of analyzing, questioning, and interpreting data that we hear or read in order to judge or discern it. In civic life, it enables individuals to navigate complex issues, detect bias, and make informed decisions. By encouraging reasoned reflection over impulsive reaction, it helps build active and responsible democratic participation, helping youngsters resist misinformation, challenge manipulative rhetoric, and engage thoughtfully in public debates.

BASIC LEVEL

SKILLS

- Ask questions to collect more information and clarify potential confusion
- Make a logical flow of causes and effects from gathered information
- Ability to dissect different issues by identifying key components such as timeline, events and contributing factors

KNOWLEDGE

- Understand the needs of the community
- Understand the basic meaning of the subject of reading
- Knowledge on general cultural literacy and the ability to engage with a range of societal topics

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

- Curiosity about different opinions, diversity of cultures, and social behaviours
- Readiness for continued learning about civic participation and political engagement
- Open to receive criticism and to transform it into a drive for better reasoning and acting when it comes to making decisions

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

SKILLS

- Navigate the web to find proper sources of information
- Provide logical arguments, based on personal experience or science-based facts
- Being able to put into practice theoretical acquired knowledge through studying or personal experiences
- Spot misinformation and false information and debunk it

KNOWLEDGE

- Build awareness of the own current state of knowledge, attitudes, and bias
- Understanding of how to bridge theoretical knowledge with practical knowledge and to have a dynamic interaction between previous knowledge and new facts and inputs
- Knowledge on how to control emotions in order to avoid biases and irrational decisions and to refine emotions into emotional intelligence

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

- Be ready to apply self-discipline and strategies for consistent learning to move towards a certain goal when addressing a theoretical or practical problem
- Being an active member of a discussion community
- Readiness to change vision or course of action, if other facts are brought to our attention

ADVANCED LEVEL ▲

SKILLS

- Use of digital tools in order to create fact-based infographics, campaign messages, advocacy videos, or educational posts that support democratic dialogue, combat misinformation, raise awareness of political issues, and encourage civic participation in activities like voting or public debates.
- Ability to integrate and cooperate with other youngsters with different backgrounds, working together toward a common goal by active listening to each other, question assumptions and make a fact - based decision.
- Being able to compile information and draw synthetic and coherent conclusions

KNOWLEDGE

- Demonstrate knowledge of the notions and concepts of a wide spectrum of fields of interest, such as political, social, economic, digital, and environmental domains.
- Demonstrate understanding of how the decision-making process works on a local/ regional/ national/ international level and where to address challenges and concerns
- Demonstrate knowledge about leadership and management when it comes to social influence, in order to be able to drive the group in the best possible direction

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

- Willingness to listen to every opinion, without judging or being biased by previous assumptions
- Readiness to promote new personal ideas, despite possibly challenging commonly established knowledge and beliefs
- Readiness to empower others through offering help and practical solutions in a sense of civic solidarity

Suggested Self-Directed Learning Activities

SKILLS

Online course on Critical thinking:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLpbtRdN7xWUcPT0qWBfC52FubQxcgdgjk>

A **Critical Thinking test**, also known as a critical reasoning test, determines your ability to reason through an argument logically and make an objective decision

<https://aptitude-test.com/aptitude-tests/verbal/critical-thinking/>

KNOWLEDGE

How to improve Critical thinking:

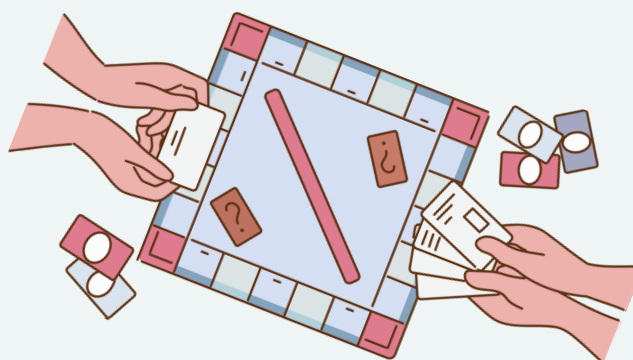
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dItUGF8GdTw>

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

Escape Room

Board games:

Catan, Monopoly, Alias



Examples of Relevant Programs, Initiatives, or Projects to learn in Groups

SKILLS

Model European Union Strasbourg,

<https://meu-strasbourg.org/>

KNOWLEDGE

European Solidarity Corps,

an opportunity to help the wider community, in Europe and beyond:

<https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity/projects/>

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

Erasmus+ internship

opportunities
<https://erasmusintern.org/>

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

The Marshmallow Challenge

GENERAL INFORMATION

- **Target Group:** (e.g., 16-25 year olds, youth workers, NEETs, mixed groups, etc.) 16-25 year olds
- **Group Size:** (Minimum and maximum participants) 16-20 (4/5 teams of 4 people)
- **Duration:** 90 minutes
- **Applied non-formal education methods:** Group project
- **Reflection Method:** Feedback on flipcharts and oral explanation at the end

LEARNING DIMENSION

• Objective(s):

The main objective of the learning activity is to enhance critical thinking through a cooperative and practical manner. At the same time it is a mechanism of building interhuman relationships between participants in order for them to come together and work towards a common goal. Another objective is to empower youth by making them aware of the value of cooperation in fostering problem solving and critical thinking.

• Link to the Competence:

The activity goal is to enhance critical thinking by fostering problem-solving, creativity, collaboration, and iterative learning. While it might seem like just a creative challenge with spaghetti and marshmallows, the deeper purpose is to spark curiosity, build teamwork and smart decision-making skills

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES

KNOWLEDGE

- Understanding of how to bridge theoretical knowledge with practical knowledge and to have a dynamic interaction between previous knowledge and new facts and inputs
- Demonstrate knowledge about leadership and management when it comes to social influence, in order to be able to drive the group in the best possible direction
- Knowledge on how to control emotions in order to avoid biases and irrational decisions and to refine emotions into emotional intelligence

BEHAVIORS/ ATTITUDES

- Readiness to change vision or course of action, if other facts are brought to our attention
- Open to receive criticism and to transform it into a drive for better reasoning and acting when it comes to making decisions
- Willingness to listen to every opinion, without judging of being biased by previous assumptions

SKILLS

- Provide logical arguments, based on personal experience or science-based facts
- Ability to integrate and cooperate with other youngsters with different backgrounds, working together toward a common goal
- Identify the problems in a logical process that breaks the issue into various elements, such as the timeline and events

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

The Marshmallow Challenge

MATERIALS NEEDED

- 100 sticks of spaghetti (20 for each group)
- 5 m of masking tape (1 for each group)
- 5 m of string (1 for each group)
- 5 marshmallows (1 for each group)
- 5 lunch bags (to create 1 kit for every team)
- Measuring Tape (to be able to measure which of the spaghetti towers is the tallest)
- Flipcharts (minimum of 5 - for the feedback at the end)
- Markers (different colours)
- Cards with the rules for each team

FACILITATION TIPS

1. You should present the simulation as a game in order to make it a fun activity and lead all the participants to feel included and bring their best energies. The rationale of the learning activity and its main results will be discussed more deeply only during the debriefing part.
2. As a criteria to create the groups, participants will count from one to four/ five in a row, and after that the participants with the same number will gather in the final groups. In this way, you can eliminate the risk of creating groups of people who know each other, because the participants need to learn to cooperate also in an improvised manner with whoever works with them.
3. Make sure to repeat the rules a few times before the actual activity begins, to make sure they are aware of all the aspects and remember them

Adaptation Options:

This learning activity is very classical and known by youth workers, psychologists and managers, so it usually abides with the main rules described above. However, the organisers might adapt the rules to different materials they have at disposal, for example if they lack a lunchbag, or if they have more participants.

The activity is very practical, so it can be used for different environments and not only for youngsters, youth workers, or NGOs. It is actually very useful for firms and workplaces in order to foster cooperation among the workteam, forcing them to apply critical thinking in a collaborative and flexible manner.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

03

The Marshmallow Challenge

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

1. Introduction

Duration: 10 minutes

Description:

- Present the activity (you can use this text as an inspiration): „Today, you're going to take on a creative team activity using just spaghetti, tape, string and one marshmallow. Sounds simple? Maybe. But here's the twist: the marshmallow has to sit on top of the tallest freestanding structure your team can build. This challenge is all about thinking smart, working together, and learning as you go. You'll need to ask good questions, test ideas, change plans when they don't work and reflect on why they do or don't. That's critical thinking in action. You'll discover how quick decisions, group dynamics, and even assumptions affect problem-solving. And you might be surprised by how your team grows through trial, error, and collaboration. So grab your materials, get creative, stay curious and build with your minds as much as your hands. ”
- Split the groups: All should stay in a line. The organiser should count them from 1 to 5 and assign a table to each of the groups.

2. Rules

Duration: 20 minutes

Description:

- The rules are quite simple: You all received cards explaining the rules(material A) and a lunch bag inside which you will find the essentials for the next activity. Every lunch bag contains 20 spaghetti, 1 m of masking tape, 1 m of string, and 1 marshmallow.
- The goal is quite simple: you will have exactly 18 minutes to create a tower from the tools we gave you, with the marshmallow on top. The tallest tower wins. But there are some tricky aspects. The tower's structure must be the table, this means you cannot suspend it from a chair or the ceiling and it must stand on its own until it is measured.
- Another rule is that you cannot cut or eat parts of the marshmallow: it has to be in its initial form, or you'll be disqualified.
- You can get creative on how you use the tools, you can break the spaghetti or the tape, but you cannot use the lunch bag.
- Any cheating and you'll be disqualified.

*We can explain the rules up to 3 times in order to make sure that everyone understands them

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

03

The Marshmallow Challenge

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

3. Main activity

Duration: 18 minutes

Description:

The groups construct the tower. Meanwhile, the organisers walk around the room to make sure there is no cheating and to observe how the process is developing.

*Don't forget to clock the time

4. Measuring the towers

Duration: 10 minutes

Description:

The group with the tallest tower standing without external support is declared the winner.

*Maybe we can offer a token for the winning group

5. Debriefing

Duration: 30 minutes

After concluding the main activity and finding the winning group, the last part of the learning activity kicks in to foster reflection and awareness among the participants.

Here are some questions for the participants to gather feedback:

1. What was the first idea your team came up with? Did it change along the way?
2. How did you decide what to do and who would do what?
3. What part of the challenge was the trickiest, and how did you handle it as a group?
4. Can you think of a moment when someone asked a great question or made you see things differently?
5. If you could do this again, what would you try differently? And what do you think your team did really well?

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

03

The Marshmallow Challenge

EVALUATION

Suggested Evaluation Method

The participants are given some flipcards divided into four sections, calling for a self-evaluation:



Each participant will recall their experience and write their findings on the flipchart. After this, the participants will share their observations and exchange peer feedback. In this part of the activity, the organisers will lead the participants to understanding the rationale behind the activity also with their recommendations and explanations, as the participants might have been focused on the activity itself previously and not in its wider context. As the participants share their views and experiences, the organisers might use a whiteboard where to write down key words and sentences shared by the participants, or even putting the flipcharts on it.

Risks or Sensitivities

- ▲ **Risk 1** - A group fails to cooperate in a positive way, or some arguments arise among the members and this destroys the general cooperative environment and all in all the spirit of the simulation.
- **Solution:** The organisers will patrol carefully during the activity among the tables and check whether everything is working, also offering their support as long as they do not favor a specific group or interfere in the practical activity. Of course, the selection of the participants ex ante might keep some factors into account to ensure effectiveness, such as selecting as participants engaged youngsters or reliable working teams, so that their positive interaction will be more likely. However, the scope of the game might be more effective if successfully pushing non-collaborative people toward cooperation in order to achieve a common goal, an art that we are sure youth workers will be great to manage.

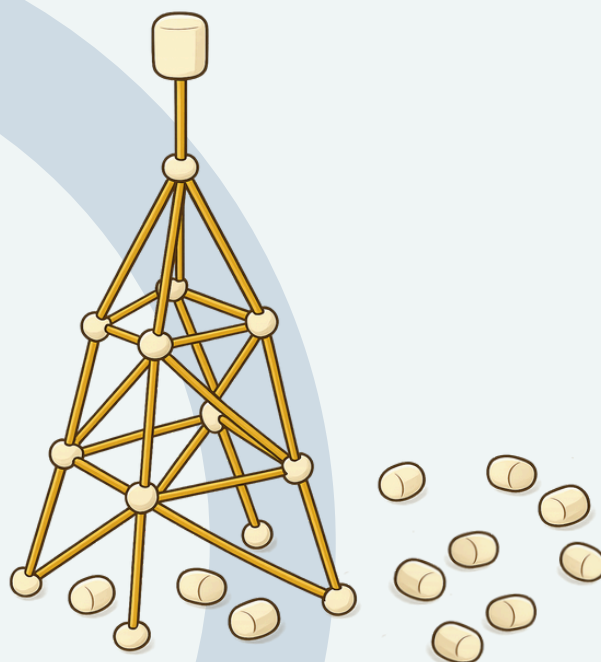
The Marshmallow Challenge

EVALUATION

- ▲ **Risk 2** - Some groups may try to cheat in favour of the construction of their own tower, or try to destroy the work of other groups.
- **Solution:** The cheating group will be eliminated outright, and in case the simulation game will be repeated without their participation.

- ▲ **Risk 3** - Some group members have physical or mental disabilities that hamper their inclusion in the group participation.
- **Solution:** We recommend being flexible and inclusive, because the rationale is for the groups to find the best strategy to cooperate by showing critical thinking and in an efficient way by cooperating among all the members, no matter what the conditions at the starting line are.

- ▲ **Risk 4** - Someone has already done the simulation.
- **Solution:** They will still have to interact with a group made of new participants and find new cooperation strategies, perhaps acquiring this time the role as group leaders spontaneously.



CREATIVE RESOLVING

Dimension of the key competence area

In a world that values efficiency and measurable results, creativity often takes a backseat. The pressure to achieve fast, objective outcomes has led to a rigid "teaching to the test" mindset, limiting the ability to think outside the box (Runco, 2007). Yet, true problem-solving, especially in complex, unpredictable contexts, requires more than conformity to standard measures. It demands creativity—the ability to approach challenges with flexibility, imagination, and openness to new solutions.

Young people today are constantly navigating problems that don't have easy fixes. Standard procedures often fall short in complex, ambiguous, or rapidly changing situations. Whether dealing with intercultural misunderstandings, digital overload, environmental dilemmas, or conflicting social norms, people—especially young people—are called upon to create solutions where none are immediately available. This is where creative resolving becomes essential. Ask yourself: how many times have you been in a situation where no obvious solutions fit? How did you handle it? Did you come up with the solution on your own, or did you get help?

The roots of this approach trace back to the post-World War II era, with Alex Osborn's concept of brainstorming. As outlined by Besant (2016), Osborn encouraged his employees to "think up" ideas using four key rules: prioritize quantity over quality, defer criticism, welcome wild ideas, and build on others' contributions. These principles became the foundation for what Runco (2012) later describes as divergent-convergent thinking—first generating a wide range of possibilities, then evaluating and refining them into actionable solutions.

In the field of conflict resolution, this approach is particularly powerful. Deutsch et al. (2006) emphasize that meaningful resolution depends on co-creation. While creativity is often perceived as a solitary pursuit, resolving conflict effectively requires collective imagination and shared innovation.

Creative resolving has become an increasingly critical skill for youth today, as they rely more and more on AI for the simplest tasks instead of thinking independently. AI's speed in generating ideas and solutions makes it tempting to skip the creative process altogether—a concern downplayed by Cropley, D. (2023), who argues that humans are still superior when it comes to brainstorming innovative ideas.

CREATIVE RESOLVING

How does it work?

Building Creative Resolving in Young People

Unlike the common perception that some things people are just born with, creative resolving is a skill that can be trained and strengthened over time. When it comes to young people, one of the most effective ways to build this is through interactive and experiential learning methods. Activities such as policy simulations, brainstorming sessions, crisis management exercises, civic collaborative projects, forums, or workshops push participants to get involved and actively respond to real-life situations, helping them learn more about their communities and inspiring them to contribute with ideas and solutions.

Socialization and communication are important parts of the creative resolving process, giving young people the space and means to engage in constructing solutions for their communities, and helping them begin to understand how political and civic life works and how they can contribute to their own well-being.

Whether debating policies, negotiating solutions in a simulation, or addressing real-life societal concerns, creative resolving is a necessary skill for youth to develop in order to have a voice in their community, because young people are resourceful and full of potential, but their abilities need to be nurtured and harnessed.



CREATIVE RESOLVING

Creative resolving is a key skill when it comes to finding practical and suited solutions for complex modern problems. Civic and political participation are often not appealing for youth, they do not feel their voice matters, even though they are the future of it, and their vision on it is the most relevant. When in fact their out of the box way of thinking is often generating the best ideas.

BASIC LEVEL

SKILLS

- Communicate with others and show creativeness
- Engage in discussions and organise ideas for a cursive flow and logic outcomes
- Analyze basic information and find a cause of the problem and its best fix

KNOWLEDGE

- Have basic knowledge in creative fields such as art, literature, cinema, writing, communication
- Have knowledge about platforms, risks and benefits of over using different digital tools
- Have practical knowledge, as it fosters, under the use of different senses - touch, sight, smell, hearing, taste - side creativity.

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

- Be open to new experiences and new ideas, without being afraid of sharing your own
- Be confident about sharing personal experiences and possible solutions, without the fear of them not being accepted as final outcomes
- Be willing to cooperate and learn from others who might hold different values

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

SKILLS

- Facilitate and mediate a debate/ brainstorming activity effectively
- Ask proper constructed questions in order to understand the problem from within
- To collect viable data and make qualitative research, evaluating the reliability of the information to come up with fact based, argumented solutions
- Ability to actively listen to others

KNOWLEDGE

- Have knowledge of innovative fields, such as AI, visual art and mindfulness, without giving up on a solid base of theoretical knowledge on traditional fields, such as philosophy, history, and the social sciences
- Have knowledge about team work mechanisms in different contexts and of the possible outcomes of different approaches
- Know how to connect concepts that are remote from each-other into novel and appropriate new ideas, using semantic memory to frame them into a structure

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

- Think outside of the box, in order to be original and unusual in solving problems and finding solutions
- Be willing to accept constructive criticism if it means having a better final solution
- Be open using new techniques instead of relying only on traditional or existing ones, especially when they are needed

ADVANCED LEVEL ▲

SKILLS

- Being able to conceptualise, apply, analyse, synthesise and evaluate information about a given problem
- Ability to intercept certain patterns in different situations and to offer best suited solutions based on research and personal experience
- Use creativity to produce a great number of ideas in a short period of time, without relying on external sources (e.g. ChatGPT) to generate them for you and to apply those to resolve a problem

KNOWLEDGE

- Have knowledge of different types of techniques on brainstorming for coming up with the most unconventional approaches
- Have knowledge on how to enhance creative attributes through reading, researching, socialising, to develop a better perspective and diverse view when it comes to civic or political problems
- Demonstrate fast thinking and fast decision making when it comes to problem solving

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

- Take the lead during a discussion/debate/brainstorming and direct in the right way so you can come up with a solution faster and more effective
- Be ready and open to brainstorm with people who hold different views, even accepting their solution if it is the most suitable one for the problem
- Be creative and innovative when you approach a problem, trying to visualise it and analyze it from a wider perspective
- Be able to publicly speak without fear, giving valid arguments that support your ideas

Suggested Self-Directed Learning Activities

SKILLS

Brainstorm for ideas

Take courses or watch educational videos for a better understanding of the skill:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GpzutFsz2SA>

KNOWLEDGE

TED talk:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bEusrD8g-dM>

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

Volunteer:
European Solidarity Corps:
https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity/register_en

Examples of Relevant Programs, Initiatives, or Projects to learn in Groups

SKILLS

Participate in simulations:
 Model United Nations:
<https://www.un.org/en/mun>

KNOWLEDGE

Virtual Role Play Game:
<https://virtual-role-play-game.digital-journey.europarl.europa.eu/#/>

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

European Youth Event 2025 (online):
<https://european-youth-event.europarl.europa.eu/en/take-part>



ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Create a Flawless Country

GENERAL INFORMATION

- **Target Group:** (e.g., 16-25 year olds, youth workers, NEETs, mixed groups, etc.): 16-25 year olds
- **Group Size:** (Minimum and maximum participants): 10-25
- **Duration:** 90 minutes (+15 minutes)
- **Applied non-formal education methods:** Working group
- **Reflection Method:** Work on flipcharts, guided questions, group debrief

LEARNING DIMENSION

- **Objective(s):**

The activity's goal is to show the importance of creative resolving when it comes to working in a group on the creation of something and resolving the problems that appear suddenly on the way for a smooth cooperation and obtaining valid results. Moreover the activity's objective is to enhance participant's ability to brainstorm and figure out creative solutions for unpredictable situations.

- **Link to the Competence:**

This learning activity will develop participants' creative resolving by putting them in a situation where they need to collaborate with other people, in a brainstorming session, for them to be able to get to a viable outcome. At the same time they will advocate for their own ideas to be chosen while actively listening to others opinions, to finally be able to get to the most optimal solution for the task given to them.

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES

KNOWLEDGE

- Have knowledge about team work mechanisms in different contexts and of the possible outcomes of different approaches
- Have knowledge of different types of techniques on brainstorming for coming up with the most unconventional approaches
- Demonstrate fast thinking and fast decision making when it comes to problem solving

BEHAVIORS/ ATTITUDES

- Think outside of the box, in order to be original and unusual in solving problems and finding solutions
- Be confident about sharing personal experiences and possible solutions, without the fear of them not being accepted as final outcomes
- Be ready and open to brainstorm with people who hold different views, even accepting their solution if it is the most suitable one for the problem

SKILLS

- Engage in discussions and organise ideas for a cursive flow and logic outcomes
- Ability to actively listen to others
- Use creativity to produce a great number of ideas in a short period of time, without relying on external sources (e.g. ChatGPT) to generate them for you and to apply those to resolve a problem

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Create a Flawless Country

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Flipcharts (for maps, brainstorming)
- Markers, pens, colored pencils
- Sticky notes
- Pre-prepared crisis cards and types of government systems (4- or 5 types)
- Laptop
- Projector

FACILITATION TIPS

1. First thing I would suggest is for them to be well aware about the skill and its specifics
2. They should know from advance with what people they will engage in order to adjust the learning activity accordingly
3. For them to be involved and to pay attention if a team struggles, to be there to give them more information if needed and support
4. To be as clear as possible during the presentation of the theoretical details, as well as the rules
5. To have enough experience to conduct such an activity
6. To have all the materials prepared in advance
7. To have a mock test of the activity to be sure they can handle everything that can go wrong

Adaptation Options:

- It is a versatile activity, because you can always change the „problems” you throw in, depending on the topic you have or the results you need to achieve
- Also, you can change even the idea, why do you need to create something, for achieving another result
- You can make it just an imaginary activity, without the flipcharts, if you don't have the time or the materials

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Create a Flawless Country

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

1. Introduction

Duration: 15 minutes

Description:

- Ask everyone to pay attention. You can start by giving some context and information about the creative resolving skill, maybe have a short presentation about the most important aspects of it (e. g. brainstorming- using the information presented about the skill) - 10 minutes
- Create the groups, depending on the number of participants, you should divide them in teams of 4 to 5 people (you can be creative when you merge them, just make sure that people that know each other are in separate groups, in order for them to network and collaborate with other people than the ones they came with) - 5 minutes

2. Rules

Duration: 15 minutes

Description:

Present the activity and explain the rules:

***IMPORTANT !** Make sure they understand everything, repeat it twice or how many times is necessary for the things to run smoothly.

„As the name suggests it, your task will be to work together to create a country from scratch. You will have all the freedom in the world regarding its name, shape, geographical positioning, number of citizens, language or any other aspect that comes to you mind. The only thing you have from us is its type of government. You will delegate someone from your team to choose a paper on which you will have this information (Depending on the number of teams, you can prepare up to 5-6 pieces of paper: democracy, oligarchy, monarchy, dictatorship, republic or another one of your choosing - material A). You will have at your disposal flipchart paper, coloured pencils, sticky notes, so GET CREATIVE. Just know, at the end, you will have to present it for the rest of the teams. Sounds easy now, but do pay attention, during your activity, we will have small surprises, so stay engaged.

But first things first, you will start the activity with a 5 minute session of brainstorming: write down as many words that come up in your mind about the task, so further you have options from what you can choose the countries name, language and all the other aspects that come to your mind”

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

03

Create a Flawless Country

3. Main activity

Duration: 40-45 minutes

Description:

1. 1.5 minute brainstorm session for them to come up with the details for their new country;
2. 30 minutes for the actual creative part- give them all the materials they need: after every 10 minutes into this, pass to everyone a card with the same problem(up to 2-3 problems for the whole period of time): you can choose from a wide variety, just bear in mind the participants age! If they are younger (16-18) be sure you choose easier ones(you can play with the writing on the cards, depending on the people you have), e.g.: (material B)

- Less than 30% of young people vote or engage in political discussions. How will you encourage youth to take an active role in shaping their country's future? Give at least two logical concrete solutions
- Some workers earn too little to afford basic needs. How can your country create fair pay for everyone? Give at least two logical concrete solutions
- Should your government increase security cameras to stop crime, or will that invade people's privacy? What's the right balance?
- Some students don't have access to good schools. How will your country make sure education is fair and available to all?
- People want to protest unfair government decisions, but officials worry about safety. How can you allow protests while keeping order? Or will you ban them completely?

4. Debriefing

Duration: 5 minutes

Description:

Stop the activity. You can ask some quick questions to see how is everyone feeling, e.g.:

- How are you feeling?
- How was the activity?
- Did you manage to reach common ground?
- Which part of it did you enjoy the most?

5. Presentations

Duration: 20-25 minutes

Each team gets to present their created country, along with the solutions they came up with for the problems they received during the activity, they choose who presents and how. 5 minutes per team should be enough. You should have some minutes left for a quick feedback, how people felt, how they resolved misunderstandings, how they got along in order to reach the same page.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

03

Create a Flawless Country

EVALUATION

Suggested Evaluation Method

- I think the best way to assess how the skill will be developed is the observation of the activity of the teams working together. This is why the one coordinating the activity should always pay attention to the groups, because the way they communicate their ideas, brainstorm, break down a problem and look at it from different and wide angles, and get to a specific solution is actually how they are using and developing their creative resolving skill.
- Also the debriefing part, where they answer to the above mentioned questions, will give you an idea of how the skill was developed and used (you can note them on sticky notes and put them on a chart to have a visual and written part)

Risks or Sensitivities

- ▲ **Risk 1** - Due to language barriers participants may not understand the rules
- **Solution:** Address this by preparing in advance a simplified version for the activity explanation
- ▲ **Risk 2** - Lack of knowledge about the terms or how a country should function
- **Solution:** Let the participants know they can use their mobile devices or laptops to look up information or explanation, as long as they don't use AI to generate ideas or solutions during the learning activity
- ▲ **Risk 3** - People may not get along in a team or have difficulties agreeing on some topics or solutions
- **Solution:** Try and mediate the situation and guide them on how they can navigate the situation, explaining that each idea is valuable, but they have to stick to the one that is the most appropriate for the situation and agreed upon by the most by team members. Everyone should feel included!



NEWS VALIDATION

Dimension of the key competence area

In the context of democratic societies, the ability to critically evaluate and validate news content is emerging as a foundational civic and political competence. In an era of digital disinformation, enhancing these competences is essential for fostering informed, participatory citizenship. This document outlines the core dimensions of news validation as a civic competence, focusing on its teaching and learning, its conceptual underpinnings, and its implications for youth engagement and competence development.

News validation is intrinsically linked to civic literacy and political awareness. It enables individuals to critically assess information sources, distinguish between fact and opinion, and identify manipulative content. Such competences are vital for deliberative democratic engagement and active participation in civic life.

Recent data from the 2024 "Giovani e fake news" study conducted by YouTrend in collaboration with the European Commission Representation in Italy reveals that 83% of young Italians say they encounter fake news frequently, yet only 39% feel confident in their ability to recognize it. Alarming, 31% admit to having shared news later discovered to be false, often due to emotional reaction or lack of verification. This reinforces the idea that exposure to online content does not necessarily translate into critical literacy, and that intentional educational strategies are needed to close this gap ([source](#)).

How does it work?

Building Awareness about News Validation in Young People

News validation is not just a technical task, it is a democratic act. For young people, learning to validate news means learning to slow down, question, and reflect in an environment that rewards speed, emotion, and visibility. It involves cultivating habits of skepticism, curiosity, and verification in the face of viral content, persuasive narratives, and politicized information. This competence allows youth to become more than passive consumers; it empowers them to become active participants in shaping public discourse with integrity and awareness. Building this awareness begins with simple but profound questions: Who created this news, and for what purpose? What evidence is presented, and what might be missing? Can this be verified across multiple sources? These are not just technical inquiries; they are acts of civic responsibility. By engaging in this type of reflection, young people begin to

COMPETENCE 3

NEWS VALIDATION

recognize bias, question assumptions, and resist the emotional triggers that disinformation is designed to exploit. News validation awareness grows through education that is experiential, dialogic, and rooted in real-world media environments. It emerges when students fact-check news in real time, compare contrasting sources, and reflect on the impact of their digital choices. It deepens when they discuss misinformation with peers, understand its effects on public trust, and participate in co-creating responsible content. In doing so, they move from passive reception to informed interaction. Moreover, validating news fosters youth agency. It helps young people recognize their power, not just as critical readers but as ethical communicators, capable of disrupting falsehoods and contributing to a healthier information ecosystem. It encourages a new kind of civic engagement—one grounded in truth, integrity, and shared responsibility.

Ask yourself

- *When was the last time I questioned a headline before sharing it?*
- *Do I know how to check the credibility of a source?*
- *What impact do my digital actions have on others' beliefs and decisions?*
- *What would it take to make news validation part of my daily practice?*



The more we ask these questions, the more we cultivate a generation that is not only digitally skilled but democratically empowered.

NEWS VALIDATION

In modern democracies, the ability to participate meaningfully in civic and political life depends not only on access to information but on the capacity to validate it. News validation, the skill of critically assessing the accuracy, credibility, and intention behind information has become an essential civic competence in an era marked by digital disinformation, algorithmic bias, and media polarization. Young people today are immersed in a media landscape where the boundaries between journalism, opinion, propaganda, and misinformation are increasingly blurred. While they consume vast amounts of content through social media, studies consistently show that many lack the skills necessary to verify sources, evaluate claims, or detect manipulative narratives. This creates a profound vulnerability: without validation, misinformation can distort their understanding of public issues, weaken democratic trust, and lead to disengagement or manipulation. News validation is directly tied to the quality of civic engagement. When individuals possess the competence to discern fact from falsehood, they are more likely to participate in democratic processes, such as voting, campaigning, or deliberating with informed judgment. Conversely, those who fall victim to fake news or ideological misinformation may withdraw from political life altogether or contribute to the spread of polarising and harmful content. For youth in particular, learning to validate news fosters both political agency and democratic responsibility. It encourages active, rather than passive, engagement with information, empowering them to challenge dominant narratives, amplify marginalized voices, and participate critically in civic life. This is especially vital in a context where social movements and political debates increasingly unfold online, and where misinformation can sway public opinion on key issues such as climate policy, elections, migration, and human rights.

BASIC LEVEL

SKILLS

- Skill of comparing news from multiple sources
- Ability to check publication dates, authorship, and consistency
- Using basic fact-checking tools to verify viral content like a checklist

KNOWLEDGE

- Basic knowledge of what misinformation and disinformation are
- Awareness of different types of news sources (official, user-generated, credible and unreliable)
- Understanding the concept of "fake news" and its impact

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

- Curiosity to understand different perspectives in news stories and willingness to fact-check
- Openness to change opinion when presented with verified evidence
- Willing to question sources instead of accepting them blindly

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

SKILLS

- Skill in detecting bias, propaganda techniques, or emotionally manipulative language
- Ability to analyse the reliability of images or videos (reverse image search)
- Skill in guiding others to evaluate digital content critically

KNOWLEDGE

- Knowledge of fact-checking tools and platforms (factcheck.org)
- Understanding media literacy concepts (bias, framing, source credibility)
- Awareness of algorithmic influence on news exposure (filter bubbles, echo chambers)

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

- Readiness to reflect on personal biases and how they affect news perception
- Demonstrate ethical responsibility when sharing content
- Courage to speak out when misinformation is shared in peer groups
- Willingness to stay informed and responsible in digital space
- Express critical curiosity about the sources of news
- Challenges misinformation in group chats or social media
- Shares reliable, evidence-based information and explains why it's trustworthy

ADVANCED LEVEL ▲

SKILLS

- Ability to facilitate peer workshops on news literacy and disinformation
- Skill in deconstructing and explaining fake news mechanisms
- Capacity to develop and share educational materials or campaigns on news validation

KNOWLEDGE

- Knowledge of how to critically analyse complex news narratives and their agendas
- Understanding the socio-political impact of disinformation campaigns
- Knowledge of strategies for debunking false information and educating others about it

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

- Commitment to promoting media literacy among peers
- Willingness to engage in constructive dialogue even in polarized discussions
- Helps build a culture of verification, digital responsibility, and media awareness in community

Suggested Self-Directed Learning Activities

SKILLS

Choosing a trending news article each day and verify its credibility using at least two fact-checking sources.

Keeping a digital journal of the findings

Google tools for fact-checkers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q0RcyKwaIU8>

Video fact

checking: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u8Pg-cD0ytg>

KNOWLEDGE

Comparing the same news item across different newspapers

(local/national/international).

Identifying tone, framing, omissions, or bias: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kim9ujIU874>

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

Creating a youth blog or podcast to review news stories, investigate disinformation, and share media literacy tips:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8pSU5LkTW-Y>

Examples of Relevant Programs, Initiatives, or Projects to learn in Groups

SKILLS

<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/european-digital-media-observatory>

<https://lie-detectors.org/>

KNOWLEDGE

<https://citizenevidence.amnestyusa.org/>
https://www.unesco.org/fr/media-information-literacy_

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

Global Media and Information

Literacy Week:

https://learning-corner.learning.europa.eu/news-and-competitions/global-media-and-information-literacy-week-2024-10-24_en

https://learning-corner.learning.europa.eu/learning-materials/staying-vigilant-online-can-you-spot-information-manipulation_en



ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

News Detectives: Unmasking Misinformation

GENERAL INFORMATION

- **Target Group:** 16-25 year olds, youth, NEETs, mixed groups, etc.
- **Group Size:** (8-24)
- **Duration:** 90 minutes
- **Applied non-formal education methods:** Experiential learning, peer learning, simulation game, group discussion, visual analysis
- **Reflection Method:**
 - Guided group debrief using reflective questions
 - Personal journaling (written or audio)

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

News Detectives: Unmasking Misinformation

LEARNING DIMENSION

• Objective(s):

To develop participants' ability to critically analyze and verify news content, to increase awareness of the mechanisms of misinformation and disinformation, to enhance media literacy and responsible online behavior.

• Link to the Competence:

This activity supports the development of digital and critical thinking competencies, especially related to news validation within the broader context of media literacy. It encourages ethical behavior, awareness of bias, and fact-checking skills.

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES

KNOWLEDGE

- Basic knowledge of what misinformation and disinformation are
- Awareness of different types of news sources (official, user-generated, credible and unreliable)
- Awareness of algorithmic influence on news exposure (filter bubbles, echo chambers)

BEHAVIORS/ ATTITUDES

- Curiosity to understand different perspectives in news stories and willingness to fact-check
- Demonstrate ethical responsibility when sharing content
- Express critical curiosity about the sources of news

SKILLS

- Ability to analyse the reliability of images or videos (reverse image search)
- Analyze and compare different media narratives
- Using basic fact-checking tools to verify viral content like a checklist

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

News Detectives: Unmasking Misinformation

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Projector or screen for media analysis
- Printed or digital news examples (real and fake)
- Fact-checking checklist handout
- Devices with internet access (smartphones/tablets)
- Flipchart and markers
- Post-its and pens
- Journaling sheets or audio recording app

FACILITATION TIPS

Be neutral when presenting controversial content, let youth lead; act as a guide more than a teacher, provide examples close to participants' reality (social media, local news)

Adaptation Options:

Can be scaled down for 60-minute classrooms or up for a 3-hour workshop, adapt news examples to specific interests (e.g. climate, health, politics), use local language versions or low-tech formats if digital tools are limited

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

1. Introduction

Duration: 15 minutes

Description:

- Welcome participants and introduce the activity goals
- Briefly discuss: "*What is fake news? Why does it matter?*" (5 minutes)
- Icebreaker: "*True or Fake?*" Quick group quiz using real/fake headlines
- Encourage first impressions: How do you decide if something is true? (10 minutes)

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

03

News Detectives: Unmasking Misinformation

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

2. Main activity

Duration: 60 minutes

Description:

1. Simulation (25 mins):

- Divide into small groups. Each group receives 3 short news pieces (1 real, 2 fake)
- Use the Fact-Checking Checklist to analyze them (printed or digital)
- Each group presents their results and justifies their reasoning

2. Reverse Image Search (10 mins):

- Show participants a viral image. Ask: Is it real?
- Guide them to use reverse image tools (Google, TinEye)

Find here the guide on how to use the mentioned tools: [Needed materials - News Validation](#)

3. Source Mapping (10 mins):

- Participants trace a piece of fake news to its origin using clues (date, source, authorship)

4. Mini-Debate (15 mins):

- Statement: "Fake news is more dangerous than censorship."
- Participants form two groups to argue for or against

3. Debriefing

Duration: 15 minutes

Description:

Reflective questions:

- What surprised you today?
- How do you normally verify news?
- Will you change anything about how you share information?
- Encourage journaling or voice recording for personal reflection

EVALUATION

Suggested Evaluation Method

- Self-assessment checklist: "What I learned today"
- Peer feedback in small groups
- Exit cards with 1 insight + 1 question participants are still reflecting on

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

News Detectives: Unmasking Misinformation

EVALUATION

Risks or Sensitivities

▲ **Risk 1** - Controversial Topics

- **Solution:** Avoid overly political or traumatic examples. Choose neutral or non-local sources for analysis.

▲ **Risk 2** - Digital Access

- **Solution:** Ensure group access to devices or provide printed alternatives

▲ **Risk 3** - Language Barriers

- **Solution:** Use simplified English or translated materials where necessary



ANALYTICAL REASONING

Dimension of the key competence area

In an era shaped by rapid information flows, strategic narratives, and algorithmic amplification, young people face unique cognitive challenges. While they are often digitally fluent, research consistently shows they struggle with evaluating the reliability, logic, and structure of information, especially when interpreting complex events or navigating conflicting perspectives (Heuer, 1999; Kahneman, 2011; Wineburg & McGrew, 2018). Analytical reasoning is essential to bridge this gap. It is the capacity to think logically, evaluate competing explanations, and form well-founded conclusions, particularly in contexts marked by uncertainty, contradiction, or incomplete data.

This competence is not merely academic: it is deeply civic. As Heuer (1999) explains in *Psychology of Intelligence Analysis*, even experienced professionals frequently fall prey to predictable cognitive errors: seeing what they expect to see, struggling to revise early judgments, and misinterpreting new data to fit preconceived notions. These limitations are magnified when young people are under pressure to respond quickly, whether in online discourse, social activism, or information crises. Without explicit development of analytical reasoning, youth risk falling into reactive, emotionally driven, or confirmation-biased thinking that undermines critical engagement.

Analytical reasoning is increasingly seen as a fundamental 21st-century competence. According to the OECD (2018), it underpins problem-solving, ethical reflection, and decision-making in democratic societies. The European Commission's DigComp 2.2 framework (2022) includes analytical and critical thinking as core digital citizenship skills, essential for evaluating digital content and navigating civic life. These frameworks underscore that reasoning is not an innate ability, but a learnable process involving metacognition, epistemic awareness, and structured reflection.

David Kahn identifies three frames for analytical reasoning: mathematical, psychological, and sociological. Among young people, the latter two are particularly relevant. Social media environments reward speed, emotion, and identity-aligned responses, making it difficult to sustain neutral or evidence-based analysis. As McGrew (2018) shows, students often rely on surface cues rather than evaluating source credibility or argument coherence. Encouraging epistemic thinking, asking who created this, why, and what evidence supports it, can significantly improve reasoning quality and reduce susceptibility to misinformation.

ANALYTICAL REASONING

Structured reasoning techniques such as hypothesis testing, scenario analysis, and lateral reading offer practical tools for youth to navigate complexity. Wineburg and McGrew (2018) demonstrate that students trained in these methods become more adept at identifying manipulation and verifying information. Analytical reasoning not only strengthens independent thought, it also builds civic resilience. It equips young people to recognize fallacies, resist persuasive falsehoods, and contribute thoughtfully to polarized public debates.

In areas like climate change, migration, and public health, where evidence competes with misinformation, analytical reasoning empowers young people to move beyond passive consumption. It positions them as active agents, capable of interpreting evidence, challenging assumptions, and participating meaningfully in democratic life.

Ask yourself

- *How often do you stop to think before reacting to something online?*
- *How do you typically verify whether an online claim is true or not? What steps do you take?*
- *What role do emotions play in how you respond to controversial or sensitive topics?*
- *Do you tend to seek out information that challenges your beliefs, or only that which confirms them? Why?*
- *How can stronger reasoning skills help you contribute more effectively to discussions on complex issues like climate change, public health, or migration?*



ANALYTICAL REASONING

Through a whole process, it's the ability to examine a topic, data, facts, statistics, behaviors, phenomena, etc. by breaking it down into component parts or constituent elements with details to push the analyze deeper in order to discover more about the issue and then to clearly identify and tackle the matter related to civic and political participation. It's the process of thinking about the issue in order to come up with an answer which is the fruit of the production of a relevant and demonstrable conclusion after interpreting and understanding all the facts. Analytical thinking can have several dimensions. At first, analytical thinking strikes us as a competence that is only logically driven which means that emotions are not included in the process of analyzing and reasoning. But analytical reasoning, especially in civic and political participation, should involve emotional analysis in order to get to an exhaustive and sharp conclusion to get to the most efficient decision.

BASIC LEVEL

SKILLS

- notice that questioning is needed to start to analyze the issue
- understand the context and secondary topics involved of a given problem, and relevant actors and consequences to get closer to the best approach
- organize ideas in a structured framework by using arguments, contradictions, analysis, statistics, testimonies, etc
- research correctly with the right tools and right search engine to have data related to civic and political participation

KNOWLEDGE

- knowing the importance of the need to learn about analytical reasoning in a civic and political participation context
- know how to brainstorm and mapmind in order to engage in discussions with students or youth, youth worker, etc to collect as much information as possible to have dataset to analyze afterwards
- knowing basic implications of civic participation in order to reason analytically by gathering dataset
- know the main steps of a coherent analytical reasoning which are : to gather relevant info, identify issues and problems, to know metacognitive skills, use multiples modes and formats, reach a founded conclusion and provide feedback and support

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

- take initiative to question to be curious about civic and political participation and to inform oneself to after analyze
- be open to receive information on civic and political participation in order to accept external and/or contradictory ideas
- be pragmatic in order to organize and structure ideas to be efficient in a framework
- be flexible for different tools and methods in researching process to collect data
- feel motivated from the matter of civic and politics in order to be implicated and involved in group-socialize and to be patient

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

SKILLS

- evaluate and select which information are useful and which are fake which leads to a dataset that can be ready to be analyzed related to civic and political participation
- break down an information in several pieces to dive deeper into analytical reasoning
- use different tools for checking if facts are reliable and trustworthy
- understand and reason through official matters by analyzing information from official documents

KNOWLEDGE

- know where to extract the sources to have the right information to compare them from different dimensions and aspects efficiently
- know the difference between qualitative and quantitative data in order to adapt one's approach in data collecting
- know that reasoning emotionally and logically can be combined to come up with the most efficient approach of the issue
- know different research engines, tools and how to use them for data collecting (surveys, questionnaires, focus groups, bing, etc)

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

- look for new processes to improve analytical reasoning related to civic and political participation
- observe and interpret information derived from non-verbal cues, such as body language, behaviors, and habits, rather than relying solely on digital or survey-based sources
- being opened to ideas and resources that may not seem useful at first glance, avoiding impulsive judgments in order to recognize their potential value
- have confidence in one's ideas and statements about civic and political participation

ADVANCED LEVEL ▲

SKILLS

- interpret and understand facts and data to reach to an evidence based conclusion
- acknowledge emotions in the reasoning process without allowing them to cloud judgment, maintaining a logical and objective approach when required
- question personal beliefs and information, actively comparing them with alternative perspectives and remaining open to new evidence - even when it challenges existing views
- understand and reason through complex issues by analyzing detailed and multifaceted information
- identify the problem to raise awareness and to come up with the right solution
- predict certain patterns to avoid inconvenience and adopt the most efficient solution

KNOWLEDGE

- know how to create patterns and scheme to help interpret and reach to a conclusion efficiently (organizational aspect)
- know that there is diversity of culture, religion, backgrounds, education and political opinion
- know how to use tools to collect and analyze data (Excel, Google Sheets, Interactive Data Dashboards, QlickView, etc.)
- know how to get to a concrete, realizable and relevant answer to come up with an analytical conclusion and have writing skills to convince
- know how to synthesize ideas after collecting enough of information, so you can restructure and don't lose the target
- know how and when to step back to have fresh mind to analyze things afterwards

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

- take initiative at the head of a group
- dare exchange with institutions, public bodies and services, and political actors
- accept the way other people are reasoning, even if it is not how we are doing it
- have confidence in your conclusion and be able to convey it in order to motivate people and encourage them in civic and political participation
- be able to speak in public and to be convincing in order to encourage and catch attention of people so they are interested in the evidence based conclusion
- be creative in our approach to have a wider overview of the problematic

Suggested Self-Directed Learning Activities

SKILLS

- **Games and simulations** that require sense-making decisions and strategic thinking
- Engage in **volunteering** and tasks that require analytical reasoning skills
- Train organizing ideas with a **mind-map**
- **Train your analytical skills**

KNOWLEDGE

- **Inform yourself about relevant topics:** e.g. citizenship, civic local engagement (example), etc
- **Assess regularly your actual knowledge, and update it if needed**
- **Consult fact-checking and scientific databases:** e.g. ERIC, ESO, Cairn, etc.
- **Use tools to inform yourself properly**

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

- **Logical games** (Sudoku)
- **Strategic games for thought-provoking situations** (e.g. Monopoly)
- **Role playing games/activities**

Examples of Relevant Programs, Initiatives, or Projects to learn in Groups

SKILLS

- **Participate with groups in analytical reasoning sessions** (e.g. MegaMisja)
- **Cine-debate** (debate after a movie's projection)
- **Escape game**

KNOWLEDGE

- **Co-write newspaper** (e.g. Taurillon)
- **Simulations** (e.g. MUN)
- **Communicate best practices about analytical reasoning**

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

- Take part in **public debates** concerning civic issues
- **Assemblées citoyennes in France**, a space where ordinary citizens can debate and exchange about political topics
- **Take part in a socially-impacting project** (e.g. Participative Budget in Warsaw)

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Civic Detectives

GENERAL INFORMATION

- **Target Group:** 16-25 year olds, NEETs, mixed groups
- **Group Size:** 10 to 20 participants
- **Duration:** 70 to 90 minutes
- **Applied non-formal education methods:** gamification, role-play, group work
- **Reflection Method:** guided questions, group debrief, group discussions

LEARNING DIMENSION

- **Objective(s):**
 - Develop questioning and listening skills in youth as well as strengthen communication strategies
 - Enhance analytical reasoning by piecing together fragmented information
 - Promote teamwork and collaborative problem-solving
- **Link to the Competence:**
 - Through collecting and organizing data systematically, separating relevant from irrelevant details
 - Through interpreting partial and sometimes contradictory information
 - Through forming hypotheses, testing them against the available facts, and adjusting based on new insights
 - Through synthesizing findings into a coherent version of events supported by evidence

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES

KNOWLEDGE

- know the main steps of a coherent analytical reasoning which are : to gather relevant info, identify issues and problems, to know metacognitive skills, use multiples modes and formats, reach a founded conclusion and provide feedback and support
- know where to extract the sources to have the right information to compare them from different dimensions and aspects efficiently
- know that reasoning emotionally and logically can be combined to come up with the most efficient approach of the issue

BEHAVIORS/ ATTITUDES

- be open to receive information on civic and political participation in order to accept external and/or contradictory ideas
- being opened to ideas and resources that may not seem useful at first glance, avoiding impulsive judgments in order to recognize their potential value
- have confidence in one's ideas and statements about civic and political participation

SKILLS

- break down an information in several pieces to dive deeper into analytical reasoning
- organize ideas in a structured framework by using arguments, contradictions, analysis, statistics, testimonies, etc.
- evaluate and select which information are useful and which are fake which leads to a dataset that can be ready to be analyzed related to civic and political participation

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Civic Detectives

MATERIALS NEEDED

- A “detective story” full of details shared with every participant (Material 1)
- Role cards for each participant with their personal story described (Material 2)
- A “detective story” revealment for trainer only (Material 3)
- Sheets of paper and pens for note-taking
- Flipchart or whiteboard for shared notes
- Timer or clock

FACILITATION TIPS

1. Observe the interview and analysis process, noting interesting moments for the debrief
2. Encourage Detectives to use a variety of questioning and information analysis techniques
3. During the debrief, help participants draw parallels between the exercise and real-life situations

Adaptation Options:

1. Add a role of an “unreliable witness” who may give partially incorrect information to make the task more challenging
2. Limit the number of questions that can be asked to each witness to encourage more thoughtful formulation
3. Organize a competition between multiple detective teams working on the same case



ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

03

Civic Detectives

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

1. Introduction

Duration: 15 minutes

Description:

- Begin with a short ice-breaker (10 min)
- Explain the activity's purpose and how it is going to look like. Participants will step into the roles of either detectives or witnesses. Detectives will investigate a mysterious incident by interviewing witnesses, who each hold some piece of information needed to crack the solution for the incident. Participants' goal is to uncover what really happened.
- Divide participants into two groups where Witnesses are at least 8 participants from the group and Detectives are the remaining participants.

2. Role distribution and briefing

Duration: 5 minutes

Description:

- Hand out role cards to each witness and instruct them that during this game they can only share what's written on their card, they can do no guessing or inventing during the whole process. They should read silently and analyze information they have received.
- While Witnesses read and analyze information on their role cards, brief the Detectives. Inform them that their task is to solve the case and they will do this by questioning witnesses, taking notes, and working together to reason out a coherent explanation to what has happened.

3. Investigation phase

Duration: 30 minutes

Description:

- Set the clock for 30 minutes which is the maximum time the investigation phase should last. You can adapt the time depending on your group's needs.
- Detectives conduct interviews with Witnesses either one-on-one, in pairs or in groups, depending on the group size and facilitator's decision. Throughout the process, you should encourage Detectives to take detailed notes, divide responsibilities, and collaborate with each other by regularly sharing their findings on a shared flipchart or whiteboard.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Civic Detectives

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

- Monitor that witnesses respond only with the information provided on their role cards as they must not improvise or offer personal interpretations. Detectives may return to witnesses that have already been interviewed unless you decide to introduce restrictions for different dynamics.
- The goal of this phase is to gather as much information as possible to later reconstruct the full picture of the incident.

4. Theory building

Duration: 5 minutes

Description:

- After completing the interviews, detectives gather to put together their findings. They should compare notes, identify connections between pieces of information, and by working together construct a timeline of events to formulate a theory of what occurred and determine who they believe is the suspect.

5. Theory presentation

Duration: 5 minutes

Description:

- After completing the interviews, detectives gather to put together their findings. They should compare notes, identify connections between pieces of information, and by working together construct a timeline of events to formulate a theory of what occurred and determine who they believe is the suspect.



ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

03

Civic Detectives

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

6. Debriefing

Duration: 15 minutes

Description:

- Conclude the activity by revealing the actual events and clarifying any unresolved details. Then, guide a structured group debrief to help participants reflect on what has happened.

Proposed questions for debriefing:

- What questioning strategies proved most effective?
- How did you work as a team?
- What aspects of the task were most challenging?
- If you could do it again, what would you do differently?
- Which skills were most important for successfully solving the case?
- How can this experience be applied to real-life situations involving information gathering and analysis?

EVALUATION

Suggested Evaluation Method

- Trainer's observation during the activity
- Structured group debriefing in the end of the activity

Risks or Sensitivities

- ▲ **Risk 1** - During this experience as a trainer you may face unequal participation as some participants may dominate and others withdraw
- ▲ **Risk 2** - During the interviewing process Detectives may expect witnesses to elaborate or guess. Clarify clearly that Witnesses can only share what's on their card
- ▲ **Risk 3** - As this activity involves some form of role-playing, we can expect that some Witnesses may feel awkward acting out roles

RATIONAL DECISION-MAKING

Dimension of the key competence area

Throughout the day, individuals make a wide range of decisions across different areas of life. These can be simple everyday personal choices, such as deciding what to wear, how much money to spend or what to eat (Parker & Fischhoff, 2005, p.1). While such routine decisions are often guided by habit or intuition, other decisions are less obvious to make and require additional information, context and experience to make well-informed choices (Uzonwanne, 2016, p. 1). This is particularly relevant when it comes to issues like climate change, political participation or social justice. In these cases, young people need more than just their intuition: they need a structured and reflective approach to make decisions.

For this reason, individuals first must assess their beliefs, which means evaluating how likely or accurate certain pieces of information are. Secondly, they need to understand their own values to know what matters to them in a specific context. Thirdly, these beliefs and values must be integrated to guide the selection of the most reasonable and appropriate option. Finally, individuals should develop a “meta-cognitive awareness” of their own thinking process, which means they should be able to reflect on their ability to make decisions and recognize where they need more information (Parker & Fischhoff, 2005, p. 3).

When presented with all the facts and by taking out their own emotions, one can make a fact-based, unbiased decision.

How does it work?

The Rational Decision-Making Process

Unlike intuitive or spontaneous decisions, the rational model follows a clear structure based on facts and logical analysis (Uzonwanne, 2016, p. 1).

The rational decision-making process involves several key steps. They can look like this (Uzonwanne, 2016, p. 4):

1. Identifying the problem: Recognizing what issue needs to be solved.
2. Identifying the solution scenario: Thinking about how a successful outcome would look like.
3. Carrying out a gap analysis: Comparing the current situation with the desired outcome to understand what is missing.

COMPETENCE 5

RATIONAL DECISION-MAKING

4. Gathering facts, options, and alternatives: Collecting all necessary information and possible choices.

5. Analyzing option outcomes: Thinking through the possible results of each alternative.

6. Selecting the best possible option: Choosing the most effective and logical solution.

Implementing the decision and evaluating the outcome: Taking action and checking if the solution worked as planned. (Uzonwanne, 2016, p. 4).

Ask yourself

- *Do I clearly understand the problem before I try to solve it?*
- *Am I using facts or am I being influenced by emotions and assumptions?*
- *Have I considered all possible options and the outcomes of each?*
- *What matters to me in this decision - and why?*
- *Have I taken the time to reflect on how I'm making this decision?*
- *Did I evaluate my past decisions and have I learned from them?*



RATIONAL DECISION-MAKING

Rational decision-making supports young people in engaging thoughtfully with political and social issues. It helps analyzing facts, consider different viewpoints and make informed choices. For example, it can guide them in deciding which political party to vote for or which youth organization or social cause to support. In times of widespread misinformation on Social Media, this skill is essential for making responsible and reflective choices.

BASIC LEVEL

SKILLS

- Read and interpret political party programs to identify pros and cons for the local community
- Draw conclusions by comparing different political views based on available sources and data.
- Communicate one's own opinion clearly and empathetically so that others can understand the perspective

KNOWLEDGE

- Understanding basic political topics and why civic participation matters
- Knowledge of decision making concepts and models to begin forming personal opinions
- Knowledge of public policies, legal frameworks and local political or community structures

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

- Willingness to research topics and apply findings when making decisions
- Acknowledging and validating others lived experiences, even when different from one's own
- Being open towards new ideas, behaviors and viewpoints that challenge personal assumptions

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

SKILLS

- Ask clarifying questions to gain deeper understanding and explore possible compromises or alternatives
- Apply knowledge of how stereotypes/prejudice can influence decisions and actively work to reduce bias
- Facilitate or moderate peer discussions to encourage knowledge-sharing and build consensus

KNOWLEDGE

- Understand what the local community needs and what a realistic outcome would be
- Possess basic knowledge about privilege and power dynamics and their impact on civic life and participation
- Knowledge of decision making concepts and models (e.g cost-benefit analysis, stakeholders mapping and PESTLE analysis)

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

- Be willing to see people in a holistic way, considering their different background, culture, language, socio-economic status etc.
- Actively challenging a “us versus them” mindset and encourage inclusive viewpoints
- Awareness of your own personal strengths and limits, be open to feedback and learn from others

ADVANCED LEVEL ▲

SKILLS

- Using educational methods for “out of the box-”thinking, problem solving, design thinking to solve problems innovatively
- Navigate conflictual or emotionally charged debates through mediation and dialogue, enabling constructive negotiation
- Apply known decision making concepts and models to highlight the advantages and disadvantages of the available options and be able to choose the most fitting to the own cause

KNOWLEDGE

- Knowledge of identifying complex connections between social, political and historical developments, including mistakes, injustices,....
- Knowledge of resolving and transforming conflict to reduce escalation and foster mutual understanding
- Know how to gather, interpret and apply reliable data in civic or political decision-making (e.g to uncover misinformation)

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

- Practice reciprocity: be aware of what you can teach others and what they can teach you
- Integrate ethical aspects (beneficence, nonmaleficence, autonomy, justice) before making a decision
- Be committed to express views/ideas and opinions in a logical, calm and ethical manner that supports civic aims

Suggested Self-Directed Learning Activities

SKILLS

Communication: Practice Nonviolent Communication (Model by Marshall Rosenberg)

<https://ccpgc.usmf.md/sites/default/files/inline-files/Nonviolent%20Communication%20A%20Language%20of%20Life%20Life-Changing%20Tools%20for%20Healthy%20Relationships%20%28%20PDFDrive%20%29.pdf>

KNOWLEDGE

Conflict resolution: The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Model, explained

<https://www.bitesizelearning.co.uk/resources/thomas-kilmann-conflict-model>

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

Venn Diagram: A Venn diagram can show the differences, similarities, and overlapping relationships between sets, i.e., groups of data. Its most common use is to describe the commonalities between opposing factions.

<https://vizzlo.com/data-viz-guide/venn-diagram/what-is-a-venn-diagram>

Examples of Relevant Programs, Initiatives, or Projects to learn in Groups

SKILLS

Simulations

Model European Parliament:

<https://mepeurope.eu/>

Model United Nations:

<https://www.un.org/en/mun>

Free Youth Parliament:

<https://www.aequitaz.org/projets/parlement-libre-des-jeunes/>

KNOWLEDGE

Youth Events

European Youth Events:

<https://european-youth-event.europarl.europa.eu/en>

Youth Survey:

<https://european-youth-event.europarl.europa.eu/en/beyond-eye/youth-survey>

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

Interrail:

<https://www.interrail.eu/en>

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Consensus Quest

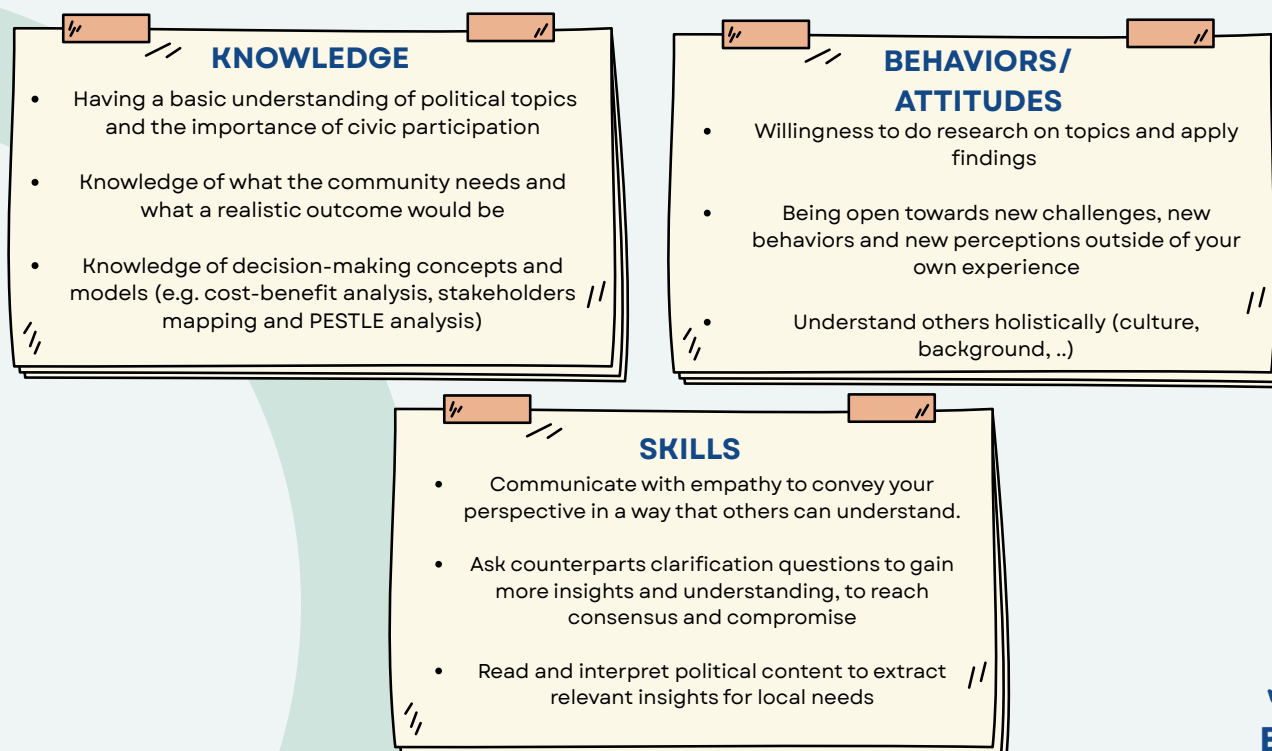
GENERAL INFORMATION

- **Target Group:** 18-25 year olds (youth and NEETs)
- **Group Size:** 12-25, (group of 4-6 people)
- **Duration:** 90 minutes
- **Applied non-formal education methods:** Role playing exercise, peer to peer, Decision making framework
- **Reflection Method:** Guided questions, group debrief, group discussions, brainstorming, decision making tool Strategic Capital

LEARNING DIMENSION

- **Objective(s):**
 - Learn to make decision based on objective facts, not emotions
 - Apply structured methods (Rational Decision-Making Model) in political/civic contexts
 - Understand other perspectives to reach shared, unbiased outcomes
 - Strengthen both individual and collective decision-making abilities
- **Link to the Competence:**
 - Encourage fact-based, realistic and inclusive decisions
 - Builds emotional distance in decision-making to avoid bias
 - Helps finding a consensual and collective reasoning
 - Applies rational thinking in civic or political engagement

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES



ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Consensus Quest

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Kahoot (or any other similar quiz platform)
- Internet-connected devices (phones, laptops)
- Projector/screen
- Printed handouts:

Rational decision making model (ANNEX1)

- Topic suggestions for “Consensus Quest”
- Watch/Alarm

FACILITATION TIPS

1. Lay down rules of good communications: don't interrupt, don't judge
2. Prepare concrete examples of civic/political/societal issues
3. Get familiar with the Rational Decision Making Model
4. As a youth worker, you should pay attention to the whole group; support quieter participants to engage
5. Make sure everyone gets the opportunity to speak, but don't push

Adaptation Options:

1. Younger participants should use simple, everyday examples, like school uniforms or about the spending of class funds.
2. For young adults, voting rights at 16 or climate change actions are appropriate; these are a bit more complex and need more analysis.
3. Adults can discuss complex issues such as immigration or healthcare policies; these discussions could be a first “introduction” into civic and political engagement.
4. Online version: Breakout rooms + virtual whiteboard etc.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

03

Consensus Quest

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

1. Introduction

Duration: 5 minutes

Description:

- Welcome the group in a big circle and explain the agenda for that day. Explain that this is a training on civic participation and political engagement and that the training will be 90 minutes in total length, with a break of 20 minutes. Tell them exactly when to expect this break. Let them all quickly introduce each other by name.
- Now start with an Ice Break Session - “Tornado”. Name an attribute (blonde hair, black shoes,...) and tell them to switch seats if it applies to them.

2. Introduction to the Topic

Duration: 10 minutes

Description:

- Give them the proper definition of rational decision making (ANNEX1)
- Discuss together, why rational decision making is important in civic participation and political engagement.
- Give them 2 minutes to write down their thoughts on Kahoot:
What examples can they give? Example: Gender Mainstreaming, Fight against discrimination, choosing a political party, ...
- After the time for brainstorming is up, show all the answers on a screen. Now you discuss the results together.

3. Methods

Duration: 10 minutes

Description:

- Explain briefly the 5 phases of the Rational Making Process:
- Define the problem. Start by identifying the issue and understanding why making a decision is important.
- Identify the decision criteria.
- Assign weight to the criteria.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

03

Consensus Quest

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

- Create a list of options and order them.
- Choose the best option and finalize your decision.
- Print out a handout or display this model on a screen, so they can use it throughout the next exercise (ANNEX1)

4. Main activity

Duration: 40 minutes

Description:

Now introduce the main activity for today:

“The Consensus Quest”

1. Explain the activity to the participants. Remind them to use the model throughout all the steps. As the name suggests, the goal of this activity is for all participants to be involved in a consensus process. Divide them into groups with minimum 4, maximum 6 people. Give them all the same topic to discuss. Before starting the debate, they need to choose a representative, who will present the group in the next phase. (5 minutes)
2. Then the group starts discussing the topic, trying to reach common ground and find commonalities. (10 minutes)
3. After the time is up, the representatives come together at the center of the circle, surrounded by the other participants, to express their group's interest. Now the representatives need to also find consensus. Everyone else listens attentively and takes notes. (10 minutes)
4. Then each of the representatives comes together into their groups again and discusses the new proposals (5 minutes).
5. The representative returns to the circle once again and tries to reach a consensus. (5 minutes)
6. They return to the groups for the last time, discussing the new input. Now the group has to designate a new representative, to ensure that the objectives are being delivered unbiased (5 minutes).
7. The new representatives come together to finalize the proposal in the center. (5 minutes)
8. A final decision is made!

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

03

Consensus Quest

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

5. Debrief

Duration: 5 minutes

Description:

Get back together in a big circle. Ask the participants about the process.

- *How do they feel?*
- *How was the decision making process?*
- *Did they feel included in the process and by the representative?*
- *Did they take into consideration other's arguments and reasonings?*
- *Did this influence their decisions?*
- *Did it maybe change their mind?*
- *Was it more clear after structuring them?*
- *How does this relate to civic/political life?*

6. Evaluation

Duration: 15 minutes

Description:

Connect the rational decision making process to a real life example on civic participation or political engagement, like finding for what party to vote for or for what cause you want to volunteer. You can even bring competence to be representative yourself - since you, unbiased, now are able to transfer ideas and find common ground.

Does knowing how to navigate through decisions and do a decision making process encourage you to take part in civic participation or political engagement?

Ask the participants to place a dot on a scale, based on how much a decision making process and knowing how to effectively navigate through information, can help you to make a fact-based decision.

For evaluation, use a dot-scale or continuum: *To what extent does this help you make more confident, fact-based decisions?*

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

03

Consensus Quest

EVALUATION

Suggested Evaluation Method

- End-of-session reflection scale
- Peer group feedback during debrief
- Facilitator observation

Risks or Sensitivities

- ▲ ● Youth may be shy or inexperienced, always be empathetic and not pushy
- ▲ ● Don't take too controversial or dividing topics for the main activity
- ▲ ● Make sure to not perpetuate stereotypes and prejudices; be aware to be inclusive
- ▲ ● Be sensitive to language proficiency and possible language barriers



ETHICAL SOCIAL MEDIA

Dimension of the key competence area

Social media has become an essential space for communication, self-expression, activism, and youth participation. However, it also raises significant ethical questions related to privacy, misinformation, manipulation, digital wellbeing, and the role of AI. Understanding these ethical challenges is crucial for promoting responsible and conscious digital citizenship. According to the EP Youth Survey 2024 (published in 2025.), 42 percent of Europeans aged between 16 and 30 mainly rely on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube to access news about politics and social issues.

This data reflects the evolution of attitudes toward news consumption, which, shifting toward a fast and easily accessible model, places younger generations at an increasing risk of misinformation.

The younger the respondents, the more likely they are to rely on social media. The report revealed that teenagers aged 16 to 18 trust TikTok and Instagram more than any other platform.

As an important source of information, social media would furnish reliable information. However, social media contents face more and more misinformation and AI generated content, that may be false. It is a major stake to guarantee fact-check information to people, especially the most vulnerable ones.

According to DeepMedia estimations, this phenomenon is increasing:

- 3x increase in video deep fakes and 8x increase in voice deep fakes from 2022 to 2023.
- An estimated 500,000 deepfakes were shared on social media in 2023.

As a consequence, this activity aims to actually empower them in facing these new threats.

How does it work?

Building Ethical Social Media in Young People

Ethical social media has its roots in rules and empathy. For young people to use social media ethically they have to be able to follow rules given to them by various apps, platforms and other forms of digital spaces through strict regulations and norms (both written and unwritten). Individual empathy plays a role in ethical use of media, there has to exist a certain level of emotional intelligence to be able to respect human rights, promote fairness and avoid harm toward individuals and/or communities.

ETHICAL SOCIAL MEDIA

Navigating digital spaces has different meanings when we talk about ethical social media such as: finding trustworthy information (knowing how to search, evaluate sources, and spot misinformation or fake news); staying safe online (protecting your privacy, managing passwords, avoiding scams, and understanding digital footprints); engaging responsibly (commenting, posting, and messaging in respectful ways; avoiding hate speech, cyberbullying); recognizing manipulation (understanding how algorithms, influencers, and ads try to shape your views or behavior); being a thoughtful digital citizen (reporting harmful content, standing up against online harm, and sharing helpful, truthful information).

Social media is also an essential place for free expression of ideas and feelings. Speaking up and sharing allows people to build a unique online community and to develop their social skills, such as leadership, patience, teamworking, active listening, and circling back to empathy. These skills are essential to really fit in a society and to engage efficiently in its mechanisms and civic participation.

In the digital era, social media are a primary source of information, identity expression, and community engagement for young people. However, to navigate these platforms responsibly, youth need more than technical skills, they need ethical awareness. Building ethical social media practices means helping young people become conscious, critical, and responsible digital citizens.

Ask yourself

- *How often do I question what I see online?*
- *Do I take time to verify before I share?*
- *Where do I find trustworthy information?*
- *What steps can I take to be more ethical on social media?*
- *How do I recognize digital manipulation? How do I become a thoughtful digital citizen?*



ETHICAL SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media are a blend of platforms that uses a form of digital communication which creates online networks and allows socializing, sharing and posting information. It encourages connection with virtual communities through text, photos, videos and other content. Marketing uses social media for ads, propaganda, and has mutual power over community forums. Since this enormous use of it, there are mandatory regulations and ethical norms such as principles and values, that are considered morally right, just or fair. These norms cover different dimensions as societal norms, social responsibility, well-being and mental health. Other important aspects are respecting human rights, promoting fairness and avoiding harm toward individuals and/or communities. Other dimensions are professional, environmental, sustainable and business ethics combined with individual competences; integrity, justice, fairness, dignity, authenticity, responsibility, inclusivity, etc. In addition with legal aspects: privacy and data protection, intellectual property.

BASIC LEVEL

SKILLS

- Opening, managing social media accounts and navigating social media platforms to get well informed about politics, education, civic topics, environmental, mental health and to share connected information
- Examining URLs, pictures and title to find additional information, to get inspired about political and civic participation
- Ability to use different tools for fact checking and verifying information before further dissemination (such as climate-related info).

KNOWLEDGE

- How to use social media (where the search bar is, how to send messages..)
- Knowing different functions of platforms and apps and what to use them for
- Being able to compare information from different sources (to be informed in the most efficient way possible)
- Understanding what fact-checking is and the importance of it, and its implications on building an informed opinion

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

- Having basic etiquette (basic values and human decency in a way where everybody is respected because we are equal)
- Engaging in discussions related to active learning and to encourage active change towards bettering the community
- Taking photos and videos (promoting yourself and civic and political views in an ethical way)
- Openness to unlearn and changing one's opinion in case of additional evidence

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

SKILLS

- Researching and learning a political Programme during elections (searching up the pamphlets and promises)
- Using ecological and non-gapha search engines (taking the ethical road and using tools that are led by ecologically driven companies). It helps in fighting hypocrisy and staying relevant and legit.
- Having the ability to contribute towards a safe space (with comments, groups, profile, sense-making, analytical thinking, interpersonal communication, active listening skills, etc)
- Having the ability to avoid online addiction and not getting overwhelmed by the information with the help of different tools (screen time limitation, google calendar for organization such as time management) and self reflection.

KNOWLEDGE

- How to differentiate political propaganda (knowing what is right or wrong)
- Knowing diversity (of culture, political views..)
- Knowing and recognizing that there is a lot of misinformation being represented in social media (to promote one's propaganda)
- Understanding image and sound rights (in a copyright and privacy sense)
- Knowledge about mental health and well being (emotions and emotional mechanisms) to understand the effect that excessive use of social media has on individuals.
- Knowledge about crisis mechanisms and management (knowing how and when to reflect on civic and political topics)
- Knowing how to recognize harassment (hateful speech, controversial and unpopular opinion being a target, body shaming, sexualization of women, mobbing, bullying) and where to find support systems (call centers, help desks, social assistance, support groups led by social associations)

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

- Recognizing your own individual strength to not let yourself be influenced by outside forces (not being easily persuaded, standing your ground)
- Aiming to educate people against the spread of false information (ex. leading discussions, sharing tools and experiences on how to begin)
- Creating a space where we promote inclusion and motivate others to be open minded (towards minorities and marginalized groups).
- Showcasing respect towards the privacy and data of others whereas it generates trust and maintains confidentiality
- Developing empathetic approach towards harassment and wellbeing issues with the end goal being to support others and helping them overcome their problems

ADVANCED LEVEL ▲

SKILLS

- The ability to recognize misinformation with the help of tools, such as browser extensions (ex. NewsGuard, Snopes)
- Reporting/blocking accounts to prevent other users from succumbing to fake news (taking educative courses to realize the first steps of suspicious behaviour)
- Opening and leading a group (student, environmental, support..). Having the ability to socially influence others in captivating them and guiding them towards civic and political participation
- Managing information and online safety issues related to privacy and security (including the use of navigation filters, passwords, anti-virus and firewall software) to deal with and avoid dangerous or unpleasant situations

KNOWLEDGE

- Knowing how to see the beginning and recognizing the course of a media becoming radicalized and turning extremist
- Knowing the steps to fight misinformation (developing journalistic techniques and ethical practices to identify credible content)
- Knowing the way the group interacts and works cohesively with each other (emotional intelligence, collaboration and co-operate)
- Knowing the applicable laws, regulations and the consequences concerning the private life of users and misinformation and data regulation so we are acquainted with our rights as social media users. (such as Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016)

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

- Showing interest in following official profiles to fight against the spread of political and civic misinformation (ex. in election times, during protests)
- Seeking to inform ourselves first, then educating others and spreading awareness about relevant topics (such as political and civic topics). Having a motivating, confident, transparent, constructive and empowering mindset.
- Leading a group realising that you have balance towards online addiction in order to collect your thoughts, and having a fresh point of view, not falling under the pressure of propaganda

Suggested Self-Directed Learning Activities

SKILLS

Take the time to think critically, observe and question.

KNOWLEDGE

Knowing where to find trustworthy sites and using browser extensions like NewsGuard (<https://www.news-guardtech.com/it/>)

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

Coaching, journaling, personal advancement (self-actualization).

Examples of Relevant Programs, Initiatives, or Projects to learn in Groups

SKILLS

https://learning-corner.learning.europa.eu/learning-materials/staying-vigilant-online-can-you-spot-information-manipulation_en

<https://www.un.org/en/mun>

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/compass/>

KNOWLEDGE

<https://citizenevidence.amnestyusa.org/> (**Amnesty International's tool for checking the different uses of a video on Youtube.**)

https://www.unicef.fr/sites/default/files/fiche_thematique-myunicef-le_cyberharcelement.pdf

<https://www.unesco.org/fr/media-information-literacy>

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

Creation of ethical information campaigns

Taking part in groups of young journalists

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Real or fake? Don't make a mistake!

GENERAL INFORMATION

- **Target Group:** 16-25 year olds, youth workers, NEETs, mixed groups, etc.
- **Group Size:** (Min 15 and maximum 25)
- **Duration:** 90 minutes
- **Applied non-formal education methods:** group production, interactive and creative work, poster creation
- **Reflection Method:** Guided questions, group debrief

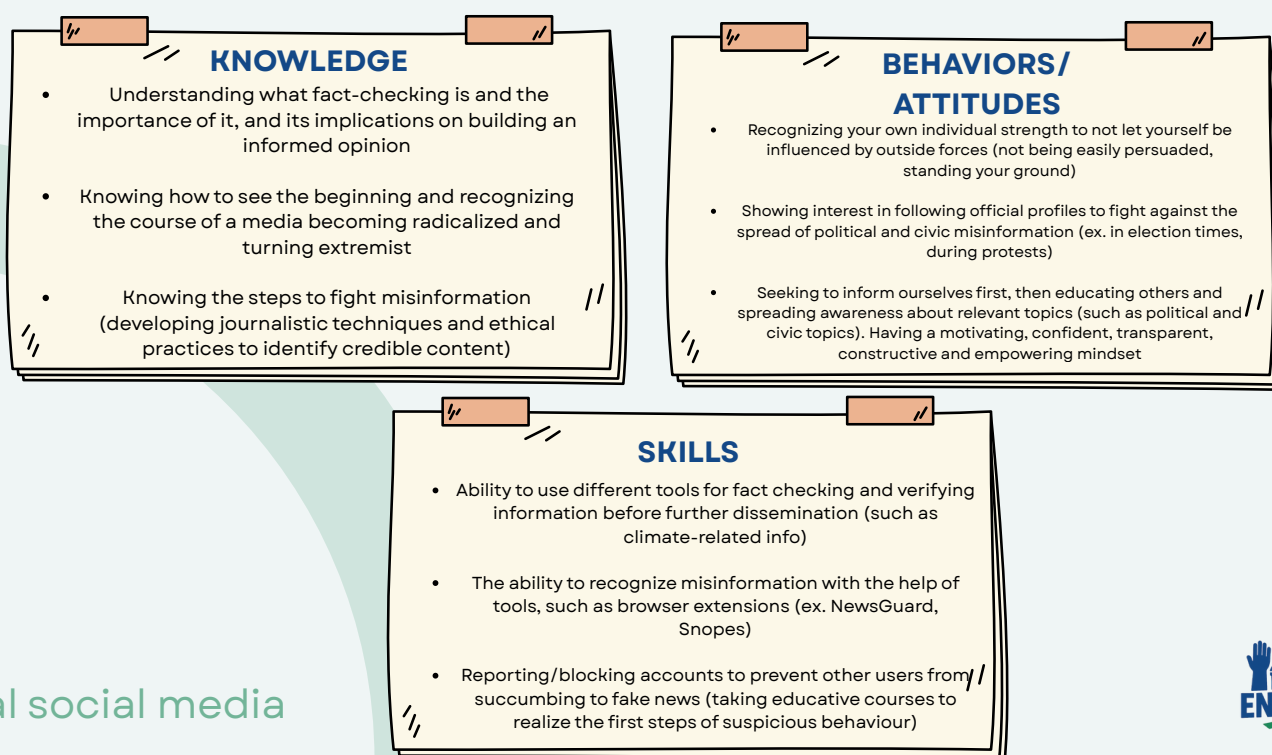
LEARNING DIMENSION

- **Objective(s):**
 - spreading awareness about misinformation in the digital world (political and civic sphere)
 - teaching participants how to fact-check on their own and how to use critical thinking to help them in their engagement
 - teaching them how to use sense-making to not be persuaded into form their own opinion
 - navigating the internet and utilizing its provided tools so they can fact check better and help in fighting against misinformation and in recognizing AI content
 - encouraging participants on when and how to report/block accounts on social media with the end goal being bettering the online community and teaching them how to think critically

• Link to the Competence:

The activity develops the Ethical Social Media competence by teaching the participants how to carefully observe the social media content and to clearly identify misinformation and AI generated contents with the help of tools and through analyzing and fact checking. Creating awareness among the participants of being active civic participants on social media.

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES



ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Real or fake? Don't make a mistake!

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Projector for videos
- Printed AI generated images and real pictures
- AI generated videos and Real video
- Pens, paper, markers for group work, post-it (at least two different colors), tape, pins
- Laptops/tablets (Min 3)
- Printer

FACILITATION TIPS

Be at least two facilitators for 15 people and 3 for 25 participants. Test the materials before the activity, prepare the room and check the digital tools. Make sure that there are enough laptops. Smaller groups in Post creation can not have more than 7 to 8 people in it.

Adaptation Options:

The activity could be adapted in other context and in other competences like News Validation, Critical thinking, Sense-Making, Collaborative Action. The content can also be changed to tackle other thematics. e.g. climate change, mental health, urbanization, etc.



ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

03

Real or fake? Don't make a mistake!

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

1. Introduction

Duration: 15 minutes

Description:

Energizer

- "Name Exchange" Energizer
- Participants stand in a circle. Each person tells their name to the person on their right, who will now use that name as their own. Everyone then begins walking around the room. Each time they meet someone, they exchange the name they were given (not their real name).
- The activity continues until everyone has recovered their original name.

2. Presentation

Duration: 6 minutes

Description:

- Presentation of how the workshop will work, the objective
- Dividing into groups

3. Main activity 1

Duration: 10 minutes

Description:

Gallery Walk

- The facilitator will provide 10 different images (5 of them AI generated, 5 real images). The images will be taped on a wall (like in a gallery). The participants will be asked to differentiate if the images are real or if they were AI generated. They will have two different colors of post-it notes (red represents AI generated images, while green represents real images). Each of them will have 5 red post-it notes, and 5 green ones which they will put under the images indicating their perception of the images.
- The facilitator will ask 3 questions to the group:
 1. *Why did you choose one over the other?*
 2. *Did you have any doubts or were you confident?*
 3. *What was your thought process while analyzing the images?*
- 6 - Needed materials - Ethical Social Media

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Real or fake? Don't make a mistake!

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

3. Main activity 2

Duration: 10 minutes

Description:

AI generated video

- The facilitator will project 2 videos (1 real and 1 AI generated video) to the group. The participants will be asked to differentiate the videos and decide which one was which. The room will be divided into two sides by tape. One side represents real video and the other represents AI generated video. After showing of each video, the participants will be asked to stand on one side of the room or the other and this will show a clear vision of their perception.
- The facilitator will ask 3 questions to the group:
 1. *Why did you choose one over the other?*
 2. *How often do you encounter suspicious video content?*
 3. *Have you ever questioned the authenticity of a post?*

- Links to the videos:

Fake: <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DGhfpgHsOg6/?igsh=MTlly3Y4NnlpMzl2YQ==>

Real: https://youtube.com/shorts/8qn_UJwHt0?si=vqXschBNJy2Vc2YC

4. Main activity 3

Duration: 30 + 10 minutes

Description:

Post creation

The group will be divided into three smaller groups. Each group will have the same task. The provided task will be to create two posters. One of the posters will be created using AI technology, while the other would be created with creative outputs and classical techniques (work in Canva etc..). After the 30 minutes pass, the group will gather back to one and each of the smaller ones will have a chance to present their work in front of the others. After each group presentation the group will vote on which of the posters was created using AI and which was created organically.

5. Evaluation

Duration: 10 minutes

Description:

1. *What did you learn about AI content?*
2. *Do you think that AI generated content is dangerous or an opportunity in social media use?*
3. *How can you apply this awareness in your daily social media use?*
4. *How can young people take action (reporting fake content, raising awareness)?*

Real or fake? Don't make a mistake!

EVALUATION

Suggested Evaluation Method

The participants will be evaluated during the group debriefing time, through a group discussion where they will have the opportunity to share their opinions about these questions:

- What did you learn about AI content?
- Do you think that AI generated content is dangerous or an opportunity in social media use?
- How can you apply this awareness in your daily social media use?
- How can young people take action (reporting fake content, raising awareness)?

Then, they will have a type of self-assessment where they will evaluate their behaviour on social media (ethical or not). Through a form of a few questions, they will be graded.

- Do you report misinformation on social media when you see it?
- Do you fact-check social media content?
- Do you feel prepared to face misinformation and AI content on social media?
- Does misinformation, especially AI generated content, affect your well-being?

Risks or Sensitivities

▲ **Risk 1** - Politically controversial or sensitive topics

● **Solution:** Be aware in selecting topics and content. It is essential not to create political group divisions so all the participants can really benefit from the activity.

● **Solution:** Be inclusive in treating the participants, whatever their gender, sexual orientation, race, etc

● **Solution:** Be neutral while speaking and explaining political and social facts.

▲ **Risk 2** - Lack of digital tools for the activity

● **Solution:** Preparing multiple digital tools in advance (laptop and/or tablets), in case the participants don't have the financial stability.

● **Solution:** Ask for more digital tools to local partners, institutions, schools, etc.

● **Solution:** Giving them access to online digital tools (Canva, Photoshop, Adobe..)

▲ **Risk 3** - Lack of digital competence

● **Solution:** Educating them to basic use of a computer if needed.

● **Solution:** Ensure sufficient supervision of the participants so they will not be in difficulty or not-active

▲ **Risk 4** - Language barriers

● **Solution:** Providing subtitles on the videos.

● **Solution:** Favour the native language for the presented content (in case of a one nationality workshop)

▲ **Risk 5** - Lack of group cohesion that affects group productivity

● **Solution:** Doing team building exercises, and organizing games that bring the group together.

● **Solution:** Choose a group leader in every group

Dimension of the key competence area

Young people are growing up today with an overwhelming amount of information that is rapidly spreading and filled with uncertainty. They are considered digital natives and usually confident in navigating digital platforms, however, they still can struggle to actually distinguish between legit and unreliable information. According to a study by the European Commission in 2024, 76% of young Europeans have encountered disinformation and fake news a week before taking the survey (European Commission, 2024). 42% of young people from 16-30 named Social Media as the main source of information on political and societal issues; the younger the respondents, the less likely they were to take their information from online news platforms.

Therefore it is not enough to solely look at the facts presented - one has to question them, to make sense of them. This is where sensemaking becomes essential.

Many young people in Europe show general interest in politics and social issues. According to the EU Youth Report 2024, more than 70% of young people vote in elections (European Commission, 2025). The European Union also published data showing that Europe's youth are discussing political issues, joining youth organisations and participating in elections, especially involving topics such as inequality and climate change (Publications Office of the European Union, 2023). However, participation becomes most effective when young people are able to interpret these complex issues, understand their causes and consequences and reflect on their own role in shaping solutions.

How does it work?

Building Sense-making in Young People

Sensemaking is the ability to connect new information with what is already known - to understand complex issues, see patterns and ask critical questions in unfamiliar and uncertain situations. (Axelrod, R. (2014). Sensemaking starts when something feels confusing, surprising or does not match the previous beliefs and experiences (Odden and Russ, 2019). It can be a minor gap in understanding and when a situation or a fact presented does not make sense. In times of widespread disinformation and fake news, especially when much of the information is taken from unverified social media sources, a critical mind is more crucial than ever. Being able to connect data, experiences and social realities to foster critical thinking and take informed action.

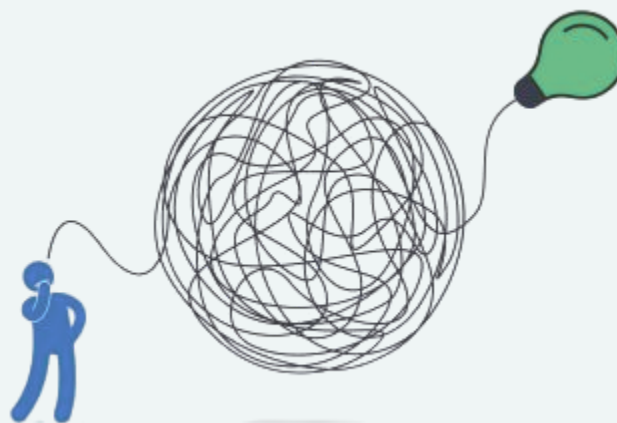
SENSE-MAKING

When young people learn how and when to question, explore and put information into context (e.g Eurobarometer surveys), they develop awareness.

Sense-making transforms passive observation into active participation - from only seeing a post about a political issue on Social Media to deeply understanding it, looking from all the aspects and then acting with purpose.

Ask yourself

- *When I read or hear about an issue, do I ask myself: What's really behind this?*
- *Do I try to understand different sides of an issue before I form my opinion?*
- *Is it my own opinion, based on research, or am I reciting someone else's opinion?*
- *Am I aware how my background, emotions or own experiences shape what I believe?*
- *How do I make sense of certain topics (e.g climate change, inequality) and where do I go for trusted information?*
- *Can I explain an issue I care about in a way that helps others understand it too?*



SENSE-MAKING

Civic and political participation is important because it helps young people have a voice in decisions that affect their lives and future. Voting, joining discussions, taking part in community activities - all of these activities are first steps to influence laws and policies. This participation also strengthens democracy and helps build a fair and active society, where everybody contributes to a more vibrant civic and political life.

BASIC LEVEL

SKILLS

- Gather and organise relevant information using trustworthy sources (e.g Google Scholar, official statistics portals)
- Ask clarifying questions to make confusing or contradictory information more understandable
- Analyse basic information to draw conclusions, recognising clear cause-effect relationships between events or ideas

KNOWLEDGE

- Understand different types of information and their role in shaping public debates
- Understand how sense-making connects with other skills like critical thinking, empathy, .. in civic participation
- Understanding the importance of reflexion and questioning to update one's views

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

- Be willing to explore unfamiliar issues, even when they seem complex or uncomfortable
- Trust in their own ability to contribute in a meaningful way and their potential to make positive changes
- Aligning actions with personal conclusions
- Remain open to information that challenges their views and consider how it possibly influence or reshape their position

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

SKILLS

- Expand research by using verified academic platforms (e.g [Academia.edu](https://www.academia.edu/), EU open data portals) to access more detailed and diverse information for deeper interpretation
- Compare the different levels and types of information, critically evaluating the reliability of sources, the roles of all involved parties and the broader context
- Collect data to draw more nuanced conclusions that reflect patterns, contradictions and contextual clarity

KNOWLEDGE

- Understand the deeper meaning of gathered information (symbolically, emotionally and ideologically)
- Recognise how events, involved parties and systems are casually and relationally connected
- Apply interpretative frameworks (historical, cultural, economic) to make sense of civic issues
- Understand how argumentation, dialogue and negotiation can reveal blind spots and foster new perspectives
- Know methods to identify biases, gaps in reasoning and decision-making

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

- Remain open to different contexts and narratives when analysing information
- Demonstrate flexibility in thinking and adapting their interpretation as new evidence
- Show initiative to update and improve own sense-making skills, including willingness to engage with unfamiliar tools, perspectives or methods

ADVANCED LEVEL ▲

SKILLS

- Anticipate potential outcomes and implications when engaging in complex sense-making processes
- Support conclusions with well-structured evidence like data, expert insights
- Guide others in navigating uncertainty, using sense-making as a collaborative and transformative tools

KNOWLEDGE

- Understand how to clearly communicate sense-making outcomes to different audiences (adapting tone and format accordingly)
- Understand how networks of people, places and events are dynamically interrelated and how these relationships shape civic and political realities
- Be able to use structured thinking and reflection to make sense of complicated or confusing topics

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

- Demonstrate openness to radically different or conflicting perspectives and use them as tools for deeper insight
- Try out different strategies and ideas from various areas to improve your sense-making process
- Embrace “out-of-the-box” thinking as a way to reframe problems and imagine alternative civic futures

Suggested Self-Directed Learning Activities

SKILLS

Keep the **daily notes of daily achievements** of chosen subjects that you feel need and wish to change (for example, food intake). After a period of time, you collected the data of each day, to be able to see the progress, possible achievements, and if you reached the given aim. You can make it by yourself as a journal - to feel more committed and creative (here is an example on how to do it - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WEujlaY6hEg>) or you can keep online notes on your phone or laptop (You can download apps like Stoic., Daily Diary, My Diary)

KNOWLEDGE

Disney method workshop
<https://www.designmethodsfinder.com/methods/walt-disney-method>

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

<https://www.debonogroup.com/services/core-programs/six-thinking-hats/>
 By using this **guide**, you can be able to see different perspectives of the situation, how differently people react in the same situation.

Examples of Relevant Programs, Initiatives, or Projects to learn in Groups

SKILLS

Relevant programs inside Erasmus+ for young people: **Youth Exchanges** - you can find programs on application designed for young people who are interested in participating - <https://applyandgo.app/>
Workshop - a workshop designed for young people to gain skills for easier accomplishment of sense making: <https://www.bcfamilyinnovationlab.ca/initiatives/youth-voices/sensemaking-workshop/>

KNOWLEDGE

European Youth Parliament- (<https://eyp.org/who-we-are/>) - helps young people in gaining knowledge on civic engagement
Workshop
 This workshop is designed for young people to learn how to collect information and collaborate with others at the same time.
 First, everyone, for themselves, writes a definition of a given term (for example civic participation). After everyone has finished their own definition, they make a pair with the person on their right, and they have to make a new definition by combining what they have written. After that part is finished, the pair combines with other pair (in a group of four) to make a new definition. After that part is done, the groups of 4 combine into 8 and define one last definition. Here, participants have learned how to gather information, how to give more detail to the gathered information and how to collaborate.

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

Programs inside Erasmus+ **Volunteering** - European Solidarity Corps (ESC) - European voluntary service that helps young people to find places and organizations where they can volunteer (https://youth.europa.eu/go-abroad/volunteering/opportunities_en) and official Facebook group for ESC (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1147016848762453/>)

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Thinking from All Angles: A structured Sense-making Simulation

GENERAL INFORMATION

- **Target Group:** young people 16-25 years old
- **Group Size:** 18 (3 groups x 6 persons)
- **Duration:** 90 minutes
- **Applied non-formal education methods:** De Bono - Six Thinking Hats method, Role-based group work
- **Reflection Method:** Guided group reflection, Group debriefing with structured questions, Peer discussions

LEARNING DIMENSION

• Objective(s):

- To avoid prematurely jumping to conclusions and making decisions based on limited or biased information
- To support young people in experimenting with new ways of thinking and behaving, especially in unfamiliar or complex situations
- To develop the ability to analyze civic and social problems from different perspectives, individually and in teams

• Link to the Competence:

- Allowing participants to practice and understand different styles of thinking
- Helping participants to gather, compare and synthesise information to draw reasoned, evidence-based conclusions
- Helping participants to process complex information from cognitive, emotional and strategic angles
- Encouraging to adapt their thinking in response to conflicting inputs/group dynamics

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES

KNOWLEDGE

- Understand how to evaluate a problem from different perspectives
- Understand different concepts of sense-making
- In group discussions, they will understand how negotiation and argumentation help shift perspectives and improve group decisions

BEHAVIORS/ ATTITUDES

- Show greater openness to improvising and adapting when processing complex information
- Reflect more consciously on the quality and logic of their own decisions
- Demonstrate comfort with ambiguity, knowing that conclusions often come through dialogue and perspective-shifting

SKILLS

- Integrate and respect other participants' ideas using parallel thinking to build more inclusive group conclusions
- Apply structured tools to analyse civic issues with greater depth and balance
- Adapt their thinking style to fit the needs of different social and civic challenges

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Thinking from All Angles: A structured Sense-making Simulation

MATERIALS NEEDED

- ANNEX1: Printed Hat Role Cards + short explanations of each of the Six Thinking Hats
- ANNEX2: Print Handout for further explanation
- Ideas for issues to be discussed
- ANNEX3: Group Name Cards + Roles for the energizer (Carrots; Cucumbers; Potatoes+Grandfather, Grandmother, Father, Mother, Son, Daughter)
- Music and Speaker for energizer
- Flipchart Paper & Markers

FACILITATION TIPS

1. Emphasize links to critical thinking, tolerance and adaptability in complex or unfamiliar situations
2. Ensure that the participants fully understand each “thinking hat” before starting
3. Link the activity to real-life situations and civic participation/political engagement

Adaptation Options:

- This activity is for minimum 3 groups, each group containing only 6 participants. It is possible to do it in as many groups as possible.
- Topics are flexible and can be adapted based on context
- Online-friendly! Also works in breakout-rooms
- For younger participants, fewer hats and less complex topics can be used



SIX THINKING HATS

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

03

Thinking from All Angles: A structured Sense-making Simulation

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

1. Introduction

Duration: 15 minutes

Description:

- Each participant gets a paper with a random role and group written on it. The roles include “Grandfather”, “Grandmother”, “Father”, “Mother”, “Son” and “Daughter” (ANNEX4); the groups are “Carrots”, “Cucumbers” and “Potatoes” (ANNEX3) (for each group there are written all 6 roles). All papers are facedown to keep the contents hidden.
- In the center of the room, three chairs are back-to-back in a star-like formation. The facilitator is playing music and the participants are going around the chairs. While they are circling around the chairs (in two directions), they are interchanging the papers as much as possible with each other, while papers are always facing down so that the roles and groups are not visible. Once the facilitator stops the music, the participants have to find their group name and organize themselves by their roles (from oldest to youngest) and sit in the appropriate order. The group that completes this task first and correctly wins the round.
- The energizer is repeated several times, with the first round being the practice round. The music should be energizing and fun - ideally a national song from one of the countries represented in the group.
- Outcome: This energizer builds energy, loosens group dynamics and randomly creates three working groups based on the final roles and group names. These same groups will be used in the main activity.

2. Main activity

Instructions and Set Up:

Duration: 5 minutes

Description:

- Each group of 6 receives:
- One of the Six Thinking Hats (white, yellow, black, green, red, blue - ANNEX 1) and a small description of their hat's function (ANNEX 1).

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

03

Thinking from All Angles: A structured Sense-making Simulation

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

- According to the Six Thinking Hats methodology, based on De Bono: White hat (data, information), Yellow hat (strengths), black hat (weaknesses), green hat (opportunities), red hat (options) and blue hat (coordinator).
- Participants analyze a social problem using only the thinking style assigned to their hat. The blue hat serves as group facilitator/coordinator. Group stays within their assigned roles during discussions.
- After each round of 15 minutes, the participants switch roles, ensuring no one repeats the “same hat”. After the 15 minutes have passed, they are again given the new task, and they have to switch roles.

Problem no.1

Duration: 15 minutes

Description:

The analysis of the first problem by using the Six Thinking Hat method:

Problem no.1: YOUNG PEOPLE ARE NOT INVOLVED ENOUGH IN THE LOCAL SOCIETY MATTERS

Problem no.2

Duration: 15 minutes

Description:

The analysis of the first problem by using the Six Thinking Hat method:

Problem no.2: MIGRANTS DON'T HAVE THE SAME RIGHTS AS LOCAL CITIZENS

Problem no.3

Duration: 15 minutes

Description:

The analysis of the first problem by using the Six Thinking Hat method:

Problem no.3: THE TECHNOLOGY IS LIMITING YOUNG PEOPLE'S THINKING PROCESS AND CREATIVITY

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

03

Thinking from All Angles: A structured Sense-making Simulation

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

5. Debriefing

Duration: 25 minutes

Description:

Facilitators regroup in a circle for a guided reflection facilitated by the trainer.

Questions for debriefing:

- *Which thinking hat felt easiest or most natural for you? Which one challenged you?*
- *How did switching roles affect your understanding of the problems?*
- *What did you notice about your thinking when you were restricted to one perspective?*
- *What helped your group reach clearer or more creative conclusions?*
- *Can this kind of thinking be useful in real or civic or political life?*
- *Did your opinion on any issue shift during the activity?*

EVALUATION

Suggested Evaluation Method

- Facilitator observation during the activity (argumentation, openness to change perspectives)
- Quick peer feedback in each group
- Group debriefing

Risks or Sensitivities

- ▲ ● Beware of too controversial topics; this should be a safe space
- ▲ ● Dominant personalities may overtake group roles - facilitators should monitor and intervene to ensure equal contribution

DATA ANALYSIS

Dimension of the key competence area

Data analysis has evolved from a technical task into a powerful driver of knowledge, innovation, and societal transformation. In an age of ubiquitous digital footprints, the ability to extract meaning from raw data is not only a professional skill, it is a civic responsibility. Data analysis is not just about numbers. It's about asking the right questions, making informed decisions, and recognizing the broader consequences of those decisions.

Data no longer just reflects the world. It helps shape it. At its core, data analysis refers to processes such as inspecting, cleaning, transforming, modelling, and interpreting data to discover useful information and support decision-making (Kelleher & Tierney, 2018). But today's data landscape, shaped by massive, often unstructured datasets and increasingly automated systems, demands a broader set of competences: technical precision, ethical sensitivity, and critical thinking.

Mayer-Schönberger and Cukier (2014) argue that we increasingly repurpose data for uses far beyond its original context. This creates immense innovation potential, but also raises risks of misinterpretation, surveillance, or exclusion. As Virginia Eubanks (2018) shows, algorithmic decision-making can reinforce existing inequalities, especially when based on biased or incomplete data. Kahneman's research (2002) reminds us that human cognition remains highly influenced by context, framing, and perceived authority, even when we think we are being rational.

The integration of artificial intelligence has further transformed the field. AI-powered systems can analyze language, images, and behaviors at scale, revealing patterns that humans might miss (Patterson & Gibson, 2018). Yet the complexity of such systems makes it difficult to trace or justify their conclusions. Cheney-Lippold (2017) notes that algorithms increasingly define our digital identities and social roles, often without our knowledge or consent. This shift demands that analysts not only interpret data but also interrogate it.

Data analysis is increasingly used in real-time, high-stakes environments: from healthcare diagnostics to predictive policing to smart city management. The question is no longer just what we can do with data, but what we should do. This calls for reflection on the original purpose of data collection, the transparency of models, and the real-world impact of the insights we generate.

DATA ANALYSIS

How does it work?

Building Responsible Data Analysis Competencies

Building responsible data analysis skills requires more than technical training. It involves cultivating curiosity, ethics, and critical thinking. At its core, responsible data analysis begins with understanding the purpose behind the data: Why was it collected? Who collected it, and for what reason? Competent analysts must learn to evaluate not just the numerical accuracy of datasets, but also their social context and potential biases. Learning to clean, visualize, and model data is essential, but so is asking whether the dataset truly represents the population or phenomenon it claims to reflect. Transparency, reproducibility, and accountability are the pillars of ethical data work. Analysts must be aware of the limitations of their tools, especially when using AI models that may obscure decision logic or amplify hidden patterns in biased ways. Learning how to interpret results with humility, rather than overconfidence, is critical. Building these competencies means learning to see data not as neutral facts, but as fragments of reality shaped by human choices. This includes learning when not to analyze: sometimes, the absence of data tells us more than its presence.

Ask yourself

- *Do I understand where my data comes from?*
- *Have I questioned whether my dataset is complete and representative?*
- *Am I aware of the potential impact of my analysis on real people?*
- *Do I know the limits of the models I use?*
- *How do I ensure fairness, transparency, and accountability in my work?*
- *Am I building insight or just processing information?*



DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis competence is essential for effective civic and political participation in modern societies in Europe and worldwide, as it enables citizens to critically evaluate information, make informed decisions, and hold public institutions accountable for their actions and decisions. Data-literate citizens are better equipped to detect statistical manipulation and bias, thereby strengthening democratic accountability and transparency among society as a whole.

BASIC LEVEL

SKILLS

- spot when data or evidence is needed in civic discussions
- interpret basic statistics or graphs
- use simple tools (e.g. Google search, survey platforms) to gather raw data

KNOWLEDGE

- understand what data is and how it relates to public issues
- know basic sources of civic data (e.g., statistics offices, NGOs, media)
- know that data can be biased or incomplete

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

- be curious about the stories behind numbers
- show openness to learning from data
- be willing to question surface-level claims

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

SKILLS

- analyze and compare data from multiple sources
- identify misleading statistics or visualizations
- evaluate the credibility of data sources

KNOWLEDGE

- know the difference between correlation and causation
- understand datasets, sampling, margins of error
- know how civic data is gathered (e.g. censuses, surveys, digital traces)

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

- respect complexity and avoid oversimplification
- be cautious about using data to generalize unfairly
- engage with civic issues using evidence-based reasoning

ADVANCED LEVEL ▲

SKILLS

- turn diverse data into insights that have meaning
- use tools (e.g., Excel, Google Sheets, Tableau, SPSS) to explore data
- draw conclusions and make recommendations based on data

KNOWLEDGE

- understand ethics of data collection and use
- know how algorithms and AI interpret social data
- know limitations of “big data” as well as qualitative insights

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

- advocate for responsible, transparent data use in civic life
- encourage data literacy in peers
- challenge injustice or inequality exposed through data

Suggested Self-Directed Learning Activities

SKILLS

Use **websites** like [Statista](#), [Our World in Data](#), or [Gapminder](#) to practice reading charts

Complete a **basic online data analysis course** (e.g., [Coursera](#))

Use tools like [Google Forms](#) to collect and analyze your own mini dataset

Search for **specific datasets** using advanced [Google](#) search tips (e.g., using "filetype:xls" or "site:.gov").

KNOWLEDGE

Explore websites of **national statistical offices** (e.g., [Eurostat](#), [Statistics Poland](#))

Follow **interactive data blogs** (e.g., [Our World in Data](#), [Gapminder](#))

Read or listen to **investigative journalism** that uses data (e.g., [The Pudding](#), [FiveThirtyEight](#))

Practice identifying examples of spurious correlations using websites like [Spurious Correlations](#)

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

Seek out data that contradicts your views and reflect on what new perspectives it offers

Practice **fact-checking** viral claims using tools like [Snopes](#), [FactCheck.org](#), or your country's fact-checking platforms

Use the "**5 Whys**" technique to dig deeper when you encounter simple claims – ask "Why?" or "What's behind this?" repeatedly

Examples of Relevant Programs, Initiatives, or Projects to learn in Groups

SKILLS

Hackathons or datathons (e.g., [EU Datathon](#))

[Youth Data Lab](#)

KNOWLEDGE

[Open Data Day](#) - annual event where groups explore how open data can be used to address local issues

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

[European Youth Parliament](#) or other youth councils which entail group debates and policy simulations using real data to support arguments

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Data Tells Us What Should the City Fund

GENERAL INFORMATION

- **Target Group:** youth (16–25) or mixed groups
- **Group Size:** 10–20 participants
- **Duration:** 60–75 minutes
- **Applied non-formal education methods:** Roleplay, improvisation, structured debate, ethical reflection
- **Reflection Method:** Guided questions, ground debrief, group discussion

LEARNING DIMENSION

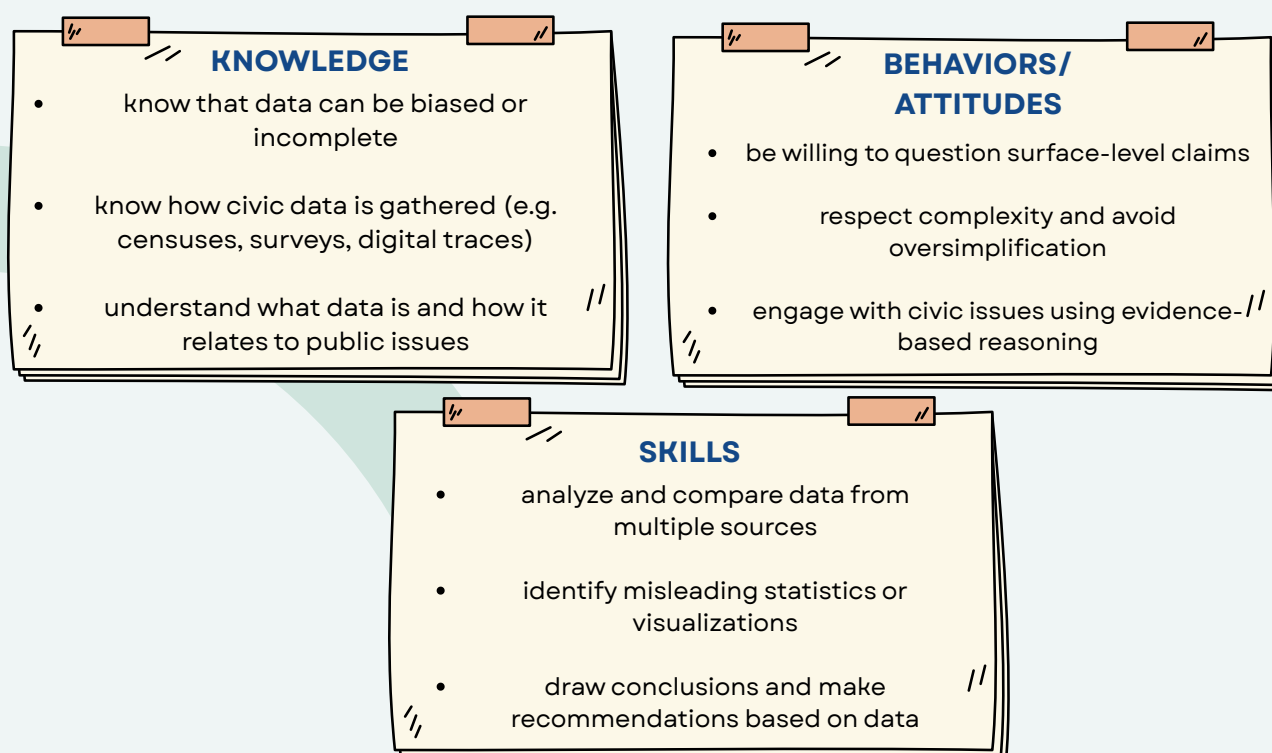
- **Objective(s):**

To help participants explore how different actors use data to tell stories, justify decisions, or shape public opinion and to reflect on ethical responsibility in data interpretation.

- **Link to the Competence:**

This activity builds data analysis competence by putting participants in the shoes of various stakeholders who must use (or misuse) data to persuade, defend, or challenge narratives.

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES



ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Data Tells Us What Should the City Fund

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Chairs are arranged like a courtroom or debate circle
- Advocates' role cards printed out (Material 1)
- Sheets of paper and pens for note-taking
- Flipchart or whiteboard

FACILITATION TIPS

- Encourage participants to lean into their characters as it's okay to exaggerate slightly to see the tension between roles.
- If the group is shy, in the Advocates group assign roles in pairs or triples to reduce pressure.
- Use a flipchart to note keywords that come up in the presentations of the Advocates (e.g., bias, fairness, fear, transparency).

Adaptation Options:

- You can make an activity shorter by assigning less Advocate roles and shortening the debate section.
- Limit each Advocate's speaking time to 1 minute if time is constrained.
- During the debate you can introduce a plot twist, e.g., someone reveals that the statistic was misreported or outdated



ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Data Tells Us What Should the City Fund

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

Ice-breaker activity.

Description:

Begin with a light warm-up

1. Introduction

Duration: 5 minutes

Description:

- Introduce to the participants the activity's purpose and structure. Participants will explore how the same statistic can be interpreted differently depending on one's perspective and priorities.
- The group will simulate a city youth council meeting. A budget of 1 million euros is available for one of proposed youth-focused initiatives. Participants will take on different roles:
 1. At least 5 of them will act as Youth Council Members, who will listen, ask questions, and vote at the end.
 2. All other participants will act as Advocates, each representing one specific policy proposal.

2. Role assignment and statistics introduction

Duration: 10 minutes

Description:

- Assign roles to participants. Select at least 5 people to serve as Youth Council Members.
- Distribute Role Cards (Material 1) to the remaining participants, who will act as Advocates. Each Advocate will receive a short profile describing their role, proposal, and talking points and each of the roles is based on a different interpretation of the core data point. Some Advocates may work in pairs or even in triples if the group is big enough.
- Present the data point to the whole group of participants:
- **“65% of youth aged 14–24 say they do not feel represented in city decisions.”**

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Data Tells Us What Should the City Fund

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

- Present 4 decisions on which Youth Council Members will vote by the end of the game:
 1. Youth Employment Program
 2. Green and Safe Public Spaces
 3. Mental Health & Counseling Centers for Youth
 4. Youth Culture & Arts Hubs
- Allow Advocates time to silently read and prepare their arguments. After that, provide a short briefing to the Youth Council Members. Inform them that they will listen to all proposals, ask questions, and ultimately vote for the initiative they believe will best address the issue of youth in the best way.

3. Advocacy phase

Duration: 25-30 minutes

Description:

- Each Advocate or Advocate group presents their proposal in a short 2-minute statement. Presentations should include the information on how the Advocate interprets the data point, why their solution is the best response to that issue and supporting arguments or statistics
- After each presentation, encourage the Council Members to ask follow-up questions. Advocates should respond concisely, staying within their role.

4. Council deliberation and voting

Duration: 5-10 minutes

Description:

- Youth Council Members step aside to discuss briefly or may do so in front of the group. They should discuss which proposal is most convincing and important for the city. Each Council Member casts one vote. The initiative with the majority wins the funding.
- The initiatives Members vote for are as follows:
 1. Youth Employment Program
 2. Green and Safe Public Spaces
 3. Mental Health & Counseling Centers for Youth
 4. Youth Culture & Arts Hubs

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Data Tells Us What Should the City Fund

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

5. Debriefing

Duration: 10-15 minutes

Description:

- Facilitate a group discussion to reflect on the experience that has happened.
Suggested debriefing questions:
 - What did you notice about how the same data point was used differently?
 - What made some arguments more persuasive than others?
 - Did your perspective shift during the activity? Why or why not?
 - How does this experience reflect real-world situations?
- Encourage both Advocates and Council Members to share their reflections. Emphasize how data can be interpreted in multiple ways and how critical thinking plays a role in public decision-making.

EVALUATION

Suggested Evaluation Method

- Trainer's observation during the activity
- Structured group debriefing in the end of the activity
- A simple participant self-assessment or a one-minute reflection prompt, such as: "What did you learn today about how data influences decisions? What will you do differently next time you see a statistic or data?"

Risks or Sensitivities

- ▲ ● Some participants may become emotionally invested in the role so be ready to de-role gently.
- ▲ ● Stronger speakers may dominate during Advocate's presentations so be mindful of group dynamics and encourage balanced involvement
- ▲ ● Some participants may feel attached to their proposal or take rejection personally so they may experience frustration if the proposal is not chosen by the Council

SOCIAL INFLUENCE

Dimension of the key competence area

The 2024 European elections have shown a decline in voter turnout among young people under 25 years old, with only 36% of eligible voters in this age range who participated. This is highlighting a 6% decrease from the 42% turnout of young people under 25 in the 2019 elections (2024). This analysis shows a decrease of young people's involvement in civic participation and political engagement. Therefore, to counter this "lack" of participation, one of the main competences to develop in young people is social influence.

Social influence among people is widely understood to be a universal component of the human experience. According to Gerber and Green (2010), social influence is related to a "basic human drive to win praise and avoid chastisement". People are induced to act in the way they observe others acting as B. Bimber and H. Gil de Zúñiga highlighted in their research (2022). Social behavior is also shaped by imitating or modeling others' behavior, and individuals learn behaviors by observing those around them (Bandura, 1986). Therefore, social influence has an effect on young people when they are exposed to the behaviors and norms of others and observe the positive outcomes others receive from such behaviors. According to E. Morin (1996), social influence is part of a broader process of cultural and symbolic construction, where media, education, language and shared myths play a key role. Social influence is a process of interaction between the person who wields power and the target of that power. Still, according to E. Morin, it is possible to identify four different forms of social influence.

The first form of social influence resides in normalisation which can be understood as a process of mutual adjustment between the members of a group. It corresponds to a situation where the group is under construction and norms have yet to be invented, and individuals interact to reach a compromise. This involves each member of the group making concessions in order to reach agreements. The second form consists in conformity, which refers to a situation where an individual adopts an attitude that conforms to the group's models. The individual experiences an internal conflict between his own convictions and the values of the group to which he is supposed to belong. Obedience is the third form of social influence, residing in the submission to the injunctions of an individual representing the authority figure. This is where leadership comes in, since authority can only be exercised through a leader who is legitimised and accepted by the group. Finally, social influence resides in innovation, which unlike the other forms of influence, is expressed more in the context of

SOCIAL INFLUENCE

deviance or variance. Deviants are characterised by non-conformity, deliberately departing from the values of the group and favouring their own values. Deviants may be rejected by the group, but they can also influence it. If the ideas put forward by the deviant are judged to be original, it is possible for him to change the majority tendency of a group.

How does it work?

Encouraging Social Influence in Young People

Social influence is primordial to encourage young people's civic participation and political engagement, allowing them to take on meaningful participation and fostering their feeling of being part of society. Creating opportunities for young people to actively participate in discussions, debates or campaigns, empowers them to realise they are part of a larger social and political system. Role models, such as young activists or community leaders, play a key role by demonstrating how individuals can affect change, especially nowadays, through the digital sphere.

Developing social influence as a competence for young people is determining for their involvement in civic and political participation. Building social and political influence in young people encourages a stronger sense of civic responsibility and commitment to democratic values, increases confidence in expressing opinions, develops leadership skills and teamwork, and expands motivation to participate in elections and community decision-making.

Ask yourself

- *How often have you made a choice based on the decisions of others?*
- *How much do you think your choices can influence those of your friends and community?*
- *Have you ever changed your mind because of something a friend said or did and what made you trust their opinion?*



SOCIAL INFLUENCE

BASIC LEVEL

SKILLS

- Ability to communicate with externals and counterparts to talk to them about their own organisation and its ideas and express own opinions
- To mobilize and assemble fellow peers for group actions such as community clean ups
- To gather people so that they understand the importance of working as a group
- Ability to represent your organisation in front of groups and institutions, to demonstrate its objectives and its relevance

KNOWLEDGE

- Knowing how to open up dialogue and keep up a simple conversation
- Understanding of the basic rules to create links between people and gather them around a same cause
- Knowledge about their own organisation, its activities, its functioning and regulations
- Knowing that participation can take many different forms such as associations, political parties, communities, on social media

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

- Show willingness to be part of collective action positive influence and demonstrated respect for others' opinions
- Being emphatic and open minded in order to understand others from their own point of view
- Being committed to a cause, a subject, an idea, making you want to get involved

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

SKILLS

- Ability to communicate on a subject to engage and empower others around it
- Ability to create a network to make your organisation's voice heard and bring out its values
- Ability to speak up for your organisation in order to engage people and create an interactive dialogue

KNOWLEDGE

- Knowing how to be persuasive and how to convince people in order for them to support your organisation, its ideas and actions
- Knowing how to defend your organisation, its engagements and particularly those that may appear controversial, with your heart
- Knowing how to use social media and digital platforms in a conscious and ethical way to increase your organisation's visibility and reach as many person as possible

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

- Being curious about the backgrounds of the participants and how, based on their experience, they can contribute to social development
- Confidence to speak up in order to defend ones' ideas and opinions in front of people
- Being perseverant and loyal for people to trust oneself and gather around the person, own ideas and organisation

ADVANCED LEVEL ▲

SKILLS

- Ability to build an impactful social campaign either online with social media and online communication channels or offline with manifestations and public meetings
- Ability to communicate with groups from different countries / backgrounds adopting a personalized approach according to their different cultures
- Ability to create a social and political sustainable network engaging people in your organisation over the long term
- Ability to make people join your organisation encouraging them to realise their will to engage in a cause by raising their voices and taking actions

KNOWLEDGE

- Understanding of your peers, subjects, languages, and especially the ones that can be challenging
- Understanding how to make your organisation active, creating actions, being present on social media while having a relevant impact
- Understanding of communication techniques, channels, challenges, in order to spread your values and actions, including in the digital sphere
- Knowing how to evaluate the impact of your actions, by building satisfactions questionnaires, to improve your work and make it more relevant

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

- Being flexible and comprehensive in order for you to be able to understand different views and opinion
- Being inclusive and friendly in order to connect people with your cause and your organisation over the long term, especially by creating a safe place where everybody can be heard
- Being a leader who is attentive to the needs of others and with whom they can communicate freely without being judged
- Being able to lead ethical initiatives and ensure transparency and accountability about your work and actions

Suggested Self-Directed Learning Activities

SKILLS

Create a **page on social media** to communicate on a specific topic. For the meaning of this topic the person needs to gather information, and communicate about it. Young people will have to create a communication strategy for their page to be relevant.

KNOWLEDGE

Selection of a few **videos** on how to be convincing, how to spread your values, how to be creative, perseverant,...

Social Influence: Crash Course Psychology

#38

Emotional Intelligence

Free online course :
The Art of Persuasion

2022 UNICEF Youth Advocacy Guide Training Materials

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

Read a **book** on how to gain on public speaking and communication skills (with different publics)

Ex : Talk Like Ted - C. Gallo

How to Win Friends and Influence

People - D. Carnegie

Examples of Relevant Programs, Initiatives, or Projects to learn in Groups

SKILLS

Moving debate

The idea is for young people to express their opinion on a subject, trying to be convincing, and making people on the other side change their minds.

KNOWLEDGE

Young European Federalists

<https://jef.eu/>

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

Model European Union Strasbourg,

<https://meu-strasbourg.org/>

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Campaigning for Influence

GENERAL INFORMATION

- **Target Group:** young people between 16-24 years old including NEETs
- **Group Size:** 10 to 20 participants
- **Duration:** 90 minutes
- **Applied non-formal education methods:** Peer Learning and Group Work ; Creative Expression
- **Reflection Method:** Group Debrief

LEARNING DIMENSION

• **Objective(s):**

This activity will enable young people to reflect on a specific topic of their choice, related to civic participation and political engagement. By using oral and digital communication as well as persuasion techniques, they will design, collaboratively, a mobilisation campaign.

By the end of the activity, each group of young people will be able to :

- Identify a specific civic or political issue ;
- Deliver a coherent and impactful message ;
- Create a relevant communication support ;
- Use oral, mediatic and persuasive communication strategy to present their campaign ;

By the end of the activity we aim to :

- Have at least 50% of the group attesting that the activity helped them to understand what social influence is ;
- Have at least 50% of the group attesting that the activity helped them to understand the importance of social influence for civic participation and political engagement

• **Link to the Competence:**

Social influence in civic participation and political engagement is about developing oral expression and argumentation, critical thinking, self-confidence and leadership as well as communication skills including in the digital sphere. This activity will allow young people to improve their oral and digital communication, their teamwork spirit, and to develop persuasion skills either orally than in writing. It will also help them to understand what critical thinking and leadership consist in.

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES

KNOWLEDGE

- Understanding of the basic rules to create links between people and gather them around a same cause
- Knowing how to be persuasive and how to convince people in order for them to support your organisation, its ideas and actions
- Understanding of communication techniques, channels, challenges, in order to spread your values and actions, including in the digital sphere

BEHAVIORS/ ATTITUDES

- Confidence to speak up in order to defend ones' ideas and opinions in front of people
- Being flexible and comprehensive in order for you to be able to understand different views and opinion
- Being a leader who is attentive to the needs of others and with whom they can communicate freely without being judged

SKILLS

- To gather people so that they understand the importance of working as a group
- Ability to communicate on a subject to engage and empower others around it
- Ability to build an impactful social campaign either online with social media and online communication channels or offline with manifestations and public meetings

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Campaigning for Influence

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Paperboard or table to write on
- List of prepared topics
- Paper
- Post-it
- Pens / Pencils / Markers
- Fixing paste
- Stickers, stationery and supplies
- Printer
- Access to digital tools (computers, tablets,... to use Canva or another online tool)
- Camera / Phone
- Video projector
- Clips of famous speech, extracts of advertisements
- Chairs and tables
- Timer
- Bowl
- GOOSECHASE app

FACILITATION TIPS

- For better implementation it is important to have chosen and prepared the extract we want to show them as for the introduction part ;
- For better implementation it is really important to have the topics prepared so that participants only have to pick them up when they start the activity ;
- For better implementation it is also really important to keep precise track of time → the idea is not to lose time on the introduction and make it as short as possible so that participants have enough time to work on the creation of their campaign and that you also have enough time to make a constructive debrief ;
- This activity does not have right or wrong answers so the facilitator needs to listen to everybody's opinions ;
- It is important for the facilitator to encourage as much as possible links to real participation opportunities available at national and European levels (volunteering, youth councils,...)

Adaptation Options:

- This activity can be scaled up in terms of time and people. The more time you have, the more people can participate in the activity. You can extend the activity up to 3 hours and 30 participants.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

03

Campaigning for Influence

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

1. Introduction

Duration: 10 minutes

Description:

What is social influence and where can we find it?

1. Questioning young people about social influence :
 - *What does it mean to them ?*
 - *Where can they see social influence methods ? In Political Speeches ? In advertising ? Through people they are following on social media ?* (5 minutes)
2. Showing young people examples of situations where social influence is used :
 - Famous speeches (politicians, actors,...)
 - e.g : Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" → this speech actively influence social attitudes and behavior by using information facts and persuasion techniques
 - Personal experiences
 - e.g : Ask young people "Have you ever done something just because all your friends were doing it ?" or "Did you ever change your mind to avoid feeling excluded ?" → Helps young people to understand social influence by connecting it to an everyday situation.
 - Extracts of advertisements
 - e.g : extract from the "Like A Girl" ad → the ad is challenging social norms redefining the expression "like a girl" into a form of strength and confidence
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5yLXrWLvwAo>
 - The ad creates an effect of social movement
 - This campaign went viral, influencing social media conversation (5 minutes)

2. Main activity

Duration: 70 minutes

Design of the mobilisation campaign

1. Groups constitution & drawing lots for subjects
 - Divide participants into 4 groups of a maximum of 5 people.
 - Each group has to randomly draw one of the topics proposed:

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Campaigning for Influence

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

1. Lower vote turnout among young people → How to get young people motivated to go voting
2. Lack of youth representation in politics → Why are there so few young people involved in politics ?
3. Disengagement from local civic life → why are young people less engaged and how to encourage them to take part in civic participation ?
4. Political divisions and hate speech → How can young people promote respectful dialogue and ethical social media ?
5. Misinformation and Fake news → How can young people raise awareness among their peers about fake news ?
6. Lack of Civic Education → What can be done to promote better civic education for young people ?
7. Climate change → How can young people promote environmental activism to have an impact on political decisions ?
8. Barriers to civic participation and political engagement → How can young people promote more inclusive political engagement (for migrants, LGBTQIA+, rural youth) ?
9. Distrust in political institutions → How can young people rebuild trust in political institutions ?
10. Lack of knowledge about rights and civic opportunities → How can young people promote information about their rights and participation tools? (5 minutes)

2. Young people Designing Campaigns → each group will have to come up with a campaign in relation to the topic they picked up. They will have to design their campaign using all the tools they want. They can come up with a hand made poster, digital poster, a short video, a short speech, a social media campaign,... To do that they will have stationery and supplies, access to laptops and tablets,...

They need to know that each group will only have 5 minutes to present their campaign so their contents need to be quite short

- Clear and powerful message : can be delivered through a slogan, a hashtag, a logo,... → you can give them tips to create a powerful message : best if it is short, can be emotional, needs to be easy to remember,...
- Visual communication tool : poster, social media post, video, speech, song, poem,...
- Distribution channel : where will young people want to share their campaign (on social media, in schools, in a public event, in a newspaper, on TV,...) → they can be creative !
- Influence strategy : young people need to come up with a strategy for their campaign to be influential → who is their target audience ? through which channels do they want to disseminate it ? What do they want people to feel while viewing their campaign ? What change are they aiming to create through this campaign ? (40 minutes)

Campaigning for Influence

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

3. Presentation of the campaigns

The objective here is to allow each group to present their campaign to their peers, trying to influence and convince them to support their cause. This step will allow young people to develop communication and public speaking skills and persuasion techniques.

The presentation can last maximum 5 minutes and needs to include :

- **Presentation of the cause** : what is the issue ? Why is it important for young people? Who is affected and what change do they want to see ?
- **Their message** : what is their main message ? Slogan ? Hashtag ? ...
- **Campaign plan** : what is the format of their campaign ? Who is the targeted audience ? Through which channel do they want to disseminate the campaign ?
- **Social influence strategy (or persuasion strategy)** : which persuasion methods did they pick ? What arguments were used to influence ? How did they make their campaign convincing ?
- **Communication material created** : young people show their poster, social media post, video, song, clip,...
- **Concrete action** : Where would they like to spread their campaign ? How did they work together as a group ? Who had which role (leader,...) ? (20 minutes)

4. Voting for the most convincing campaign

Each group has to vote for the most convincing campaign according to them. They will have to give a short argument to justify their choice (I vote for this campaign because...). (5 minutes)

5. Debriefing

Duration: 10 minutes

The debrief will help them to reflect on the importance of social influence in civic participation and political engagement, by reflecting on the methods they used, and the impact they had on others.

- Feelings and impressions : How did they feel during the creation of the campaign and during the presentation ? Were they stressed, confident,...
- Key learning outcomes :
 - What did they learn during the activity about social influence ?
 - Have they already seen these methods in their everyday life ?
 - Which strategy do they think is the most efficient ?
- Real life application : How do they think they can use what they learned during the activity to be more engaged in civic and political life ? Or to convince others to get more engaged in civic and political life ?

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

03

Campaigning for Influence

EVALUATION

Suggested Evaluation Method

The aim by the end of the activity is to have :

- At least 50% of the group attesting that the activity helped them to understand what social influence is ;
- At least 50% of the group attesting that the activity helped them to understand the importance of social influence for civic participation and political engagement ;

The idea is for the facilitator to ask these questions, either orally or through a questionnaire, to the participants at the end of the activity.

Risks or Sensitivities

- ▲ ● Controversial topics might be identified during this activity. The facilitator needs to be open minded and needs to listen carefully to every participant's opinion. It is important for the facilitator to remind participants that one of the attitudes needed to develop social influence is to be a leader who is attentive to the needs of others and with whom they can communicate freely without being judged.
- ▲ ● Language might happen as a barrier between participants so the facilitator needs to be very comfortable with English.



COLLABORATIVE ACTION

Dimension of the key competence area

Collaborative action refers to the ability of individuals to engage with others in order to identify common goals, create solutions, and act collectively to address civic, social, or political challenges. It encompasses technical coordination between people but also emotional, relational, and ethical dimensions of working in groups towards shared societal outcomes.

The development of collaborative action resides in sociocultural learning theories, which highlight learning as a socially mediated process (Vygotsky, 1978). Therefore, young people learn to collaborate by participating in authentic collective experiences, guided by more competent peers or adults. Moreover, as highlighted by Torney-Purta & al. (2001), political socialization literature shows that exposure to democratic participation, especially in groups, strengthens civic engagement over the long term. However, collaborative action requires more than simply working with others. It involves a deep understanding of the structure processes, and relational dynamics that underpin meaningful civic engagement. A foundational aspect of collaborative action is the understanding of democratic systems, including how decisions are made, the roles and responsibilities of institutions and the formal and informal mechanisms available for civic participation (Torney-Purta & al. 2001). Moreover, young people must understand how collective mobilizations, such as social movements, function within and something in opposition to these structures. As E. Ostrom (1990) emphasized in her work, successful collective action depends on the group's ability to navigate power dynamics, build coalitions across differences, and apply inclusive decision making practices that balance individual and collective interests. Thus, these competencies are not only cognitive but also interpersonal and emotional. According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2020), the development of social and emotional learning is central to empowering young people with tools for effective collaboration. Skills such as effective communication, empathic negotiation, conflict resolution, shared goal-setting, and the flexible practice of both leadership and followership are essential to sustaining group efforts and achieving civic goals. These socio-emotional capacities allow individuals to engage constructively with difference, to listen deeply, and to co-create strategies with others, even in conditions of uncertainty or disagreement.

We now understand that in an era marked by an increasing political polarization, environmental crises, and digital activism, young people are seeking for participatory actions that will allow them to experience real and shared agency. Movements such as Fridays for Future, Black Lives Matter, or European youth initiatives such as the EU Youth Dialogue, illustrate that collaborative action is not a secondary skill but is central for young people's civic participation and political engagement.

COLLABORATIVE ACTION

How does it work?

Building Critical Thinking in Young People

The success of collaborative action lies in its ability to engage young people's sense of social belonging and the motivating power of their peers. When young people act together, they feel a sense of inclusion and shared purpose, increasing their motivation, accountability, and persistence (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Being in a group environment encourages positive and social influence by allowing collaboration to be observed and encouraged among peers. This process builds young people's civic confidence especially when they recognize the impact and visibility of their contributions.

Ask yourself

- *If you want to defend a very important cause for you, do you think it will be more effective to do it by yourself or with others supporting you ?*



COLLABORATIVE ACTION

BASIC LEVEL

SKILLS

- Ability to communicate ideas clearly to participate in group discussions and meeting
- Ability to listen actively to others to share ideas and thoughts
- Ability to share tasks and responsibilities to better work as a group

KNOWLEDGE

- Understanding what collaboration means and why it is important
- Knowing and understanding of basic democratic values such as equality, inclusion and respect
- Knowing and understanding of simple decision-making methods to define the roles and responsibilities in a group

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

- Show willingness to be part of collective action and demonstrate respect for others' opinions
- Show openness to various perspectives to respect the rules and the group's norms
- Show a sense of responsibility for the team to feel secured

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

SKILLS

- Ability to facilitate group discussions in order to encourage participation
- Ability to manage group conflicts in a constructive manner for everybody to feel heard and valued
- Ability to coordinate and delegate roles for the team to be effective and efficient

KNOWLEDGE

- Understanding how a group operates and takes decisions to be more efficient in the work done
- Knowledge of conflict resolution techniques to increase the group's dynamic
- Understanding the importance and impact of team building to improve inclusion in the group

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

- Show patience for the group to process various challenges by itself
- Show commitment to share goals and ideas for them to be discussed within the group
- Look for diversity in the group for the actions and decisions to cover a wide range

ADVANCED LEVEL ▲

SKILLS

- Ability to design and lead collaborative projects to initiate new projects within a group
- Ability to adapt your collaboration strategy to different groups
- Ability to listen carefully to others to make common and efficient decisions within the group

KNOWLEDGE

- Strong understanding of collaboration and participatory methods in order to lead a group
- Understanding the dynamics of partnerships to come up with a strong network
- Understanding how to build a sustainable coalition within the group in order to perpetuate it

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

- Show a strong belief in the possibility of changes through collective effort
- Show a strong ethical commitment to important values such as fairness, equity and inclusion
- Show willingness to receive constructive feedback and being able to change behavior for the group's well being

Suggested Self-Directed Learning Activities

SKILLS

Game The Evolution of Trust

<https://ncase.me/trust/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mScpHTli-kM>

KNOWLEDGE

European Youth Portal : Civic Engagement

https://youth.europa.eu/get-involved/civic-engagement/articles_en

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

Ted Talk : The Power of Collaboration

https://www.ted.com/talks/linda_hill_how_to_manage_for_collective_creativity?referrer=playlist-the_power_of_collaboration



Examples of Relevant Programs, Initiatives, or Projects to learn in Groups

SKILLS

Council simulation game

https://learning-corner.learning.europa.eu/learning-materials/council-simulation-game_en

KNOWLEDGE

European Youth Event

<https://european-youth-event.europarl.europa.eu/en>

ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS

Youth Democracy Map

<https://youthdemocracycohort.com/map/>

Panic Room

GENERAL INFORMATION

- **Target Group:** young people between 16-24 years old including NEETs
- **Group Size:** 10-25 participants
- **Duration:** 90 minutes (+-15 minutes)
- **Applied non-formal education methods:** Group Work
- **Reflection Method:** group debrief and “stop - start - continue” reflection tool

LEARNING DIMENSION

• **Objective(s):**

This activity will allow young people to understand the importance of collaborative action in their civic participation and political engagement. Through interactive role-play, group decision-making, and real-world examples, participants will experience how working collectively, with shared purpose, respect for diverse perspectives, and mutual accountability, can lead to more inclusive, effective, and impactful civic initiatives.

By the end of the activity, participants will be able to :

- Understand what collaborative action means in civic and political contexts ;
- Experience challenges and benefits of working collaboratively towards a shared civic goal ;
- Reflect on the attitudes and skills needed for effective collaboration ;
- Be able to identify real life examples of civil collaborative action

By the end of the activity we aim to :

- Have at least 50% of the participants who can accurately define what collaborative action is ;
- Have at least 50% of participants attesting that the activity helped them to understand the importance of collaborative action for civic participation and political engagement ;
- Have participants able to identify at least 3 elements of effective collaboration

• **Link to the Competence:**

This activity is directly linked to the competence of collaborative action, as it places young people in realistic scenarios where they must be working together to address civic challenges. By engaging in group decision making, negotiating diverse points of view, and developing a shared action plan, participants actively practice the key skills, knowledge and attitudes that define collaborative action. This activity helps them understand how collaboration is not only a practical tool but also a democratic asset essential to effective civic and political engagement.

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES

KNOWLEDGE

- Understanding what collaboration means and why it is important
- Strong understanding of collaboration and participatory methods in order to lead a group
- Understanding how to build a sustainable coalition within the group in order to perpetuate it

BEHAVIORS/ ATTITUDES

- Show openness to various perspectives to respect the rules and the group's norms
- Show commitment to share goals and ideas for them to be discussed within the group
- Show willingness to receive constructive feedback and being able to change behavior for the group's well being

SKILLS

- Ability to listen actively to others to share ideas and thoughts
- Ability to design and lead collaborative projects to initiate new projects within a group
- Ability to listen carefully to others to make common and efficient decisions within the group

Panic Room

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Paperboard or whiteboards
- Markers
- Sticky notes
- Timers
- Printed role cards
- List of issues / situations
- Civic circle template
- Pencils

FACILITATION TIPS

The facilitator of the activity should :

- Encourage everyone to contribute to the activity ;
- Emphasize that the session is not about who's the loudest or smartest, but about how people collaborate to solve civic challenges ;
- Stick to the timing, otherwise the activity would not be developed to its fullest
- If they are getting stuck in their reflections you can guide them by asking :
 - "What's a common goal here?"
 - "Whose voice hasn't been heard yet?"
 - "How could two roles work together?"
- Be prepared with some real-life examples where collaborative action was implemented

Adaptation Options:

- The number of participants involved in the activity can vary and other themes / situations / issues can be added ;
- If you have more than 90 minutes for your activity, the timing can be modified

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

03

Panic Room

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

1. Introduction

Duration: 10 minutes

Description:

What does it mean to act together ?

- Invite participants to brainstorm the things that come to their minds when they hear “working together for the same cause”. Make their ideas visible by putting them on the paper board or whiteboard. Briefly introduce the concept of collaborative action with a short and accessible definition : “Collaborative action is about joining forces to make a difference – it’s not about who leads, but how we move forward together.”

2. Main activity

Duration: 35 minutes

Description:

- Divide participants into small groups (4-6 per group) Each group receives a scenario and a set of roles (Politician, NGO, Youth representative, Business owner, Citizen, Activist) → Citizen and Activist are the 2 optional roles
- In 25 minutes participants must identify their shared goals and concerns, decide together on a collaborative action plan and prepare a 2 minutes presentation of their action plan. The key rules are that all their voices must be heard, the decision must have been reached collectively, and they get a bonus if they have involved an unexpected partnership (alliance between Youth Representative and Business owner).
- Each group has 2 mins to present its action plan to the other groups, explaining how they reached this plan and why it is going to be effective towards the issue / situation given.

3. Debriefing

Duration: 20 minutes

Description:

- Facilitator leads questions such as :
 1. *What was difficult about collaborating?*
 2. *What strategies helped your group work together?*
 3. *Did any voices get ignored ?*
 4. *What values or attitudes did you identify as essential for successful collaboration?*
- Reflection tool : “Stop - Start - Continue”

Ask participants :

1. *What should we stop doing when collaborating?*
2. *What should we start doing?*
3. *What should we keep doing?*

Panic Room

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

4. My Civic Circle

Duration: 20 minutes

Description:

- Explain the concept: The Civic circle will help participants to map out who is already in their life that they could collaborate with to take civic or political actions. (2 minutes)
- Draw the Civic Circle
 1. At the center of the circle, they need to write "Me" ;
 2. First ring will be their close allies: Friends, classmates, family,...
 3. The second ring will be community actors: teachers, youth workers, sports coaches,...
 4. Third ring will be institutions and organizations: student council, youth centers, local NGOs,....

The idea is to let them write the names of real people or organizations they know about and to think about the kind of collaboration that might be possible with each one of them.

- Reflection and Share of thoughts: the idea here is to make them reflect on the people and organizations they choose.
You can ask questions such as :
 1. Which actors surprised you?
 2. Who would be easy to approach? Who would be harder?
 3. What could be your first step to engage someone you know in your civic circle?

5. Takeaway

Duration: 5 minutes

Description:

- Invite young people to share one thing they learned or a thing they would like to try in the future

EVALUATION

Suggested Evaluation Method

By the end of the activity we aim to :

- Have at least 50% of the participants who can accurately define what collaborative action is ;
- Have at least 50% of participants attesting that the activity helped them to understand the importance of collaborative action for civic participation and political engagement ;
- Have participants able to identify at least 3 elements of effective collaboration

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

03

Panic Room

EVALUATION

The idea will be to ask the following questions to the participants through a form :
On a scale to 1 to 5

- I felt I was able to collaborate effectively with others today
- I listened and tried to understand different perspectives
- I contributed to the group decisions
- I believe that collaboration can make civic action more powerful

Risks or Sensitivities

- ▲ ● Controversial topics might be identified during this activity. The facilitator needs to be open minded and needs to listen carefully to every participant's opinion. It is important for the facilitator to remind participants that one of the attitudes needed to develop collaborative action is to let others communicate freely without being judged.
- ▲ ● Language might happen as a barrier between participants so the facilitator needs to be very comfortable with English.



04



PARTICIPATORY METHODOLOGY FOR IN-PERSON YOUTH CIVIC AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION FORUMS USING THE LIVING LAB CONCEPT

The "Youth Civic and Political Participation Forums" organised as part of the ENGAGE project are designed as immersive, co-creative learning experiences that apply the Living Lab methodology to empower young people to explore, reflect on, and shape their roles in civic life. Rooted in non-formal education and democratic innovation, these forums engage youth through experiential activities, structured dialogue, and direct engagement with policymakers.

Organizing a one-day in-person forum on youth civic and political participation requires a **participatory methodology** that is engaging, inclusive, and outcome-oriented. This guide expands an existing participatory methodology into a detailed format for the forum using the **Living Lab concept**. It integrates a **Living Lab approach** with essential civic competences, outlines concrete learning activities, and provides a full-day agenda and implementation tips. The focus is on empowering young people (through co-creation, dialogue, and hands-on exercises) to build key skills for civic life while directly engaging with real-world policy processes. In our approach, emphasis is placed on **inclusivity** (ensuring diverse youth voices are heard), **youth co-creation** (youth as active partners in designing and running the forum), and **real-world policy engagement** (connecting participants with policymakers and authentic civic challenges).

Throughout, the methodology and the forum format draws on the **European Compass of Civic and Political Participation Competences for Youth**, which is created as part of the ENGAGE project. This framework and methodology are the cornerstone for the forum design, ensuring that each session and activity actively develops the targeted competences in an interactive, empowering way. After consultation with young people, youth workers and experts, the "**Living Lab**" appeared to be the most fitting for the goals and objectives of the forum.

4.1. Living Lab Methodology in Civic Education

What is a "Living Lab" approach? In essence, a Living Lab is a **user-driven, co-creative, real-world innovation environment**. Originating in the tech and social innovation sectors, the concept has been adopted in education and civic contexts to foster collaborative problem-solving. According to the European Network of Living Labs (ENoLL), Living Labs are "*open innovation ecosystems in real-life environments using iterative feedback processes throughout a lifecycle... focusing on co-creation, rapid prototyping & testing, and scaling-up innovations, providing joint value to stakeholders*". In simpler terms, instead of a top-down lecture or a controlled "lab" experiment, a living lab engages the actual users/participants (in our case, youth and community stakeholders) as **active co-creators** in an environment that mirrors real life. All participants contribute knowledge, skills, and

experience on equal footing to **collectively design** and test solutions to real problems. Crucially, living lab activities take place “*in the wild*” (in authentic community settings, not just in classrooms), tackling complex societal issues with participants seen not as research subjects but as **active collaborators whose voices are heard in all phases**.

In the context of the ENGAGE project, Living Labs in civic education: Applying this approach to civic education means the forum is not a conventional seminar but a dynamic “lab” where youth and other stakeholders (e.g. facilitators, experts, local officials) **learn together by doing, through interactions, and through dialog and reflections**. The process is iterative and reflective: participants identify community or societal problems, brainstorm and **co-create** ideas, prototype solutions or actions, test them through role-play or simulations, and get feedback – all within the one-day event. The Living Lab becomes a “mutual learning process among different stakeholders”: youth learn from facilitators and peers, facilitators learn from youth perspectives, and policymakers (if present) learn from the lived experiences and ideas of young participants. This **iterative mutual** learning in three dimensions – *learning with others, from one’s own experience, and from others’ experiences* – is a core feature of Living Lab methodology.

In practice, a living lab civic forum emphasizes:

Real-life context

The activities simulate or directly involve real civic processes (e.g. a town hall, a community issue, a policy debate) so that learning is grounded in reality, not just theory. Unlike a sterile classroom exercise, participants engage with authentic scenarios and data from their community or current events (the forum essentially acts as a microcosm of civic society).

Co-creation and user agency

Youth participants are designers and decision-makers in activities. For example, they might co-create ground rules at the start, generate the questions to ask a policymaker, or collaboratively design an action project. Their ideas drive the outcomes, embodying the Living Lab credo that users (*young people*) are co-creators of solutions.

Multi-stakeholder collaboration

The forum encourages interaction between youth and other actors – youth workers, educators, community leaders, and invited decision-makers. By involving multiple stakeholders, the forum reflects the multi-stakeholder participation that is a *common element of Living Labs*. Everyone works together on equal terms to address civic challenges, which increases mutual understanding and helps break down barriers between “youth” and “authority.”

Iterative problem-solving

The sessions are designed in loops of exploration, ideation, and reflection. For instance, in a policy simulation, participants might first identify a problem, then brainstorm solutions, then role-play a council meeting to debate those solutions, and finally reflect on what worked or what could be improved. This iterative cycle aligns with the Living Lab's research-design-test-refine sequence, and helps youth build confidence through continuous improvement of their ideas

Empowerment and real impact

Perhaps most importantly, the Living Lab approach in civic education is about empowerment. It treats young participants as capable problem-solvers and respects their voices. By the end of the forum, youth should feel a greater sense of ownership over civic issues and confidence in their ability to effect change. The forum's outcomes (ideas, action plans, or expressed youth needs) can be documented and fed into actual community initiatives or youth policies, ensuring the work doesn't stay within the room. This conversion of *social invention* into *social innovation* – taking ideas generated by youth and working to scale them up or implement them in the community – completes the Living Lab cycle.

Living Lab vs. traditional workshop: In summary, using a Living Lab methodology transforms the forum into an **experiential learning space**. Rather than passively receiving information, participants actively construct knowledge and solutions. This aligns with best practices in civic education, which show that engaging youth in realistic, hands-on civic problem-solving boosts their commitment to democratic values. It also resonates with approaches like Danilo Dolci's **Reciprocal Maieutic Approach (RMA)**, which the project underpinning this guide explicitly adopts. RMA is a participatory method where knowledge emerges through collective inquiry – starting from individuals' experiences and critical questions, and building shared understanding through dialogue. Incorporating RMA principles means facilitators will pose open-ended questions, encourage storytelling and critical reflection (e.g. “*What issues upset you in your community, and what would you change if anything was possible?*” – questions that help youth “*conscientise*” their reality), and ensure every participant's perspective shapes the outcomes. This approach ensures the forum is not only informative but transformative – a process where youth find personal meaning in civic participation and recognize their power to influence their world.

Finally, the Living Lab methodology inherently fosters **inclusion**. By design, it values all voices and requires facilitators to create a safe, **dialogue-friendly space** from

the start. *“All participatory work starts with bringing people together... ensure people feel safe to express themselves... lay the foundations for inclusion and human rights,”* as one expert notes. In a Living Lab forum, this means using inclusive facilitation techniques (circle seating, group agreements, icebreakers to build trust, etc.) so that *diverse participants – including those often marginalized – feel equally empowered to contribute*. The result is a rich learning environment where participants not only gain skills but also experience **democracy in action** through the very format of the event.

4.2. Ten Key Competences and Their Integration

The forum’s content is built around **ten Youth Key Competences (YKCs)** identified as crucial for effective civic and political participation in today’s world. These competences form the backbone of the **European Compass of Civic and Political Participation Competences for Youth** (the framework guiding this forum design). Each session and activity in the forum is intentionally crafted to develop one or more of these competences in the participants. Here are the 10 YKCs and how the forum integrates them:

1. Critical Thinking

The ability to objectively analyze information and arguments before forming a judgment. In the forum, critical thinking is infused through debates and reflection exercises. For example, an activity might challenge participants to examine a controversial statement or policy from multiple angles, identifying biases or fallacies. The goal is to get youth questioning assumptions and *“learning how to draw their own conclusions”* through inquiry and debate. By debating issues and questioning the status quo, participants practice critical analysis of civic information, a skill vital for resisting misinformation and extremist narratives.

2. Creative Problem-Solving

The capacity to generate innovative solutions for complex problems. Civic life often presents thorny issues (climate change, community conflicts) that need fresh approaches. The forum encourages creative thinking via brainstorming sessions and scenario challenges. Using a **“civic imagination”** approach, youth might engage in a world-building exercise – imagining an ideal future community – and then work backward to design solutions for current problems. This competence is integrated by giving participants open-ended problems and creative tools (mind-mapping, role-play, design thinking methods) to craft **out-of-the-box solutions** rather than relying on predefined answers.

3. Analytical Reasoning

The skill of logically breaking down information, identifying patterns, and drawing evidence-based conclusions. To build analytical reasoning, the forum can include case-study analyses and data interpretation tasks. For instance, participants might be given a case study of a local policy dilemma or a set of community survey data. In groups they will analyze the facts, differentiate between causes and symptoms of the problem, and reason out possible outcomes of different decisions. One effective method is the **case study dilemma discussion**: reading a concise true story about a civic decision and then discussing “what would you do?”. By simulating the original decision-makers and deliberating toward a group decision, youth practice structured reasoning and see the consequences of choices, thereby sharpening their analytical skills in a civic context.

4. Rational Decision-Making

Closely related to analytical reasoning, this competence focuses on evaluating options and making decisions based on evidence and logic (rather than emotion or pressure). The forum integrates this by using **structured decision-making frameworks** in activities. For example, in a mock city council simulation, participants might use a decision matrix to weigh proposals (considering criteria like feasibility, fairness, long-term impact). Another approach is to present participants with multiple policy options and limited resources, forcing them to deliberate trade-offs and justify their final choices. A guided reflection afterward connects this to real-world democratic decision-making. By practicing making tough choices in a safe environment, youth learn to approach civic decisions methodically and ethically.

5. Ethical Use of Social Media

In the digital age, civic participation often occurs online, so being able to navigate social media responsibly is key. This competence covers digital citizenship skills like recognizing misinformation, respecting others online, and using social platforms for positive change. The forum addresses this through activities on **media literacy and digital ethics**. For instance, participants might work on a scenario where a misleading rumor spreads on social media during an election. They must decide what is the ethical way to respond – balancing freedom of expression with truth-telling and harm prevention. They may develop a “*social media code of conduct*” or create sample posts that demonstrate respectful discourse. Emphasis is placed on “*promoting digital safety and ethics*” – understanding privacy, cyberbullying, and the consequences of one’s online behavior. By reflecting on real social media dilemmas and practicing how to handle them, youth strengthen their competence in using online tools conscientiously for civic engagement.

6. Sense-Making

This refers to the ability to make sense of complex or ambiguous information – to connect the dots and find meaning. In civic terms, sense-making might involve understanding how different issues or pieces of information relate (e.g. how a local issue connects to global trends, or how public opinion shapes policy). The forum fosters sense-making by including **synthesis and reflection** tasks. For example, after various activities, participants could do a “big picture mapping” of what they learned: linking a news story to underlying societal factors or summarizing a simulation’s outcomes into key lessons. A short workshop on note-taking could introduce sense-making techniques (mind mapping, summarizing). As educators note, *“sense-making is about transforming information – shifting from collecting facts to creating meaning, which fuels deeper understanding and critical thinking”*. Through guided reflection and meta-cognitive prompts (like *“What patterns did you notice?”* or *“How does this connect to your prior experience?”*), participants practice weaving disparate insights into a coherent understanding of civic life.

7. Data Analysis

Civic participation increasingly involves interpreting data – from election statistics to community surveys or budgets. The forum includes at least one activity where participants engage with **data for civic insight**. For instance, a “community data dive” could present youth with real data (charts of youth voter turnout, local demographic stats, polling results on an issue). In small teams, they must analyze what the data shows and what it implies for their community, then present their findings. This hands-on experience demystifies data and reinforces that data can inform better civic decisions. Teaching data literacy in youth civic education is powerful: *“Teaching young people to work with data... can enable them to understand and participate in civic issues, prepare them for various professions, and equip them to think critically and ethically about data”*. By integrating data analysis exercises, the forum ensures youth can not only voice opinions but back them up with evidence – a key competence for informed citizenship

8. News Validation

With the prevalence of “fake news” and misinformation, the competence of validating news (media literacy) is crucial. The forum tackles this through an interactive **fact-checking activity**. For example, a *“Fake News Challenge”* can engage participants in analyzing social media headlines or news articles to judge their credibility. In one such activity adapted from a youth workshop, participants review several headlines and decide which are trustworthy, identify any misinformation techniques, and explain clues that informed their decisions. The exercise is to have groups each present an item – one group presents a true news

story as if it were fake, another presents a fake story with seemingly credible evidence – and challenges each other to tell the truth from falsehood. These games build the habit of not taking information at face value. By the end, youth gain practical tips for verifying information (e.g. checking multiple sources, looking at evidence) and an appreciation for the importance of reliable news in democracy. This competence is also reinforced in how the forum itself shares information – facilitators model source-checking and encourage skepticism of unsupported claims, cultivating an environment of informed inquiry.

9. Social Influence

This competence involves understanding how social dynamics and persuasion work – both in being influenced by others and in positively influencing peers or the community. In a civic context, it's about **leadership and advocacy skills**: knowing how to rally support for a cause, how group opinions form, and how to resist negative peer pressure or manipulation. The forum builds this competence through activities like campaign simulations or group decision exercises. One highlight is a **“Youth Advocacy Campaign”** activity where participants design and pitch a mini-campaign for a cause they care about. They must consider messaging, target audience, and method of spreading the word (e.g. via social media, school clubs, community events). This not only taps creative skills but teaches how persuasive techniques can be used ethically to mobilize others. Participants learn by doing what it means to create social impact. Real examples can be showcased: for instance, the story of the #NeverAgain movement after a school tragedy, where within a week students' social-media-driven advocacy garnered millions of supporters and led to tangible policy impact. Discussing such cases shows the power of youth voice and social influence in action. Additionally, a facilitated reflection on group dynamics during the forum (noting who spoke up more, how ideas gained traction) can raise awareness of influence patterns and the importance of inclusive leadership.

10. Collaborative Action

Finally, collaborative action is the competence of working effectively with others to plan and execute a project or initiative for change. It is the culmination of many of the above skills – requiring teamwork, communication, shared decision-making, and collective responsibility. To integrate this, the forum may conclude with a **group project planning session**. For example, participants could break into small teams and each develop a simple action plan to address a local issue (like improving a public space, raising awareness on a topic, or organizing a volunteer drive). Using a structured template, they decide on a goal, steps, roles, resources needed, and timeline – essentially practicing the process of turning an idea into action. This

resembles the “*Action Civics*” approach, where youth research an issue and then take action to create change. In our one-day format, they may not implement the project on the spot, but they experience the planning stage collaboratively. Some forums invite participants to actually carry out a small action after the event or to present their plans to the invited policymaker for feedback. The key outcome is that youth feel what it’s like to **lead change together**, understanding both the challenges and rewards of collaboration. This session solidifies the mindset that civic engagement is a team effort and that every individual can play a role in collective civic impact.

All of the competences addressed are interrelated, and the forum is intentionally designed so that most activities engage multiple competences simultaneously. For example, a parliamentary role-play simulation may develop critical thinking (analyzing arguments), rational decision-making (voting on proposals), collaborative action (forming coalitions), and ethical use of social media (if public communication is part of the scenario). The Competence Framework (Compass), outlined in the upper section of this document, maps each activity to the specific competences it fosters, ensuring a balanced and comprehensive coverage. By the end of the forum, participants will have actively practiced all ten Youth Key Competences (YKCs) through diverse and engaging methods.

This holistic approach ensures that the forum is not merely a “talk shop,” but a meaningful learning experience that equips young people with a well-rounded set of civic skills and attitudes.

To support the development of each competence, we highly recommend engaging with both the mapped individual and collective activities, as well as the example learning activity provided for each competence. At the same time, we strongly encourage experienced youth workers and facilitators to adapt, combine, or design new activities based on the needs of their participants, their own expertise, and the context in which they are working.

In addition to the previously mapped learning activities and examples, the next section presents a selection of experiential activities aligned with each of the ten competences. These were tested in earlier Living Lab sessions. Some activities are drawn from the previously mapped ones—occasionally in adapted form—while others are newly developed. This section can also be used as a stand-alone resource within the broader participatory methodology.

The key difference between the previously listed activities and those that follow is their scope: while the earlier activities each focus primarily on a single competence, the following activities are deliberately designed to engage multiple competences simultaneously.

4.3. Specific Experiential Learning Activities to the ten Competences

To bring the above competences to life, the forum uses **at least 10 specific learning activities**, many of which are sourced or adapted from the *European Compass of Civic and Political Participation Competences for Youth* (a compendium of educational activities corresponding to the 10 competences). Below is a list of 10 exemplar activities, each mapped to one or more competences, with a brief description:

● **Activity 1: Debate & Deliberation Challenge** – Competences: Critical Thinking, Analytical Reasoning

Format: Participants are given a provocative statement on a current issue (e.g. “Voting should be mandatory for youth”). They split into small groups to gather arguments **for** and **against** the statement (consulting provided fact sheets or quick online searches). Groups then engage in a structured mini-debate.

Description: This activity forces youth to examine an issue from multiple perspectives and support their stance with reasoning. By debating, they learn to spot weak arguments, question assumptions, and think on their feet. The aim is not to “win” but to jointly arrive at a deeper understanding. It mirrors the Compass’s objective of using debate as a tool to **educate in critical thinking** – encouraging young people to seek information and form their own conclusions. After the debate, a facilitator debriefs: How did participants decide which arguments were strong? Did they change their view and why? This reflection reinforces critical analysis and open-mindedness.

● **Activity 2: Civic Imagination Brainstorm** – Competences: Creative Problem-Solving, Sense-Making

Format: A guided creative brainstorming session often called a “**world-building workshop**.” Participants are asked to imagine their community or country 20 years in the future where a major current problem has been solved (e.g. climate change, youth unemployment). First individually, then in teams, they envision what that future looks like – “*If anything was possible, what would a better world look like?*” – and identify what changes got them there.

Description: Teams create a narrative or draw a sketch of this future scenario, then work backward to list steps or innovations that would be needed to achieve it. This playful approach (inspired by civic imagination methods) unlocks creativity by

suspending “realism” temporarily. It helps participants break out of present-day constraints (“the tyranny of the possible”) and generate bold ideas. In doing so, they also practice sense-making by connecting present issues to future solutions and identifying patterns (e.g. noticing that many of their utopias involve more community gardens or better communication—revealing underlying needs). Sharing the visions with the whole group fosters optimism and creative thinking in approaching civic challenges. The facilitator notes common themes and ties them back to real initiatives (“Interestingly, many drew cities full of solar panels – did you know our town has a solar co-op initiative?”), thus linking imagination to actionable knowledge.

● **Activity 3: Case Study Dilemma (What Would You Do?) –** **Competences:** Rational Decision-Making, Ethical Reasoning, Analytical Reasoning

Format: Participants read a short case study describing a realistic civic dilemma faced by a group or individual. For example, a story about a youth council deciding whether to protest a new policy or work with authorities quietly, each option having pros and cons. Working in groups, participants discuss the dilemma and must come to a collective decision on what course of action to take, and then justify it.

Description: This mirrors a proven method in civic education where “*reading a concise true story about a difficult choice and then discussing what you would do*” builds decision-making skills. In the forum, each group presents their decision and reasoning. The facilitator then reveals (if it’s a true story) what happened in real life, and what the outcomes were. The discussion touches on ethics (values at stake), evidence (what facts influenced the decision), and stakeholder perspectives (who benefits or loses). This activity compels youth to practice **weighing options** in a structured way. It shows them the importance of process (deliberation, considering minority opinions) in making fair decisions. By grappling with a nuanced scenario, they learn that civic decisions often involve ethical trade-offs and that rational methods (like listing pros/cons or criteria) can aid in reaching a sound decision.

● **Activity 4: Fact-Check Hunt –** **Competences:** News Validation, Critical Thinking, Ethical Use of Social Media.

Format: An interactive media literacy game. Participants are given a set of news snippets or social media posts – some factual, some misleading or false. Working in pairs or small teams, they must research and determine which items are true and which are false, and identify any “red flags” (e.g. clickbait titles, no credible source cited, doctored images). For instance, they might analyze viral headlines and decide if it’s real news or fake, explaining how they figured it out.

Description: This activity turns participants into “*fact-checkers*.” They are provided with tablets or phones (if available) to quickly verify claims (via trusted websites or reverse image search), or given fact-checking printouts if offline. As they work, facilitators circulate with tips (like how to check the source or find the original context of a quote). After time is up, each team reports one item they checked and whether it was valid or not, and how they knew. A brief input may be given on common misinformation tactics and the importance of verifying news before sharing. This lively challenge not only strengthens the **news validation competence** by practicing it, but also underscores the role of ethics in social media use – participants see firsthand how easily false information can spread and discuss why *responsible digital citizens verify information and stop misinformation*. It ties back to their daily life, encouraging them to apply these skills whenever they encounter sensational claims online.

● Activity 5: Social Media Ethics Role-Play – Competences: Ethical Use of Social Media, Social Influence

Format: A scenario-based role-play. Participants are given a scenario where an ethical decision about social media must be made. For example: “*You are organizing a youth event and discover a participant posted an inappropriate, false rumor about a local official on social media that’s gaining attention. As organizers, how do you respond?*” Another scenario could involve witnessing cyberbullying in a community group, or deciding whether to share unverified information that supports your cause. Small groups each get a scenario to act out – one person might play the role of the poster, another the concerned friend, another the community leader, etc., and they improvise the situation to a conclusion.

Description: After the short role-plays, groups discuss what happened and whether the decisions made were ethical and wise. The whole room then reflects on guidelines for ethical social media behavior (e.g. not spreading unverified rumors, addressing hate speech constructively, respecting privacy). This directly builds competence in **digital ethics**. As noted in digital youth engagement guides, *promoting digital safety* and ethics is essential, including respecting boundaries and considering the impact of online behavior. Through the scenarios, youth confront the grey areas of online life – they practice how to balance free expression with respect and truth. Because it’s framed as a role-play, participants can experiment with different responses (perhaps even replaying a scenario with an alternative ending after discussion) to see which feels most ethical and effective. They leave with clearer insight into how their online actions have real consequences and how to navigate those responsibly.

● Activity 6: Community Data Dive – Competences: Data Analysis, Sense-Making

Format: A hands-on activity where participants work with a simplified dataset related to a civic issue. For instance, they might be given charts or infographics about voter turnout by age, a city budget breakdown, or survey results on youth opinions. Each team gets a different dataset (or aspect of a dataset) and a set of questions to answer (e.g. “*What trend do you see over time? Which group is most affected? What story does this data tell?*”). They analyze and then present a summary of findings to the whole group.

Description: This activity demystifies the use of data in civic discourse. By actively engaging with numbers and visual data, participants learn to extract meaning – a key part of sense-making and analytical competence. For example, one group might report “*Youth turnout in our city council elections increased by 15% in the last election, but is still only at 40%. It’s lower in poorer neighborhoods.*” They then might hypothesize why, and what could be done, connecting to broader issues of representation. The facilitator highlights how data can back up advocacy: teaching youth that being “*data literate*” empowers them to participate in civic issues and think critically about policy. The process also shows that data is not scary or boring – it’s another form of storytelling about the community. Wrapping up, the group could collectively brainstorm one action or question raised by the data (e.g. “How might we increase youth turnout?”), illustrating how evidence-informed thinking leads to better decisions and solutions.

● Activity 7: Policy Pitch (Youth Cabinet Simulation) – Competences: Collaborative Action, Rational Decision-Making, Social Influence

Format: Participants simulate being a youth advisory council pitching policy ideas to local leaders. The room is divided into a few “policy teams,” each given a broad theme (e.g. environment, education, public space). Their task: identify one concrete proposal under that theme that would improve youth civic life (for instance, “*Create a youth co-working space in the town library for community projects*” or “*Add climate education in school curriculum*”). They have to collaborate to refine their idea and prepare a 3-minute pitch to an audience (which could include an **invited policymaker** or panel of facilitators acting as officials).

Description: This is a **collaborative project exercise** that condenses idea-to-proposal development into a short span, demanding teamwork and consensus-building. Each team member might take a role (researcher, presenter, etc.), but the key is joint creation. When pitching, they must use *social influence skills* to persuade – clearly explaining the issue, why their solution is needed, and possibly sharing a personal story or data for impact. This draws on many competences: analytical reasoning (to formulate a viable proposal), creative problem-solving (innovative ideas welcome), and especially collaborative action and influence (working together and convincing others). The presence of a real official or at least the simulation thereof adds authenticity – youth know this is how they can voice ideas to power. After the pitches, the “officials” (or audience) ask questions and give feedback. The debrief highlights effective elements of each pitch and how the teams handled the collaboration. Participants thus experience what it’s like to create change through policy advocacy, learning how collective effort and clear communication can turn an idea into something that authorities and peers take seriously. Such experiences can be very empowering and align with the forum’s aim to have youth **directly engage with policymaking** in a practical way.

● **Activity 8: Parliamentary Simulation Game – Competences:** Rational Decision-Making, Social Influence, Critical Thinking, Collaborative Action

Format: A gamified simulation of a parliamentary debate (scaled to a youth-friendly context). The group is split into “parties” or stakeholder groups, each with a platform or position on a mock bill (for example, a bill related to youth civic education funding). Simplified roles might include government vs. opposition, or multiple interest groups (environmental group, student union, etc.). They receive briefing sheets about their position. The simulation proceeds with speeches, open debate, negotiations between factions, and finally a vote on the bill.

Description: This immersive activity puts participants in the shoes of decision-makers in a legislature. It requires them to **think critically** about arguments (so they can counter others), use **social influence** in real time (persuading others to support amendments or vote a certain way), and practice **decision-making under procedure** (they have to eventually vote yes or no). Such simulations have been shown to deepen understanding of democratic processes and build engagement. In our forum, the outcome of the vote isn’t as important as the process – youth learn how laws can be shaped by debate and coalition-building. The facilitators ensure that even those not usually outspoken get a chance (perhaps by giving each “party” a turn or specific agenda). Afterward, a reflection connects the game to real-life parliaments: *What tactics did people use to convince others? How did it feel to*

negotiate? Was the final decision fair? This draws out lessons on compromise, the influence of vocal members, and evidence-based debate. The simulation thus encapsulates multiple competences and gives a taste of formal political participation in a fun, contained way.

● Activity 9: “Media & Influence” Scenario Discussion –

Competences: Social Influence, News Validation, Ethical Social Media

Format: A moderated discussion activity using a real-world scenario that involves media and public opinion. For example, the scenario could be: *“A misleading video about local police goes viral among youth, sparking protests – how can youth leaders respond constructively?”* Participants read the scenario and then discuss guided by specific questions: *What are the facts vs. rumors? How does social influence affect people’s reactions here? What ethical responsibilities do influencers or youth leaders have? What action would you take as a concerned young citizen (e.g. make a clarifying post, organize a dialogue)?”*

Description: Unlike the more active games, this is a semi-structured dialogue that encourages participants to apply several competences to a concrete situation. It’s essentially a group problem-solving discussion where the problem involves media influence and community conflict. The facilitator’s role is to ensure the conversation stays respectful and that various viewpoints are heard – much like a deliberative forum. This slower-paced activity allows participants to articulate their thoughts, listen to others, and collectively make sense of a complex scenario (practicing **sense-making** of a social issue that has both factual and emotional elements). By the end, the group ideally formulates a few principles or steps they deem wise for handling such situations. This might integrate ideas like “Always verify information before acting” (news validation), “Use your voice to calm, not inflame, tensions” (ethical influence), and “Engage authorities and youth in dialogue to address the concern” (collaborative civic action). The learning outcome is recognizing how **social influence** operates in crises and how young people can either amplify chaos or foster understanding. It solidifies the notion that they can be positive influencers in their communities by applying critical thinking and ethical judgment.

● Activity 10: Action Planning Workshop (“Project Incubator”)

– Competences: Collaborative Action, Creative Problem-Solving, Social Influence

Format: Near the end of the day, participants form new groups (preferably mixing those who haven’t worked together yet) to develop a mini action project as a capstone. They are prompted: *“Based on everything learned today, plan a small initiative that you could do in the next month to improve civic engagement or address an issue you care about.”* They use a flipchart template with headings: Goal, Steps, Who is involved, Resources needed, Possible Challenges, and Next Step. Facilitators circulate to coach the groups. After 30–45 minutes, each group shares a brief overview of their plan.

Description: This activity synthesizes the day’s competences into a tangible outcome. It is essentially a taste of **Action Civics** – identifying an issue and planning action. By doing this collaboratively, participants practice leadership and teamwork. They have to **problem-solve creatively** to design something feasible yet impactful, and they must decide roles and steps (decision-making and organization). Some examples might be planning a community dialogue event, a social media campaign for voter registration, or a peer education workshop at school. The content can connect to earlier sessions (e.g. a group inspired by the parliamentary simulation might plan to start a model parliament club, applying what they learned). The crucial element is that it’s youth-driven – facilitators do not impose projects, they emerge from participants’ own interests. This reinforces co-creation and ensures relevance. Presenting their plans hones their communication/influence skills, as they try to persuade others that their idea is worthwhile. To emphasize *real-world engagement*, the invited policymaker or community guest (if present) can react to the plans, offering support or feedback (“This is excellent – you should meet with our community board, I can help connect you”). Even without a guest, facilitators provide encouragement and suggest how participants might actually follow up after the forum. The intent is that youth leave not just with knowledge, but with a concrete path to continue their civic participation journey – truly empowered to be **“agents of change”** in their community.



4.4. One-Day Forum Agenda – Outline of Sessions (Provisional Example)

The forum is structured into **four main sessions** over the course of one day, plus breaks. Below is an agenda outline with session titles, timing, objectives, and formats. (Exact times can be adjusted, but assume a full day from roughly 9:00 to 17:00 with lunch and short breaks.)

➤ Session 1: Welcome & Setting the Stage (09:00 – 10:30)

Objectives: Introduce participants to the forum’s purpose and each other, establish a safe and inclusive environment, and prime the group with key background knowledge on civic participation.

Format: **Opening circle and info-sharing.** Begins with a warm welcome from facilitators and any host organization reps. Includes an **ice-breaker** (e.g. a quick game or “find someone who...” activity) to help participants get comfortable. Ground rules or a group agreement are co-created (respect, listen actively, etc.), reflecting Living Lab principles of co-management.

Facilitators present a brief, interactive **info session** on civic participation and the Living Lab approach (could be a short presentation or quiz game). They might share inspiring examples of youth civic action to set a motivating tone. Participants are introduced to the 10 competences (perhaps via a simple poster or slideshow) so they know the skills we’ll focus on. This session should ideally include a quick **“forum survey” or poll** (like asking how many have participated in community projects, etc.) to gauge baseline and engage the room. By the end of Session 1, everyone should feel oriented, included, and curious – ready to dive into activities.

➤ Session 2: Exploring and Understanding (Competence Workshops) (10:45 – 12:30)

Objectives: Engage participants in interactive exercises that develop critical understanding of civic issues and media, focusing on competences like critical thinking, media/news literacy, and analytical reasoning. Participants will analyze information, debate viewpoints, and practice verifying facts.

Format: **Rotating small-group activities** or one extended activity broken into parts. For example, Session 2 might be split into two blocks: first a **Debate & Deliberation Challenge** (Activity 1 above) and then a Fact-Check Hunt (Activity 4). These can be



done in the same groups or different groupings to vary interaction. The idea is to get participants actively **thinking and questioning**. After each activity, a short debrief ties it back to real-world civic life (e.g. discussing how debating an issue helps in understanding policy choices, or how fact-checking is crucial before sharing news on social media). By lunch, the group will have exercised their minds critically and likely had some energetic discussions, setting a foundation of awareness. *(Note: timing can be 45 min for debate including feedback, 45 min for fact-check, with 15 min transition and debrief, totaling ~105 min.)*

Lunch Break (12:30 – 13:30) – An informal lunch on-site, if possible, to maintain continuity and allow participants to mingle. This is also an opportunity for facilitators to engage casually with participants (listening to their thoughts so far) and for participants to informally network or check out any informational displays (e.g. a wall of youth opportunities or project posters, if provided).

➤ **Session 3: Engaging and Co-Creating Solutions** (13:30 – 15:00)

Objectives: Focus on collaborative creativity and problem-solving. Participants will work together to generate solutions or campaigns on civic issues, thereby practicing creative thinking, teamwork, and planning (creative problem-solving, collaborative action competences). They also learn how to articulate and pitch their ideas (social influence competence).

Format: Hands-on co-creation workshops. This session can host one comprehensive activity such as the **Policy Pitch simulation** or **Action Project Incubator** (Activities 7 and 10). Alternatively, two shorter rounds are possible: e.g. first the **Civic Imagination Brainstorm** (Activity 2) to open up creativity, followed by **Policy Pitch** where that creativity is channeled into concrete proposals. In practice, one effective design is to run **parallel working groups**: participants choose a theme (like “environment” or “youth civic education” etc.) and join that group to develop a proposal or campaign (this is akin to splitting into the policy teams in Activity 7). Facilitators guide each group. After about 60 minutes of teamwork, everyone reconvenes and each group presents their idea or “pitch” in plenary (~5 minutes each including one or two questions from peers or facilitator panel). A short applause or positive feedback for each reinforces confidence. Learning objectives: Besides the concrete ideas produced, this session teaches how to collaborate under time constraints, how to integrate diverse viewpoints into one plan, and how to advocate effectively. The presence of real issues and potentially **an invited guest** (to listen to pitches) adds seriousness and authenticity. This fulfills the goal of giving youth a platform to articulate solutions to real stakeholders. By the end of Session 3, participants have not only learned about civic participation – they have practiced being active citizens by formulating solutions and voicing them.

Coffee/Tea Break (15:00 – 15:15) – A short break to refresh. During this time, organizers might set up the room for the final session (e.g. arrange chairs in a circle or panel format for the roundtable, ensure any guest speaker is ready, display group outputs on the wall for all to see, etc.).

➤ **Session 4: Youth-Policymaker Roundtable & Reflection** (15:15 – 16:45)

Objectives: Provide a direct dialogue between young participants and a policymaker (or community decision-maker), reinforcing real-world engagement. Reflect on the day's learnings and solidify commitments or next steps. This session aims to validate youths' work by having it heard by an official, to let youth ask questions to someone in power (demystifying policy processes), and to critically evaluate what they learned through group reflection.

Format: Roundtable Discussion + Closing Reflection. The session usually starts with a **Roundtable Q&A** with the invited guest (if multiple guests, it can be a panel). The guest could be a local government representative, a school board member, a youth council leader, or anyone in a relevant civic role. In preparation, participants might have brainstormed questions earlier (possibly during pre-briefing or at lunch). The facilitator moderates: youth get to ask the policymaker about issues that concern them, or about how youth can influence decisions. In turn, the guest can respond to the pitches/ideas presented in Session 3, offering thoughts on feasibility or expressing willingness to support. This segment realizes the forum's goal of **real-world policy engagement** – youth voice meets authority in a constructive conversation. It also teaches the competence of engaging with institutional processes respectfully yet assertively. After ~45 minutes of roundtable dialogue, the guest is thanked and the focus shifts to **reflection** among participants. This closing reflection can be done as a whole group in a circle or in pairs then share-out. Possible prompts: “*What is your biggest takeaway from today?*” “*Which competence or skill do you feel you improved the most?*” “*What action do you want to take after this forum?*” The facilitator might highlight and remind of the competences again, asking for examples of each from the day. There could be a quick evaluation (hands up rating or a sticky-note feedback on what they liked and what to improve). Finally, organizers encourage participants to stay involved – perhaps inviting them to a follow-up event or an online group (tying into the debriefing session later). The session ends on an inspiring note, reiterating that *youth are not just participants but partners in civic life*, and their ideas and energies are valued by the community.

Wrap-up and Closing (16:45 – 17:00)

A *short formal close*: thanking everyone (participants, facilitators, guests), distributing any materials or certificates if applicable, and taking a group photo (if comfortable) to document the collaborative spirit. If any immediate next steps are planned (like an online debrief date or forming a WhatsApp group), announce those. End with a round of applause and possibly a unison cheer or motto to celebrate the day's achievements.

This agenda is designed to be **highly interactive and youth-centered**, alternating between whole-group dialogues and small-group work, with variety to keep energy high. The four main sessions correspond broadly to: (1) context-setting, (2) analytical skills, (3) creative collaboration, and (4) dialogue & reflection. Each has clear learning objectives linked to the competences and uses appropriate formats (games, discussions, design tasks, dialogue) to achieve them. There is also a logical flow: first understanding issues, then creating solutions, then interfacing with real decision-makers about those solutions. This flow mirrors the progression often cited in the project plan – awareness-raising, skill development, then empowerment for action. The schedule also respects the need for breaks and variety to maintain focus.

Facilitators should

be mindful of time management to keep sessions on track without rushing meaningful exchanges. The timing suggested allows some flexibility (e.g. if the roundtable is very engaging, it might run a bit longer and the reflection slightly shorter, etc.). A prepared moderator and timekeeper is essential for the pitch presentations and roundtable to ensure everyone gets heard. Using a visible timer or agenda board can help participants pace themselves too.

4.5. Online Pre-Briefing Session (Before the Forum)

To maximize the one-day forum's impact, an **online pre-briefing session** is conducted a few days to a week prior. This is a virtual meeting (via Zoom, Teams, etc.) with all registered participants (and facilitators) for about 1 hour.

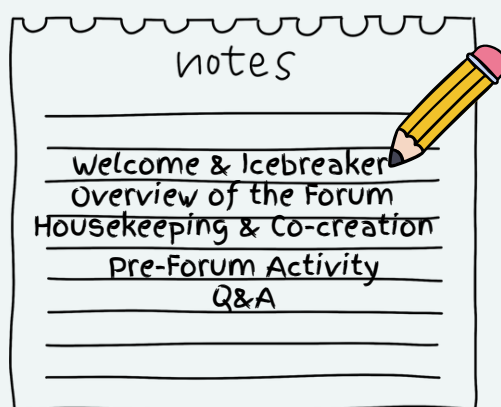
Purpose: The pre-briefing serves to prepare and prime participants so that valuable forum time isn't lost on basic introductions or explaining simple concepts. It helps build initial rapport, clarify expectations, and give participants a chance to shape the event content (aligning with co-creation). It also introduces any preliminary knowledge needed (for example, if not all participants are familiar with certain civic terms, the pre-brief can cover that). Another purpose is to handle practical logistics and ease any anxiety – especially important if participants are coming from different areas or backgrounds, or if some are not used to such events.

Structure: The online session can be informal yet structured.

Suggested outline:

- **Welcome & Icebreaker:** Facilitators welcome everyone, do a quick round of introductions (name, where from, one thing they care about in their community). A light icebreaker question like “If you could change one thing in society by magic, what would it be?” can be used to get people talking and thinking civically. This gets participants comfortable speaking up.
- **Overview of the Forum:** A concise presentation of what the in-person forum will be about – its goals, the Living Lab approach, and the competences. For instance, show a slide with the 10 competences and a sentence each, so participants are exposed to these terms early. Explain that at the forum they’ll do interactive activities (maybe tease one fun activity to build excitement). Emphasize that no prior expertise is needed, only an open mind and willingness to participate.
- **Housekeeping & Co-creation:** Discuss logistical details (venue, timing, what to bring, etc.). Then invite input: ask participants if there are specific topics or issues they really hope to discuss or specific skills they want to learn. This can be done via a quick online poll or open floor. For example, maybe many express interest in climate issues or in learning how to speak publicly – facilitators can note these and ensure the forum agenda can accommodate or reference these interests. Also, if a policymaker is coming, you might reveal who and even crowdsource questions in advance (“We will have a city council member at the forum – what questions or issues would you like them to address? Let’s brainstorm now so we can make the most of their time”). This primes participants to think ahead.
- **Pre-Forum Activity:** Sometimes giving a small task can enhance engagement. One idea is to ask each participant to come to the forum with a news article or social media post about a youth issue they care about (this will feed into the news validation or debate activities). Or ask them to talk to one friend about civic participation and be ready to share one insight. These light “homework” tasks set a participatory tone – youth begin the learning process before arriving. It also means at the forum, when an activity asks for examples, everyone has something up their sleeve.
- **Q&A:** Allow time for any questions about the forum or the project at large. Ensure everyone knows whom to contact for any concern (travel, accessibility needs, etc.)

Structure & Content of Pre-briefing: This session is intentionally kept relatively short and not heavy. It's about building connection and clarity. It prevents the forum from getting bogged down in introductions or confusion, freeing more time for substantive activities on the day. It also signals to youth that their voice matters from the get-go (by asking their expectations and topic interests, we incorporate **youth co-creation** in planning). Additionally, it's a chance to flag the inclusivity principles: facilitators can mention that the forum will be a safe space, and if anyone has needs (mobility, dietary, etc.), they should feel free to share privately so arrangements can be made. All this preparation makes participants more comfortable and invested when they arrive at the forum, leading to a more productive in-person experience.



4.6. Online Debriefing Session (After the Forum)

Equally important is the **post-forum debriefing**, conducted online a few days or a week after the event. This is typically a 1-hour virtual meeting bringing participants back together to reflect on the forum and discuss follow-ups.

Purpose: The debriefing consolidates learning, provides closure, and maintains momentum. Youth get to reflect on what they learned and how they might apply it, which solidifies the competences (reflection is a key step in experiential learning). It's also an opportunity to evaluate the event – gather feedback on what worked or not – feeding that into future improvements (since the methodology may be used repeatedly). Crucially, the debrief serves to channel the forum's energy into continued action: helping participants connect to opportunities or next steps (like forming a network, initiating the projects they planned, or simply staying informed). It keeps the community alive beyond the one-day forum, enhancing impact.

Structure: A typical debrief session could include:

- **Welcome Back & Check-In:** Facilitators greet everyone, perhaps with a fun question like “What’s one thing you did since the forum that you’re proud of?” to get positive vibes. This helps see if anyone applied something immediately (maybe someone spoke up in class or shared the experience on social media).
- **Reflection Discussion:** Use guiding questions to prompt sharing. For example: “*What is a memorable insight or skill you gained from the forum?*” “*Have your views on civic participation changed?*” “*Which competence do you feel strongest in now, and which do you want to keep developing?*” One effective method is a **story circle**: each participant can briefly share a story from the forum (an “aha” moment or challenge they overcame). This not only reinforces their own learning but lets them hear others’, building a sense of collective achievement. Facilitators can also share their observations (e.g. “We were really impressed by how you all collaborated in the project pitches, that was a highlight.”).
- **Feedback Collection:** It’s important to formally evaluate the forum’s success. Facilitators can ask participants to mention one thing they liked and one thing to improve. Or use an anonymous Google form or Zoom poll during the debrief to rate aspects (activities, facilitation, etc.). Because enough time has passed, participants might have clearer thoughts on what was useful. For instance, someone might realize, “*That fact-checking game has made me verify everything I read now*”, which is great feedback on impact. Or they might say they wished for more time with the policymaker – useful for organizers to note. Summarize the common points and acknowledge them.
- **Update on Outcomes:** Share with participants any concrete outcomes from the forum. For example, if the invited policymaker took their ideas and discussed them further or if the forum was part of a larger project, mention how their input will be used (perhaps it’s contributing to the “Youth Civic Participation Stocktaking Report” as in our project). If any of the action plans or pitches from Session 3 are moving forward, highlight that: “*Two of you have started a petition at school – fantastic!*” This validates their efforts and shows the forum wasn’t just a one-off talk shop.
- **Next Steps & Opportunities:** This is critical. Provide pathways for continued engagement. Examples: invite them to join a local youth council or follow an online community for civic initiatives; mention upcoming events or training (maybe the **online e-learning platform** launching as part of the project); encourage them to implement the group projects they brainstormed and

support (maybe the partner organizations can mentor or small seed funds are available). Even something simple like exchanging contacts or creating a WhatsApp/Discord group for the cohort helps maintain the network. Essentially, answer the question “What now?” so the energy translates into real action.

- **Celebration & Closure:** End on a high note. Congratulate them once more for their participation. If feasible, show a short slideshow of photos from the forum (people love seeing themselves and reminiscing). You could also do a quick, fun quiz recalling moments from the day as a way to recap learning in a playful manner. Finally, encourage them to stay civic-minded and reassure that facilitators/organizers are available for support or references in the future.

4.7. Ensuring Inclusivity, Youth Co-Creation, and Real-World Policy Engagement

Throughout the methodology, special emphasis is placed on these three cross-cutting principles:

The forum is designed to be inclusive in content and process. This means actively involving youth from diverse backgrounds (different schools or neighborhoods, genders, ethnic or socioeconomic backgrounds, including those with fewer opportunities such as rural youth or migrants as targeted in the project). To achieve this, outreach before the event should be broad and possibly partner with community organizations to reach underrepresented groups. During the forum, facilitators implement techniques to ensure inclusive participation: using mixed groupings (so cliques don’t isolate anyone), encouraging quieter voices (maybe by explicitly giving each person a moment in a round or using write-and-post methods for those shy to speak aloud), and addressing any form of disrespect or dominance immediately. As Dan, the facilitator in the SALTO piece, noted: an inclusive facilitator “*creates space for the most ‘vulnerable’ to talk, sometimes by gently limiting those who overshare*”. The Living Lab approach inherently values everyone’s contribution, aligning with **equality and human dignity** as European values. Also, attention to physical inclusivity: the venue must be accessible (for disabilities), seating arranged to avoid hierarchy (a circle or small tables instead of lecture rows), and materials in clear language. By modeling inclusivity, the forum teaches it: participants experience what a respectful democratic space feels like, hopefully inspiring them to replicate that in other contexts.

Rather than adults planning everything, youth have substantial input and leadership in this methodology. Co-creation is evident in multiple layers: the competence framework itself was co-designed with youth inputs in the project; the forum content (activities chosen) can be adjusted based on youth's stated interests (from pre-briefing feedback); and during the forum, activities like brainstorming, group agreements, and action planning are youth-led in substance. Moreover, one could involve a team of **youth co-facilitators**: perhaps some slightly older participants or youth workers who have been trained in the methodology help run the activities. This not only builds their leadership but gives participants relatable near-peer guides. The benefit of co-creation is increased relevance and buy-in – when young people see their ideas reflected, they engage more earnestly. For example, if in the pre-survey many participants voiced concern about climate change, the facilitators might ensure one example or scenario revolves around that topic, showing youth that *“we hear you, and here’s space to work on that.”* The Reciprocal Maieutic Approach again is relevant: it treats participants as equal contributors to knowledge – the forum is a two-way learning street, not teachers pouring info into students. In practice, this might mean being flexible: if a discussion veers into a passionate area because that’s what youth care about, the facilitator may allow that exploration rather than rigidly sticking to script. The co-created **European Compass** deliverable itself notes that the methodology should *“actualize these resources”* by adapting to youth needs. Ultimately, co-creation fosters a sense of ownership – participants feel *this is our forum*, which empowers them further to engage and follow through.

A standout feature of this forum model is the direct connection with policymakers or tangible civic processes. We intentionally include an elected official or policy expert in the agenda (Session 4 roundtable) to break down the walls between youth and decision-making. This serves multiple purposes: youths’ ideas and concerns reach the ears of someone who can act on them (even if just to take them into consideration), and youths gain insight into how policies are made and how they can interact with institutions. It demystifies leadership roles – a young person might realize a councilor is just a person one can talk to, reducing alienation from politics. Moreover, it provides networking; a particularly engaged youth might be invited by the guest to a city youth council meeting, for instance. In planning, it’s crucial to brief the policymaker to be in **listening mode** and to value youth inputs, not just give a speech. The ideal is a dialogue, not a lecture, aligning with how youth forums (like EU Youth Dialogues) operate to let youth influence policy. If a live policymaker cannot be present, an alternative is to simulate a policy engagement (as in the parliamentary simulation or by reviewing a real policy document and sending collective written feedback afterward to officials). The key is that youth work on real issues – not hypothetical ones only – and see pathways to real action. The methodology’s emphasis on local initiatives and even a stocktaking report means that what happens in the forum will be compiled and shared, ensuring voices have

a lasting record. This fulfills the priority of *active citizenship* and bridging the gap between youth and institutions. When participants witness that their forum resulted in, say, a recommendation sent to the city council or a mention in a community newsletter, it reinforces that their participation matters. Such engagement also builds trust on both sides: youth trust that policymakers can listen, and policymakers gain trust in youths' constructive contributions.

In essence, these three elements – inclusivity, co-creation, and policy linkage – are woven into the forum's DNA. They are not standalone topics but principles that shape how every session is conducted. For example, an inclusive ethos will influence how seating is arranged (circle, no one at the “head”), how speaking turns are managed, even how snacks cater to different dietary needs (seemingly small, but important inclusivity detail). Co-creation will influence how facilitators phrase questions (“What do *you* think we should focus on?”), how feedback is taken, and how flexible the agenda can be. Policy engagement drives the selection of certain activities (like including the roundtable, picking case studies that mirror actual local issues, etc.). By explicitly prioritizing these, the forum not only teaches about democratic participation but **models democracy in action**. Participants effectively live a day as active, respected citizens in a micro-democracy (the forum community), which can be a transformative experience.

4.8. Practical Advice for Implementation

For organizers and facilitators, executing this forum successfully requires attention to various practical aspects. Below are some **practical tips and guidelines** regarding space setup, facilitator roles, documentation, and feedback mechanisms:

Space Setup



The physical environment should reflect the participatory, open spirit of the Living Lab. Choose a **venue** that is accessible (central location if possible, wheelchair access, etc.) and has flexible furniture. An ideal setup is a large room that can accommodate a circle or U-shape for plenaries and have tables or breakout areas for small groups. **Arrange seating in a circle or clusters** rather than lecture style – this encourages equal footing and eye contact. Have plenty of open wall space or flipchart stands for posting charts (visuals of the ten competences, group work results, etc.). A welcome table at the entrance with name tags and a sign-in can help make arrivals smooth. Consider a “gallery” section: maybe hang some informative posters (like inspiring quotes, SDGs, or youth rights) to set the mood and give something to browse during breaks.

Materials



Prepare large paper, sticky notes, markers – creative supplies to prompt interactive work. If possible, have a projector for any brief presentations or showing videos, but keep tech minimal for flexibility. Also create a **“safe corner”** – perhaps a side area with comfortable cushions or chairs where someone can step away if they feel overwhelmed or need a break; this supports inclusivity and well-being. Arrange the catering (water, coffee, snacks, lunch) in a way that fosters mingling – e.g. buffet style. The space should be *inviting and dynamic* – think of it as a workshop studio, not a classroom. Ahead of time, test the acoustics and lighting; natural light and a bit of decoration can energize the atmosphere. A pro tip: display the day’s **agenda and goals on a poster** so participants know the roadmap (transparency helps them feel included in the process).

Facilitator Roles



A skilled facilitation team is key. It’s recommended to have at least **two facilitators (or more for larger groups)** to share duties and provide multiple perspectives. Ideally, one could be the lead moderator and another handles support tasks (note-taking, timekeeping, managing breakouts). Facilitation in a participatory forum is a delicate dance: one must guide the process firmly enough to meet objectives, but also step back to let youth lead conversations and activities. Facilitators should embody a **friendly, encouraging, neutral** stance. They are there to support learning, not to be all-knowing experts. In fact, as advised for youth participation work, *“forget about being a know-it-all”* – facilitators should avoid dominating content with their opinions. Instead, ask open questions, draw out contributions, and synthesize points. They should be adept at creating a **safe space** (as discussed, emphasizing confidentiality if serious topics arise, and intervening against any disrespect). During activities, they circulate, observe group dynamics, and nudge when necessary – for example, if one person is quiet, a facilitator might softly encourage them or adjust group roles to give them a turn. They must also watch the energy level: be ready with energizer mini-games if after lunch slump hits, or calming focus techniques if a debate gets too heated. **Time management** is a key facilitator role – gently enforcing time limits so the agenda stays on track (having a visible countdown or a funny signal can help). Additionally, assign someone as a **note-taker/photographer** (with consent) to document key points and capture the mood; this is useful for the stocktaking report or social media sharing afterwards. If youth co-facilitators are included, brief them thoroughly on their parts (maybe one leads an icebreaker, another moderates a small group). The facilitators should meet before the event to rehearse and align understanding of

the methodology. A good practice is also a debrief among facilitators after each session (even a quick huddle during breaks) to adjust anything for the next session. Overall, facilitators act as “guides on the side”, empowering participants while keeping the forum purposeful and inclusive.

Documentation Tools



Capturing the outcomes of the forum is important for both learning and accountability. Various tools should be used: **written flipcharts or digital docs** for recording group discussions, **sticky notes** for quick idea collection, and possibly an **online collaborative board (like Padlet or Miro)** if digital access is feasible for some parts (though careful not to over-tech). For instance, during the roundtable, one facilitator can scribe the main Q&As on a flipchart visible to all, so there’s a record of what was said. Encourage groups to appoint a note-taker in activities and then collect those notes (physically or via a photo) after presentations. It’s wise to produce a **one-page summary of each activity’s results** (e.g. list of ideas generated, key debate arguments, decisions made). If the forum is part of a project, these feed into deliverables like the *Youth Civic Participation Stocktaking Report* – so make sure to gather raw data: what youth have expressed as needs, their solutions, any voting or rating results from activities. **Multimedia documentation:** take photos of group work, especially of any charts or diagrams they create (for accuracy, and also to share with them later). If privacy allows, photos of participants engaging (with smiles, post-its in hand, etc.) are great for reporting and dissemination, but always ask for consent (perhaps included in registration form). Another tool is recording audio or video of the policymaker’s response or a particularly powerful youth statement – again with permission – which could be transcribed as a quote in reports. At minimum, one laptop should be on hand if someone prefers typing notes. If participants are comfortable, you might assign a **“youth reporter”** role to one or two attendees: they could make a short blog or social media post during or after, summarizing the event from their perspective (this is empowering and gives authenticity). All documentation should be stored and organized immediately after the event (the facilitators can do a quick digital upload of photos and notes) so nothing is lost. Besides formal purposes, sharing the documentation back with participants (like sending them a brief report or even a simple email with “Here are the ideas you came up with...”) reinforces that their work was valued and reminds them of the experience.

Feedback and Evaluation Mechanisms



Gathering feedback is both for improving future iterations and for participants to reflect on their personal experience. We integrate feedback in a few ways:

1. **On-the-spot feedback:** During the closing reflection, as mentioned, participants can voice what they liked or what could be better. This qualitative input is invaluable. Facilitators should note these down. To encourage honesty, one can use methods like writing anonymously on index cards or an evaluation wall with “I appreciated...” and “I wish...” columns.
2. **Post-event survey:** Shortly after the forum, send a quick survey (Google Form or similar) asking participants to rate aspects (facilitation, activities, overall satisfaction) and whether the forum increased their competences/interest. For example, using a Likert scale for statements like “I feel more confident to participate in my community after this forum” is a way to measure impact. Also include open questions for any additional comments. Keep it youth-friendly (not too long). Offering a small incentive for completing (even just a personalized certificate or entry in a raffle) can boost response rate.
3. **Facilitator evaluation:** The team should also evaluate internally – what went well or not from a delivery standpoint, did we meet our objectives (e.g., did we see evidence of competence development?), were we inclusive enough, etc. This can be written as a brief internal report or debrief meeting. These insights, combined with youth feedback, will refine the methodology guide for next use.
4. **Follow-up tracking:** In line with policy engagement and action outcomes, consider a mechanism to track what happens after. For instance, check-in with participants a few months later to see if any of the project ideas were implemented or if they took further civic actions (this could be an informal follow-up or part of project impact assessment). It shows long-term commitment and can produce success stories to highlight in reports.

Thanks to the implementation of robust feedback loops, the forum model itself stays dynamic and participant-informed – very much in the spirit of a Living Lab, which uses **iterative feedback to improve innovation**. One could even treat each forum as a “prototype” that gets refined with each run, based on user (participant) feedback. For example, if multiple youths say the debate was too short, next time extend it; if someone suggests involving local community groups in the action planning, consider that addition.

Additional practical advice: Always have a **Plan B**. With youth events, flexibility is key – maybe fewer participants show up than expected (adapt group sizes or combine roles), or the policymaker cancels last minute (prepare an alternate

activity like a mock council with participants themselves taking on roles). Weather or other factors might disrupt schedule – keep an eye on morale and adjust (e.g. if energy drops, do a quick energizer even if not on agenda). *Have supplies* for contingencies: a first aid kit, extra pens, printed backup of slides in case tech fails, etc. If possible, involve an **on-site support person** (not a facilitator) who handles logistics (registration, catering, taking calls from lost participants). This frees facilitators to focus on content and participants.

Last but not least, **document success and celebrate it**. A forum like this can be quite impactful – capturing a group photo with smiles and maybe sharing a news release or social media post about what happened (with outcomes and thanks to participants) can amplify the impact and give participants public recognition. It might even catch the eye of other stakeholders or media, further validating the youth’s efforts. Just ensure any such publicity has participants’ consent and portrays them respectfully and positively (which it should, given their hard work!).

With thorough planning and these practical considerations, the forum stands a strong chance of running smoothly and achieving its objectives. The methodology is comprehensive, but the heart of it is quite simple: **bring youth together in a supportive space, give them tools and freedom to learn by doing, and connect them to the wider world of decision-making**. Do this, and the results – more informed, skilled, and motivated young citizens – will speak for themselves.



REPORTING ON FORUM EXPERIENCE

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To capture the collective impact and country-specific insights of the Youth Civic and Political Participation Forums, each partner is required to produce a **National Experience Report**. This report will document the experience of implementing two one-day Living Lab Forums in their country, summarising key outcomes, participant feedback, and local context. The purpose of the report is to deepen our understanding of the civic realities faced by young people across Europe and to collect evidence-based insights that can inform youth work, policy development, and civic education strategies. Each report should include a **SWOT analysis** based on youth input and national data, as well as reflections on the learning outcomes related to the ten civic competences. All reports will be consolidated into a joint **Youth Civic and Political Participation Stocktaking Report**, which will serve as a core intellectual output of the project and a resource for policymakers, educators, and youth organisations.

Standardized Outline for the National Experience Report (10+ pages)

Title: *[Country Name] National Report on Youth Civic and Political Participation Forums*

1. Executive Summary (1 page)

- Concise summary of key findings, insights, and recommendations.
- Brief on the number of participants, location, and main highlights.

2. Country Context: Youth & Civic Participation (1–2 pages)

- Brief overview of the national context of youth civic and political participation.
- Include relevant data, research studies, or policy references (e.g., Eurobarometer, national youth strategy, civic education curriculum, recent elections/youth turnout).
- Identify key challenges and opportunities for youth engagement.

Example sources: National Youth Strategy, EU Youth Dialogue findings, OECD Civic Engagement Report, local civic NGOs' studies.

3. Overview of Forum Implementation (1–2 pages)

- Description of how the two Forums were organised:
 - Date, location, number and profile of participants.
 - Partners involved.
 - Brief agenda description (can include a table).
 - Description of the online briefing and debriefing.

4. Methodology Applied (1–2 pages)

- Explain the use of the Living Lab participatory approach in the Forums.
- How youth co-created the activities.
- How the European Compass of Civic Competences was used.
- Any local adaptation or customization applied.

5. Competence Development Summary (1–2 pages)

- Overview of how the 10 competences were addressed.
- Which activities were used per competence (mapping table or matrix).
- Youth feedback on the most relevant competences and reflections.
- Include direct quotes or reflections from participants (anonymized).

6. Youth Voices & Outcomes (1–2 pages)

- Highlighted ideas, proposals, and insights shared by participants during the Forum.
- Issues and challenges raised by young people.
- Prioritized civic topics and policy requests that emerged.

7. SWOT Analysis (1–2 pages)

Use inputs from youth and local context to build a **SWOT Analysis of Youth Civic Participation** in your country- Each section should include insights drawn from the Forum sessions, youth input, and national studies/policies.

8. Recommendations (0.5–1 page)

- Key suggestions to strengthen youth civic engagement nationally.
- Can include recommendations for education, policymakers, NGOs, municipalities, etc.

9. Reflections from Organisers (0.5–1 page)

- Partner's internal reflections on implementation, engagement, and learnings.
- What worked well, what could be improved.

10. Annexes

- Agenda of each Forum (if different).
- Visuals (photos, drawings, quotes, charts).
- Any tools or templates used.
- Optional: Summary of the online briefing & debriefing sessions.

✓ Formatting Guidelines

- 10–15 pages minimum (excluding annexes).
- Language: English.
- Include title page with country name, organization, date, logos.
- All references must be cited (footnotes or endnotes).
- Each section clearly labeled.

Good Luck with the Implementation!



06



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