



CivicArt

Methodology GUIDE

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CLARIFICATION OF TERMINOLOGY: The simultaneous use of male and female forms of speech has been avoided for reasons of better readability. All personal designations are equally applicable to all genders.



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1. INTRODUCTION TO PROJECT AND GUIDE

Project overview

The CivicArt project is designed to enhance the capacity of youth organizations in Ukraine and Georgia to deliver high-quality, innovative, and artistically enriched civic education activities for young people. This initiative integrates art-based methodologies into civic education, fostering active citizenship and democratic engagement. The project employs European best practices, drawing on the experience and expertise of European partners from Germany and Spain, to create an impactful educational experience, both online and offline. These practices will be adapted to the local contexts of Ukraine and Georgia, ensuring that the educational tools are relevant and effective for the target groups. The project will aim to reach a diverse group of young people, youth workers, artists and educators, promoting intercultural exchange and collaboration across borders.

The core objectives of the CivicArt project are as follows:

1. To enrich methodologies for non-formal civic education through the integration of artistic practices.
2. To enhance the competencies of 26 youth workers from Ukraine and Georgia in using art as an educational tool for civic education.
3. To foster cooperation among youth NGOs, artistic unions, and formal education institutions, promoting cross-sectoral collaboration.
4. To expand the networks of partner organizations, facilitating international cooperation and exchange of best practices.
5. To ensure the multiplier effect of project activities, reaching at least 5,000 stakeholders across various sectors through the dissemination of innovative educational materials.

The project is structured into three distinct stages:

Stage 1: This stage focuses on analyzing and adjusting European best practices for civic education through art to suit the Ukrainian and Georgian contexts. It includes assessing the current gaps in youth work related to civic education and exploring innovative approaches to art-based civic engagement.



The stage culminates in the creation of the **Collection of Best Practices in CivicArt** and will be the base for development of a Methodology Guide and training course for youth workers in the next stage.

Stage 2: In this stage, the capacity of all partners will be strengthened to develop and use modern, non-formal educational tools for civic education. Based on the Collection of Best Practices from Stage 1, partners will collaboratively create the **Methodology Guide on Civic Education through Art**, which will then be used in **a training course for youth workers**. This stage ensures that the partners are equipped with the tools to apply innovative art-based practices in their educational activities.

Stage 3: This stage strengthens the ability of youth workers in Ukraine and Georgia to engage stakeholders in civic education activities. It includes the implementation of **local, artistically enriched civic education activities**, supported by a **social media campaign**. A key component of this stage is the creation of the **CivicArt Alliance** network, bringing together youth workers, artists, and educators to ensure the sustainability of the project outcomes and to foster ongoing international cooperation and knowledge sharing. The stage will also ensure the dissemination of the project's outcomes, reaching at least 5,000 stakeholders across different sectors.

In addition to these stages, the project will maintain a strong communication and dissemination strategy. This includes producing four videos promoting activism and civic education and ensuring the accessibility of all materials via Creative Commons licenses. Translations of the project deliverables into multiple languages (Ukrainian, Georgian, German, and Spanish) will ensure the wide-reaching impact of the project.

The CivicArt project aims to foster a **long-term impact** on youth work by building the capacities of youth organizations, enhancing collaboration across sectors, and facilitating the integration of artistic practices into civic education. The project's ultimate goal is to empower young people in Ukraine and Georgia to become active and

informed citizens, ready to engage in societal issues and contribute to shaping their communities.

By equipping youth workers with the knowledge and skills to integrate art into civic education, the project helps to promote democratic values, critical thinking, and active participation among young people. Through the creation of the **CivicArt Alliance**, the project will also lay the foundation for ongoing international collaboration, ensuring that the innovative practices developed during the project will continue to influence civic education long after its completion.

At the European level, CivicArt aligns with the European Youth Goals and the EU Youth Strategy, contributing to youth empowerment through innovative civic education practices.

Guide overview and approach

The CivicART Guide has been created as a practical companion for educators, youth workers, trainers, artists, and activists who want to connect civic learning with creative practice. It is not a textbook in the traditional sense. Instead, it is designed to be a space where you can read, experiment, reflect, and act.

Each chapter of the Guide invites you to engage with both ideas and practice. You will find:

- A Big Question that frames the theme of the chapter. This question is meant to stay with you while reading, helping you link what you learn with your own experiences and context.
- Reflection questions that follow the experiential learning cycle – moving from experience, to reflection, to conceptualisation, and then to trying things out in new ways.
- A practical task that allows you to apply what you have read. These tasks are intentionally simple and adaptable, so you can use them directly with your group or modify them to suit your context.
- A Quick Reference Card at the end of each chapter. These cards give you a concise,



one-page summary of the key points: the Big Question, main ideas, competencies developed, practical steps, and reflection prompts. They are designed as tools you can quickly revisit when preparing your own activities or sharing insights with colleagues. The cards can also be used separately as a stand-alone toolkit — handy when you need inspiration, a refresher, or a ready- to-use summary without re-reading the full chapter.



How to Use the Quick Reference Cards

Each chapter ends with a Quick Reference Card — your one-page guide to the essentials.



What's inside?

- The Big Question of the chapter
- Key ideas in bullet form
- Competencies developed
- Practical steps you can try out
- Reflection prompts to guide your thinking



How to use them:

- As a recap of what you've just read
- As a stand-alone toolkit for training, planning, or inspiration
- As a handout or discussion starter with your group
- As a reminder before running an activity



Tip: Keep the cards handy when preparing sessions — they are designed to save you time and spark ideas!

For every chapter you can also receive an Open Badge confirming that you have completed it and engaged with the learning. If you collect all the badges, we will issue you a certificate of theoretical knowledge on how to use art methods for civic education.



Open Badges with Cities of Learning

At the beginning of each chapter, you will find a link to the Cities of Learning platform. There, you will find a short task connected to the chapter. By completing it, you can earn a digital Open Badge.

**How it works:**

1. Click the link at the beginning of the chapter – it will take you directly to the Badge task on Cities of Learning.
2. Complete the task (reflection, small action, or creative activity).
3. Submit it through the platform.
4. Receive your Open Badge.

**Keep your Badges:**

To collect and store your Badges you need the Badge Wallet app (available for free) or you can simply subscribe to the Badge Wallet web page.

The link in each chapter will guide you directly to the corresponding Badge task.



Complete all chapter tasks to collect the full set of Badges. When you have them all, you can request a certificate of theoretical knowledge in using art methods for civic education.

The Guide is built to encourage active engagement. You are invited not only to absorb the content but also to shape it with your own insights, examples, and experiences. CivicART is about dialogue, creativity, and participation – and so is this Guide.

**Think about it...**

What do you want to get from this guide and how will you use it?

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2. WHAT WE UNDERSTAND BY CIVIC EDUCATION THROUGH ART AND ARTIVISM

**Think about it...**

How does the situation described here connect (or not connect) to your own experience of youth work or activism?

Defining Artivism, Civic Education, Youth Participation

Understanding civic education through arts

Civic education via arts represents a transformative approach to learning that builds knowledge base and understanding about civic rights, responsibilities, and democracy through creative expression. This methodology employs structured learning experiences, workshops, and community projects that focus on developing civic knowledge while engaging participants in meaningful artistic processes.

The primary focus of civic education through arts centers on education and raising awareness about democratic principles and civic responsibilities. Unlike traditional educational approaches, this method utilizes the emotional and experiential power of art to create deeper connections with civic concepts. Through storytelling, symbolism, and immersive experiences, participants develop empathy and inspiration for civic action while building long-term understanding of their roles as engaged citizens.

Key characteristics of effective civic education through arts include purpose-driven relevance that addresses real societal issues, participatory and inclusive processes that amplify marginalized voices, and emotional connections that resonate with participants' lived experiences. The approach maintains an educational, reflective, and participatory tone while ensuring accessibility across different skill levels and backgrounds.

Artivism: Art as catalyst for change

Artivism emerges as an extension of civic education via the arts, transforming understanding into direct action. While civic education through arts builds foundational



knowledge, activism channels that understanding into activism through art, specifically aiming to provoke social or political change.

“ While civic education through arts builds foundational knowledge, activism channels that understanding into activism through art, specifically aiming to provoke social or political change... ”

Activism operates with distinct characteristics that differentiate it from traditional civic education approaches. It functions with urgency for change, addressing current or critical issues through disruptive creativity that challenges existing systems and norms. Artists utilize public spaces such as streets, protests, and social media platforms to maximize visibility and impact, often employing confrontational approaches that directly criticize authorities and structures.

“ Artists utilize public spaces such as streets, protests, and social media platforms to maximize visibility and impact... ”

The methodology of activism focuses on immediate emotional impact and mobilizing action rather than gradual understanding. Through public performances, protests, or installations, artists create work designed to challenge authority and societal norms. The tone is often confrontational, provocative, and urgent, utilizing bold and provocative imagery or performance to create memorable and impactful statements.

Essential features of effective activism include activism-focused intent with immediacy for transformation, public visibility and boldness in presentation, and strategic messaging designed to amplify voices demanding reform. Artists excel at using symbolic power and emotional provocation to spark strong responses such as outrage, empathy, or hope, ultimately driving people toward action.

The interconnection: From education to action

The relationship between civic education via arts and activism represents a natural progression from understanding to action. Civic education through arts may lead to activism as participants transform their newfound knowledge into direct advocacy. This

progression can manifest through various approaches:

- community workshops that culminate in street art campaigns,
- art installations in educational settings that evolve into public advocacy campaigns,
- performances or exhibitions that simultaneously educate about issues and demand change by highlighting systemic failures.

Both approaches share common goals in using art as a tool for social engagement, fostering awareness, critical thinking, and action on societal issues. They aim to inspire individuals to take responsibility for their communities and promote positive change while recognizing creativity as a catalyst for transformation. The educational and emotional impact of both methods seeks to engage audiences, whether through teaching civic rights or advocating for specific causes.

Youth participation: Art-based civic engagement and activism as tools for democratic involvement

Youth participation in democratic processes represents a fundamental goal, with art-based civic engagement and activism serving as powerful tools to facilitate and enhance this involvement. Rather than viewing youth participation solely within artistic contexts, we understand it as a broader democratic imperative where creative approaches become instrumental in engaging young people in civic life.

Both civic education through arts and activism function as strategic instruments for fostering youth participation in democratic society. Effective practices prioritize youth-centered impact by clearly defining goals that address civic issues relevant to young people, including:

- Democracy,
- Human rights,
- Non-discrimination,
- Diversity,
- Climate change,
- Social justice and so on.

These initiatives demonstrate real-world impact by amplifying youth voices and increasing their participation in civic and activist efforts. Successful youth engagement requires meaningful involvement as co-creators, ensuring young people have substantial roles in designing and implementing projects. This approach fosters youth leadership, encouraging participants to take ownership of their ideas and actions while developing skills for continued civic engagement beyond individual projects.

“ Successful youth engagement requires meaningful involvement as cocreators, ensuring young people have substantial roles in designing and implementing projects... ”

Quality youth-centered practices combine education and advocacy, helping young people understand societal structures while inspiring them to take impactful steps. They provide clear pathways to advocacy and civic action, linking art projects to tangible goals such as policy change or community engagement. The artistic creativity component focuses on youth-friendly, innovative, and emotionally powerful art forms. Successful practices prioritize projects that combine creative mediums popular with youth, such as street art, digital media, or music, to capture attention and imagination. These approaches ensure the artistic method resonates with young audiences while maintaining the balance between educational content and activist inspiration.

Examples of activism in Europe

The practices documented across Europe reveal the transformative power of activism as both educational methodology and catalyst for social change. These initiatives span diverse contexts: post-Soviet societies rebuilding civic culture, educational institutions seeking democratic transformation, communities processing displacement and trauma, and neighborhoods asserting collective ownership of public space. The diversity of approaches, ranging from subtle interventions to bold public performances, illustrates activism's adaptability to different cultural contexts, political climates, and community needs.

[The Collection of Practices in CivicArt](#), prepared within CivicArt project, presents 22 examples of art-based civic education methods that demonstrate how artistic techniques can serve as powerful tools for civic engagement and social change. Organized around four key missions, each practice is systematically documented with

details about artistic techniques used, complexity levels, target audiences, implementation contexts, objectives, and the civic competencies developed through participation. These practices showcase the transformative potential of combining creative expression with civic learning, offering educators, youth workers, community organizers, and cultural institutions practical methodologies for fostering democratic participation and social awareness. The complete collection can be accessed in the CivicArt project library at <https://civicart.rcfres.org/library/>, where practitioners can find detailed implementation guides and adapt these innovative approaches to their specific educational and community contexts.

Environmental activism: Sustainability through creative action

Environmental consciousness emerges as a central theme across multiple practices, demonstrating how activism transforms abstract ecological concepts into tangible community action. The **Labor** project in Germany exemplifies this approach through its transformation of construction trailers into a “Green Classroom” where students investigate earth, water, and air ecosystems. The project's emphasis on upcycling and resource management provides practical skills while developing ecological consciousness. Students learned that “many items can be better and more effective through repair and repurposing than by buying new ones,” directly challenging consumption patterns through creative reuse.

The **Social Street Art - Sombrero Garbage Bins** project in Budapest takes a different approach, using humor and visual intervention to address urban ecology and social inclusion simultaneously. By transforming ordinary garbage bins into eye-catching “sombrero” installations that invite citizens to donate bottles for homeless individuals, the project creates ecological awareness while fostering solidarity. This practice illustrates activism's capacity to address multiple social issues through single interventions, turning environmental consciousness into acts of social care.

Similarly, the **Filigree of the Drava** project in Croatia demonstrates how environmental activism can strengthen regional identity while building ecological awareness. Through community participation in collecting historical photographs and oral histories about the



Drava River, the project reconnects participants with the region's ecological heritage before industrialization. The combination of archival research, photo-collages, and travelogues creates "intergenerational dialogue and environmental awareness by reconnecting participants with the river's rich ecological and cultural legacy." This practice illustrates how environmental activism can operate through memory work, using cultural preservation to foster contemporary ecological consciousness.

Human Rights and migration

The human rights dimension of activism manifests powerfully in practices addressing migration, displacement, and cultural integration. Thus, the **hausRAT** project in Germany demonstrates how activism can facilitate the complex process of "becoming domestic" for refugees. Through the creation of personal utility items participants symbolically create value through art while developing practical skills and aesthetic languages that bridge cultural differences. The artistic production provides emotional anchoring and identity affirmation, while the networking component connects participants to professional opportunities and community resources. The integration of participants' existing professional skills with new artistic practices creates dignified pathways for social integration.

Tejiendo Vidas: Therapeutic Photography for Peace addresses the psychological dimensions of displacement through participatory photography with Colombian exiles in Spain. This practice demonstrates activism's therapeutic potential, using visual storytelling to process trauma while creating community connections. The blending of "old family photos from Colombia with new images of life in Spain" creates visual narratives that honor history while envisioning resilient futures. The project's emphasis on participant consent and trauma-informed practices highlights activism's ethical responsibilities when working with vulnerable populations.

The **Dublin Arts and Human Rights Festival** represents activism's capacity to create sustained platforms for human rights advocacy. By combining diverse artistic disciplines with human rights themes, the festival demonstrates how activism can maintain long-term advocacy efforts while reaching broad audiences through cultural engagement.

Solidarity and social healing: Georgia and Ukraine perspectives

Practices from Georgian and Ukrainian contexts reveal activism's particular significance in societies processing historical and current trauma and building democratic institutions. The **Enlightened Unicorn** project in Tbilisi, Georgia, uses playful, affirming street art in the form of stickers to spark small moments of emotional connection and self-reflection in public spaces. This seemingly simple intervention addresses collective mental health while demonstrating that "one does not need large resources to engage in civic creativity."

This focus on improving collective mental health and well-being of the Georgian people through simple yet meaningful street interventions illustrates activism's capacity to address societal healing through accessible creative acts. By introducing positivity into civic consciousness, the practice contributes to democratic culture-building in conflict and post-conflict contexts where civic engagement may carry significant risks.

The **From Heart to Heart** project, working with war-affected children from Ukraine, demonstrates activism's role in processing ongoing trauma while maintaining both support and solidarity on one hand, and cultural identity on the other. The integration of Ukrainian cultural heritage, such as creating Christmas stars, lithographs, and folk toys, provides therapeutic outlets while preserving cultural traditions during displacement. The international dimension of the project, which started as an initiative by Japanese artists and subsequently connected Ukrainian children with peers in Japan, Poland, the UK, Australia, and Thailand, illustrates activism's capacity to build solidarity across borders while processing localized trauma.

Educational innovation: Transforming institutional structures

Several practices demonstrate activism's potential to transform educational institutions from within. The **Power Vacuum** project represents an experimental approach to examining institutional authority by temporarily removing traditional school leadership. The project transformed the principal's office into a performance space and introduced alternative decision-makers - a turtle, three elementary school children, and finally an artificial intelligence to observe how the school community would respond to disrupted power structures. This institutional intervention deliberately blurred boundaries between fiction and



reality, creating uncertainty that revealed “automated reactions to authority” while providing students with direct experience of their voices being heard in institutional decision-making. The project made the normally invisible mechanisms of institutional power visible and initiated a broad debate about participation and democracy in educational institutions.

The **Formwandler** project takes a different approach, creating process-oriented dialogue spaces that transcend conventional academic boundaries. Under the motto “Contrasts,” students collaborated with artists to interconnect traditionally separate fields of fine arts, applied arts, and performing arts within regular classes. One component involved transforming the school cafeteria through temporary installations inspired by artistic wrapping techniques.

Another intervention repurposed the cafeteria during non-meal times by constructing seating from packaging materials and discarded books. Students created reading platforms and book columns while forming reading choirs that experimented with various rhythms, tempos, and vocal styles. These interventions demonstrate how activism can disrupt everyday school life, routines and habits through artistic methods while opening new dialogue spaces.

Community building and active citizenship

Neighborhood-level activism practices demonstrate how creative interventions can strengthen democratic participation at the grassroots level. The Donauwelle participatory newspaper project empowers residents to shape public narratives through collaborative journalism and creative expression. The project's multilingual approach and inclusion of diverse voices, especially migrants, older residents and children illustrates activism's capacity to amplify marginalized perspectives while building inclusive communities.

The **Wandering Living Rooms** project transforms public spaces through temporary interventions that assert collective ownership of urban environments. The practice involves creating improvised living rooms in neglected public spaces, complete with carpets, furniture, books, and household objects that participants bring to share. Participants first clean and prepare neglected areas, then collaboratively arrange domestic furniture and objects to create welcoming communal spaces. The process develops a sense of ownership for the place while demonstrating that streets and squares, as public spaces, belong to everyone. In such

a way the project challenged conventional uses of urban space while fostering community connections.

The **Book Party with a Tree** project addresses post-pandemic social isolation through performative reading, civic dialogue and collective care. This practice demonstrates activism's capacity to rebuild social connections while fostering civic engagement through cultural activity. The emphasis on anyone, regardless of background participating in reading and discussion illustrates activism's democratizing potential.

Inclusive creative spaces

Practices addressing identity and intersectionality reveal activism's capacity to create inclusive spaces for complex social dialogue. Thus, **Artistania** NGO creates safe spaces for creative exploration that bring together individuals from different cultural and social backgrounds to promote transcultural creativity and mutual learning. The organization's emphasis on overcoming processes of exclusion through collaborative art-making demonstrates activism's potential for social integration.

The **IDiscover - Masks & Identity** project specifically addresses representation and belonging for first and second-generation immigrants through mask-making and theatrical improvisation. The project's questioning of "why expressive masks are typically white" while creating more representative, inclusive forms of expression illustrates activism's capacity to challenge dominant cultural norms while affirming marginalized identities.

The **Theater der kleinen Form** project demonstrates activism's educational potential with children, using puppetry, movement, storytelling and improvisation to develop communication skills, emotional intelligence and self-confidence while exploring social challenges like environmental issues.



Public engagement

Direct political engagement manifests differently across contexts, from subtle institutional critique to open resistance. The **Linoleum Express** mobile printmaking workshops empower political activists, youth and marginalised groups through accessible art-making that produces protest art. The project's combination of artistic skill development with political expression demonstrates activism's capacity to build both creative and civic capabilities simultaneously.

The **"Be Human" Memorial Performance** in Krakow represents activism's role in maintaining historical memory and promoting international understanding. The interactive flash mob's reading of deportees' names and invitation for audience participation demonstrates activism's capacity to make abstract historical trauma immediate and personal.

Conclusion: Patterns and principles

These diverse practices reveal several consistent patterns in effective activism and art-based civic education. Purpose-driven relevance remains fundamental, with clear, impactful goals tied to real societal issues that reflect participants' lived experiences and local contexts. Participatory and inclusive processes involve diverse communities in creation, ensuring marginalized voices receive amplification while maintaining accessibility across skill levels and backgrounds. Action-oriented outcomes provide clear pathways to advocacy and civic action, linking artistic projects to tangible goals and partnering with activists or organizations to amplify reach and impact. Sustainability and scalability equip participants with skills and tools for continued civic engagement while designing adaptable frameworks for replication across diverse communities.

The integration of these elements creates a comprehensive approach that bridges the gap between artistic expression and civic engagement, providing pathways for individuals, particularly youth, to move from awareness to understanding to action.

Quick Reference Card — Chapter 2: What we understand by Civic Education through Art and Activism



Big Question

- ? How can artistic practices transform civic learning into civic action?



Key Ideas

- Civic education through arts = learning about rights, democracy, and civic life via creativity.
- Activism = urgent, public, and bold use of art as activism.
- Link: from awareness (education) → to expression (arts) → to action (activism).
- Youth participation is central: young people as co-creators, not passive learners.
- Purpose-driven, inclusive, and emotionally engaging processes are most impactful.



Competencies Developed (CivicART Model)

- Creating and holding space for expression
- Facilitating learning through creative practice
- Supporting young people's agency and voice
- Connecting people, ideas, and contexts
- Co-creating impact and reflecting on practice



Practical Steps

1. Start with workshops that combine civic themes and artistic methods.
2. Encourage youth to choose an issue that matters to them.
3. Guide them to design a creative action (street art, performance, digital media).
4. Support them in moving from awareness to public expression.
5. Debrief and connect experiences to wider civic engagement pathways.



Reflection Prompts

- What civic issues in my community could be explored through art?
- How can I create safe and inclusive space for youth expression?
- Where might young people's art best reach and influence others?

Use this card as a recap & action tool at the end of Chapter 2.

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3. CONNECTING CONTEXT AND COMMUNITIES

General overview

This part of the manual is dedicated to explaining the context in which the project participants live and work, and where they implement their workshops. That is why we decided to provide a rather detailed overview of the local realities regarding youth policy, young people, youth work, and activism in Ukraine and Georgia. We will start with Ukraine and then continue with Georgia. While you are reading, we invite you to reflect on one question:



Think about it...

How does the situation described here connect (or not connect) to your own experience of youth work or activism?

Civil society continues to be a fundamental element of Ukrainian and Georgian democracy, playing a crucial role in the resilience of both nations, especially in response to the ongoing Russian aggression. Volunteer movements and informal civil society groups, which emerged at the onset of the war in Ukraine, “often act as the backbone of humanitarian action across the country” (European Commission, 2023). However, these movements often lack the structure or clear vision needed to contribute significantly to broader societal resilience, particularly in fostering youth engagement and resilience. This limitation is especially significant, as many of these groups struggle to see how they can play an integral role in the long-term rebuilding of society, including strengthening youth engagement through education.

Citizenship education has become an education policy priority at the EU level (European Parliament, 2023). However, it is common in many countries that specific gaps in youth work and civic education include limited opportunities for sustained engagement in post-training civic activities, leading to a drop in youth involvement (CoLab, 2023). Similarly, both in Ukraine and Georgia, traditional approaches frequently fail to engage youth effectively, lacking long-term participatory methods and practical, hands-on experiences. Additionally, limited cross-sectoral collaboration between educational institutions, NGOs, and cultural sectors is an issue that reduces the richness and diversity of civic education experiences.

At the same time, there is a rise in artistic activity centred around civic issues in Europe. A combination of art and activism (commonly known as “artivism”) often is used to express opinion, cultivate awareness, and motivate change in society. Artists, known for their innovative and often rebellious nature, play a crucial role in reflecting societal concerns

through their artwork. It is considered as a pathway to cultivate democratic values and meaningful participation among young people, as well as an important measure for post-conflict reconstruction efforts. Coupled with artistic practices, civic education could offer a multifaceted approach to address the challenges faced by young people with fewer opportunities both in Ukraine and Georgia. Visual arts, music, storytelling could serve as powerful tools for healing and resilience-building, enabling youth to develop a participatory attitude and sense of belonging within their communities.

Ukraine

Definitions and statistics

In Ukraine, “youth” is defined in law as people aged 14-35. Wartime mobility has reshaped where young people live and learn. As of July 2025, the Ministry of Social Policy reports approximately 4.6 million officially registered IDPs inside Ukraine (administrative register). In parallel, IOM's survey-based estimate for April 2025 indicates approximately 3.76 million de facto IDPs and approximately 4.14 million returnees (“Ukraine Displacement Data: IDP Estimates [IOM DTM] | Humanitarian Dataset | HDX”), reflecting a different methodology focused on current residence and recent movements. Beyond Ukraine's borders, around 6.8 million refugees from Ukraine were recorded globally as of January 2025 (“Ukraine Emergency | UNHCR US”). Taken together, these figures explain the higher youth presence in central/western regions and major cities that host IDPs and returnees, and underscore the need to localize outreach and partnerships in those hubs.

Ukraine is predominantly urban: World Bank data show around 70% of the population lives in urban areas. Since 2022, displacement patterns and service concentration have tilted opportunities further toward cities and IDP-hosting centres, widening access gaps for rural youth, particularly for education, psychosocial support, and extracurricular/arts provision noted in UNICEF's 2024 Situation Analysis (“Situation Analysis of Children in Ukraine 2024”).

“ Ukraine is predominantly urban: World Bank data show around 70% of the population lives in urban areas. ”

Since 2022, the everyday realities of young people in Ukraine have been reshaped by war-driven mobility, interrupted education and work, and new forms of civic engagement. Youth-led volunteering has become a standing feature of public life. Digital platforms are now the default space for organising, learning and even mental support. These shifts are guiding youth-oriented programme design: meet youth where they are (host hubs and online), co-create with volunteer structures, and build in trauma-informed, psychosocial support.

“ Since 2022, the everyday realities of young people in Ukraine have been reshaped by war-driven mobility, interrupted education and work, and new forms of civic engagement... ”

Youth policy in Ukraine

Under Ukraine's "Law on the Basic Principles of Youth Policy", a primary objective of youth policy is to foster conditions that encourage youth participation in public, political, socio-economic and cultural spheres. This also entails promoting the role and significance of youth involvement in decision-making processes (Bodnar, 2023).

Ukraine's youth policy is administered by the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine (hereafter - MYS), which serves as the central executive body responsible for formulating and implementing state policy in the sphere of youth development. MYS is the primary coordinator and publisher of normative acts and guidance for the youth sphere issues orders, regulations, and methodological guidance that govern day-to-day implementation (e.g., rules for establishing youth centers, standards for youth workers, grant procedures, and program implementation). These instruments translate national strategies into actions and administrative procedures.

Key directions of youth policy in Ukraine are:

1. **Civic education and patriotic development.** Ukraine places significant emphasis on national identity formation and patriotic education among young people. This includes programs designed to strengthen national consciousness, promote Ukrainian cultural values, and develop civic responsibility.
2. **Youth participation and engagement.** This policy framework promotes active youth participation in democratic processes through:

- » Youth councils at various administrative levels
- » Youth advisory bodies to government institutions
- » Civic engagement programs that encourage young people to participate in community development

3. Volunteer activities, which are actively promoted as a means of civic engagement and social responsibility development. MYS supports volunteer initiatives and creates frameworks for organized volunteer activities.

4. Educational and professional development, including learning advancement, skill development, professional training, career guidance, as well as youth worker programs to build capacity in the youth sector.

Legislative framework

Cross-sectoral and international framework

The broader framework of cross-sectoral and international instruments that guide Ukraine's youth policy alignment with global standards provide the legal and policy foundation for international cooperation while ensuring coherence with national priorities.

At the European level, the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement establishes fundamental parameters for youth policy cooperation, including alignment with EU standards, education and training cooperation with mutual recognition pathways, participation in mobility schemes and EU initiatives, and structured policy dialogue mechanisms. This agreement creates the overarching framework within which programs like Erasmus+ operate, ensuring strategic coherence between bilateral cooperation and multilateral programming.

Council of Europe instruments provide normative foundations for youth participation and rights recognition, particularly through the European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life, which establishes standards for meaningful youth engagement in decision-making processes. The Revised European Social Charter and the Lisbon Recognition Convention further support mobility and qualification recognition that enable young people's cross-border participation and learning mobility.

Global frameworks anchor Ukraine's youth policies within universal human rights and development commitments. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child provides foundational principles of participation, protection, and provision that inform youth policy approaches. The 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals create accountability frameworks through SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), while UNESCO recommendations guide approaches to education, non-formal learning, and cultural participation.

Regional and bilateral cooperation mechanisms include Eastern Partnership youth programs, Black Sea regional initiatives, Nordic-Baltic-Ukrainian cooperation formats, and bilateral agreements that enable exchanges, joint projects, and mutual recognition.

Domestic legislation

Ukraine's youth policy is regulated by a layered normative-legal framework designed to coordinate central and local authorities, civil society, and educational and cultural institutions that work with young people. It includes laws, resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers, Presidential decrees, ministerial orders, and implementing regulations relevant to youth policy.

Law “On the Basic Principles of Youth Policy” (No. 1414-IX, 27 Apr 2021) is the core law enacted by the Parliament of Ukraine to provide the legal basis for youth rights, participation, social protection, and education. It sets principles for state youth policy, define target groups and state responsibilities, and create the legal space for youth organizations and public participation.

Additional laws that complement youth policy are the following:

- **Law on Public Associations** - determines the formation, activity and status of youth and children's public associations, regulates, inter alia, registration and governing rules for youth organizations and NGOs;
- **Law on Volunteering** - establishes the legal framework for volunteer activity, defining the status of volunteers and organizations, etc. In May 2025, the Law was enacted to integrate and develop volunteering within the education system, recognizing experience for university admission and making educational institutions responsible for supporting volunteerism;
- **Law on Education** and several other laws regulate specific levels and aspects of the

Ukrainian education system: Law on Early Childhood Education (2001), Law on Complete General Secondary Education (2020), Law on Vocational Education (1998), Law on Out-of-School Education (2000), and Law on Higher Education (2014). They all ensure access to quality education and lifelong learning;

- **Labour regulations** - protecting young workers' rights and promoting youth employment

[National Youth Strategy to 2030](#), approved by Presidential Decree No. 94/2021 sets strategic goals to expand meaningful youth participation and civic engagement through youth councils and consultations. It is also aimed on enhancing access to quality formal and non-formal education while strengthening digital and civic competencies; promoting employment, vocational training, entrepreneurship and economic inclusion; ensuring physical and mental health services, resilience and prevention programs; removing barriers to social inclusion for rural youth, internally displaced persons, minorities and people with disabilities; building youth infrastructure and local capacity through youth centers, cultural and sports facilities and empowered local authorities; and fostering civic-patriotic identity, cultural participation and international mobility to integrate Ukrainian youth into wider European and global communities.

Declared core principle of the Strategy are the following:

- Youth-centred approach and meaningful participation of young people in policy design and implementation;
- Cross-sectoral coordination among ministries (education, culture, health, labour, social protection, etc.);
- Evidence-based policy with monitoring, indicators and periodic review;
- Decentralization and adapting national priorities to local contexts;
- Alignment with European/international standards and cooperation frameworks.

Youth policy implementation mechanisms

Implementation mechanisms include multi-year state and sectoral programs supported by dedicated budget allocations.

The primary implementation tool is [the State Targeted Social Program “Youth of Ukraine”](#), which provides a comprehensive framework for youth development initiatives across the country. The Programme operationalises the National Youth Strategy by translating strategic goals into concrete measures, financing and timelines. The Cabinet of Ministers' Resolution No. 579 (current edition updated May 2024) specifies annual budget lines, responsible implementing agencies and performance indicators for actions across education, employment, health, inclusion and youth infrastructure. Key programme components include:

- accelerated Youth Centers Development - establishing, renovating and maintaining youth facilities nationwide to serve as hubs for learning and civic life;
- leadership development programs to build capacity among young leaders and youth organizations;
- skills development initiatives offering professional, vocational and soft-skills training to improve employability and entrepreneurship; and
- civic education programs that promote democratic values, civic responsibility and meaningful participation in public life.

The Program establishes reporting cycles and evaluation checkpoints to ensure evidence-based adjustments and local adaptation through regional administrations and municipal authorities, leverages co-funding and technical partnerships with international donors, NGOs and the private sector to expand impact, and a successor concept for 2026-2030 is currently under public consultation (2025) to align the next Programme with evolving needs and European standards (see CMU Resolution No. 579 and official ministry portals).

Ukraine Recovery Plan

The [Ukraine Recovery Plan](#) recognises young people's central role as volunteers, civic actors,

and future workforce. The plan sets short-, mid- and long-term actions within staged recovery, with youth activities spanning emergency mobilization, consolidation, and transformation stages. **Strategic goals of the Ukraine Recovery Plan ("Youth and Sports" working group) include:**

- Goal 1. Participation of young people, women and men (different categories) in public life to hasten the victory day, rebuild Ukraine and ensure European integration (including through the activities of the Ukrainian Youth Foundation, All-Ukrainian Youth Centre, civil society institutions, youth centres and spaces, youth councils and volunteering).
- Goal 2. The development of a physically active and healthy nation is a priority of the state's humanitarian policy.
- Goal 3. Recovery and development of reserve sports and high-achievement sports, including the priority of Olympic sports.
- Goal 4. Restoration and development of sports infrastructure.
- Goal 5. Increase in the level of Ukrainian national and civic identity up to 85%.

Key youth-related elements in the recovery plan include two national flagship projects targeting youth, namely:

- Ukrainian Youth Fund (UYF), dealing with grant-making, youth entrepreneurship and employment support, capacity building, and digital mechanisms to engage and return young people to Ukraine; and
- "United Ukraine" - an initiative on non-formal civic and patriotic education, strengthening national identity, civil-defense training, and programmes to involve displaced youth and returnees.

Besides, to achieve meaningful participation, the plan foresees the institutionalisation of youth representation across recovery governance. It declares guaranteed youth seats with defined mandates and consultative budgetary roles on municipal and sectoral reconstruction committees, formalises youth councils in line with European standards, and establishes

transparent feedback loops through digital platforms and local hubs. These provisions are framed as practical checks against tokenistic engagement by connecting youth input to decision-making, funding and monitoring processes.

The plan gives particular weight to youth hubs as focal points for local action: multipurpose spaces are to combine civic education, volunteer coordination, career guidance and psychosocial support under one roof. Co-management arrangements with youth-led organisations are promoted so programming remains relevant and accessible, including for displaced, rural, disabled and minority young people. Volunteering is explicitly positioned not only as civic contribution but also as an accredited route into apprenticeships and jobs linked to reconstruction, helping to turn volunteer experience into recognised, marketable qualifications.

In addition, the document stresses inclusion, psychosocial recovery and digital equity as cross-cutting priorities that must accompany all youth measures. It provides for multi-year financing for the Ukrainian Youth Fund and the hub network and for capacity-building of youth workers and municipal staff to keep participation sustainable beyond short donor cycles.

Human Resources Development

A special **Youth Worker Program** has been established to ensure qualified personnel for youth work across the country, recognizing the importance of professional capacity in the youth sector. The Program operates through a structured partnership led by the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine in collaboration with Council of Europe, UNDP in Ukraine and the All-Ukrainian Youth Center. Around this core, the program has developed an ecosystem that includes an annual Youth Work Forum, a national Best Practices competition, an open-access library of methodological materials, and a nationwide trainer network. Together, these institutions provide governance, quality assurance, peer learning, and sustained capacity building for the youth work sector at both national and local levels.

Core training components include a foundational training that introduces:

- the principles and ethics of youth work,
- youth participation,
- project-based methods,
- safeguarding,

The specialized modules offer deeper learning in areas such as trauma-informed youth work, public administration tools for the youth sector, online youth work, and volunteer management, among other themes. A dedicated training-of-trainers track prepares and accredits facilitators to deliver both basic and specialized modules, ensuring program scalability and consistency. Delivery formats include in-person, blended, and fully online courses, using interactive methodologies, group work, and mentored practice to translate knowledge into applied skills. In response to the full-scale war, the program has adapted delivery by expanding blended and online formats and launching updated modules on trauma-informed youth work and practical tools for public administration under crisis conditions.

Civic engagement and youth in Ukraine during the war

Since 2022, the everyday realities of young people in Ukraine have been reshaped by war-driven mobility, interrupted education and work, and new forms of civic engagement. Internal displacement remains dynamic, with cyclical movements as people relocate for safety, services, study and work, and then test returns when conditions allow.

Prior to the full-scale invasion, Ukraine had developed a robust network of over 300 youth centers and spaces serving young people across the country. As of July 4, 2022, 121 youth centers remained operational, though they had significantly transformed their work to respond to wartime needs. These centers now function as humanitarian hubs, shelters for internally displaced persons (IDPs), volunteer coordination points, and assistance centers for vulnerable populations.

The physical infrastructure of youth work has been severely impacted, with 30 youth centers and spaces damaged or completely destroyed, and 60 facilities under occupation (data as of July 4, 2022, Ministry of Youth and Sport of Ukraine, 2024). The human resources of the youth sector have been equally disrupted. Surveys indicate that 68% of youth workers were forced to relocate from their home regions, creating a diaspora of skilled professionals who previously provided direct services to young people. When asked about their ability to continue their youth work:

- 37.6 % of respondents reported they could still perform their youth work duties
- 51 % indicated they could only partially continue their work

- 10.8 % stated they had no capacity to continue their professional activities

The broader youth policy ecosystem has also been fractured, with numerous civil society organizations, youth councils, youth centers, youth workers, and other stakeholders losing their ability to operate consistently and effectively. Many have been displaced from their communities, forcing them to either suspend their activities entirely or fundamentally redesign their approaches to youth engagement and support during wartime.

Nevertheless, as of December 2024, 613 youth councils have been established in the country, including 577 at the local level (including 196 rural, 159 community, and 222 urban youth councils), 3 on the district level and 23 at the regional level and the city of Kyiv. The total number of members of Ukraine's youth councils at various levels amounts to 9,687 young people (Ministry of Youth and Sport of Ukraine, 2024).

Despite these challenges, the youth sector has demonstrated remarkable resilience, with many centers pivoting to address immediate humanitarian needs while still maintaining some youth-focused programming adapted to the wartime context. ((Ministry of Youth and Sport of Ukraine, 2022).

The European Commission's report highlights the **increasing civic engagement** of Ukrainian youth, with participation in societal rebuilding efforts rising from 6% to 37% during the war. This demonstrates a growing potential for youth involvement in both civic and political spheres, reinforcing the case for enhancing civic education in the country. There is a clear recognition of the importance of integrating comprehensive civic education into Ukraine's national recovery efforts (European Commission, 2023). While 72% of young people in Ukraine expressed a willingness to contribute to community recovery, only 1% were actively involved. Barriers to participation include insufficient representation in governmental bodies, a lack of accessible tools for civic participation, and bureaucratic obstacles. These findings reveal a disconnect between the youth's desire to contribute and their actual involvement, highlighting the need for more structured and accessible channels for youth engagement in post-war reconstruction (UNDP, 2023).

“...the increasing civic engagement of Ukrainian youth, with participation in societal rebuilding efforts rising from 6% to 37% during the war...”

Furthermore, the full-scale invasion of Ukraine has spurred significant youth engagement in **volunteering and community-driven activities**. Youth volunteerism and community self-organisation spiked in 2022 and continues at elevated levels, creating natural entry points for co-created, arts-based civic projects (from mutual-aid logistics to neighbourhood cultural actions). UNDP's youth studies show sustained participation in volunteering/donations and petitioning since 2022, alongside rising interest in local recovery processes. Approximately 30% of young people participated in volunteer work for the first time, compared to only 6% in 2021. The motivation for volunteering was primarily driven by a personal desire to help (43%), with family and friends also playing a key role in encouraging participation (27%). This shift underscores the resilience of Ukrainian youth, who are increasingly taking on civic responsibilities. This increased engagement is essential for rebuilding communities and reinforcing democratic values through active participation in recovery efforts (UNDP, 2023).

Youth **participation in formal political processes** remains low, with 70% of respondents not involved in any civil society activities in the past year. Despite increased volunteering, youth political and civic engagement faces significant challenges, such as a lack of influence in decision-making and limited opportunities for meaningful participation. To boost youth involvement, the report suggests creating youth-driven projects, providing financial support for these initiatives, and promoting youth participation in both local and national decision-making processes (UNDP, 2023).

At the same time, young people organise and voice priorities through national and NGO **digital channels**. U-Report Ukraine runs frequent polls that feed into programme and policy conversations, while the government's Diia platform has scaled e-services to tens of millions, enabling rapid sign-ups, notifications and feedback loops for youth programming. Leverage both for recruitment, pulse checks and iterative design.

Stakeholder Mapping and Community Engagement

Official structures

Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine (MYS) is the central executive body responsible for developing and implementing state policy on youth development. The MYS coordinates sectoral initiatives and issues normative acts, orders and methodological guidance that govern

practical implementation: rules for establishing youth centres, standards for youth workers, grant procedures and program implementation mechanisms.

To guarantee participation, there are established youth consultative bodies (**youth councils**) at two levels:

1. Nationally, the National Youth Council under the Cabinet of Ministers (chaired by the Prime Minister) develops coordinated positions on youth policy and supports cross-government cooperation. Its membership includes representatives of youth and children's NGOs (selected competitively), student self-government, youth councils and public authorities
2. Locally, youth councils may be set up under regional and municipal authorities to help set priorities, monitor implementation and channel feedback from young people to decision-makers.

The youth work infrastructure comprises a three-tier system of **youth centres**: the All-Ukrainian Youth Center, regional youth centres and local youth centres, complemented by flexible youth spaces (premises used for youth work). Regional centres provide general coordination and more equal access, while local centres and spaces deliver services: civic and non-formal education, volunteering and meaningful leisure, including support to youth and children's associations. Quality criteria and a national mark of quality for centres are approved by the central authority.

Professional youth work community

The [Association of Youth Workers of Ukraine \(AMPU\)](#) is a professional network that bridges formal institutions and grassroots practice. It serves as the primary professional body, coordinating sector-wide initiatives and advocating for the recognition of youth work as a distinct profession. AMPU operates through networks of local practitioners who collaborate on territorial and thematic bases.

AMPU's core functions include consultation and mentoring support for communities and organizations facing challenges in youth policy implementation or youth work practice, providing guidance for non-functioning youth councils, advice for individuals beginning careers in youth work, and expert consultation on developing youth programs within local communities or NGOs. Additionally, AMPU offers trainer and facilitator services through its network of experienced practitioners who can deliver customized training programs or

organize comprehensive “turnkey” events, with services ranging from pro-bono support for grassroots initiatives to fee-based professional services depending on the scope and complexity of requirements.

“ AMPU’s core functions include consultation and mentoring support for communities and organizations facing challenges in youth policy implementation or youth work practice...” ”

Civil society organizations

Youth NGOs are the most diverse and dynamic stakeholder category, ranging from large national organizations with multiple programmatic focuses to specialized local initiatives addressing specific community needs. These organizations operate across various thematic areas including civic education, environmental activism, cultural preservation, social entrepreneurship, human rights advocacy etc.

Key characteristics of the youth NGO landscape include:

- **National youth organizations** that implement large-scale programs, conduct advocacy campaigns, and serve as umbrella structures for local affiliates
- **Thematic networks** focusing on specific issues such as gender equality, environmental protection, or digital rights
- **Local youth** initiatives that address community-specific challenges and provide direct services to young people
- **Student organizations** within educational institutions that combine academic interests with broader social engagement

Educational institutions as stakeholders

Universities, colleges, and secondary schools serve as both venues for youth participation and stakeholder entities with their own institutional interests. Student self-government bodies within educational institutions provide structured opportunities for democratic participation, budget allocation decisions, and institutional policy influence when they operate as genuine participatory mechanisms rather than formal structures. The effectiveness of these bodies varies significantly across institutions, with some functioning as meaningful platforms for student voice while others remain largely ceremonial.

Recognizing this challenge, numerous civil society organizations and youth initiatives actively work to strengthen authentic participation within educational settings, providing training, advocacy, and support to help transform formal structures into genuine participatory mechanisms. These efforts focus on building capacity among student leaders, advocating for meaningful decision-making powers, and creating accountability mechanisms that ensure student voices are heard and acted upon.

International and donor organizations

International development agencies, bilateral donors, and multilateral organizations significantly influence the youth participation landscape through funding mechanisms, technical assistance, and policy dialogue. The European Union, through various programs including Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps, provides both direct opportunities for youth engagement and funding for local initiatives.

Erasmus+ offers Ukrainian youth extensive opportunities for educational mobility, youth exchanges, and capacity building through its Youth strand. The program supports non-formal learning activities, strategic partnerships between organizations, and capacity building projects that strengthen youth work quality and recognition. Through Key Action 1 (mobility projects), young people can participate in youth exchanges and volunteering activities, while Key Action 2 enables organizations to develop innovative practices and strengthen international cooperation.

The European Solidarity Corps creates pathways for young people to engage in solidarity activities through volunteering projects, traineeships, and solidarity projects within Ukraine and across Europe. These programs not only provide direct participation opportunities but also build organizational capacity among Ukrainian youth NGOs and youth centers through partnership mechanisms and project co-funding requirements.

The Council of Europe plays a crucial role through initiatives like the “Youth for Democracy in Ukraine: Phase II” project, which aligns with both the Council of Europe’s youth sector strategy 2030 and Ukraine’s national policy reforms, including the National Strategy of State Youth Policy 2030. This project focuses on implementing European standards for youth policy through three key components: developing participatory and gender-sensitive youth policy approaches, advancing youth work recognition and quality standards, and promoting social cohesion

and inclusion. The initiative engages various stakeholders in implementing Council of Europe recommendations on access to social rights, youth rights, and youth work standards.

UNICEF Ukraine contributes through innovative programs like UPSHIFT, a global social innovation initiative implemented locally through partnerships with organizations such as the Kharkiv Professional Development Foundation. This program empowers teenagers and young people to develop and implement solutions to community challenges using human-centered design methodologies. Participants receive mentoring support to conduct research, understand target audiences, and test their innovative ideas, with successful teams gaining access to funding for project implementation. The program combines skills development, mentoring, and financial support to build youth resilience while generating community-level solutions.

Community-level and private sector stakeholders

Ukraine's decentralization reforms have fundamentally transformed the landscape of community-level stakeholders, creating new opportunities and responsibilities for youth participation at the local level. United territorial communities (UTCs) now serve as the primary administrative units for local governance, combining previously separate villages, towns, and cities into larger, more capable entities with expanded budgets, administrative capacity, and decision-making authority.

Local councils and mayors within UTCs have gained significant autonomy over budget allocation, service delivery, and community development planning, making them key stakeholders in youth policy implementation. These authorities control substantial resources that can be directed toward youth programming, infrastructure development, and participatory initiatives. The success of youth participation often depends on the political will and understanding of local elected officials regarding the value of youth engagement.

Community development coordinators and social workers employed by UTCs represent a new category of professional stakeholders who bridge formal administrative structures with grassroots community needs. These professionals often serve as entry points for youth initiatives, helping navigate bureaucratic processes and connecting young people with available resources and opportunities.

Local cultural institutions - including community centers, libraries, museums, and cultural houses - have gained increased importance as UTCs assume responsibility for cultural programming

and community engagement. They provide physical spaces for youth activities and often serve as neutral venues for intergenerational dialogue and civic education initiatives.

Village and neighborhood councils within larger UTCs maintain important roles in hyperlocal decision-making, particularly in rural areas where they serve as the most accessible level of democratic participation for young people. These smaller units often provide the first opportunities for youth to engage in formal political processes and community planning.

Local business communities and employers have become more significant stakeholders as decentralization has emphasized local economic development. Youth entrepreneurship programs, internship opportunities, and skills development initiatives increasingly depend on partnerships with local enterprises that understand community economic needs and opportunities.

Local business communities and employers, corporate social responsibility initiatives, youth-focused businesses, and social enterprises have become more significant stakeholders that bridge economic development with social impact. Youth entrepreneurship programs, internship opportunities, and skills development initiatives increasingly depend on partnerships with local enterprises that understand community economic needs and opportunities.

The decentralization process has also empowered **civil society organizations and informal community groups** by creating more direct pathways to influence local policy and access funding. Youth-led initiatives now have clearer mechanisms to engage with decision-makers and compete for community development resources alongside other local priorities.

Georgia

Definitions and Statistics

The Law of Georgia on Youth Policy (2019) defines youth as individuals aged 14-29. This cohort accounts for roughly a quarter of the population. The distribution is highly uneven: the majority of opportunities (tertiary education, creative industries, civil society jobs, internships) cluster in Tbilisi and a few large cities (Batumi, Kutaisi, Rustavi), while mountainous and border regions

experience persistent youth out-migration. The demographic dynamics are shaped by declining fertility, internal migration toward urban centers, and significant outward mobility of young people seeking study and work opportunities abroad (EU, Turkey, and beyond).

Youth demographics and opportunities vary markedly across Georgia's regions. According to UNFPA's Youth Index (2021), Tbilisi alone accounts for around 33.2% of the country's youth population, while Adjara and Kvemo Kartli each account for about 10-12.5%. At the other extreme, Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti together host only around 0.5% of Georgia's youth. This uneven distribution reflects both demographic decline in some mountainous regions and the persistent pull of Tbilisi and other urban centers.

Education outcomes also differ strongly by region. Secondary school completion rates in Tbilisi average around 76%, but in Kakheti they are as low as 42%, highlighting systemic disadvantages in rural and agricultural areas. Access to higher education and vocational training is similarly unequal: while Tbilisi, Batumi, and Kutaisi offer a dense network of universities and vocational colleges, remote regions rely mainly on smaller institutions with limited capacity and fewer program choices.

Employment patterns reflect these structural divides. Youth unemployment is most acute in rural and mountainous areas where labour markets are thin and transport infrastructure is weak. NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) rates are particularly elevated in regions such as Kakheti, Guria, and Shida Kartli, where agriculture dominates and few alternative opportunities exist. In contrast, Tbilisi and Adjara benefit from more diversified economies with opportunities in services, IT, and tourism, though even here youth unemployment remains high relative to national averages.

“ Regional youth programs respond unevenly to these realities. Municipal youth centers and youth councils function actively in Tbilisi, Adjara, and Imereti, but are less resourced in smaller regions. ”

Donor-supported pilots—such as youth innovation labs in Kakheti, Shida Kartli, Guria, and Racha-Lechkhumi—demonstrate that targeted investment can yield strong results in entrepreneurship and civic engagement. Similarly, vocational colleges in regions like Kvemo Kartli and Adjara have begun linking skills training with local economic needs (agriculture, tourism, logistics). Expanding such initiatives across other regions could help bridge gaps

between education and labour market outcomes.

Gender gaps in employment and entrepreneurship are pronounced, driven by care burdens, safety/transport barriers, and sectoral segregation. Gender-sensitive programming (childcare during training, safe transport stipends, mentoring by women leaders, addressing gender-based violence) increases participation and completion.

Barriers for Rural youth and NEETs include low information density (fewer networks), weak transport, and limited role models. Outreach-first approaches (mobile youth work + guided referrals) and subsidized pathways into VET/apprenticeships are effective.

Georgian language proficiency can constrain transitions into higher education and public-sector jobs. Bilingual peer mentoring, preparatory courses, and localized opportunities (e.g., community media, intercultural projects) improve inclusion.

Accessibility of venues, digital content, and transport is uneven. Universal design, personal assistance budgets, and partnerships with disability organizations are prerequisites. Youth centers that embed assistive tech and inclusive sports/arts have higher participation.

Over the last decade, access to upper-secondary education has expanded, and higher-education enrollment has increased. Yet persistent gaps remain in foundational and transversal competencies (communication, teamwork, problem-solving, digital literacy) that employers value most. Learning outcomes vary by region; rural schools often struggle with teacher shortages, digital connectivity, and extracurricular provision. The consequence is a pronounced “skills mismatch” at entry to the labor market, where employers report difficulty finding job-ready youth, and youth report difficulty finding jobs that recognize or build on their competencies.

Youth unemployment typically exceeds the national average by a large margin and remains stubbornly high for young women and rural youth. Informal and seasonal work is widespread; many young people piece together income from irregular employment, self-employment in agriculture or services, and family businesses. NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) rates are elevated in several regions and are strongly associated with transport barriers, low access to guidance and information, and limited availability of quality non-formal learning. Entrepreneurship is increasingly attractive to youth but constrained by access to seed capital,

mentorship, and markets.

Formal participation—membership in youth NGOs, youth councils, or student unions—remains modest. However, willingness to engage is high when entry points are accessible, relevant, and time-bounded (short volunteering placements, local environmental actions, campus campaigns). Digital platforms have become default spaces for expression, organizing, and peer-to-peer learning. These shifts are most visible among urban students but increasingly diffuse to regional centers through hybrid online/offline activities.

“ According to recent labour market reports, around 27-30% of young people aged 15-29 in Georgia fall into the NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) category. ”

The highest NEET rates are observed among rural youth, young women, and ethnic minorities. Reasons for this include lack of career guidance, mismatch between education and labour market needs, transport barriers in remote regions, and limited availability of quality vocational and apprenticeship opportunities. Social norms, early marriage in some communities, and discouragement due to previous unsuccessful job searches further contribute to persistent NEET levels. Vocational colleges (VET) play a particularly important role in Georgia's youth landscape. There are over 100 VET institutions across the country, offering courses in agriculture, tourism, IT, and services. Youth work initiatives are increasingly integrated into VET curricula, with extracurricular civic education, entrepreneurship clubs, and volunteering schemes. Despite this progress, VET enrolment is still relatively low compared to higher education, and many young people perceive vocational education as a less prestigious option. Strengthening the link between VET, local employers, and municipal youth programs is therefore a national priority.

Youth Policy in Georgia: Institutions, Strategy, and Trajectory

Institutional architecture. Youth policy is coordinated by the Ministry of Culture, Sport and Youth. Implementation is led by the Youth Agency (established in 2019 as a Legal Entity of Public Law), which manages programs, issues methodological guidance, and pilots new service models (e.g., mobile youth work). Municipalities are crucial co-implementers: they plan and fund local youth activities, operate youth centers, and host consultative platforms.

Strategic documents. The 2014 National Youth Policy Document and the ensuing Youth Strategy (updated to align with 2025 horizons) articulate priorities around participation, education (formal and non-formal), employment and entrepreneurship, health, inclusion, and culture/sport. A cross-cutting emphasis is placed on aligning with European standards (EU Youth Strategy; Council of Europe's Youth Sector Strategy 2030) and on evidence-informed policy with measurable targets.

Policy evolution and lessons. Three interlinked trends define the trajectory since 2018: (1) decentralization of youth services, with municipalities taking on larger roles; (2) recognition and gradual professionalization of youth work as a distinct field with codified competencies; and (3) stronger linkages between youth policy and labour-market policies (career guidance, entrepreneurship support, apprenticeships). The COVID-19 shock and subsequent political polarization catalyzed expansions in online youth work and digital participation tools. A key lesson is that participation without follow-through undermines trust; thus, policy now increasingly builds feedback loops (e.g., youth councils with budget consultations, transparent follow-up on youth proposals).

Legislative and Normative Framework

Through the EU Association Agreement, Georgia has committed to aligning youth policy with European standards. Participation in Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps provides youth with mobility opportunities, while Council of Europe instruments guide standards on participation and youth rights. Georgia is gradually adapting these frameworks, with progress depending on institutional capacity and resources.

“Georgia's youth policy is anchored in the **National Youth Policy Concept 2020-2030**, which prioritizes youth participation, education, employment, health, and overall well-being. Its central aim is to foster an environment where young people are engaged, empowered, and have equal access to opportunities.”

The Concept was designed in response to gaps identified in earlier youth policy frameworks and seeks to improve coordination between national institutions and municipal governments.

Key legislative developments reinforce this framework, most notably the **Code on the Rights of the Child (2019)**, alongside ongoing reforms that embed youth policy responsibilities within the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth. Together, these instruments align Georgia's youth agenda with international standards, particularly the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**.

Core Priorities of the National Youth Policy Concept 2020-2030:

- **Participation** - Expanding opportunities for youth to contribute actively to social, cultural, economic, and political life.
- **Development and Realization of Potential** - Guaranteeing access to quality education, meaningful employment, and professional growth pathways.
- **Health and Well-Being** - Promoting healthy lifestyles and improving access to youth-friendly health services.
- **Economic Empowerment** - Enhancing opportunities for entrepreneurship, innovation, and sustainable livelihoods.
- **Improved Policy Management** - Strengthening coordination, monitoring, and effectiveness of youth policy across national and municipal levels.

Institutional and Legislative Framework

Code on the Rights of the Child (2019): A comprehensive law safeguarding the best interests of children and youth. It provides clear guidance for state agencies, local authorities, and civil society organizations, ensuring compliance with Georgia's obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Institutional Division of Roles: Municipal governments hold primary responsibility for planning and implementing youth strategies at the local level, while the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth sets national priorities and provides oversight.

Implementation and Progress

Municipal-Level Initiatives: Local governments are developing tailored youth strategies and services that respond to community-specific needs, thereby operationalizing national policy goals at the grassroots level.

Practical Experience Opportunities: Since 2024, the Georgian public service has expanded

its paid internship programs, enabling students and recent graduates to gain valuable work experience and improve employability.

Capacity Building: Ongoing programs aim to strengthen the skills and capacities of youth workers and organizations, ensuring professionalization of youth work at both the regional and national scales.

Implementation Mechanisms: Programs, Services, and Monitoring

Implementation of youth policy in Georgia rests on a combination of national programs coordinated by the Youth Agency, local initiatives implemented by municipalities, and donor-supported projects that pilot new approaches. The Ministry of Culture, Sport and Youth of Georgia oversees the system and ensures cross-sectoral coordination, though the level of integration with education, labour, and health policy remains a work in progress.

National programs. The Youth Agency manages annual grant schemes for youth NGOs and informal groups, focusing on civic participation, entrepreneurship, environmental action, and culture. Youth councils are supported at municipal levels, creating advisory structures where young people can provide feedback on local budgets and programs. Youth centers act as hubs for non-formal education and volunteering, while mobile youth work teams provide outreach in rural and disadvantaged areas. These mechanisms are complemented by Ministry-supported programs on sports, culture, and volunteering, ensuring youth policy is mainstreamed into broader national strategies.

Mobile youth work. Mobile youth workers deliver services in areas where permanent infrastructure is lacking, offering career guidance, basic skills training, and psychosocial support. These pilots, implemented with donor support, are recognized by the Ministry as a priority model for scaling. Discussions are ongoing about how to secure sustainable state financing and integrate mobile youth work into long-term national frameworks. Mobile youth workers also coordinate closely with vocational colleges and schools, ensuring referrals into training and apprenticeships. This integration helps reduce NEET rates by providing practical, hands-on pathways for young people who are disengaged from formal education.

Youth centers and digital spaces. More than 50 youth centers are operational across the country, though unevenly distributed. Centers serve as laboratories for non-formal education, arts and culture, hackathons, and social innovation sprints. Increasingly, digital platforms

complement these spaces by offering online training courses, resource libraries, and feedback tools. Municipalities are encouraged to publish annual youth reports, tracking participation and outcomes.

Innovation Labs and entrepreneurship. In several regions, Youth Innovation Labs have been piloted to connect young people with entrepreneurial learning, mentorship, and micro-seed grants. These labs are most effective when embedded in regional economic ecosystems—for example, tourism and agri-processing in Kakheti, or creative industries in Adjara. Entrepreneurship competitions and startup incubators are often run jointly by youth centers, local chambers of commerce, and international donors, creating bridges between young innovators and employers.

Monitoring and evaluation. A stronger monitoring culture has emerged, with municipalities and the Youth Agency adopting outcome indicators such as the number of young people progressing from participation in youth activities to employment, education, or civic leadership. While still developing, this system represents a step towards evidence-informed policy. International partners support this by funding research, pilot evaluations, and youth sector capacity-building in data collection.

National programs. The Youth Agency currently implements annual grant schemes for youth NGOs and informal groups, supports participation infrastructures such as youth councils, and invests in youth centers, mobile youth work, and youth worker training. The Ministry of Culture, Sport and Youth provides overall coordination and has expressed its commitment to linking youth programs with other national priorities, including vocational education and employment. Many initiatives are in pilot phases, with gradual expansion depending on funding and local government engagement.

Human Resources and the Professionalization of Youth Work

The professionalization of youth work in Georgia is a relatively new but growing field. Traditionally, youth work had been carried out informally by NGO staff or volunteers, often without formal recognition or standardized training. Since the establishment of the Youth Agency and the Association of Youth Workers of Georgia, momentum has built for creating a

professional identity, training pathways, and eventually recognition of youth work as a career option.

Competency frameworks. The Youth Agency, with input from practitioners and the Association of Youth Workers, has piloted draft competency frameworks to define the skills, knowledge, and values expected from youth workers. These cover outreach and engagement, facilitation of non-formal education, safeguarding, inclusion, and coaching. While these frameworks remain in development, they represent an important step towards standardizing practice across municipalities and NGOs.

Training architecture. Training of youth workers currently occurs through donor-supported projects, Ministry-organized short courses, and peer-learning initiatives. The training system follows a ladder approach: (1) introductory modules for new youth workers, (2) specialized modules on topics such as digital youth work, environmental education, and trauma-informed practice, and (3) training-of-trainers courses to expand the pool of facilitators nationwide. Youth worker forums and practice-sharing events help to build networks and disseminate innovative approaches.

Certification and recognition. Policy discussions are ongoing about developing a national certification system for youth workers. While no formal state certification exists yet, pilots have introduced voluntary recognition tools such as digital badges and certificates of completion. The Ministry of Culture, Sport and Youth has expressed interest in aligning any future certification scheme with existing professional standards (teachers, social workers), to ensure parity of esteem. Progress depends on funding, stakeholder consensus, and integration with the public service registry.

Challenges and next steps. Key challenges remain: sustainable financing for youth worker posts, particularly in rural municipalities; professional supervision and well-being support for youth workers dealing with high-stress environments; and the creation of attractive career pathways to retain skilled practitioners. Opportunities lie in expanding collaboration with vocational colleges, universities, and international partners, ensuring youth work becomes embedded within both formal education and broader public service structures.

“ The Ministry has indicated in policy consultations that future reforms will align youth worker recognition with other professional standards (such as

teachers and social workers), though concrete legal or regulatory changes have not yet been adopted. ”

Youth Participation and Civic Engagement

Formal participation. Georgia hosts a layered participation ecosystem: a National Youth Council; municipal youth councils and ad hoc youth advisory boards; student self-governments; and school-level parliaments. Where well-designed, these bodies co-draft agendas with local authorities, review youth budgets, and monitor delivery. Where underpowered, they risk tokenism. Sustained capacity support (training, mentorship, and small facilitation budgets) is decisive for impact.

Informal and issue-based engagement. The last two years have seen a surge of youth-led public action. University students and recent graduates have organized large-scale, sustained demonstrations in defense of democratic standards and EU integration. Campus strikes, human-chains, and nightly rallies in Tbilisi and regional centers drew wide participation and were coordinated through social media and encrypted messaging channels. Young journalists, artists, and civic technologists amplified the mobilization through live streams, explainers, and creative protest formats.

Examples from current days. Youth-led opposition to the so-called “foreign agents” legislation—branded by protesters as the “Russian law”—was spearheaded by Gen-Z organizers around campuses and cultural spaces. Reports describe broad student involvement, volunteer first-aid teams, legal aid collectives, and rapid response groups documenting detentions and police actions. In parallel, youth environmental and climate initiatives have expanded, with cohorts trained to lead local climate adaptation projects in Kvemo Kartli, Shida Kartli, and Mtskheta-Mtianeti. New youth movements with social-democratic and pro-European platforms continue to emerge, seeking to translate street-level energy into policy agendas and community programs.

Barriers and enabling factors. Barriers include low trust in institutions, fear of reprisals, limited protection for student activists, and the financial/time constraints of precarious youth. Enablers are accessible entry points (short volunteer bursts, micro-grants), visible wins (e.g., local environmental clean-ups or policy concessions), credible intermediaries (universities, youth

centers, NGOs), and digital tools that reduce coordination costs. For long-term participation, youth want structured pathways from protest and volunteering to representation and co-governance (e.g., reserved youth seats on local committees with budget input; youth juries reviewing municipal plans). In May 2024, students at Batumi State University staged prolonged strikes demanding greater autonomy and protesting the 'foreign agents law.' This wave of youth mobilization spread to Kutaisi and Rustavi, where youth collectives organized sit-ins and artistic performances to draw attention to democratic backsliding. The Dafioni movement, led by youth activist Zviad Tsetskhladze, became emblematic of this new wave of civic resistance, combining social media campaigning with on-the-ground rallies. The arrest of Tsetskhladze in 2025 galvanized solidarity marches across multiple cities and created intergenerational alliances between youth groups and older civil society organizations. Similarly, climate action has risen as a unifying cause: under the EU4Youth 'Empowering Young Leaders for Climate Action' program, youth from Kvemo Kartli and Shida Kartli initiated local green projects, such as tree planting, river clean-ups, and community debates on renewable energy. These initiatives underline how Georgian youth blend global concerns with local activism, making environmental advocacy a key entry point for civic participation. In parallel, young journalists and bloggers have leveraged platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Telegram to disseminate protest information, challenge misinformation, and connect Georgian movements with European solidarity campaigns. Estimates suggest that more than 20,000 young people participated in the May-June 2024 demonstrations across Georgia, with youth constituting over 60% of total protest participants. Surveys conducted by local research institutes indicated that nearly 70% of young respondents supported the protests, and 45% reported direct involvement in rallies, strikes, or solidarity actions. Social media engagement around protest hashtags reached hundreds of thousands of interactions, with TikTok alone hosting over 10 million views of protest-related content. In climate initiatives, evaluations of EU4Youth projects show that over 500 young people in Georgia have been trained as 'climate ambassadors,' and approximately 2,000 community members engaged in local climate actions led by youth groups. These numbers illustrate both the scale and intensity of contemporary youth activism, as well as the ability of young people to mobilize rapidly and sustain civic energy in response to political and environmental challenges. Available estimates suggest that tens of thousands of young people participated nationwide. These figures are based on civil society monitoring and media coverage rather than official statistics, and should be interpreted as indicative of the significant scale of youth involvement.

Stakeholder Mapping and Community Engagement

Public authorities

- **Ministry of Culture, Sport and Youth** - policy leadership; coordinates cross-sectoral youth priorities.
- **Youth Agency** - national implementation and methodical support: grants, youth center network, mobile youth work, training and certification pilots, digital platforms, structured participation events.
- **Municipalities** - plan and finance local youth activities, run youth centers, co-host youth councils, and integrate youth priorities into local development strategies; may provide premises and co-funding for NGOs.
- **Education institutions** - schools, VET colleges, and universities as both venues and actors (student self-governance, civic curricula, service learning, and centers for entrepreneurship).

Professional community and civil society

- **Association/networks of youth workers** - advance professional standards, conduct training and mentoring, and advocate for recognition and quality assurance.
- **Youth NGOs and informal groups** - deliver non-formal learning, volunteering, activism, human-rights education, environmental action, and youth-led research.
- **Umbrella bodies** - national youth councils and thematic coalitions that coordinate advocacy (e.g., participation rights, volunteering recognition, youth employment).

International partners and donors

- **European Union** - Erasmus+, European Solidarity Corps, EU4Youth, Twinning/Taiex, and budget/program support for skills and youth.
- **Council of Europe** - standards and capacity building on participation, human rights education (HRE/EDC), and youth work recognition.
- **UN agencies (UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, ILO)** - research, pilots on youth participation, employability, health, and inclusion.

- **Bilateral donors and foundations** - program funding (youth entrepreneurship, climate action, civic tech), exchanges, and scholarships.

Private sector and media

- **Employers' associations, chambers, and corporate CSR** - internships, mentoring, innovation challenges, and social enterprise acceleration.
 - **Media and creative industries** - platforms for youth voice, media literacy, and constructive public debate.
-

International Cooperation and Mobility

Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps have become key channels for mobility, non-formal learning recognition, and cross-border networks. Youth exchanges, training courses, and strategic partnerships expose Georgian youth workers and young people to European quality standards and innovative pedagogies. EU4Youth initiatives expand employability and entrepreneurship supports and link them to climate action and green skills.

Council of Europe cooperation contributes standards on meaningful participation and youth work quality, along with access to the European Youth Centres and the partnership on HRE/EDC resources. UN agencies and bilateral donors fund targeted pilots (youth hubs, climate leadership, digital inclusion), with successful models transitioning into municipal or national programs.

The value of cooperation is not only learning transfer; it is also legitimacy and durability. Projects that embed co-management with public institutions and co-funding with municipalities are most likely to scale. Strategic use of digital platforms ensures that materials and methods remain accessible beyond grant cycles.



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Quick Reference Card — Chapter 3: Connecting Context and Communities



Big Question

? How does the situation described here connect (or not connect) to your own experience of youth work or activism?



Key Ideas

- Context matters: youth realities differ in Ukraine & Georgia.
- Civil society = resilience anchor, but needs structure.
- Intention–participation gap: youth want to engage but face barriers.
- Education + arts = lever for participation and resilience.
- Cross-sector cooperation multiplies impact.



Competencies Developed (CivicART Model)

- Creating and Holding Space for Expression – fostering trust, inclusion, and embodied participation.
- Facilitating Learning through Creative Practice – designing learner-centred, art-based activities that encourage exploration.
- Supporting Young People's Agency and Voice – empowering initiative, authorship, and self-expression.

- Connecting People, Ideas and Contexts – navigating complexity, fostering empathy, and enabling dialogue across communities.
- Co-Creating Impact and Reflecting on Practice – turning ideas into actions and learning through reflection and adaptation.



Practical Steps

1. Map your community: stakeholders, spaces, barriers.
2. Identify youth entry points: short volunteer roles, micro-grants, digital polls.
3. Design participation bridges: one-off → council/committee → co-budgeting.
4. Embed art practices: storytelling, visual journals, micro-performances.
5. Ensure psycho-social baseline: safe spaces, trauma-informed facilitation.



Reflection Prompts

- Where do young people in my context naturally gather (offline/online)?
- Which barriers are most visible here, and who could help remove them?
- What small creative action could link youth voice to decision-making in the next 30 days?

Use this card as a recap & action tool at the end of Chapter 3.

[Get your Bage](#)



4.DESIGNING LEARNING FOR CIVIC EDUCATION AND ARTIVISM

The fourth chapter of our guide is dedicated to exploring methodological approaches and explaining the competence framework that we developed specifically for this project. At the end of the chapter, we also share our perspective on how to involve young people by creating a safe space and providing opportunities for their participation.

As usual, at the beginning of the chapter we include reflection questions. This time there are three, since the chapter contains many elements to think about throughout:



Think about it...

What would you consider a safe space for yourself when learning together with others?

How can such a space be created so that it is engaging, motivating, participatory, and beneficial for you?

What competences (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) should a person have in order to lead such a process?

Non-Formal Education Methodology for collaborative learning through artistic activities

What do we understand by Non-formal Education

When it comes to learning in formal or informal settings, we typically discuss three types of education: formal education, non-formal education, and informal learning. Let's examine each of these.

Informal learning is non-planned learning that happens in everyday life. It occurs beyond the walls of schools and colleges, emerging naturally from the learner's engagement in activities not specifically designed for educational purposes. It is an involuntary aspect of everyday life. Unlike formal or non-formal learning, which combines intentional and incidental learning aspects, informal learning is solely incidental. That is why we do not even use the term 'education' for this type of learning, as there is no system or methodology behind it; it just happens because we live.

Further, we will focus on two types of education - formal and non-formal - to understand the



difference and further explore all the features and methodology of non-formal education.

■ FORMAL VS NON-FORMAL

Formal Education is the classical education we receive in schools and universities. It primarily aims at imparting knowledge, with the teacher at the centre of this learning process. This type of education occurs within an official curriculum in public or private institutions, such as schools, colleges, or universities. At the end of this process, students receive a diploma with marks, usually recognised by employers and other institutions. Though it is a mandatory process, it plays a crucial role in providing fundamental knowledge and skills that we can develop further into a profession or other competencies.

Non-formal education, in contrast to formal education, typically takes place outside of official educational institutions. It has its own methodology, structured objectives, and learning outcomes to be achieved by the end of the process. A facilitator or trainer guides this process, but unlike formal education, in non-formal education, the learner is the centre of the learning process. It is voluntary education, so learners decide whether or not to participate. In non-formal education, learning outcomes are tailored to the needs of the learner, making it a learner-centred process. Another key aspect of non-formal education is its focus on developing not just knowledge, but also skills and attitudes. These three elements together form a competence and are closely linked to the holistic approach of non-formal education. This approach ensures that activities engage not only the mind of the participant but also their emotions and physical being. This is how people can work on their attitudes and acquire skills - by feeling, doing, and then understanding, or initially understanding, then doing and feeling.

- OUTSIDE OF FORMAL EDUCATION
- WELL STRUCTURED PROCESS
- LEARNER-CENTERED
- VOLUNTARY
- KNOWLEDGE + SKILLS + ATTITUDES = COMPETENCIES
- NEEDS BASED APPROACH
- HOLISTIC APPROACH
- COLLECTIVE LEARNING - GROUP AS A SOURCE

As non-formal education works with attitudes, it is closely connected to values - values that

are transmitted and influence people's attitudes towards various topics. This is why involving emotions and experiences is crucial in non-formal education. It is based on experiential learning, which means we are actively engaged in the topic, not just discussing it. We offer participants experiences, or exercises, to try out things in various ways. After an exercise is completed, we provide space for reflection, inviting participants to consider their feelings and the reasons behind them, the processes involved, strategies used, and the roles people played. This experience is then linked to previous experiences, helping to make connections to real life. We discuss with participants how the learning from this specific experience can be applied in the future, once the activity is over. This is why non-formal education is practical and emphasizes the group as a source of learning. It is difficult to experience societal life alone; we need a group for this. In non-formal education, people think, reflect, and learn together, making the group a significant source of learning. We believe that people can learn from each other, drawing from their diverse and varied experiences.

Another crucial aspect of non-formal education is creating a safe space, free from judgment. At the start of non-formal education activities, considerable time is dedicated to building the group and establishing trust among participants. This is what we call the creation of a safe space - where people trust each other and are not afraid to make mistakes and learn new things. To maintain this safe space, we adopt a non-judgmental approach. External evaluators or trainers do not assign grades to participants based on performance. We believe that only the individual can truly assess what and how much they have learned. Instead of evaluation, we use self-assessment, which is another important factor in fostering a safe space atmosphere.

To summarize and highlight the key aspects and differences between non-formal and formal education, we have created a comparison table for you. This will allow you to effectively schematise this information.

Aspect	Formal Education	Non-Formal Education
Setting	Takes place in schools, colleges, and universities.	Occurs outside of traditional educational institutions.
Focus	Primarily on imparting knowledge.	On developing knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Aspect	Formal Education	Non-Formal Education
Learning Process	Teacher-centered; follows an official curriculum.	Learner-centered; tailored to individual needs and interests.
Nature	Mandatory and structured within an official curriculum.	Voluntary and flexible, based on learner choice.
Outcomes	Students receive recognized diplomas and grades.	Outcomes are adapted to the learner's needs, often without formal certification.
Methodology	Traditional, often lecture-based.	Experiential, involving practical exercises and reflection. But also well structures and planned.
Role of Educator	Teacher as the central figure in the learning process.	Facilitator or trainer guides the process, not the central figure.
Approach	Often focuses on theoretical understanding.	Holistic, engaging the mind, emotions, and physicality of participants.
Assessment	Grades and evaluations by external evaluators or teachers.	Self-assessment and reflection, no external grading.
Group Dynamics	Less emphasis on group work and peer learning.	Emphasizes collaborative learning, group reflection, and peer experiences.
Environment	Structured and often less flexible.	Safe, inclusive, and free from judgment, fostering trust and openness.

What do we understand by methodology

When discussing the methodology of non-formal education, it's crucial to differentiate between 'methodology' and 'methods'. By 'methodology', we refer to the type of activities we use. For example, role-play is a methodology as it's an approach to activities, just like simulation or group-building activities. So, what are the methods? Methods are the specific tools we employ within these methodologies. Let's first look at different types of activities we use during activities with young people.

In our educational activities, particularly at the beginning of our work with young people or of the project, we utilize a team-building methodology, employing different methods - concrete activities that help participants get to know each other and create a team.

So, let's examine different methodologies that we usually use in non-formal education:

- **Icebreakers:** These activities are typically used at the beginning of the training. Their aim is to break the ice, providing an opportunity for people to start talking, trying out things together, discovering who is in the group, and breaking initial barriers. This starts the process of creating a space where people feel safe to communicate. Included in icebreakers are name games, which help people remember each other's names, an important step in building trust. In a context of learning environment and group of learners that they don't know, the learning objective would be to create a self directed and participatory learning environment and this is only possible when people feel safe, seen and when they have ownership. Therefore activities of the type of ice breaking which in a metaphorical way express the process of melting the ice and bringing closeness, are so important.
- **Team Building:** This methodology includes methods that transform a group of individuals into a team. These activities are longer than icebreakers and require more collaboration, common decision-making, and strategy. Unlike icebreakers, which are more about fun and getting to know each other, team building is about achieving a common goal, solving problems, and modeling societal relations. We usually use team building activities in the first days of training to create a safe space. A Tool which in total serves the dynamics of a group process of learners. To support its natural phases (here we refer to the Tuckman Model of the Group Development).
- **Simulation Games:** We use this methodology when we want participants to develop



new skills and attitudes about how they would behave in a given situation. Typically, participants are presented with a situation requiring a collective decision or problem-solving, but they represent themselves. Simulation is a method expanding the cognitive and behavioural patterns, by creating using the gamification - new to learner contexts which may cause new behaviours

- **Role Play:** Similar to simulation games, but with a key difference - in role play, participants act from assigned roles, not as themselves. This allows them to take perspectives they might never encounter in real life.
- **Group Work:** This methodology encompasses various methods involving smaller group work. With larger groups, it can be challenging for everyone to communicate effectively from the start. Group work can include discussions, brainstorms, or mapping, depending on the activity's purpose.
- **Input:** This usually involves information provided by experts or facilitators, either through formal or interactive presentations or videos. The main aim here is to impart knowledge, differing from the previous methodologies that focus more on skills and attitudes.
- **Debates:** These activities allow participants to discuss topics and formulate opinions through discussion with others. Various methods can be employed, such as Fishbowl debates, 'Yes-No-Maybe', 'Take Your Position', or Oxford-style debates, among others.

By understanding these methodologies and their corresponding methods, we can effectively navigate the landscape of non-formal education.

Why Non-formal Education for collaborative learning through artistic activities

Both non-formal education and artistic activities are value-based. The methodology of NFE allows us to work with values and attitudes, which align closely with the aims of civic education through the arts.

NFE uses a holistic approach, engaging the body, mind, and emotions — exactly what happens in the arts. Whether in theatre, painting, music, or other creative forms, artistic processes naturally involve all three components.

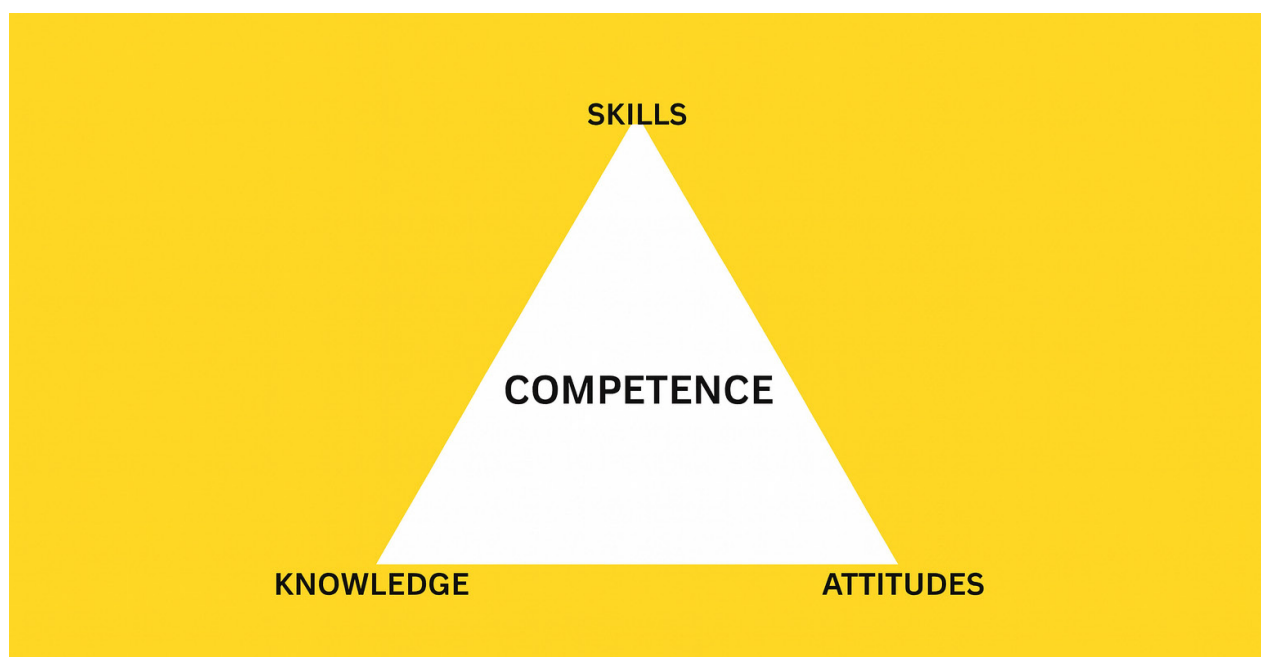
Safe space and learner-centred approach — to discover their potential in the arts, participants need to feel safe and free from judgment. This supportive environment encourages them to open up and use their full creative potential.

Collective learning — one of the main goals of artistic activities is to bring people together to create. In the context of civic art, this means building a community of like-minded individuals who collaborate for social justice, mobilise society, and foster active participation in democratic life. Through such collaboration, we can respond to the challenges we face as a society and engage young people in meaningful actions that address these challenges.

Competences Frameworks

As we already mentioned when talking about civic art activities, we use a competence-based approach. What does this mean in practice? It means that we care not only about the knowledge participants gain — about human rights, participation, or any other topic addressed in the activities — but also about developing their attitudes and practical skills. The aim is that participants can take what they learn and actually use it in their everyday lives.

When we speak about competence, we mean a mix of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, always shaped by the context in which learning happens. Competence is not just theory; it is a holistic process that involves the mind, emotions, and body.





By the end of the learning process, we want participants not only to understand the concepts but also to gain real tools and behaviours to apply them. For example, when we talk about civic education, it is not only about learning the definition of citizenship. It is also about reflecting:

- What kind of citizen do I want to be?
- How can I live this role when I return to my everyday life?

For this project, we initially planned to use a single competence framework — YOCOMO, part of the European Training Strategy — which focuses on the professional competences of youth workers in the European youth field. It offers guidance on organising work effectively, structuring and facilitating learning processes, and creating meaningful opportunities that support young people's personal and social development.

However, after our first study visit, it became clear that when working with activism, youth workers also need competences that go beyond facilitation and learning design. They require the ability to make activities creative, inspiring, and artistically engaging — helping participants connect emotionally and think in new, imaginative ways.

This realisation led us to introduce a second framework: the Creative Practice Competence Framework, developed by UN Global Pulse. This framework emphasises creativity, innovation, and artistic processes as drivers for social change. It highlights the attitudes, skills, and behaviours needed to work creatively, think systemically, and design inclusive civic impact through art-based approaches.

By combining YOCOMO's process-oriented strengths with UNGP's **creativity-focused perspective**, we created a Competence Framework for Youth Workers Facilitating Artistic Civic Projects. This new, integrated model bridges the **how** and the **what**:

- **YOCOMO** ensures that the learning process is professionally structured, inclusive, and impactful.
- **UNGP** ensures that the content and approach are imaginative, emotionally resonant, and capable of inspiring artistic civic engagement.

YOCOMO - ETS Competence Model for Youth Workers

YOCOMO is part of the European Training Strategy (ETS) and focuses on the competences youth workers need to create and manage quality learning processes for young people. While UNGP addresses what creative capacities we want to build, YOCOMO addresses how to structure the educational process so that those capacities can emerge and flourish.

Competence Areas:

- Facilitating Learning - Creating and managing educational processes that support young people's personal, social, and civic development.
 - » Designing learner-centred activities
 - » Using appropriate methods and tools
 - » Supporting reflection and transfer of learning
- Creating a Safe and Inclusive Space - Ensuring that all participants feel respected, valued, and able to contribute.
 - » Building trust and group cohesion
 - » Managing diversity and inclusion
 - » Preventing and addressing conflict constructively
- Empowering and Motivating Young People - Supporting participants to take ownership of their learning and engagement.
 - » Encouraging participation and agency
 - » Supporting self-expression and initiative
 - » Providing constructive feedback
- Communication and Cooperation - Building effective relationships with young people, partners, and stakeholders.
 - » Active listening and clear communication
 - » Working in teams and partnerships
 - » Networking across sectors and communities
- Professional Development and Self-Reflection - Continuously improving one's own practice as a youth worker.
 - » Self-assessment and competence development

- » Reflective practice
- » Adapting to emerging needs and contexts



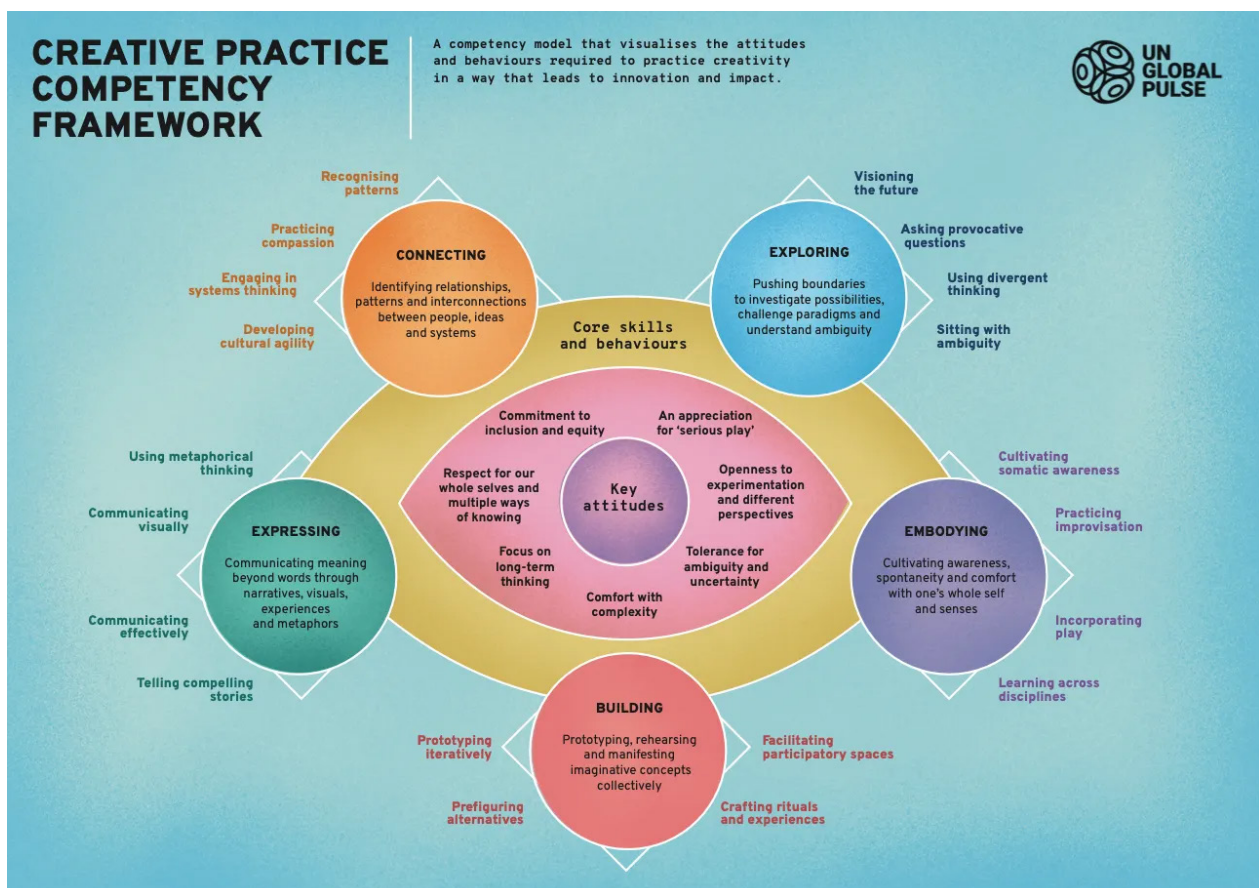
UN Global Pulse Creative Practice Competency Framework

The UNGP Creative Practice Competency Framework identifies the attitudes, skills, and behaviours needed to work creatively and collaboratively in ways that foster innovation, inclusion, and civic impact. It is particularly relevant for art-based educational and community projects, as it values imagination, systemic thinking, and the integration of body, mind, and emotions.

Competence Areas:

- Building - Turning ideas into tangible outcomes through collaboration, prototyping, and iterative development.
 - » Co-creation and prototyping
 - » Iterative testing and refinement
 - » Prefiguring alternative futures
- Expressing - Communicating meaning and ideas in compelling, multisensory ways.
 - » Storytelling, narrative building, and metaphor
 - » Visual and artistic communication
 - » Designing experiences that resonate emotionally

- Embodying - Bringing one's full presence, awareness, and physicality into the creative process.
 - » Somatic awareness and sensory engagement
 - » Improvisation and adaptability
 - » Working with playfulness and joy
- Connecting - Recognising patterns, relationships, and systems, and building connections across disciplines and communities.
 - » Systems thinking
 - » Cultural agility and inclusive practice
 - » Facilitating participatory spaces
- Exploring - Navigating uncertainty, challenging assumptions, and seeking new possibilities.
 - » Divergent thinking and curiosity
 - » Comfort with ambiguity
 - » Cross-disciplinary learning



Integrated Competence Landscape for Youth Workers Facilitating Artistic Civic Projects

The integration of these two models results in a framework, that we would like to call a landscape, that ensures civic art activities are both creatively rich and professionally facilitated, increasing their impact on individuals and communities. Each of the five competence areas below merges selected YOCOMO and UNGP elements into a coherent set of expectations for youth workers in activism projects.

1. Creating and Holding Space for Expression

Youth workers create emotionally and physically safe spaces where young people feel welcome, respected, and empowered to express themselves freely — through words, movement, visuals, sound, or silence.

Includes:

- » Building trust and group cohesion
- » Managing diversity and inclusion
- » Encouraging somatic awareness and joy
- » Supporting freedom of expression through artistic media
- » Facilitating embodied participation and risk-taking

2. Facilitating Learning through Creative Practice

Youth workers guide meaningful, learner-centred processes that allow young people to explore, learn, and reflect through experimentation, improvisation, and play.

Includes:

- » Designing learner-centred activities using art
- » Supporting reflection and transfer of learning
- » Fostering curiosity and divergent thinking
- » Allowing room for ambiguity and multiple interpretations
- » Encouraging trial-and-error, exploration and iteration

3. Supporting Young People's Agency and Voice

Youth workers empower young people to find their voice, define their message, and share it with others in ways that are meaningful to them — while fostering participation, responsibility, and initiative.

Includes:

- » Encouraging self-expression and authorship
- » Supporting initiative and project ownership
- » Helping shape messages through narrative, storytelling, metaphor
- » Giving constructive feedback and nurturing confidence
- » Validating diverse forms of knowledge and experience

4. Connecting People, Ideas and Contexts

Youth workers help young people navigate complexity, find patterns and meaning, and work across disciplines and communities to make sense of the world and take creative civic action.

Includes:

- » Facilitating cross-sector collaboration and partnerships
- » Using systems thinking to frame social issues
- » Supporting cultural agility and empathy
- » Building participatory spaces for dialogue
- » Encouraging interdisciplinary thinking and civic awareness

5. Co-Creating Impact and Reflecting on Practice

Youth workers co-create civic-artistic processes with young people that lead to meaningful outcomes — while reflecting on their own practice, adapting to change, and learning from each iteration.

Includes:

- » Co-developing ideas and turning them into actions
- » Using iterative processes (prototype - test - reflect - improve)
- » Reflecting on own facilitation and power dynamics
- » Adapting to changing needs and group dynamics
- » Evaluating artistic and civic impact together with youth

Concluding this part of the chapter, we would like to highlight the competence Landscape that emerged from combining the YOCOMO model and the UNGP Creative Practice Competency Framework. The result is five competence areas, which will be the focus of the training for youth workers. These areas will also be referenced throughout this methodological guide whenever we speak about the learning outcomes of the sessions and activities

described. Below, you will find an illustration of these five areas, designed to help educators imagine and visualise them more clearly

COMPETENCIES LANDSCAPE FOR CIVIC EDUCATION VIA ARTS



So, when working with young people on civic education through arts-based methods, we suggest following this competence framework and reflecting on which competences each activity develops. This will help you ensure a balanced approach, so that young people have opportunities to work on all five competence areas.

In chapter 5, you will find a set of tools and methods that we suggest. They are aligned with this competence framework, and each of them addresses one or several competences from the Landscape.

Creating Safe and Inclusive Spaces

A safe space for participants stands as the most crucial factor to consider during activity planning, implementation and evaluation. What do we mean by a “safe space”? A safe learning environment enables people to learn eagerly while practicing new approaches and behaviors without fear of judgment or failure. An environment that promotes safety requires both participant support and acceptance of diversity and non-violent communication methods along with an absence of judgment.

How do we create it? There are several key aspects to consider. The safe space foundation begins with the information about the event/workshop/ project which explains the location and program details and describes the learning environment. The safe space begins when participants enter the activity/workshop area. A warm welcome begins with greeting posters and youth workers/facilitators who personally greet participants to create a positive atmosphere. Participants should introduce themselves during the first meeting through icebreakers and activities which promote both conversation and mutual curiosity about each other.

The first meeting is vital in creating a safe space. We use group dynamics to help participants engage deeply with each other through various collaboration approaches and plenary participation and smaller group work for building stronger connections. The main objective of the first meeting is to build a group while creating an environment where participants feel safe and included without judgment.

Methodologically speaking, we use various activities to achieve this. For instance, ‘line up’ activities help participants learn about each other’s backgrounds and experiences. Drawing portraits of each other, where participants pass around papers adding different features, fosters visual contact and trust building. Team building activities with a common goal are crucial, not just for the activity itself but for the reflection and conclusions drawn afterwards. At the end of team building exercises, we encourage groups to establish ground rules for a safe environment, based on mutual respect, active listening, and providing space for each voice. The participants should suggest what makes them feel safe and eager to learn in the group, and how they can benefit from the experience as much as possible. You can call it Group Agreement or Ground Rules. Put them on the visible place at your workshop, so you can come back to them any time you need to remind or to add new points to it.

GROUP AGREEMENTS

what makes participants feel safe and eager to learn in the group, so they can benefit from the experience as much as possible

Youth workers/facilitators play a key role in maintaining a safe space. Their actions and words set an example for participants. Avoiding actions like sarcastic jokes is important, as they can undermine the safety of the space. In the following workshops, activities should continue to encourage participants to get to know each other and work together. Mixing groups prevents cliques and ensures diverse interaction, fostering a sense of safety and familiarity among smaller groups.

If participants are hesitant to speak during meetings, it may mean they do not yet feel safe in the group. They might be shy, unaccustomed to speaking publicly, or face a language barrier (especially with young people from migrant or refugee backgrounds). Patience and gradual encouragement are key. Facilitators should invite quieter individuals to contribute while managing more dominant voices. If there is a language barrier, consider creating a support structure — for example, asking young people who already speak a language to support those who do not yet, or finding a shared language that is not necessarily the local one (such as English or French).

The same applies to gender language: use three genders when you speak — she/he/they — so that everyone feels included. At the beginning, ask participants how they would like to be addressed and what pronouns they prefer. You can find more tips on inclusive language here:

<https://rm.coe.int/guidelines-for-the-use-of-language-as-a-driver-of-inclusivity/1680aec235>

To summarise, creating a safe learning space involves thoughtful planning, sensitive facilitation, and an atmosphere that fosters openness, respect, and collaboration. But it does not mean, that this is a “sterile” space, where nobody can have different opinions and should think the same - it is opposite we are talking about creating the space where people are open and willing to share their different points of view, exchange diverse opinions, but find a way to do it in a respectful and safe way.

Techniques for effectively engaging and motivating youth participants, including inclusivity and accessibility in art-based civic education activities

Engaging young people in art-based civic education requires a combination of creativity, relevance, and respect for their individual needs. It is also about reaching those who are often excluded, or who belong to groups at risk of exclusion. In other words, it is not only about creating good activities, but also about ensuring that the young people who could benefit most are actually able to take part.

Let us look step by step at different aspects of inclusivity and accessibility in art-based educational activities.

Before we dive into this part, ask yourself a few reflective questions:

- How do I usually make my activities inclusive and accessible for young people?
- Do I use specific channels to reach out to those who are less likely to participate?
- Do I intentionally invite young people who are often underrepresented?
- How do I ensure that my activity is truly accessible for them?
- Is participation free of charge, or are there costs or other barriers that might prevent some young people from joining? If so, what are those barriers, and how can they be reduced?



In art-based civic education activities, youth participation goes beyond simply being present. It means that young people play an active and meaningful role in shaping, creating, and leading the artistic and civic processes they are involved in.

In the context of activism and art-based civic education, inclusive participation means:

- giving young people opportunities to express themselves creatively on issues that matter to them;
- involving diverse groups of young people, including those at risk of exclusion;
- ensuring accessibility at all levels — physical, social, linguistic, and emotional;
- creating safe spaces where all voices are respected and valued.

Theories of youth participation help us understand how to structure this involvement. Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation (1992) highlights different levels of participation, from tokenism to full youth-led initiatives. Phil Treseder's Degrees of Participation (1997) remove the hierarchy, showing that participation can take different forms depending on context and needs, but requires empowerment to be meaningful (Karsten 2012).

Applied to art-based civic education, these models remind us:

- participation is not “one size fits all”;
- every level — from being consulted to leading — can be valuable if transparent, inclusive, and empowering;
- youth ownership and creative freedom increase motivation and learning impact.

Art-based civic education uses creative methods — visual arts, theatre, music, storytelling, digital media — to explore topics such as human rights, youth participation, active citizenship, environment, and social inclusion.

For such activities to be transformative, young people need to be at the centre. Their experiences, perspectives, and creative ideas shape not only the artistic outcomes but also the civic messages and the learning process itself.

Inclusive youth participation ensures that:

- Young people feel ownership of the activity and its outcomes;
- Activities are relevant to their realities, interests, and identities;
- Diverse groups bring in multiple perspectives, enriching creativity and dialogue;
- Civic education becomes a shared experience, not a top-down process.
- Moreover, inclusive art-based participation develops both civic competences (critical thinking, collaboration, democratic values) and creative competences (self-expression, innovation, emotional engagement).

Adapting Hart and Treseder's models to art-based civic education, we can identify several forms of youth participation:

1. Youth assigned but informed

Facilitators design the art activity; young people join with clearly defined roles (e.g., painting a mural, performing in a play).

Useful for: introducing first-time participants to activism and civic themes.

2. Youth consulted and informed

Young people contribute ideas to the artistic concept and civic messages, but facilitators keep decision-making power.

Useful for: ensuring activities reflect youth perspectives while providing structure.

3. Adult-initiated, shared decision-making

Adults initiate the art project, but decisions about content, methods, and performance are shared equally with young people.

Useful for: co-creating outcomes and balancing support with youth leadership.

4. Youth-initiated, shared decision-making

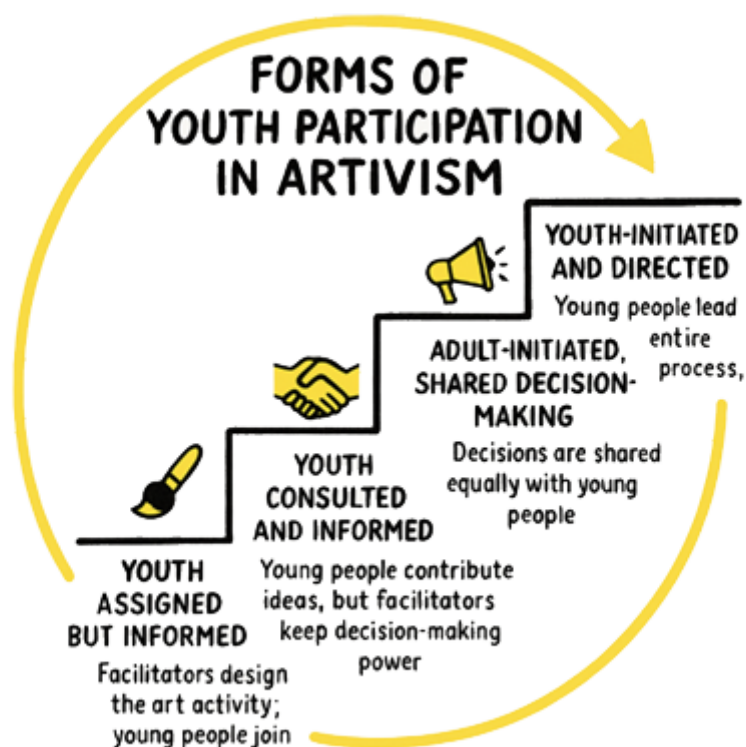
Young people design the art activity; adults support with logistics, resources, and mentoring.

Useful for: developing youth leadership, civic agency, and project ownership.

5. Youth-initiated and directed

Young people lead the entire process — from concept to implementation — with adults as optional supporters.

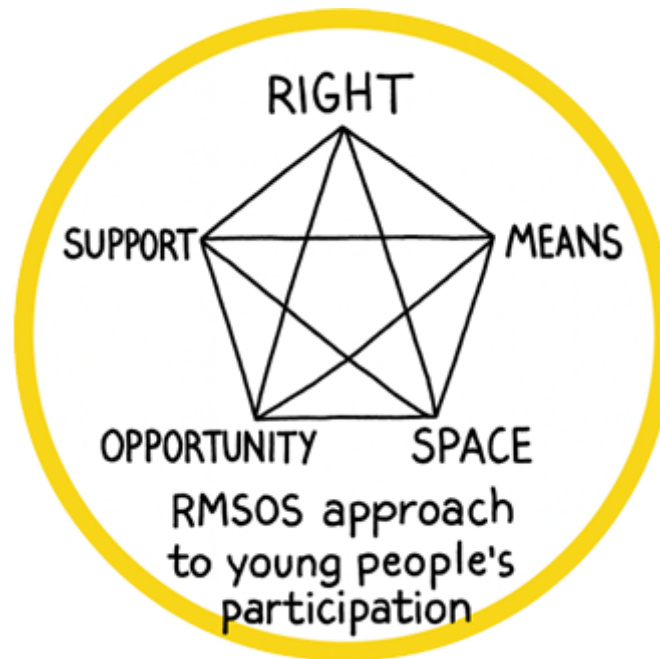
Useful for: advanced groups ready for full autonomy and civic activism.



No form is inherently “better”; inclusivity means choosing the form that fits the group's experience, needs, and goals, while ensuring empowerment and learning.

To make art-based civic education activities engaging, motivating, and accessible, facilitators can draw on the RMSOS model — *Rights, Means, Space, Opportunity, Support*:

- **Rights:** Participation is a *right*, not a privilege. Clearly communicate that every young person's voice and creativity matters.
- **Means:** Provide materials, skills training, and information so all participants — including those with fewer opportunities — can contribute fully.
- **Space:** Ensure physical and emotional safety, inclusivity, and accessibility (e.g., language support, mobility access, culturally sensitive facilitation).
- **Opportunity:** Create real chances for youth to lead parts of the activity, make decisions, and present outcomes publicly.
- **Support:** Offer mentoring, emotional support, and constructive feedback without taking control of the creative process.



Practical techniques include:

- Starting with team-building and trust exercises to create a safe space;
- Using multiple art forms so participants can choose the medium that fits them best;
- Working in small, diverse groups to encourage interaction across different backgrounds;
- Allowing reflection moments (journaling, group talks) to connect artistic expression with civic learning;
- Providing multiple entry points: from low-threshold tasks (e.g., helping with materials) to high-responsibility roles (e.g., directing a performance);
- Offering flexible facilitation — adapting pace, methods, and roles to participants' needs and energy levels.

Inclusivity also means active outreach to marginalised youth — using channels, languages, and partnerships that reach beyond already active groups.



Quick Reference Card — Chapter 4: Designing Learning for Civic Education and Activism



Big Question

? What makes a learning space feel safe, engaging, and motivating for you and others?



Key Ideas

- Non-formal education (NFE) = learner-centred, voluntary, holistic (knowledge + skills + attitudes).
- Safe space = trust, inclusion, non-judgment, openness to mistakes.
- Methodologies: icebreakers, team building, simulations, role play, group work, debates.
- Artistic processes align naturally with NFE: engage body, mind, and emotions.
- Integrated Competence Landscape = YOCOMO (structure) + UNGP (creativity).
- Youth participation: degrees of involvement, from informed to youth-led.
- Inclusivity requires outreach, accessibility, and empowerment (RMSOS model).



Competencies Developed

- Creating and holding space for expression
- Facilitating learning through creative practice

- Supporting young people's agency and voice
- Connecting people, ideas and contexts
- Co-creating impact and reflecting on practice



Practical Steps

1. Open every programme with group-building and trust activities.
2. Establish a Group Agreement / Ground Rules with participants.
3. Choose methodologies (role play, simulation, debates) that match learning goals.
4. Align each method with the 5 competence areas.
5. Use the RMSOS model to ensure inclusivity: Rights, Means, Space, Opportunity, Support.
6. Adapt activities for accessibility: language, mobility, cultural sensitivity.



Reflection Prompts

- What would a "safe space" look like for me as a learner?
- How do I usually make my activities inclusive and accessible?
- Which competences do my current practices already develop — and which are missing?

Use this card as a recap & action tool at the end of Chapter 4.

[Get your Bage](#)



5. FROM IDEAS TO ACTION - TRAINING MODULES AND TOOLS

This chapter presents specific tools and methods for civic education through art that are designed in order to help you to design, implement, and follow up on activism activities with young people. Building on the foundations of the previous chapters — which introduced activism, the situation in Ukraine and Georgia, good practices from across Europe, and approaches to inclusivity and safe space — this part of the guide turns theory into practice. The programme is structured to combine knowledge-building with creative experimentation, and is aligned with the four missions from our Good Practices book: Human Rights; Youth Participation & Active Citizenship; Environment; and Intersectoral Dialogue.

When you will read activities we invite you to think about:



Think about it...

What activities would you like to do with your young people? How, where, and when would you like to organise and implement them? What will young people learn from them?

All the previous chapters of this guide have served as a foundation, helping you to understand the overall project, the idea of activism, and the situation of young people and youth organisations in Ukraine and Georgia. We also offered a short overview of good practices collected across Europe, highlighting the main themes most frequently addressed in activist projects. In addition, we discussed group dynamics, the importance of inclusivity, and how to create safe spaces for participants. Step by step, these elements have built the framework and context in which you can apply the activities and modules described in this chapter. At the same time, they form the basis for the training tools and methods presented here.

This chapter is very practical: it offers concrete tools that you can take, adapt, and implement in your work. Here, we describe a training programme for youth workers on how to design, implement, and follow up on activism activities with young people. The tools and methods also supports youth workers in engaging with young people on topics such as activism, human rights, youth participation, active citizenship, environmental issues, and intersectoral cooperation. They are aligned with the Competence Landscape of the CivicART Project (see p. 70).

In the tools and methods, we follow several approaches to the topics mentioned above, aiming to create a holistic learning experience. It provides space for participants not only to learn but also to practise a variety of activism methods while reflecting on the following questions:

» What is activism?

- » What are human rights?
- » What does youth participation mean?
- » What is active citizenship?
- » How can we address environmental issues and foster intersectoral dialogue?

The core themes addressed in this methods and tools — Human Rights; Youth Participation & Active Citizenship; Environment; and Intersectoral Dialogue — are also the four “missions” highlighted in our [Good Practices Collection](#). They represent the central practices and directions that guided our activist actions within the project. By linking the training and workshops inside directly to these missions, we ensure that participants connect their learning with the concrete experiences and outcomes already developed and documented in the project.

Design of the sessions and how to use session outlines

In order to better understand workshops outlines and sessions itself we invite you to explore how to design and use session/activity outline.

When planning an activity, the first step is to think about the learning outcomes and learning objectives you want to achieve. A few guiding questions can help:

● **Step 1:** Define learning outcomes

1. What do I want participants to learn?
 - » What knowledge should they gain by the end of the session?
 - » Which skills should they be able to practise or demonstrate?
 - » What attitudes or values should they be able to reflect on or develop?
2. Why is this important?
 - » How does this learning connect to the overall goals of the training course or project?

How is it relevant to the participants' realities and experiences?

Once the learning outcomes are defined, the next step is to consider how to achieve them. At this stage, we think about the learning journey: what sequence of steps will lead participants towards these outcomes, and which methods, tools, and approaches can best support this



process.

- **Step 2:** Design the session

3. How will I structure the session?

- » What is the logical flow of the session so that learning builds step by step?
- » Which methods and tools will best support the learning process?
- » How can I ensure the activity is inclusive and make the best use of time and resources?

- **Step 3:** Plan resources and timing

4. What resources and time do I have?

- » How much time is available for the session?
- » Which methods from Chapter 4 fit best into this timeframe and learning goal?

After we design the flow of the session and select the methods, it is important to plan how we will measure learning. We need to think in advance how to find out whether the learning outcomes were achieved and what participants actually learned. This is where reflection and evaluation become essential elements of the session design.

- **Step 4:** Analyse and evaluate

5. How will I analyse and evaluate the learning?

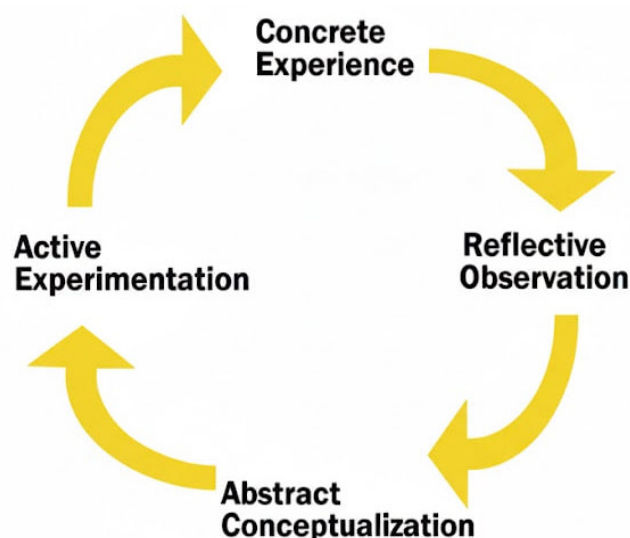
- » How can I include reflection or self-assessment moments?
- » What signs will show me that participants have achieved the objectives?

At the end, when everything is ready, you can identify what materials you will need to use and take one more important step: ask yourself if you already know the activity you are going to implement — have you done it before, either as a trainer or as a participant? If not, think about with whom and where you could try it out before running it with young people. This will help you be sure about the timing, keep in mind possible risks, and plan how to prevent or address them if something goes wrong.

To make the process more structured and easier, we suggest using session outline forms. You will find an example of the basic session or workshop outline below and see how to fill it in later in the section with session outlines that we have developed for the workshops you can implement in your projects.

Title of session:	
Date and time:	
Aim of the Session	Why and for whom you will run the session?
Competence Landscape area	<i>What of the competence areas from the Landscape of Art-Based Competence are addressed at the session?</i>
Learning Outcomes of the Session	At the end of the session what competencies (skills, knowledge and attitudes) are expected to be developed by participants?
Step by Step Description	Write step by step all the activities of the session, with description and time
Materials and Resources	What resources were you using while developing the session (tool kits, manuals etc). What materials do you need to run the session?

To better understand how to build the experience within the topic and how to provide participants with as practical an experience as possible — with reflection that will bring them meaningful insights and learning — we would like to look at the model of experiential learning that we use a lot in non-formal education activities and that was described by David Kolb.



https://serc.carleton.edu/download/images/9499/kolb_cycle.gif



The learning cycle has **4 steps**:

- It starts with a **Concrete Experience**: A learner uses senses and perceptions to engage in what is happening now.
 - » These concrete experiences are the activities designed for the project.
 - » They should be designed in line with the learning objectives.
- **Reflective Observation**: After the experience, a learner reflects on what happened and connects feelings with ideas about the experience.
 - » Ideally, it happens after each session. You don't need to write the reflection for each session, but when you are planning the activities, you need to allow some time and space for a debriefing. The length of the debriefing will depend on the activity. If the activity touched participants deeply and made them experience strong feelings, as well as if some conflict arose, or we are in the steps of group building, debriefing will take longer.
 - » Allow some time and space for reflection after a day of activities, either long-term (at the trainings) or local (in workshops) ones. It helps the participant and the group to go through the process and build their own learning.
- **Thinking (Abstract Conceptualization)**: The learner engages in thinking to reach conclusions and form theories, concepts, or general principles.
 - » At the end of the process, guide the participants to reflect again on what happened during the experience and help them to reach conclusions that will lead them from what they have learned to their realities and how they can apply the new concepts and ideas.
 - » At this point of the process, it's also important the recognition of learning. In case of youth projects there is an essential tool that every Erasmus+ project should include is the [Youthpass](#) mobility certificates. These are recognition instruments for non-formal and informal learning processes in youth projects. They enlist the competencies and skills you or your participants have mastered during the activities.

- **Acting (Active Experimentation):** The learner tests the theory and applies what was learned to create the next experience.
 - » This step may happen during the experience, especially if the experience takes several months as when you work on a long-term with one group. Participants may use what they have learned in one activity to implement the next one or approach it with a fresh look.
 - » You should foresee some experimentation after the project as a follow-up for the activity.
 - How are the participants going to implement what they have learned back home?
 - Which actions and projects they can carry out to put the new learnings into action?
 - How you can escalate and transfer what you have learned in other contexts and scopes?
-

Description of the Modules and Activities

In this part, we invite you to explore different activities and sessions that you can run for your participants. The topics of the activities follow the main themes of the training modules/ workshops that we described earlier in this chapter and are following these topics:

- Getting to know each other and creating a safe space in the group
- Human Rights
- Youth Participation and Active citizenship
- Environment
- Intersectoral Dialogue
- Evaluation and planning follow up steps

Some activities were designed by us, while others were taken and adapted from various T-Kits and manuals that we use in our work and that have already proven their effectiveness and relevance (we will add links to the sources for each session outline or activity). You can use those session outlines as separate tools for your activities or combine them together for longer activities.



Activities

Getting to know each other and creating a safe space in the group

(Activities for the first day of training or for the first workshops)

Title of activity:	Getting to know each other
Duration:	90 min
Aim of the Session	To help participants get to know each other in a creative and playful way, encourage non-verbal communication and collaboration, and create a relaxed and inclusive group atmosphere at the beginning of the training.
Competence landscape area of facilitator	<i>Creating and Holding Space for Expression</i>
Learning Outcomes of the Session	Participants get to know one another, remember each others names, start to feel comfortable in the group
Step by Step Description	1. Welcome words (5min) from the project coordinator, followed by a brief presentation of the project and the training's role within it. The coordinator introduces the trainers/facilitators team. 2. Circle of names and countries (10 min) - In a circle, participants are invited, one by one, to state their name and country. The facilitators start first to set an example: "My name is...; I come from..." 3. Name Game - Snowball "Name and Adjective" (20 min): Participants stand in a circle. The facilitator invites them to think of an adjective that starts with the same letter as their

Step by Step

Description

name. Then, participants are encouraged to state their name and adjective in a special way. The first person says their name and adjective. The second person repeats the name and adjective of the first person and then states their own.

4. Three Lies and One Truth Activity (20 min) - Each participant receives an A4 paper. Their task is to write three truths about themselves and one falsehood on the paper, without indicating which statement is false. Once everyone is ready, they are invited to move freely around the training room, meet other participants, read what others have written, and guess which statements are true and which are false.

5. Line Up! (10 min) - Participants are invited to form a line based on specific criteria. One important condition is that they cannot speak while completing the task. The facilitator should also indicate where the beginning and the end of the line are. Criteria include:

- Line up according to your names, from A to Z.
- Line up according to your day and month of birth, from January to December.
- Line up according to the number of Erasmus+ mobilities you have participated in.
- Line up according to your years of experience in Youth Work.

6. Speed Date (25 min) - First, participants are invited to draw an analog clock on an A4 paper, marking 12 hours. The next step involves arranging 'dates' for each hour with different people from the group. It's okay if some participants can't find a partner for every hour, as this may depend on the total number of people in the group.

Once everyone is ready, the facilitator announces an hour, and those with a scheduled 'date' for that time find each other and discuss to find something they have in common, all within 2 minutes. When the time is up, the facilitator announces the next

**Step by Step
Description**

hour, and participants change their partners. If someone does not have a partner for a specific hour, one of the facilitators can step in as a partner.

At the end of the activity, we recommend conducting a short debriefing with questions like:

- How do you feel after the activity?
- What commonalities did you discover?
- Was there anything that surprised you about other people? What was it?

**Materials and
Resources**

You will need A4 papers, one for each participant, along with pens and pencils. Find a suitable space where all participants can comfortably stand in one line.



Art activities for group building and getting to know each other

Title of activity: Duration:	Fine Arts Night - Conversations through Colours 40-60 min (depends on group size)
Aim of the Session	To help participants get to know each other in a creative and playful way, encourage non-verbal communication and collaboration, and create a relaxed and inclusive group atmosphere at the beginning of the training.
Competence landscape areas of facilitator	<i>Creating and Holding Space for Expression</i>
Learning Outcomes of the Session	By the end of the session, participants will: ● Experience creative, non-verbal communication and reflect on its role in group processes. ● Practise active listening and cooperation through artistic expression. ● Build trust and group connection through a shared creative experience. ● Reflect on how art-based methods can foster inclusion and team-building in youth work
Step by Step Description	Introduction (5 min) ● Welcome participants and explain the goal: <i>"This activity will help us to get to know each other through colours and shapes instead of words."</i> ● Introduce the concept of <i>"conversation through drawing"</i>. Round 1: Drawing in pairs (5 min) ● Participants sit in pairs, facing each other across the table. ● Each pair gets a blank section of paper. ● Invite them to start a drawing "conversation" using colours, lines, and shapes — no words allowed!



Step by Step Description	Rotation (2 min) ● After 5 min, ask one row to move one seat to the right. ● New pairs form, each with a fresh paper section or space. Round 2 & 3: New dialogues (10-15 min) ● Repeat the process with new pairs. ● Encourage participants to experiment: use different colours, respond to what the partner draws, create a joint image together. Gallery Walk (5 min) ● At the end, invite participants to walk around the table and look at all the drawings. ● If they wish, authors can briefly explain their work. Reflection (10 min) Use questions like: ● How did it feel to “talk” through drawing instead of words? ● What did you learn about your partners? ● Did anything surprise you about the process? ● How was this experience different from usual introductions?
Materials and Resources	● Long tables with space for two rows facing each other ● Large sheets of paper (or one long roll of paper covering the table) ● Watercolours, brushes, cups for water, napkins or cloths ● Optional: relaxing background music

Title of activity: Duration:	Colours of Emotions - setting up learning goals 2 sessions of 1 hour each
Aim of the Session	To set and reconnect to personal life goals To find strategies on how to reach chosen goals
Competence landscape areas of facilitator	<i>Creating and Holding Space for Expression</i>
Learning Outcomes of the Session	By the end of the session, participants will: ● Recognise and express current and desired feelings. ● Visualise personal goals through images and cards. ● Identify and prioritise key needs. ● Recall past helpful strategies and link them to future steps. ● Formulate simple strategies and affirmations for moving forward.
Step by Step Description	Session 1 (1h): 1. Defining the aim (20 min): » Participants choose up to 3 <i>feelings cards</i> that represent how they feel now. » Then choose up to 3 cards that represent how they would like to feel in the near future. » Share descriptions, supported by guiding questions. 2. Dreamt future image (20 min): » Place chosen cards on blank paper and expand into a bigger picture (drawing around the cards). » Use visual dialogue and guiding questions to deepen reflection.



**Step by Step
Description**

3. Needs exploration (20 min):

- » From the *needs cards*, select 3–5 needs visible in the imagined future.
- » Choose 1–2 needs to focus on in the coming days.

Closure: Relaxation/visualisation, breathing, or light music.

Session 2 (1h, next day):

1. Check-in (15 min):

- » Recall images and needs from the first session.
- » Review the 2 selected needs: are they still relevant?

2. Exploring “Now – Past – Future” with rope (40 min):

- » Place cards on rope symbolising time.
- » “Now”: feelings/needs cards representing the present.
- » “Past”: recall strategies that helped before, choose cards to illustrate them.
- » “Future”: visualise steps towards fulfilling selected needs, symbolise with cards.

3. Affirmation (5 min):

- » Choose cards that represent supportive strategies.
- » Make drawings of chosen strategies and reflect on needed support.

4. Debriefing of the Process (discussion with the group):

- What stayed with you from yesterday's image?
- Are your chosen needs still relevant today?
- What did you notice when placing cards on the rope (past–now–future)?
- Which past strategies might help you again?
- What first step feels possible now?
- What support would help you?
- Which card or drawing best represents your takeaway?

Step by Step**Description****Tips for facilitators:**

- Maintain the timeframe, avoid prolonging.
- Use clear, open, focused questions to guide participants.
- Provide safe closure through relaxation or meditation.

**Materials and
Resources**

[The Colours of Feelings and Needs cards](#) (feelings + needs) Paper, pastels, rope

Source: [The Colours of Feelings and Needs Manual](#)



Title of activity:	Group Agreement - <i>Creating Our Safe and Productive Space</i>
Duration:	60 min
Group size:	10-30 participants
Aim of the Session	To create a collective group agreement that reflects participants' needs for a safe, inclusive, and productive learning environment; to ensure shared ownership and responsibility for the group process.
Competence landscape areas of facilitator	<i>Creating and Holding Space for Expression; Connecting people, ideas and contexts</i>
Learning Outcomes of the Session	By the end of the session, participants will: ● Reflect on their personal needs for feeling safe and productive in a group setting. ● Practise collaborative decision-making and creative expression. ● Contribute to shaping a shared group agreement in a visual and engaging way. ● Strengthen the sense of belonging and ownership in the group.
Step by Step Description	Introduction (5 min) ● Explain the goal: "We are going to create our group agreement together so that everyone feels safe, included, and able to learn and work productively." Individual reflection (5 min) ● Participants individually reflect on the question: "What do I need to feel safe and productive in this group?" ● They write down keywords or short phrases. Small group work: Collage creation (20 min) ● Participants form groups of 3-4 people. ● Using magazines, coloured paper, scissors, glue, and pencils, they create a collage that represents their ideas visually and in words.

Step by Step Description	- While working, they discuss their needs and agree on the most important elements for their group. Presentations (10 min) - Each group presents their collage to the whole group. Collective agreement building (10 min) - All collages are arranged together on the wall or floor to create one shared form (e.g., a tree, puzzle, circle). - As collages are combined, participants share keywords that are written down to form the final group agreement text. Debriefing (10 min) - How did it feel to create the group agreement together? - Did everyone's voice get heard? - Which elements are most important for you personally? - How will we keep this agreement alive throughout the training?
Materials and Resources	- Magazines, coloured paper, scissors, glue, pencils/markers - Flipchart or large paper to collect keywords for the final agreement - Tape or pins to display collages together - Optional: music in the background

Title of activity:	Creating Safe Space & Group Building – Warm-up Exercises from the Theatre of the Oppressed
Duration:	60 min
Group size:	10-30 participants
Aim of the Session	To build trust, openness, and group cohesion through physical, playful, and creative exercises inspired by Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed, creating a safe and inclusive learning environment.
Competence landscape areas of facilitator	<i>Creating and Holding Space for Expression; Connecting people, ideas and contexts</i>
Learning Outcomes of the Session	By the end of the session, participants will: ● Feel more comfortable and connected through shared movement and play. ● Develop awareness of space, body language, and non-verbal communication. ● Practise collaboration, trust, and creativity in a safe group setting. ● Strengthen a sense of belonging and inclusion in the training group.
Step by Step Description	Exploring the Space (15 min) ● Ask participants to spread out so everyone has personal space. ● (1-2 min): "Walk slowly around the room. Visit every corner. For now, keep your gaze down—notice the floor, your steps, your breathing." ● Progression (2-3 min): "Now raise your gaze to people's hands – notice gestures, rings, colours – still no eye contact." ● Progression (2-3 min): "Now, gently lift your eyes to people's faces. If you meet someone's eyes, greet them non-verbally – a nod, a smile, a hand to the heart."

Step by Step**Description**

- Variation (2-3 min): "Greet each other as you would greet a close friend in your home culture – without words."

Facilitator tips:

- » Keep reminding: "Change direction, vary speed, use the whole space."
- » Normalize choice: "Eye contact is optional – use a soft gaze if you prefer."
- » Safety: flag bags/cables; invite softer pace if the room is crowded.
- » Adaptation: seated participants can rotate upper body, make eye-level contact with nearby people, or mirror hand gestures.

Walking with Imagery (5 min)

- Task: "Keep walking. Imagine you're on ice – how does your body change? Now lava – what adjustments do you make?"
- Game: Introduce calls: "Frozen!" (everyone stops); "Unfrozen!" (resume).

Facilitator tips:

- » Keep calls playful; vary frequency.
- » Offer alternatives for balance issues: smaller steps, grounded stance, chair-based upper-body movement.

Sculptures in Trios (5 min)

- Formation: "Find two people near you – groups of three."
- Task: "Create a living sculpture that expresses 'safe and productive work together.' No lifting; all positions must be comfortable. Touch only with consent – no touch is also fine."

Facilitator tips:

- » Demonstrate quick non-touch sculpture (e.g., three levels/ poses).



Step by Step Description

- » Encourage using distance, levels, and shapes; not just hands.

Imaginary Ball (5 min)

- Task: "We'll play with an invisible ball. Throw to someone with a clear gesture and eye contact; the catcher 'receives' it and throws to another."
- Progression: Add a second ball; then change the ball's weight/size ("Now it's heavy / tiny / sticky").

Facilitator tips:

- » Model exaggerated, readable gestures.
- » Inclusion: seated participants can pass across the circle; ensure routes include everyone.

Monsters with Limbs (5 min)

- Formation: "Groups of 4-5."
- Task: "Make a monster that touches the floor with exactly X legs and Y hands (e.g., 3 legs, 2 hands). Move a few steps together without breaking the count."
- Safety: No weight-bearing on others; avoid awkward joints.
- Adaptation: Use props (scarves/tape marks) to 'count' contact points; allow wall/chair support if needed.

Passing the Invisible Present (5 min)

- Circle: "We'll pass an invisible present around. When you 'receive' it, show its weight/shape/surprise, then transform it and pass it on."

Facilitator tips:

- » Encourage offers to be clear; receivers react before changing it.
- » Keep pace playful; ensure everyone gets at least one turn.

Step by Step Description

Human Musical Instrument (10 min)

- One person enters the centre and starts a simple rhythm (voice or body). One by one, others join with a different sound or movement. Listen and build a coherent soundscape.

Facilitator tips:

- » Start with a very simple beat so layering is easy.
- » Noise sensitivity: set a max volume; invite softer dynamics; no shouting.
- » End with a clear cut-off signal (hand down).

Reflection (20 min)

Questions:

- “What helped you feel safer or more connected?”
- “Which moment shifted the atmosphere?”
- “How did consent and choice show up in these exercises?”
- “What can we carry from this into our work together this week?”

Materials and Resources

- Large open space without obstacles; optional calm background music.
- Flipchart & markers for reflection keywords.
- Based on Theatre of the Oppressed (Augusto Boal) practices and common non-formal education group-building methods (trainer-to-trainer tradition), adapted for inclusivity and accessibility.

Title of activity:	River of My Professional Path
Duration:	90 min
Group size:	10-30 participants
Aim of the Session	To help participants reflect on their professional journey in youth work, activism, or arts, identify main milestones and influences, and share experiences with peers in a creative and meaningful way.
Competence landscape areas of facilitator	<i>Creating and Holding Space for Expression; Connecting people, ideas and contexts</i>
Learning Outcomes of the Session	By the end of the session, participants will: ● Practise self-reflection on their professional journey. ● Visualise and analyse milestones, challenges, and support systems in their development. ● Strengthen peer connection by sharing experiences and recognising common patterns. ● Gain a deeper understanding of their motivations and professional identity in youth work or arts.
Step by Step Description	Begin by explaining the aim: “We will reflect on our professional journey using the metaphor of a river — your river represents your path through youth work, arts, or activism.” Show an example or describe possible elements: the river’s width, speed, or turns may illustrate intensity or transitions; stones may represent obstacles or milestones; trees may show people or events that supported them. Emphasise there is no right or wrong way — this is for personal reflection. Each participant receives A4 paper and coloured materials such as pencils, markers, or crayons. Over 20-30 minutes, they draw their river from the point they first connected to youth work, arts, or activism until today. They are invited to include symbols or elements around the river — trees for supporters, stones for challenges, bridges for opportunities, or anything else meaningful to them. Play calm background music to create a reflective atmosphere.

Step by Step Description

When finished, participants display their rivers around the room for a walking gallery. For 15 minutes, they circulate freely, look at each other's rivers, and share stories or impressions with those who wish to explain their drawings.

In the final 20 minutes, gather for a debriefing. Suggested questions:

- How was it to visualise your professional journey?
- Was it easy or difficult to identify milestones and influences?
- Why are you in youth work, activism, or arts — what keeps you here?
- Did you notice common elements across your rivers?

Optionally, capture 4-5 key words or patterns on a flipchart for the group's reference.

Materials and Resources

- A4 paper (1-2 sheets per participant)
- Coloured pencils, markers, wax crayons, coloured paper, glue
- Music player & calm background music
- Flipchart & markers for capturing insights
- Inspired by *Learning to Learn Facilitator's Manual* methods for reflective practice

Activities for Human Rights sessions and workshops

Title of activity:	Introduction to Human Rights - Air Balloon
Duration:	90 min
Group size:	10-30 participants
Aim of the Session	To help participants reflect on the interconnectedness of human rights, practise prioritising them under pressure, and explore how removing rights affects individuals, society, and democracy.
Competence landscape areas of facilitator	<i>Creating and Holding Space for Expression; Connecting people, ideas and contexts; Facilitating learning through creative practice</i>
Learning Outcomes of the Session	By the end of the session, participants will: ● Become familiar with key human rights articles. ● Recognise how rights depend on each other and protect democratic values. ● Practise decision-making and negotiation in a group setting. ● Reflect on the consequences of depriving rights for individuals and societies. ● Explore connections between human rights and democracy.
Step by Step Description	Introduction (5 min) ● Explain: “We are going to imagine we are flying in a hot air balloon. To survive, we need to throw away sandbags, each representing a human right. Once gone, it’s gone forever.” ● Present 8 human rights chosen for the activity (e.g., freedom from slavery, equality before the law, freedom of expression, education, etc.). Ensure everyone understands them. Group Work (20 min) ● Divide into groups of 4-6. Provide slips of paper, pens, scissors. ● Groups discuss which rights to throw away first to gain altitude. Every few minutes, announce: “The mountain is closer — time to throw another right away!” ● They must agree on the order and number each right before

discarding it.

Facilitator Tips:

- Encourage discussion on which rights protect others, which are essential for democracy, and which meet basic needs.
- Remind participants to negotiate and justify decisions as a team.

Gallery & Reflection (15 min)

- Groups display or share the order of discarded rights.
- Lead reflection using questions:
 - » Which rights did you sacrifice first or keep longest?
 - » What was difficult about agreeing on the order?
 - » What would be the real-life consequences of losing certain rights?
 - » How do these rights relate to democracy and equality?

Input on Human Rights (20 min)

- Make an input, using materials from the part of Theoretical Input of this Manual.
- Summarise: *"Human rights are interconnected. Removing one affects others — and democracy itself."*
- Share links for further exploration.

Step by Step Description

Materials and Resources

- Paper, pens, scissors for each group
- Space for small group discussion & gallery
- **Reference:** [The Little Big Handbook of Democracy - European Wergeland Centre](#)
- [Universal Declaration of Human Rights \(UN\)](#)
- [European Convention on Human Rights](#) (Council of Europe)

Title of activity:	Introduction to Human Rights - Where do you stand?
Duration:	90 min
Group size:	10-30 participants
Aim of the Session	To surface participants' assumptions and attitudes about human rights, introduce core principles (universality, indivisibility, interdependence, equality), and prepare the ground for deeper learning.
Competence landscape areas of facilitator	<i>Connecting people, ideas and contexts</i>
Learning Outcomes of the Session	By the end of the session, participants will: ● Identify different categories of human rights and recognise tensions between them. ● Explain (in simple terms) universality, indivisibility, and interdependence. ● Practise listening, argumentation, and respectful disagreement. ● Connect personal positions to human rights in democratic societies.
Step by Step Description	Set up a physical line from AGREE to DISAGREE (posters on opposite walls). Explain: "I'll read a statement. Choose a place on the line that best represents your view. There are no 'right' answers. Listen first; speak briefly; be open to moving if you hear something new." Round 1 - Warm-up (10 min). Use 3-4 lower-stakes statements to model the process and tempo. Invite 2-3 voices per statement, max 30-45 seconds each. Round 2 - Core statements (25 min). Use 6-8 statements (see list below). After each, ask: "What principle(s) are in tension here? What real-life examples come to mind?" Encourage participants to move if their view shifts. Mini-synthesis (10 min). On a flipchart, capture 5-7 keywords that

Step by Step

Description

emerged (e.g., equality, limits, safety, participation, dignity, social protection). Briefly link these to HR principles (see theoretical support in this chapter).

Micro-pairs (5 min). In pairs: “Which statement was hardest? Did anything shift for you?”

Facilitator tips & accessibility

- Offer a seated version: hold coloured cards (green = agree / red = disagree / yellow = in between) if movement is difficult.
- Model respectful language; invite one point per person; rotate voices.
- Timebox contributions; avoid debating personal identities/ traumas.
- If a statement spikes emotions, pause and name the tension; refocus on the principle (e.g., freedom of expression vs. non-discrimination).

Suggested statements (choose 8-12 and adapt to context)

1. “All human rights are equally important.”
2. “Some rights can be limited for public safety.”
3. “Equality means treating everyone the same.”
4. “Economic and social rights are as essential as civil and political rights.”
5. “Without democracy, human rights cannot be guaranteed.”
6. “The right to vote is more important than the right to protest.”
7. “People should be able to say anything they want online.”
8. “Hate speech should be restricted to protect others' rights.”
9. “Mass surveillance is acceptable if it prevents crime.”
10. “Privacy is a luxury, not a right, in the digital age.”
11. “Some groups should have extra protections to achieve real equality.”
12. “Religious freedom should always outweigh other rights.”

Step by Step
Description

13. "Environmental protection should be recognised as a human right."
14. "Access to the internet should be a human right."
15. "Healthcare is a human right, not a service you buy."
16. "Education is a privilege, not a right."

Materials and
Resources

- Space: divide the room into two parts — Agree and Disagree. You can draw a line on the floor and place large signs reading AGREE and DISAGREE on opposite sides
- Reference:
 - » [The Little Big Handbook of Democracy - European Wergeland Centre](#)
 - » [Universal Declaration of Human Rights \(UN\)](#)
 - » [European Convention on Human Rights](#) (Council of Europe)
 - » [Compass: Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People](#) (Council of Europe)



Title of activity: Duration: Group size:	DigiART for Human Rights: Visual Stories for Social Change 3-4 hours 15-25 participants
Aim of the Session	To engage participants in exploring human rights through digital and visual arts, encouraging creative expression, critical thinking, and advocacy for social justice.
Competence landscape areas of facilitator	<i>Connecting people, ideas and contexts; Co-Creating Impact and reflecting on practice; Facilitating learning through creative practice</i>
Learning Outcomes of the Session	By the end of the session, participants will: ● Describe key principles of human rights (UDHR, ECHR). ● Link personal or community experiences to human rights issues. ● Apply basic storytelling techniques using digital and visual media. ● Express ideas about social justice through creative methods. ● Evaluate how art can influence public awareness and social change.
Step by Step Description	1. Introduction and Inspiration (30 min) ● Present 2-3 short examples of activism or multimedia campaigns on human rights (e.g., <i>The Silent Immigrant</i>) or Think Common - Play Common or IDiscover - Masks & Identity from our Collection of practices in Civic Art. ● Discussion: Ask participants what messages or emotions these examples carry. ● Mini-input: Brief introduction to human rights principles and their link to art and activism. 2. Exploration and Idea Development (30 min) ● Individual work: Participants reflect on a human rights issue important to them or their community. ● Small groups: Share reflections and create a mind map of ideas, emotions, and possible images/sounds for their digital story.



Step by Step Description	Facilitator tip: » Help participants keep the story focused and simple. 3. Creative Production (1.5-2 hours) ● Task: Participants create short digital or visual stories using phones, tablets, or offline materials (collages, posters). ● Tools: Free apps (Canva, CapCut, iMovie) or paper and markers for non-digital versions. ● Facilitator tip: Provide technical support, but let participants lead the creative process. 4. Gallery Walk and Sharing (30 min) ● Display all artworks in a room or online platform. ● Walk-through: Participants move around, watch each other's stories, and give feedback. ● Big circle discussion: » What did you learn about human rights? » What emotions did the stories bring up? » How can we use art for advocacy? 5. Reflection and Next Steps (20 min) ● Group reflection: How was this process for you? What would you like to do next with your story? ● Action planning: Participants write down one concrete idea to share or continue their work beyond the session.
Materials and Resources	● Laptop/projector for showing examples ● Smartphones/tablets with free editing tools or paper/collage materials ● Internet connection (if possible) for accessing examples and publishing stories ● Human rights background materials: » Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN) » European Convention on Human Rights (Council of Europe)

Activities for Youth Participation and Active Citizenship sessions and workshops

Title of activity: Duration: Group size:	Introduction to Youth Participation - Art Lab 2,5 hours 10-35
Aim of the Session	To introduce participants to the Ladder of Youth Participation and enable them to creatively explore different levels of youth involvement in decision-making through artistic methods.
Competence landscape areas of facilitator	<i>Co-Creating Impact and reflecting on practice; Facilitating learning through creative practice</i>
Learning Outcomes of the Session	By the end of the session, participants will: ● Understand the concept and levels of Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation. ● Analyse the current situation of youth participation in their own organisations. ● Create artistic representations of different levels of participation. ● Reflect on practical ways to increase meaningful youth involvement in their work.
Step by Step Description	1. Introduction & Theoretical Input (30 min) ● Facilitator presents Roger Hart's Ladder of Youth Participation: » Three non-participation levels: <i>Talkienism, Manipulation and Decoration.</i> » Five participation levels: <i>Assigned but Informed, Consulted and Informed, Adult-initiated shared decisions with youth, Youth-initiated shared decisions with adults, Youth-initiated and directed.</i> (You can find more information about it in Chapter 4) ● Visualise the ladder on a poster or slide, or you can use the real ladder and put A4 papers with the levels on the stairs



Step by Step

Description

- Ask participants to reflect on the organisation or project they work with and physically stand on the ladder step that best reflects the level of youth participation in their context.
- Facilitate a short discussion: "What does this tell us about youth involvement in your realities?"

2. Group Division & Art Lab Instructions (10 min)

- Divide participants into 5-7 groups, each assigned to one ladder level.
- Explain: "Your task is to create an art piece — a poster, tableau, short performance, or sculpture — showing how youth are involved at this level."
- Encourage creativity and symbolic representation rather than perfection.

3. Art Laboratory Creation Process (40 min)

- Groups brainstorm and prepare their art piece.
- Facilitator moves between groups, offering support if needed and reminding about time.
- Optional: Play background music to create a relaxed, creative atmosphere.

4. Gallery Walk & Presentations (30 min)

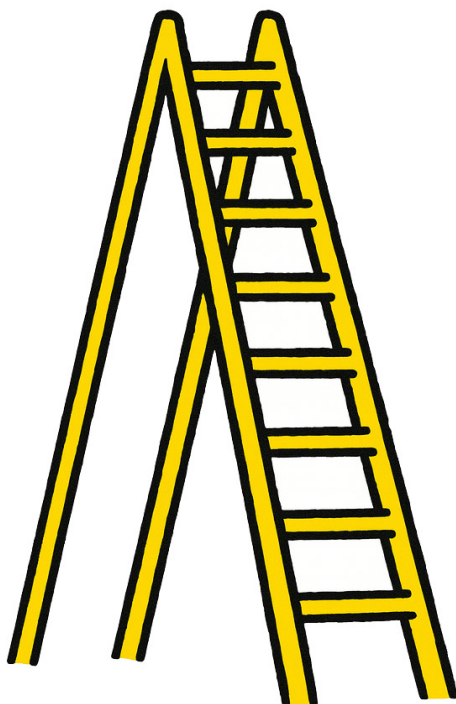
- Each group presents their artwork.
- Other participants try to guess which ladder level is being represented.
- After each presentation, short discussion: How does this level feel for young people? For adults?

5. Reflection & Debriefing (30 min)

- Part A: Whole group discussion on what levels appear most often in participants' real-life contexts, what blocks higher levels, and what helps achieve them.
- Part B: Give examples, e.g. "When youth are invited to paint a mural - at what level is this? How could it be organised to reach the highest levels of participation?"
- Summarise key principles for meaningful youth participation.

Materials and Resources

- Poster or slide of Roger Hart's Ladder (e.g., [Manual "Have Your Say"](#)), or real ladder with the papers with the names of the levels;
- Flipcharts, markers, coloured paper, scissors, glue, tape, magazines, pencils;
- Space for movement (for body voting and gallery walk);
- Music for creative atmosphere (optional).



Rung 8: Young people & adults share decision-making

Rung 7: Young people lead & initiate actions

Rung 6: Adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people

Rung 5: Young people consulted and informed

Rung 3: Young people are tokenized*

Rung 2: Young people are decoration*

Rung 1: Young people are manipulated*

The last three rungs are non-participation

Title of activity:	Youth Rights through Art: Murals for Participation
Duration:	210 min
Group size:	10-30 people
Aim of the Session	To introduce participants to the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life (Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe) and to explore youth participation rights through creative artistic expression.
Competence landscape areas of facilitator	<i>Connecting people, ideas and contexts; Co-Creating Impact and reflecting on practice; Facilitating learning through creative practice; Supporting young people's agency and voice</i>
Learning Outcomes of the Session	By the end of the session, participants will: ● Identify and explain the basic rights of young people according to the <i>Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life</i>. ● Work collaboratively to visualise and communicate these rights through creative, art-based methods. ● Reflect on how youth rights can be presented to broader audiences in an engaging and accessible way.
Step by Step Description	Energiser: The Laboratory of Crazy Dr. Simon (10 min) The facilitator plays the role of Dr. Simon, a slightly eccentric scientist who makes participants part of his "crazy experiment." ● When Dr. Simon says "Dr. Simon says..." followed by a movement (e.g., jump, turn around, clap), participants must copy it. ● If Dr. Simon gives a movement without saying "Dr. Simon says," participants must remain still. ● Anyone who moves at the wrong moment or misses a command joins Dr. Simon's "laboratory of zombies" and follows him from then on. This continues until only a few players remain or until the group is fully "zombified."

Step by Step

Description

Introduction to the Charter (15 min)

- Short input from the facilitator about the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life:
 - » What it is
 - » Why it matters
 - » How it can be used in youth work and advocacy
- Participants are introduced to a set of youth participation rights from the Charter (see list below).

Group Work: Murals for Youth Rights (50-60 min)

- Participants are divided into small groups (3-5 people).
- Each group receives one youth participation right from the Charter and a task:

Imagine you are a team of artists commissioned by the municipality to design a mural that will make young people aware of this right. Your task is to create a prototype of the mural on A3 paper using the materials provided.
- Materials: coloured paper, pencils, markers, aquarelles, gouache, and if available, graffiti markers or spray chalk for artistic effects.
- Groups work together to design and illustrate the meaning of their assigned right.

Presentation and Reflection (20-30 min)

- Each group presents its mural, explaining:
 - » Which right it represents
 - » What message it sends to young people
- Trainers act as a "commission" and accept all murals for a final exhibition.
- Reflection questions:
 - » What did you learn about youth participation rights?
 - » How can art make these rights more visible?
 - » How could you use this method in your own context?



Materials and Resources

- **Documents:** Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life (Council of Europe)
Link: <https://rm.coe.int/16807023e0>
- **Art Materials:** A3 papers, pencils, markers, aquarelles, gouache, graffiti markers/spray chalk (if available), scissors, glue.
- Handouts with the list of rights.

Handouts:

Youth Participation Rights - Summary

1. Right to Information

Young people have the right to access clear, complete, and youth-friendly information about public affairs, their rights, and available opportunities.

2. Right to Education and Training

Young people should have opportunities to learn about democratic participation, human rights, and civic engagement through formal and non-formal education.

3. Right to Participate in Decision-Making

Young people have the right to be involved in decision-making processes at local and regional levels, including planning, implementation, and evaluation.

4. Right to Meet and Form Associations

Young people have the right to gather, form youth organisations or informal groups, and express their interests collectively.

5. Right to Resources

Young people and youth organisations should have access to financial, technical, and other resources that support youth participation and initiatives.

6. Right to Cultural, Sporting, and Recreational Activities

Young people have the right to access and shape activities for culture, sports, leisure, and recreation in their communities.

7. Right to Employment and Social Integration

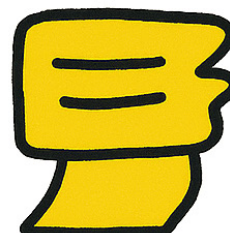
Policies should support youth employment, social protection, and the inclusion of all young people, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

8. Right to Sustainable Development and Environment

Young people should participate in actions and decisions affecting the environment and sustainable development in their communities.

9. Right to Equality and Non-Discrimination

All young people have the right to equal opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, or social status.



Title of activity:	The Mosque in Sleepyville - Youth Participation & Active Citizenship
Duration:	2-2,5 hours
Group size:	15-45
Aim of the Session	To explore how youth participation levels influence decision-making processes and to understand the link between youth rights, active citizenship, and inclusive community development through simulation.
Competence landscape areas of facilitator	<i>Facilitating learning through creative practice; Supporting young people's agency and voice</i>
Learning Outcomes of the Session	By the end of the session, participants will: ● Understand how youth participation levels affect community decisions. ● Link active citizenship with inclusive democratic practices. ● Recognise the importance of dialogue, advocacy, and coalition-building. ● Identify ways to make participation processes more inclusive and youth-friendly
Step by Step Description	1. Introduction (15 min) ● Welcome participants and explain the aim: exploring youth roles in democratic decision-making. ● Introduce the youth participation ladder (briefly, as earlier session covered it in detail). Facilitator tip: Ask participants to recall examples from their communities where youth voices influenced – or failed to influence – decisions. 2. Scenario Preparation (20 min) ● Present the adapted Mosque in Sleepyville scenario: <i>The town of Sleepyville is debating whether to allow the construction of a mosque in a central neighbourhood.</i>

Step by Step

Description

Different stakeholders have conflicting interests—some support cultural diversity, others oppose the idea due to prejudices or economic reasons. Young people want a safe, inclusive space for all.

- Divide participants into stakeholder groups:
 1. Local authorities (mayor, council members)
 2. Youth representatives
 3. Religious community members
 4. Business owners
 5. Civil society organisations / activists
 6. Local media
 7. Populist Party “Let’s make Sleepyville great again!”
- Each group receives a short description of its role, interests, and position.
- Facilitator tip: Encourage groups to prepare visual posters or slogans for their position to make it more interactive.

3. Roleplay Debate (40 min)

- Groups present their positions at the “Town Hall Meeting”.
- Facilitator plays the role of *town council chairperson*, ensuring everyone gets a chance to speak.
- During the debate, ask youth groups to propose how young people can be meaningfully involved in the decision-making process at each stage.
- Every 10 min, pause and ask: *Which participation level do we see now? How can we move higher on the ladder?*

4. Decision & Reflection (30 min)

- The council (or all participants) votes on the final decision.
- In reflection:
 - » Which groups had the most power?
 - » Where did youth voices matter?
 - » What would help to ensure meaningful, inclusive participation in real life?
 - » How does this connect to active citizenship?

Step by Step Description

Facilitator tip: Write key ideas on a flipchart: *youth participation, active citizenship, inclusivity.*

5. Debrief & Link to Practice (15 min)

- Discuss real-life parallels: youth councils, municipal hearings, activism campaigns.
- Link to the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life: which rights were at stake here?
- Share practical tools (e.g., from Have Your Say! Manual,
- SALTO Participation Pool).

Materials and Resources

- Flipcharts, markers, posters for group work.
- Roles descriptions (see below).
- Compass Manual: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/compass>



Handouts for the Simulation

Simulation Game: The Mosque in Sleepyville

Duration: 2-3 hours

Group size: 12-40 participants

Aim of the Activity

- » To explore different perspectives on active citizenship, participation, diversity, and human rights in the context of a controversial community issue.
- » To practice democratic debate, negotiation, and decision-making skills.
- » To reflect on the role of emotions, power, and participation in local decision-making processes.

Scenario

The small town of Sleepyville has recently received a request from its growing Muslim community to build a new mosque. The Town Council must decide whether to give permission.

Different groups of citizens, political actors, and stakeholders have different views, interests, and emotions about this issue. As a Town Council meeting is called, everyone is invited to express their opinions before the decision is made.

Roles for Participants

Each participant (or small group) receives one role. They prepare arguments and decide on a common position before the Town Council meeting starts.

1. Town Council (Decision-makers)

- » You are responsible for listening to all sides and making the final decision.
- » You want a solution that respects democracy, human rights, and the needs of all citizens, but you also want to keep the peace and avoid protests.

2. Muslim Community Representatives

- » You represent the Muslim families of Sleepyville.
- » Your community has been living here for many years, pays taxes, and wants a proper place for worship instead of the small rented rooms used now.
- » You promise the mosque will be open to visitors, promote interfaith dialogue, and benefit the whole town.



3. Local Residents Opposing the Mosque

- » You have lived in Sleepyville for generations.
- » You fear the mosque will change the town's identity and bring "problems" you see on the news.
- » Some of you admit you have never talked to the Muslim community but still feel the mosque doesn't belong here.

4. Local Residents Supporting the Mosque

- » You believe everyone should have equal rights to practise their religion.
- » You see the mosque as a chance to make the town more inclusive and lively.
- » You want Sleepyville to be known for tolerance and respect for diversity.

5. Business Community

- » You own shops, cafés, and services in Sleepyville.
- » You care about the economy and think new visitors might bring more business.
- » You don't want tensions or protests that scare away customers.

6. Human Rights NGO

- » You defend freedom of religion, expression, and equality.
- » You observe whether the debate respects human rights standards and are ready to remind everyone of them if needed.
- » You want the Town Council to follow democratic principles.

7. Ultra-Right Populist Party "Make Sleepyville Great Again"

- » You are politicians from a new populist party promising to "protect Sleepyville's traditions and identity."
- » You use the mosque debate to win votes by spreading fear of change and promising to defend "real Sleepyville"

Title of activity:	Youth Participation Ladder through Art: From Theory to Creative Practice
Duration:	210 min (2,5 hours)
Group size:	10 - 30
Aim of the Session	To explore the concept of Active Citizenship, its link to youth participation and human rights, and to enable participants to connect theory with their own realities through interactive activities.
Competence landscape areas of facilitator	<i>Co-Creating Impact and reflecting on practice; Facilitating learning through creative practice; Supporting young people's agency and voice</i>
Learning Outcomes of the Session	By the end of the session, participants will: ● Understand the concept of Active Citizenship and its core principles. ● See connections between youth participation, human rights, and democratic citizenship. ● Reflect on examples of active citizenship from their own contexts. ● Practise participation through interactive and creative activities.
Step by Step Description	1. Energiser: "Active Citizens in Action" (10 min) ● Facilitator tip: Ask participants to move around the room. When you call out a situation, they freeze in a position showing what a "citizen" might look like there (e.g., voting, protesting, volunteering, negotiating, signing a petition). ● Quick debriefing: What images of citizenship did we create? What is missing? (you can write them down on the flipchart) 2. Theoretical Input: What is Active Citizenship? (15 min) Short presentation with visuals covering: ● Definition: From Council of Europe & EU Youth Strategy: Active Citizenship means participating in the life of a community to improve it, defending human rights, and contributing to democratic life.



Step by Step

Description

- **Dimensions of Active Citizenship:**
 - » Political (voting, activism, policy influence)
 - » Social (volunteering, community initiatives)
 - » Cultural & digital (arts, media, online activism)
- **Link to Human Rights:**
 - » Rights = framework for participation
 - » Responsibilities = acting for the common good
 - » Youth participation = ensuring young people shape decisions affecting them
- **Key Principles:** inclusion, participation, equality, accountability

Facilitator tip: Keep it short; use examples from young people's initiatives (e.g., Fridays for Future, activism projects).

3. Interactive Activity: "Active Citizenship Map" (25 min)

- Participants work in small groups with flipcharts.
- Task: Draw a map of how young people in their town/country practise active citizenship (e.g., protests, volunteering, youth councils, activism).
- Mark where human rights appear: freedom of expression, equality, participation rights.
- Groups present briefly.

Facilitator tip: Encourage them to include offline and online actions, and also barriers young people face.

4. Cards: Participation in Action (20 min)

- Prepare cards with typical youth participation examples (e.g., youth parliament, online petition, street theatre, volunteering project, political party youth wing), you can find examples under this tool description.
- Divide group in the buzz groups (2-3 people, might be people seating next to each other), give each group one card.
- Group discussion: How does this action link to active citizenship? Which human rights are involved?

Step by Step Description	● Share key points in plenary. 5. Reflection Circle (10 min) ● Questions: » What is one new idea about active citizenship you discovered today? » How can you bring this to your own work with young people? ● Collect key words on a flipchart to connect with next sessions.
Materials and Resources	● Flipcharts, markers, sticky notes, role cards ● Council of Europe Youth Department: Have Your Say! Manual ● EU Youth Strategy (2019-2027) on Participation ● SALTO Participation Resource Pool: https://participationpool.eu/

Handout “Examples of the cards for participation in action”

■ Card 1: Youth Climate Strike

- A group of teenagers organises weekly demonstrations demanding stronger climate policies.
- Questions for discussion:
 - » Which human rights are they exercising?
 - » How does this action influence decision-makers?

■ Card 2: Online Petition for Better Public Transport

- Young people start an online campaign to improve bus connections in rural areas.
- Questions for discussion:
 - » Is this political, social, or cultural participation?
 - » Who should respond to their demands?

■ Card 3: Youth Parliament

- Elected young representatives debate local issues and present proposals to the city council.
- Questions for discussion:
 - » How does this prepare young people for democratic life?
 - » Which rights make this possible?

■ Card 4: Street Art for Equality

- A group paints murals promoting gender equality and anti-discrimination messages.
- Questions for discussion:
 - » What is the role of art in civic engagement?
 - » How does freedom of expression apply here?

■ Card 5: Volunteering in a Refugee Centre

- Young volunteers help organise language classes and cultural events for refugees.
- Questions for discussion:
 - » Which rights are supported through this action?
 - » How can this strengthen community solidarity?

■ Card 6: Digital Storytelling Project

- Youth groups collect stories from elderly citizens and share them online to preserve cultural heritage.
- Questions for discussion:
 - » How does this contribute to active citizenship?
 - » Which forms of participation are visible here?

■ Card 7: Youth in Local Budget Consultations

- The municipality invites young people to decide how part of the youth budget is spent.
- Questions for discussion:
 - » Why is youth voice important in budget decisions?
 - » How does this relate to participation rights?

■ Card 8: Theatre Forum on Bullying

- Young people perform scenes about bullying in schools, and the audience suggests alternative endings.
- Questions for discussion:
 - » How does this method empower participants?
 - » What skills do young people gain through it?

■ Card 9: Campaign blaming migrants for unemployment

- A youth wing of a populist party organises a campaign blaming migrants for unemployment.
- Questions for discussion:
 - » What challenges to human rights and democracy appear here?
 - » How can active citizenship counteract hate speech?

■ Card 10: European Youth Initiative for Digital Rights

- Young activists lobby for stronger data privacy laws to protect young people online.
- Questions for discussion:
 - » Which rights are linked to privacy and online security?
 - » How is this connected to democratic participation?

Activities for environment sessions and workshops

Title of activity:	Chicken Sandwich & Environmental Activism
Duration:	2,5 hours
Aim of the Session	To help participants explore the environmental impact of everyday food choices, reflect on sustainability issues, and turn their insights into creative art-based messages for the community.
Competence landscape areas of facilitator	<i>Connecting people, ideas and contexts; Co-Creating Impact and reflecting on practice; Facilitating learning through creative practice; Supporting young people's agency and voice</i>
Learning Outcomes of the Session	By the end of the session, participants will: ● Understand key environmental impacts related to food production and consumption. ● Be able to identify connections between personal choices and global sustainability challenges. ● Develop creativity and teamwork skills by translating environmental insights into visual messages or installations. ● Gain experience in community-focused environmental activism through art.
Step by Step Description	Step 1: Introduction (10 min) The facilitator briefly introduces the topic: food, sustainability, and environmental impact. Questions to open discussion: ● How often do we think about where our food comes from? ● What are possible hidden costs behind a simple sandwich? Step 2: Chicken Sandwich Activity - Part 1 (60 min) ● Divide participants into groups of 4-6. ● Give each group: » A picture of a chicken sandwich (center of the poster). » 11 sustainability cards randomly distributed. ● Ask participants first to silently read the cards and place them around the sandwich if they think they are connected

Step by Step

Description

- After 5 min, participants read cards placed by others and discuss:
 - » Which impacts were surprising?
 - » Which facts might influence personal eating choices?
 - » Which card was the most shocking?
- Groups prepare short presentations for others.

Step 3: Debriefing - Part 1 (15 min)

Facilitator leads a discussion:

- How do you feel after this exercise?
- Are you surprised by how little we know about food impacts?
- Should we know more? Why?
- What changes could we make as individuals or as a group?

Step 4: Optional Part 2 - Personal Food Reflection (15 min)

- Show the 10 sustainability questions on a flip chart (you can find them below in handouts).
- If participants brought food or food labels, they reflect individually: how much do they know about their food's origin, production, and impact?
- Short exchange in pairs: was it easy or difficult to answer?

Step 5: Art-Based Environmental Action (40 min)

Transition: *"Now let's turn these insights into messages for our community."*

Two options (participants choose based on time/resources):

1. Sticker Campaign:
 - » Each group creates a short slogan or image on paper that can be turned into stickers later.
 - » Example: "This Sandwich Costs the Earth" with a drawing of a melting planet inside a sandwich.
 - » Stickers can be printed and legally displayed in the neighborhood; participants photograph and share them with hashtags like #Activism #EcoYouth #ErasmusPlus.



Step by Step Description	2. Mini-Installations: » Using recycled materials, natural objects, or paper, participants build small street art installations about sustainability (e.g., “food waste mountain,” “plastic sea,” “deforested Amazon”). » Installations are temporary, symbolic, and documented via photos for social media. Facilitation Tips for Trainers Before the session ● Prepare one set of the <i>Chicken Sandwich</i> sheet and 11 sustainability cards for each small group (4-6 people). ● If possible, use recycled paper for printing to stay consistent with the sustainability theme. ● Gather materials for the art action: colored markers, eco-friendly paints, paper, tape/glue, recycled materials, and, if doing stickers, printable sticker paper or adhesive sheets. ● Organize a camera or phone for documentation (for participants to photograph their art and installations).
Materials and Resources	● Printed <i>Chicken Sandwich</i> sheets (1 per group) ● 11 Sustainability Cards per group (text below) ● Flipchart, markers, sticky tape ● Recycled materials for installations (optional) ● Paper for stickers/posters, colored pencils, markers, paints ● Music for creative phase ● Camera or phone for documentation ● Inspiration resources: » T-Kit 13 Sustainability Education » Fridays for Future

Handouts for the session:

Chicken Sandwich Poster

CHICKEN SANDWICH

**Personal Food Reflection Questions**

- Where is your food from?
- Is it nutritious and healthy?
- What packaging was used?
- How was it produced? Industrial or traditional?
- Were pesticides or chemicals used?
- Was waste generated during production?
- Environmental costs beyond production?
- Who made money from it?
- How much went to producers?
- Are there more sustainable alternatives?

Sustainability Cards

Plastic Waste - Over 8 million tonnes of plastic enter oceans every year. Microplastics harm fish and birds and end up in our food chain.

Deforestation for Animal Feed - Large areas of Amazon rainforest are cleared yearly to grow soy for animal feed, destroying biodiversity.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions - The meat industry produces 14% of global emissions, equal to all transport emissions combined.

Overfishing - More than 85% of fisheries are at or beyond safe limits; some fish species face extinction.

Factory Farming - Produces most of the world's meat but causes pollution, animal suffering, and health risks.

Water Use - Agriculture uses 70% of global freshwater; meat diets need up to 5x more water than plant-based diets.

Food Waste - One-third of all food worldwide is wasted; in the EU alone, 126 million tonnes yearly.

Health Impacts - Diets high in meat, fat, and sugar contribute to obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.

Industrial Agriculture - Multinational corporations control seeds and crops, forcing farmers to grow for export rather than local needs.

Energy Use & Transport - Global food transport uses fossil fuels and increases CO₂ emissions.

Land Use - Meat diets require much more land than vegetarian or vegan diets, increasing pressure on ecosystems.

Ideas for Action Handout

- Create posters or stickers for a local awareness campaign.
- Map local sustainable food producers and share the info.
- Organize a community cooking event with seasonal food.
- Start composting organic waste at school or youth centre.
- Contact environmental NGOs for workshops or collaborations.

Title of activity:	EcoTalks: From Facts to Action
Duration:	1,5 - 2 hours
Group size:	15-30 participants
Aim of the Session	To introduce participants to key concepts of environment and sustainability, highlight their links to human rights and democracy, and offer a space for critical thinking and discussion through an interactive fishbowl debate.
Competence landscape areas of facilitator	<i>Connecting people, ideas and contexts; Supporting young people's agency and voice</i>
Learning Outcomes of the Session	By the end of the session, participants will: ● Explain key concepts of environment and sustainability. ● Identify links between environmental protection, human rights, and democratic participation. ● Analyse different perspectives on environmental issues and argue positions respectfully. ● Reflect on responsibilities at individual, organisational, and governmental levels.
Step by Step Description	Step 1: Welcome & Introduction (10 min) Facilitator welcomes participants and explains: ● The session will have two main parts: first, a short interactive input to introduce basic concepts; then, a fishbowl debate to explore different perspectives.



Step by Step

Description

- The goal is not to reach one answer but to see the complexity of environmental issues and to connect them with youth participation and civic engagement.

Ask participants: What comes to your mind when you hear “environment” or “sustainability”? Collect 5-6 key words on a flipchart.

Step 2: Theoretical Input - Environment & Sustainability (20 min)

The facilitator introduces:

- Why Environment Matters: Human life depends on healthy ecosystems. Environmental degradation directly affects human rights: right to health, water, food, housing. Use concrete examples: floods, droughts, pollution, deforestation.
- Key Concepts:
 - » Sustainable Development: meeting the needs of today without compromising the future (Brundtland Report).
 - » Environmental Justice: fair distribution of environmental benefits and burdens; addressing inequalities.
 - » Intergenerational Equity: future generations have rights too.
 - » Public Participation: people must have a say in decisions affecting the environment (Aarhus Convention).
- Links to Human Rights & Democracy:
 - » Clean environment as a prerequisite for dignity and equality.
 - » Environmental rights connected with freedom of information, participation, and accountability.
 - » Examples: European Court of Human Rights cases on environmental protection and right to life.
- Global & European Frameworks:
 - » UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 13 Climate Action, SDG 15 Life on Land, SDG 14 Life Below Water).
 - » EU Green Deal: climate neutrality by 2050, circular economy, biodiversity strategy.
 - » Council of Europe's work on environment, human rights, and democracy.

Step by Step Description

Invite 2-3 participants to share examples of environmental challenges in their countries or communities.

Step 3: Fishbowl Debate - Agree/Disagree (40 min)

Set-up:

- Arrange two circles: inner circle (4-5 chairs) for speakers, outer circle for observers.
- Explain the rules: only those in the inner circle speak; if someone from the outer circle wants to join, they tap a speaker and swap places.
- Each statement will be discussed for 5-6 minutes; the goal is to exchange arguments, not to “win”.

Statements for Debate:

1. “Meat consumption should be heavily taxed because of its environmental impact.”
2. Individual lifestyle changes matter more than government regulations in tackling climate change.”
3. “Technological innovation will solve most of our environmental problems.”
4. “Climate change is primarily a social justice issue rather than only an environmental one.”
5. “Environmental activism should be peaceful at all times.”

Facilitator Tips:

- Start with volunteers; encourage balanced participation.
- After each statement, summarise key arguments before moving on.
- Remind participants they can change their position if they hear convincing arguments.

Step 4: Debriefing (15 min)

Facilitator asks in plenary:

- Did you change your opinion on any statement?
- After each statement, summarise key arguments before moving on.



Step by Step Description

- Remind participants they can change their position if they hear convincing arguments.

Step 4: Debriefing (15 min)

Facilitator asks in plenary:

- Did you change your opinion on any statement?
- Which arguments surprised you or made you think differently?
- What is the connection between environment, human rights, and democracy?
- What can we do in our own projects or communities?

Capture 5-6 keywords for the next steps or future action.

Step 5: Wrap-Up (5 min)

Summarise:

- Environment and sustainability are not only ecological issues but also about rights, justice, and participation.
- Addressing environmental challenges requires both systemic change and individual responsibility.
- Share resources for further learning: SDGs, EU Green Deal, Council of Europe's Compass and T-Kit 13 on Sustainability.

Materials and Resources

Materials and Resources

- Flipchart or whiteboard for notes
- Markers and sticky notes
- Chairs for fishbowl setup
- Optional: printed debate statements
- Visuals or slides for the theoretical input

References

- [T-Kit 13: Sustainability and Youth Work](#) (Council of Europe)
- United Nations: Sustainable Development Goals (sdgs.un.org)
- Aarhus Convention (unece.org)
- European Green Deal (ec.europa.eu)

Activities for Intersectoral Dialogue sessions and workshops

Title of activity: Duration: Group size:	To dialogue, or not to dialogue?! 1,5 - 2 hours 15-30 participants
Aim of the Session	To enable participants to understand the concept, principles, and benefits of intersectoral dialogue and to experience creative methods for promoting it in their communities.
Competence landscape areas of facilitator	<i>Connecting people, ideas and contexts; Co-Creating Impact and reflecting on practice; Facilitating learning through creative practice; Supporting young people's agency and voice</i>
Learning Outcomes of the Session	By the end of the session, participants will: ● Explain what intersectoral dialogue is and why it matters for democracy, human rights, and social cohesion. ● Identify key principles and skills needed for effective dialogue. ● Develop creative messages to promote intersectoral dialogue in their communities. ● Reflect on ways to integrate intersectoral dialogue into their own projects
Step by Step Description	1. Energiser: "Cross the Line" (10 min) ● Facilitator draws a line on the floor (or imagines one). ● Participants stand on one side. ● Facilitator calls out: <i>"Cross the line if you've ever worked with people from another sector (school, NGO, municipality, business, etc.)"</i>. ● Several questions follow, such as: » <i>"Cross if you've ever solved a problem with people of different ages."</i> » <i>"Cross if you've taken part in a youth council or public meeting."</i>



Step by Step Description

- Debrief briefly: This shows how much diversity and experience we already have in the group.

2. Theoretical Input: Understanding Intersectoral Dialogue (15 min)

- Facilitator presents the key concepts and principles using the prepared text:
 - » Definition and importance of intersectoral dialogue;
 - » Core principles: inclusiveness, participation, respect, collaboration, trust;
 - » Links to human rights, democratic participation, and European priorities;
 - » Examples of practices: youth councils, art-based projects, local forums.
- Short Q&A to ensure understanding.

3. Mini-Debate “Why Do We Need Dialogue?” (10 min)

- In pairs or trios, participants discuss the statement: *“Intersectoral dialogue is essential for solving local problems.”*
- One representative per pair shares a key argument for or against.
- Purpose: to engage critically with the concept before moving to creative work.

4. Creative Lab: 1-Minute Reels for Dialogue (40 min)

- Participants are divided into small groups (3-4 people).
- Each group creates a 1-minute promotional video (recorded on a phone) answering:
 - » What is intersectoral dialogue?
 - » Why is it important?
 - » How does it benefit young people and the community?
- Encourage use of role-play, art objects, drawings, or music to make the message engaging.

Step by Step**Description****5. Screening and Reflection (20 min)**

- Groups show their videos to everyone.
- Debrief questions:
 - » What messages stood out?
 - » Which principles of intersectoral dialogue were illustrated?
 - » How could these messages be used in real life (e.g., campaigns, youth events)?

Materials and**Resources**

- Projector/screen for theoretical input.
- Smartphones or cameras for recording reels.
- Basic editing apps (optional, e.g., InShot, CapCut).
- Flipchart, markers for brainstorming key messages.



Title of activity: Duration: Group size:	City of Sustain 1,5 - 2 hours 15-30 participants
Aim of the Session	To simulate decision-making on sustainability and human rights issues with limited resources, encouraging youth participation, inter-sectoral dialogue, and democratic negotiations.
Competence landscape areas of facilitator	<i>Connecting people, ideas and contexts; Co-Creating Impact and reflecting on practice; Facilitating learning through creative practice; Supporting young people's agency and voice</i>
Learning Outcomes of the Session	By the end of the session, participants will: ● Understand the complexity of balancing environmental, economic, and human rights priorities. ● Practise democratic decision-making and negotiation skills. ● Explore the role of youth participation and inter-sectoral collaboration in sustainability processes. ● Reflect on the impact of decisions on different groups and future generations.
Step by Step Description	1. Introduction & Story Setup (15 min) ● Facilitator explains the story: <i>The city faces multiple crises; resources are limited; decisions must be made together to create a sustainable, just future.</i> ● Divide participants into 4-5 groups representing: 1. Local Authorities 2. Businesses 3. Youth Organisations 4. Environmental Activists 5. Social Services / Human Rights Defenders ● Distribute Role Cards with missions, values, starting resources, and special conditions. ● Explain rules: limited time, one decision per station, negotiation allowed, human rights must be respected, final city plan required.

Step by Step

Description

2. Station Rounds (50 min)

- Groups rotate through 4-5 stations.
- Each station = a realistic dilemma with 2-3 decision options affecting resources.
- Groups have 5-7 min per station: read, discuss, decide.
- Optional: Crisis Cards add unexpected events after each round.

Stations:

1. Water Crisis
2. Energy Dilemma
3. Social Justice & Migration
4. Media & Dialogue
5. Future Generations (optional)

3. Final Assembly: City Decision-Making (40 min)

- All groups bring resources & decisions to the City Assembly.
- Together they create one City Declaration covering:
 - » Resource allocation
 - » Human rights guarantees
 - » Youth participation mechanisms
 - » Sustainability commitments
- Decision-making: consensus or democratic vote.

4. Debrief & Reflection (30 min)

Facilitator guides discussion:

- Where was it hardest to agree?
- Which rights were most at risk?
- What role did young people play?
- What alliances were built?
- How does this reflect real-world processes?



Step by Step

Description

Tips for Facilitators

- Use visible timers to keep energy and pace.
- Encourage negotiation and alliances between groups.
- Focus the debrief on learning outcomes, not just the results.
- Add Crisis Cards for extra realism and unpredictability.

Materials and

Resources

- Role Cards (one per group)
- Station Scenario Cards (5 stations)
- Crisis Cards (optional)
- Resource Tokens (water, energy, social points)
- City Declaration template (flipchart or large paper)
- Markers, tape, post-its, timer

Preparation

- Set up 4-5 stations with scenario cards on tables around the room.
- Print/cut Role Cards, Station Cards, Crisis Cards, and Resource Tokens.
- Prepare City Declaration template on a flipchart for final assembly.
- Brief co-facilitators on station timing and instructions.

Handouts:**Game Rules**

1. Time is limited: 5-7 minutes per station. Be quick but strategic.
2. One decision per station: Groups must agree on one option before time runs out.
3. Resources matter: Some decisions give more energy or water but might harm human rights → groups must balance short-term gains vs long-term justice.
4. Human rights standards: The final City Plan must respect at least basic rights and social standards (e.g., water, housing, participation). Otherwise, the Assembly may be considered a failure.
5. Negotiation allowed: Groups can trade tokens or support each other's positions at any time.
6. Final Declaration required: Without a joint plan, the city collapses → game ends unsuccessfully.

Winning the Game

There is no single winner. Success =

- A joint City Plan created democratically
- Rights respected for all groups
- Resources allocated sustainably
- Youth participation ensured

If groups fail to agree or violate rights severely, the city faces future crises → discussed in the debrief.



1. Role Cards

Copy or print one for each group.

Local Authorities

Mission: Ensure the city's development, safety, and wellbeing of all residents.

Values: Democracy, public safety, economic stability.

Starting Resources: 3 Water, 3 Energy, 2 Social Points.

Special Condition: Must balance multiple interests; risk of losing legitimacy if citizens protest.

Businesses

Mission: Grow the economy, create jobs, and stay profitable.

Values: Efficiency, innovation, public image.

Starting Resources: 2 Water, 4 Energy, 2 Social Points.

Special Condition: Have funds but need good reputation; risk of public criticism if too profit-oriented.

Youth Organisations

Mission: Protect the future, promote youth participation, demand sustainability.

Values: Equality, education, innovation, youth voice.

Starting Resources: 2 Water, 2 Energy, 3 Social Points.

Special Condition: Strong public voice but limited financial power; gain extra Social Points if rights of children/youth are protected.

Environmental Activists

Mission: Preserve the environment, ensure sustainable practices.

Values: Ecology, justice, community solidarity.

Starting Resources: 2 Water, 3 Energy, 3 Social Points.

Special Condition: Gain extra Social Points if renewable energy or environmental protection options are chosen.

Social Services / Human Rights Defenders

Mission: Protect vulnerable groups, defend human rights for all citizens.

Values: Equality, justice, dignity, participation.

Starting Resources: 3 Water, 2 Energy, 3 Social Points.

Special Condition: Gain extra Social Points if all decisions respect basic rights.

2. Station Instructions

At each station, groups read the case, discuss, and choose an option. They earn or lose resources accordingly.

Station 1: Water Crisis

Scenario: The main river is drying up. Two villages need water for drinking, one for agriculture, one for a new factory.

- Option A: Prioritise agriculture → +2 Energy, -2 Social Points (food security, but less drinking water).
- Option B: Prioritise drinking water → +3 Social Points, -2 Energy (human rights first, economy suffers).
- Option C: Build water-saving tech → -1 Energy, +2 Social Points, +1 Water (requires collaboration & funding).

Human Rights: Right to water, right to health, right to work.

Station 2: Energy Dilemma

Scenario: The city must choose energy sources.

- Coal: +3 Energy, -3 Social Points (jobs but pollution).
- Renewables: -1 Energy, +3 Social Points, +1 Water (clean but costly).
- Nuclear: +2 Energy, +1 Social Point, -1 Water (safe jobs, but controversial risks).

Human Rights: Health, environment, right to work.

Station 3: Social Justice & Migration

Scenario: 500 climate migrants arrive; housing & jobs are limited.

- Option A: Equal distribution → +3 Social Points, -2 Energy (fair but slower).
- Option B: Place them in cheap districts → +1 Energy, -3 Social Points (fast but unequal).
- Option C: Businesses fund housing for tax breaks → +2 Social Points, +1 Energy (ethical trade-off).

Human Rights: Non-discrimination, right to housing, right to work.

Station 4: Media & Dialogue

Scenario: Public panic about shortages grows.

- Option A: Full transparency → +3 Social Points, -1 Energy (democratic but risk panic).



- Option B: Limited info → +1 Energy, -2 Social Points (order but restricts freedom).
- Option C: Youth-led dialogue → +2 Social Points, +1 Energy (takes time but democratic).

Human Rights: Freedom of information, participation.

Station 5: Future Generations (optional)

Scenario: A company wants to mine near schools.

- Option A: Approve mining → +3 Energy, -3 Social Points (jobs but health risks).
- Option B: Reject mining → +3 Social Points, -2 Energy (safe but lose investment).
- Option C: Approve with green conditions → +2 Social Points, +1 Energy (compromise).

Human Rights: Rights of the child, safe environment.

3. Crisis Cards (optional)

Draw after each station to shake things up.

- "Flood destroys farmland - lose 2 Water tokens."
- "Youth strike for climate justice - gain 2 Social Points if Youth Organisation lead action."
- "International NGO offers funding if rights respected - gain +1 Social Point if all rights protected so far."

4. Resource Tokens

Print simple icons or use coloured paper:

- Water (Blue)
- Energy (Yellow)
- Social Points (Green)

5. Final Assembly Instructions

- » All groups bring their tokens to create one City Declaration.
- » Must agree on:
 - Resource distribution
 - Rights protection
 - Youth participation guarantees
 - Sustainability commitments

Decision-making can be democratic voting or consensus-building.

Activities suitable for any of four topics

Title of activity: Duration: Group size:	Visual Stories of Memory and Future 1,5 - 2 hours 15-30 participants
Aim of the Session	To explore activism's potential for healing, community-building, and active citizenship through participatory photography, while learning ethical practices for working with sensitive topics and vulnerable groups.
Competence landscape areas of facilitator	<i>Connecting people, ideas and contexts; Co-Creating Impact and reflecting on practice; Facilitating learning through creative practice; Supporting young people's agency and voice</i>
Learning Outcomes of the Session	By the end of the session, participants will: ● Experience visual storytelling as a form of expression and dialogue. ● Reflect on memory, identity, and visions of the future through creative photography. ● Explore how activism can raise awareness about displacement, human rights, and peacebuilding.
Step by Step Description	1. Introduction & Safe Space Agreement (15 min) ● Facilitator welcomes participants and introduces the idea: <i>using photography and visual storytelling to connect personal and collective memories with visions for the future.</i> ● Together create a safe space agreement: confidentiality, respect, right to pass, consent in sharing images and stories. ● Short input: <i>Why is consent essential in activism?</i> 2. Inspiration & Ethics (10 min) ● Show examples from <i>Therapeutic Photography for Peace</i> ● Highlight: <i>Participants choose what to share. Art can be healing but must respect boundaries.</i>



Step by Step Description

3. Creative Task: “Past & Future in Images” (40 min)

- Part 1: Memory - Participants choose or bring one old image (personal or symbolic) representing *past/home/history*.
- Part 2: Present/Future - Participants take 2-3 new photos around the venue/neighbourhood showing *life now* or *hopes for the future*.
- Part 3: Blending - They create a small visual collage or photo story combining old and new images into one narrative.

Facilitators support participants technically and emotionally if needed.

4. Gallery Walk & Dialogue (30 min)

- Participants choose whether to share their stories.
- The gallery can be silent (people just walk and observe) or with short explanations from those who want to speak.
- Others can respond with words of support or reflections, not judgments.

5. Debrief & Ethical Reflection (25 min)

- Discussion in a circle:
 - » How did it feel to create and share these images?
 - » What did we learn about each other's experiences?
 - » How can art be both activist and healing?
 - » What responsibilities do we have when sharing other people's stories?

6. Closing (10 min)

- Summarise key insights about activism, ethics, and peacebuilding.
- Invite participants to share one word or sentence about what they take away from the session.

Step by Step Description

Facilitator Tips

- Emphasise voluntary participation: people can choose *not to share* any personal images or stories.
- Keep the atmosphere calm and respectful, allow silence if needed.
- Encourage focus on strength, resilience, and visions for the future, not only pain or loss.
- Offer follow-up resources for participants interested in artivism or therapeutic art methods.

Materials and Resources

- Prepare a short input on trauma-informed approaches and consent in artivism.
- Collect some symbolic old photos for those who may not have personal ones.
- Set up an exhibition space for the final sharing circle.



Title of activity: Duration: Group size:	Light Forum Theater 1,5 - 2 hours 15-30 participants
Aim of the Session	To explore strategies for civic action using participatory theatre methods, allowing participants to reflect on real-life situations of power imbalance and experiment with alternative responses.
Competence landscape areas of facilitator	<i>Connecting people, ideas and contexts; Co-Creating Impact and reflecting on practice; Facilitating learning through creative practice; Supporting young people's agency and voice</i>
Learning Outcomes of the Session	By the end of the session, participants will: ● Understand the dynamics of power, oppression, and resistance in conflict situations. ● Practise critical reflection and develop alternative strategies for conflict resolution. ● Explore creative expression through theatre as a tool for civic education and activism. ● Gain experience in collective problem-solving and participatory decision-making.
Step by Step Description	Step 1: Warm-up (15 min) Facilitator leads a few simple Augusto Boal-inspired games to help participants relax and connect: ● Name and Movement Game: Each person says their name with a gesture; others repeat. ● Mirror Exercise: In pairs, one person leads slow movements; the other mirrors them. ● Machine Game: Participants create a "human machine" with repetitive sounds and movements, adding one by one until everyone is included. Facilitator Tip: Keep the energy playful but focused; these exercises prepare participants for improvisation and non-verbal expression.

Step by Step Description

Step 2: Introduction to Forum Theatre & Rule Explanation (10 min)

- Explain what Forum Theatre is: a short scene showing a problem or injustice, then replayed so participants can intervene and try new strategies.
- Key Rule: *The person in power (abuser) cannot be changed.* Only the oppressed person or bystanders can be replaced to explore alternative reactions.

Facilitator Tip: Give a simple example (e.g., bullying in school or discrimination at work) so participants understand the method before creating their own scenes.

Step 3: Scene Creation (20 min)

- Divide participants into small groups (4-6 people).
- Each group chooses a real-life situation involving conflict or injustice (e.g., discrimination, exclusion, power abuse).
- They create a 3-5 minute scene showing the problem but not the solution.
- Encourage realism and clear power dynamics (oppressor, victim, bystanders).

Facilitator Tip: Remind groups to keep scenes short and focused; avoid too many characters.

Step 4: Performance & Forum Interventions (40 min)

- Each group performs its scene once.
- On the second run, any spectator can say "STOP", step in to replace the oppressed person or bystander, and try a different action to change the outcome.
- Scene continues with the new intervention until resolution or another "STOP".

Facilitator Tip:

- Make sure the oppressor stays in character; no easy solutions.
- Interventions should be realistic — encourage creativity but also feasibility.
- After each intervention, ask the audience: *Could this work in real life? Why or why not?*



Step by Step Description	Step 5: Debriefing & Reflection (25 min) Gather participants in a circle and discuss: ● How did it feel to intervene in someone else's situation? ● Which strategies seemed most effective? ● What made some interventions fail or succeed? ● How does this relate to real-life conflicts in our communities? ● What can we learn about power, solidarity, and civic action? Facilitator Tip: Link reflections to civic education, human rights, and youth participation.
Materials and Resources	● Open space for movement ● Flipchart or whiteboard for key points ● Optional: simple props (chairs, scarves, etc.) ● References: » Boal, Augusto. <i>Games for Actors and Non-Actors</i>

Light Forum Theatre: Quick Guide for Participants

What is Forum Theatre?

Forum Theatre is an interactive method developed by Augusto Boal. It starts with a short scene showing a problem or injustice. The scene is then repeated, and spectators can stop it to try different ways to change the situation.

This is why it's called "rehearsal for real life" — we experiment with strategies for action in a safe space.

How It Works

1. Scene Creation

- » Small groups create a short scene (3-5 min) about a real-life conflict or injustice.
- » The scene shows the problem but not the solution.

2. Performance

- » The scene is performed once from start to finish.

3. Forum Interventions

- » The second time, the audience can call “STOP!” at any moment.
- » A spectator replaces the oppressed person or bystander (not the oppressor!) and tries a different approach.
- » The scene continues with the new intervention.

4. Multiple Attempts

- » Several spectators can intervene, one by one, to explore different strategies.

Main Rules

- The oppressor stays the same: Only the victim or bystanders can be replaced.
- Realism matters: Actions should be realistic — things you could actually do in real life.
- Respect for everyone: Even though we play roles, remember we are exploring sensitive issues.
- Learn, don't win: The goal is not to find “the best” solution but to try out different options and reflect on them.

Debriefing Questions

- Which interventions worked best?
- What made them effective or ineffective?
- How did it feel to step in?
- How can these lessons be used in real life?

Key Idea

Forum Theatre is about practice, reflection, and empowerment. It helps us see that there are always different ways to respond — and that change is possible.



Theoretical Materials for the Sessions

In the last part of this chapter, we share with you the main theoretical inputs that might be useful when preparing your thematic sessions. Here, you will find a brief overview of the topic, key concepts and principles, examples, as well as links and references for further reading when preparing the session or workshop.

This section gives you the key ideas to support your sessions. It is not a full academic text, but a short guide to the most important points of each topic, what to focus on, and how you can bring it into your workshop or training. At the end of each topic, you will find suggestions for further reading if you want to go deeper.

Understanding Human Rights: Key Concepts and Principles

Human rights provide the foundation for human dignity, freedom, and equality. They are not abstract legal ideas alone; they shape the way people live, participate in society, and are protected from injustice and harm. This section introduces the main concepts that underpin human rights and explains why they are essential for democratic societies.

Why Human Rights Matter

Human rights exist because every person has inherent dignity. They ensure that individuals can live with freedom and equality, protected from abuse and discrimination, and able to participate fully in society. Everyday examples help illustrate this: the right to education ensures access to schools; freedom of expression protects open discussion; equality before the law guarantees that courts treat everyone fairly, regardless of background.

What Are Human Rights?

Human rights can be described as universal minimum standards owed to every individual by states and other authorities because of our common humanity. They protect people's basic dignity and set legal and moral limits on what governments and institutions can do. States have the duty to respect, protect, and fulfil these rights for everyone within their jurisdiction.

Core Principles of Human Rights

Several fundamental principles guide all human rights:

- **Universality and inalienability:** Human rights apply to everyone, everywhere, and cannot be taken away.
- **Indivisibility and interdependence:** Civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights are equally important and interconnected.
- **Equality and non-discrimination:** Everyone is entitled to rights without discrimination of any kind.
- **Participation and inclusion:** All people have the right to participate in decisions affecting their lives.
- **Accountability and rule of law:** Governments and institutions must be answerable for respecting and protecting human rights.

Limitations and Responsibilities

While human rights are universal, some can be lawfully limited—for instance, to protect public safety, health, or the rights of others. Such limitations must always be lawful, necessary, and proportionate. However, certain rights, such as the prohibition of torture or slavery, are non-derogable and can never be restricted.

Rights Holders and Duty Bearers

All individuals are rights holders. States and public institutions are duty bearers, meaning they have obligations to:

- Respect rights by not interfering with their enjoyment;
- Protect rights by preventing violations by third parties;
- Fulfil rights by adopting laws, policies, and practices that make rights a reality.

Generations of Human Rights

For teaching purposes, human rights are often described in three “generations”:

1. First generation: Civil and political rights, such as freedom of expression, fair trial, assembly, the right to vote etc.
2. Second generation: Economic, social, and cultural rights, including education, health, work, and housing.



3. Third generation: Emerging or “solidarity” rights, like the right to a clean environment, development, or digital rights.

While these categories help explain different types of rights, it is essential to remember that all rights are interdependent and equally important.

Key Human Rights Instruments

Human rights are protected by both international and regional instruments. The most important include:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the United Nations in 1948, which provides the foundation for modern human rights standards.
- The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), adopted in 1950, which established the European Court of Human Rights to protect rights across member states.
- The European Social Charter, focusing on social and economic rights.

Human Rights and Democracy

Democracy and human rights are deeply interconnected. Democracy rests on two pillars:

- Autonomy: people's ability to make decisions about their own lives;
- Equality: everyone's equal voice and equal rights under the law.

Human rights ensure that democracies protect individuals, include minorities, and set clear limits on state power.

Human Rights in Practice

Human rights become most visible when we look at real-life situations. Access to education, freedom of assembly during protests, or legal protection against discrimination show how rights shape daily life and why their protection matters.

Human Rights Education: Three Dimensions

Human Rights Education (HRE) includes three interrelated dimensions:

- Learning about rights: building knowledge and understanding of human rights concepts, laws, and institutions.
- Learning through rights: using participatory and inclusive methods that respect human

rights in the learning process itself.

- Learning for rights: developing skills, attitudes, and motivation to protect and promote rights in everyday life and communities.

References and Further Reading

- Council of Europe. [Compass: Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People.](#) 2nd edition, updated in 2023.
- [The Council of Europe's Human Rights Handbooks](#)
- EQUITAS – International Centre for Human Rights Education, [Plai it Fair. Human Rights Education Toolkit for Children.](#) 2008
- [The Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)
- [The European Convention on Human Rights](#)
- [The European Social Charter \(revised\)](#)

Understanding Youth Participation: Key Concepts and Principles

Youth participation is at the heart of democratic societies, empowering young people to influence decisions that affect their lives, communities, and future. It is more than a right: it is also a practice of engaging young people as equal partners in shaping policies, projects, and activities. This section introduces the main concepts and principles that underpin youth participation, drawing on European standards, pedagogical models, and practical tools.

Why Youth Participation Matters

Youth participation ensures that young people have a voice in public life and that their perspectives are integrated into democratic processes. Participation creates ownership, fosters civic responsibility, and strengthens trust between young people, institutions, and communities. It moves beyond passive involvement toward genuine influence, shaping services, policies, and environments in ways that meet real needs.



Examples:

- A youth council advising a municipality on climate action plans.
- Young people co-designing cultural festivals or awareness campaigns.
- Student representatives influencing educational reforms at school or national levels.

Defining Youth Participation

According to Have Your Say! (Council of Europe), youth participation is

“ a process where young people, individually and collectively, influence and take part in decision-making and actions, bringing about change in the areas that affect their lives. ”

This definition emphasises:

- Agency: young people are not passive recipients but active contributors.
- Collective and individual dimensions: participation can happen in groups or through individual activism.
- Action and change: participation leads to tangible outcomes and social impact.

Ladder of Youth Participation

Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation (adapted in Have Your Say!) identifies different levels of young people's involvement. It helps distinguish genuine participation from non-participation practices:

- Non-participation:
 - » Manipulation: adults use young people to support agendas they do not understand.
 - » Decoration: young people are included for a “youthful image” but have no influence.
 - » Tokenism: young people appear to have a voice but have no real choice or impact.
- Genuine participation:
 1. Assigned but informed: adults decide, young people understand and accept roles.
 2. Consulted and informed: young people give opinions; adults take them seriously

3. Adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people: adults start, youth share power.
4. Youth-initiated, shared decisions with adults: youth lead, adults support equally.
5. Youth-initiated and directed: young people lead fully, adults act only if asked.

Important note:

The ladder is not about “higher = better.” Young people need entry points at different levels, building confidence and skills gradually before taking on full leadership.

Principles from the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life

Adopted by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (2003, revised 2015), the Charter outlines key principles:

- Rights-based approach: participation is a democratic right for all young people.
- Diversity and inclusion: participation must be accessible regardless of background, gender, ability, or social status.
- Institutional commitment: local and regional authorities must create opportunities, structures, and resources for participation.
- Learning dimension: participation processes should foster young people's competences, civic knowledge, and confidence.

Examples of rights from the Charter include:

- Access to information and transparency in decision-making.
- Involvement in cultural, social, and environmental initiatives.
- Support for independent youth organisations and councils.
- Participation in shaping youth services and urban spaces.



RMSOS Model of Participation

The Have Your Say! manual introduces the RMSOS model to guide quality participation:

- Rights: participation as a democratic right.
- Means: resources, spaces, and opportunities must be provided.
- Support: young people need mentoring, training, and information.
- Opportunities: real, concrete ways to participate.
- Structures: stable mechanisms like youth councils or advisory boards.

Youth Participation, Human Rights, and Democracy

Youth participation is closely linked to active citizenship and human rights:

- Human rights ensure young people's right to participate in public life.
- Democracy requires inclusive decision-making where all voices count.
- Active citizenship transforms participation into action for change, building democratic culture from the ground up.

Practical Examples

From DEEPAL Network and SALTO Participation:

- Youth parliaments in Germany influencing municipal transport policies.
- Participatory budgeting in Portugal with young people deciding on local investments.
- Artivism projects in Georgia engaging youth in campaigns for environmental justice.

References and Further Reading

- Council of Europe. [Have Your Say! Manual on the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life](#). Strasbourg, 2015.
- Council of Europe Congress. [Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life](#). 2015.
- [SALTO Participation & Information Resource Centre](#)
- [DYPALL Network: Democracy and Participation Learning Resources](#).
- Hart, R. (1992). [Children's Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship](#). UNICEF.

Understanding Active Citizenship: Key Concepts and Principles

Active citizenship is about people shaping their communities and societies through participation, responsibility, and shared values. It connects personal rights with collective action, linking democracy, human rights, and social responsibility. This section introduces the core concepts and principles that underpin active citizenship and explains why it is essential for democratic life.

Why Active Citizenship Matters

Active citizenship matters because it enables people to participate meaningfully in shaping the policies, institutions, and cultures that affect their lives. It goes beyond voting or following the law; it is about engaging in public life, speaking out on issues, taking initiative, and working together for the common good. Everyday examples include young people joining local youth councils, creating art projects to raise awareness on environmental issues, or using social media to campaign for equality.

What Is Active Citizenship?

Active citizenship means people taking responsibility for their communities and societies while exercising their rights and freedoms. It links individual agency with democratic principles, aiming to make societies more just, inclusive, and participatory.

Active citizens:

- Understand their rights and responsibilities;
- Participate in decisions affecting their lives;
- Promote equality, inclusion, and solidarity;
- Hold institutions accountable while contributing to positive change.

Core Principles of Active Citizenship

Several fundamental principles underpin active citizenship:

- Participation: People have the right and responsibility to engage in decision-making at all levels.
- Equality and inclusion: All voices should be heard, especially those of marginalised or excluded groups.



- Democratic values: Active citizenship respects pluralism, diversity, and the rule of law.
- Responsibility: Actions should protect both individual rights and the collective good.
- Empowerment: People gain knowledge, skills, and confidence to make change happen.

Links to Human Rights and Democracy

Active citizenship and human rights are inseparable. Human rights provide the legal and moral foundation for participation: freedom of expression, association, and assembly are prerequisites for active citizenship. At the same time, active citizens protect and expand rights by holding power to account, defending minorities, and ensuring governments respect equality and dignity.

In democratic societies, active citizenship strengthens the two main pillars of democracy:

- Autonomy: People shape their own lives and communities.
- Equality: Everyone has an equal voice and access to decision-making processes.

Responsibilities and Participation

Active citizenship involves rights but also responsibilities. For example:

- Freedom of expression comes with the responsibility to avoid hate speech.
- The right to protest requires peaceful and respectful action.
- Participation should strengthen democracy rather than undermine it.

Levels and Forms of Participation

Drawing on youth participation frameworks (e.g., the Ladder of Participation), active citizenship can take many forms:

- Consultation: Authorities seek opinions but retain decision-making power.
- Shared decision-making: Citizens and authorities cooperate in planning and action.
- Citizen-led initiatives: People or youth groups lead the process, with institutions providing support or resources.
- Direct action: Communities organise campaigns, art projects, or advocacy efforts to influence change.

These levels show the diversity of participation rather than a hierarchy; different contexts require different approaches.

Active Citizenship in Practice

Active citizenship becomes real through action. Examples include:

- Students creating murals on youth rights in collaboration with local councils;
- Community groups organising clean-up campaigns linked to environmental rights;
- Youth organisations using theatre or music to highlight discrimination issues;
- Online campaigns raising awareness about mental health or gender equality.

Such initiatives demonstrate how civic engagement connects rights, responsibilities, and democratic values.

Education for Active Citizenship

Like human rights education, active citizenship education has three dimensions:

- Learning about active citizenship: Understanding democratic values, rights, responsibilities, and participation mechanisms.
- Learning through active citizenship: Using inclusive, participatory, and creative methods such as art, theatre, or simulations.
- Learning for active citizenship: Developing skills, attitudes, and motivation to engage, advocate, and contribute to community and democratic life.

References and Further Reading

- [EU Youth Strategy \(2019-2027\) — Framework for youth policy emphasizing active citizenship](#)
- [Erasmus+ Programme Guide](#) — Highlights civic engagement and democratic participation as programme priorities.
- [Finnish National Agency on Erasmus+](#) — Reflects on active citizenship's role in project impact.



- [Erasmus+ as a tool for civic engagement](#) — Reinforces democratic resilience and solidarity.
- [Priority for participation](#) (Irish perspective): Engagement in democratic life as a guiding principle.

Understanding Environment & Sustainable Development: Key Concepts and Principles

Environmental sustainability is not just about protecting nature—it's about ensuring that current and future generations can thrive. It involves balancing ecological health with social equity and economic well-being. This section introduces the key concepts and principles behind environmental education and sustainability, grounded in youth empowerment and civic engagement.

Why Environmental Education Matters

Our daily actions—what we eat, how we travel, what we throw away—shape the planet's future. Environmental education helps young people understand these impacts and encourages thoughtful, responsible behavior. It empowers youth to take meaningful action in their communities, bridging global challenges like climate change with local solutions.

[Source](#)

What Is Sustainable Development?

Sustainable development means meeting today's needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. It integrates three core dimensions—environmental protection, social equity, and economic viability—often referred to as “people, planet, prosperity.”

[Source](#)

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a global roadmap, including goals on climate action, clean energy, sustainable cities, responsible consumption, and more.

Core Principles of Environmental Sustainability

- Interdependence: Human well-being depends on healthy ecosystems—clean air, water, fertile soil.
- Intra- and intergenerational equity: Fair access to resources now and in the future.
- Systems thinking: Recognizing how ecosystems, economies, and communities are linked.
- Empowerment: Equipping individuals and communities—with knowledge, skills, and agency—to drive change.

[Source](#)

Council of Europe & EU Policy Frameworks

The Council of Europe's [T-Kit 13: Sustainability and Youth Work](#) highlights the connection between environmental and human rights, urging youth to take action locally and globally.

The EU's [“Youth for a Just Transition”](#) toolkit emphasizes ensuring that sustainability transitions are equitable and that youth have a say in shaping them.

Projects like [EMPOWER SDGs](#) further illustrate how youth can engage with sustainability through innovative formats like gamification and digital storytelling.

Environmental Education in Practice

Environmental education (EE) uses interactive, learner-centered methods to build awareness, foster systemic thinking, and encourage action. Techniques include:

- Inquiry-based learning: Young people explore local environmental issues and propose solutions.
- Activism: Creative methods like installations, posters, or street art to raise awareness and engage communities.
- Advocacy & policy literacy: Youth learn how to campaign, influence decision-makers, and participate in law-making on environmental issues.

[Source](#)

Education for Sustainable Development: Three Dimensions



1. Learning about sustainability: Understanding environmental systems, challenge areas, rights, and responsibilities.
2. Learning through sustainability: Applying participatory, inclusive methods that model sustainability (e.g., zero-waste, renewable materials).

Learning for sustainability: Gaining skills and attitudes for civic action—design thinking, campaigning, collaboration.

[Source](#)

References and Further Reading

- Council of Europe, [T-Kit 13: Sustainability and Youth Work](#).
- European Commission, [Youth for a Just Transition toolkit](#).
- [EMPOWER SDGs](#) project outputs.
- UNESCO, [Education for Sustainable Development Toolkit](#).
- GCE, [Advocate & Engage in Nature Restoration Toolkit](#).
- EYSAD, [Strengthening sustainability through digital media in youth work](#)
- United Nations Environment Programme (2022). [Toolkit on Pro-Environmental Youth Engagement](#). UNEP, Nairobi..

Understanding Intersectoral Dialogue: Key Concepts and Principles

Intersectoral dialogue is about bringing together people from different backgrounds, identities, and sectors to share experiences, exchange ideas, and work collaboratively on common challenges. It creates safe and inclusive spaces where diversity is not only acknowledged but valued as a source of learning, creativity, and innovation.

This section introduces the main concepts that underpin intersectoral dialogue and explains why it is important for democratic societies, human rights, and youth participation.

Why Intersectoral Dialogue Matters

We live in increasingly diverse societies shaped by differences in culture, language, gender, religion, abilities, and socioeconomic background. While diversity enriches communities, it can also lead to misunderstanding, stereotypes, or even conflicts.

Intersectoral dialogue helps:

- Build mutual understanding and empathy between groups with different experiences.
- Create inclusive spaces where everyone feels safe to express themselves.
- Foster cooperation across sectors such as education, arts, civil society, local authorities, and business.
- Support peaceful coexistence and solidarity in communities.

What is Intersectoral Dialogue?

Intersectoral dialogue is a participatory process where individuals and groups representing different identities, professions, and communities come together to share perspectives and seek common ground.

It combines communication (listening, speaking, reflecting) with collaboration (creating, solving problems, taking action).

The goal is not to erase differences but to build bridges across them, focusing on what unites people rather than what divides them.



Core Principles of Intersectoral Dialogue

Several key principles guide effective intersectoral dialogue:

- Respect and empathy: Everyone's experiences and opinions are valued equally.
- Inclusivity: All voices are welcome, especially those often marginalised.
- Active listening: Dialogue means listening to understand, not to win arguments.
- Collaboration: Moving from discussion to joint action.
- Creativity: Using arts, storytelling, and other participatory methods to make dialogue engaging and meaningful.

Intersectoral Dialogue, Human Rights, and Democracy

Intersectoral dialogue is deeply connected to human rights because it enables people to exercise their rights to participation, expression, and association.

It also strengthens democratic principles:

- Equality: Everyone's voice counts equally in shaping decisions.
- Participation: Citizens become active contributors, not passive recipients.
- Accountability: Dialogue helps communities hold institutions accountable through shared understanding and cooperation.

Benefits of Intersectoral Dialogue

- Breaking stereotypes: Personal contact reduces prejudice and misinformation.
- Strengthening social cohesion: Communities become more resilient when people work together.
- Solving complex problems: Environmental, social, or cultural challenges often require collaboration across sectors.
- Empowering youth: Young people can bring creativity and fresh perspectives into civic processes.

Intersectoral Dialogue in Practice

Examples include:

- Youth councils bringing together local authorities and young activists.
- Civic art projects where artists, educators, and community members co-create public art on human rights themes.
- Environmental campaigns involving schools, NGOs, and municipal services.

These activities show how dialogue can lead to real action benefiting the whole community.

Learning through Dialogue

Intersectoral dialogue is not only about talking. It is about learning through interaction:

- Learning about others' realities and perspectives.
- Learning through participation in creative, inclusive processes.
- Learning for collaboration and joint action in the future.

References and Further Reading

- Council of Europe: [Have Your Say! Manual on the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life](#)
- SALTO Participation & Information Resource Centre: [Youth Participation Strategy](#)
- UNESCO: [Intercultural Dialogue Guidelines](#)
- [EU Youth Strategy \(2019-2027\): Engaging. Connecting. Empowering Youth](#)

Quick Reference Card — Chapter 5:

From Ideas to Action — Training Modules and Tools



Big Question

? How can I translate civic and artistic ideas into practical, learner-centred activities with young people?



Key Ideas

- Activities are structured through Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (experience → reflection → generalisation → application).
- Session outlines help trainers adapt modules to their own context.
- Four focus areas: Human Rights, Participation & Citizenship, Environment, Intersectoral Dialogue.
- Methods include icebreakers, simulations, debates, creative workshops, and art-based advocacy.
- Balance between creativity and civic learning ensures depth and impact.
- Inclusivity and accessibility remain central — every young person should be able to engage.



Competencies Developed

- Facilitating learning through creative practice
- Creating and holding space for expression
- Supporting young people's agency and voice
- Connecting people, ideas and contexts
- Co-creating impact and reflecting on practice



Practical Steps

1. Use the session outlines as a starting point, not a script.
2. Apply the experiential learning cycle to every module.
3. Choose modules relevant to youth needs (HR, environment, participation).
4. Combine methods: role play + creative arts + reflection.
5. Adapt tools for inclusivity (language, accessibility, cultural context).
6. Plan follow-up: how can young people carry their learning into action?



Reflection Prompts

- Which activity resonates most with the young people I work with?
- How can I adapt the tools to make them inclusive and safe?
- What concrete action do I want participants to take after my session?

** Use this card as a recap & action tool at the end of Chapter 5.**

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6. FOLLOW UP AND EVALUATION



How to track and monitor impact on participants

Challenges in measuring civic learning through art

Measuring the impact of art-based civic education on participants presents unique methodological challenges. Art-based approaches emphasize experiential learning, emotional engagement, and creative expression that resist simple quantification and require specialized evaluation strategies.

The transformative nature of artistic processes means that significant learning often occurs through non-linear, reflective, and deeply personal experiences that may not be immediately visible or easily articulated by participants. Traditional pre-and-post assessment tools may miss the subtle but profound shifts in perspective, confidence, or sense of agency that emerge through creative practice. Participants may develop new ways of seeing themselves and their communities that only become apparent weeks or months after program completion.

“ The transformative nature of artistic processes means that significant learning often occurs through non-linear, reflective, and deeply personal experiences that may not be immediately visible or easily articulated by participants. ”

Art-based civic education also operates in the realm of affective learning—addressing emotions, values, and identity formation alongside cognitive development. Standard evaluation methods typically focus on measurable knowledge gains or skill acquisition, but may overlook changes in empathy, social connection, or personal empowerment that are central to civic engagement. The creative process itself often serves as both learning method and outcome, making it difficult to separate the artistic experience from the civic learning it generates.

“ The creative process itself often serves as both learning method and outcome, making it difficult to separate the artistic experience from the civic learning it generates. ”

Furthermore, participants in art-based programs often experience learning as holistic and integrated rather than compartmentalized into discrete competencies. A single creative project might simultaneously develop critical thinking, communication skills, cultural awareness, and community connection in ways that defy traditional assessment categories. This interconnected

nature of learning requires evaluation approaches that can capture complexity and recognize multiple forms of growth simultaneously.

The social and collaborative nature of many art-based civic education programs adds another layer of assessment complexity. Individual learning occurs within group dynamics and community contexts that influence both the learning process and outcomes. Participants may develop civic capacities through peer interaction, collective creation, or community response that cannot be measured solely at the individual level, requiring evaluation methods that account for social and systemic changes alongside personal development.

Baseline Establishment

Establishing a clear baseline before program implementation is essential for tracking meaningful change in participants over time. This initial assessment captures participants' starting points across multiple dimensions of civic engagement and personal development, providing reference points for measuring growth and transformation throughout and after the program.

We recommend establishing baselines across four key dimensions that are particularly responsive to art-based civic education interventions.

Community engagement attitudes that encompass participants' current relationship with their local environment and social networks. This includes their awareness of community issues, interest in local affairs, sense of connection to neighborhood or peer groups, and previous experiences with community involvement.

Civic confidence and self-efficacy measure participants' belief in their ability to make a difference in their communities and their confidence in engaging with civic processes. This might include comfort levels with public speaking, willingness to express opinions on community issues, confidence in organizing or participating in group activities, and belief in their capacity to influence positive change in their environment.

Participants' sense of personal power provides insight into their perceived control over their circumstances and their belief in their ability to shape outcomes in their personal and community lives. This baseline helps track one of the most significant potential impacts of art-



based civic education - empowerment through creative expression and collective action.

Social connections and sense of belonging complete the baseline picture by documenting participants' existing relationships, support networks, and feelings of inclusion within their communities. Art-based programs often strengthen social bonds and create new connections, making it important to understand participants' starting points for relationship-building and community integration.

Key dimensions of art-based civic education interventions:

- Community engagement attitudes;
- Civic confidence and self-efficacy;
- Participants' sense of personal power;
- Social connections and sense of belonging.

Tracking attitude changes over time

Once baseline measurements are established, tracking how participants' attitudes evolve throughout and after the program provides crucial insights into the transformative potential of art-based civic education. These attitude changes often represent the most significant and lasting impacts of creative civic engagement, though they may emerge gradually and require sustained observation to fully document.

Shifts in civic confidence and willingness to participate in community activities often represent the most visible early changes in participants. This might manifest as increased comfort with public expression, greater willingness to share opinions in group settings, or new enthusiasm for taking on responsibilities within the program or broader community. Participants may move from passive observation to active contribution, demonstrating growing confidence in their ability to meaningfully contribute to collective efforts. Some individuals who initially hesitated to speak in groups may become vocal advocates for causes they care about, while others might volunteer for leadership roles they previously would have avoided.

Changes in understanding of local issues and social processes reflect deepening civic awareness that often accompanies artistic exploration of community themes. Through creative projects that examine neighborhood challenges, social dynamics, or cultural

issues, participants frequently develop more nuanced perspectives on complex problems. This understanding often extends beyond intellectual knowledge to include emotional and experiential comprehension of how social systems affect real people's lives, leading to more empathetic and informed civic engagement.

The evolution of critical thinking about community challenges represents another significant area of attitude change. Art-based approaches often encourage participants to question assumptions, explore root causes of problems, and consider alternative solutions through creative processes. This critical capacity may show up as more sophisticated analysis of community issues, greater skepticism of simple solutions, and increased ability to recognize the interconnected nature of social challenges. Participants often report that creative exploration helped them see familiar problems from entirely new perspectives.

Development of civic identity and sense of belonging frequently emerges as participants engage in collective creative work and community-focused projects. Many participants report feeling more connected to their communities, more invested in local outcomes, and more identified with civic roles and responsibilities. This identity development often includes both individual growth and collective identification with peer groups, community organizations, or social movements that emerge from or connect to the program experience. The process of creating art together, sharing stories, and addressing shared concerns can forge strong bonds that extend well beyond the formal program period.

Behavioral change indicators

While attitude shifts provide important insights into participant development, behavioral changes offer concrete evidence of how art-based civic education translates into real-world action. These observable changes in how participants engage with their communities and exercise civic responsibility represent the ultimate goal of most civic education initiatives.

Behavioral change indicators:

- Increased participation in community activities
- Increased volunteering and local activism engagement
- Natural emergence of peer influence and informal leadership roles
- Initiative-taking in personal environment



Increased participation in community activities serves as one of the most direct indicators of program impact. This may include joining local organizations, attending community meetings, participating in neighborhood events, or volunteering for causes participants care about. The key is not just frequency of participation, but also the quality and intentionality of engagement: participants often report feeling more purposeful and effective in their community involvement after program completion. Some individuals who previously avoided public events may start regularly attending town halls or community forums, while others might take on organizing roles they never considered before.

Volunteering and local activism engagement frequently increase as participants develop stronger connections to community issues through their artistic work. Some participants discover new causes during creative exploration of social themes, while others deepen their commitment to existing interests. The artistic component often provides unique skills and perspectives that participants bring to their volunteer work, such as creative communication strategies, visual documentation abilities, or innovative approaches to community organizing.

Peer influence and informal leadership roles often emerge naturally as participants gain confidence and skills through the program. This might manifest as participants organizing informal gatherings, mentoring newer participants, or taking initiative to address problems they identify in their communities. These leadership behaviors are particularly significant because they indicate that participants have internalized the program's empowerment objectives and are actively sharing them with others. Many program alumni report that their friends and family members notice changes in their willingness to speak up about issues or take charge in group situations.

Initiative-taking in personal environment represents perhaps the most personalized form of behavioral change. Participants apply their newfound civic confidence to their immediate surroundings, which could include advocating for changes in their schools, workplaces, or families, or starting small-scale community projects. These micro-level changes often provide the foundation for larger-scale civic engagement as participants build confidence in their ability to create positive change.

Long-term monitoring strategies

Tracking the lasting impact of art-based civic education requires sustained commitment to follow-up activities that extend well beyond program completion. Long-term monitoring presents unique challenges, as participants may scatter geographically, face changing life circumstances, or maintain varying levels of interest in continued contact with program organizers. However, the investment in long-term tracking often yields the most meaningful insights into program effectiveness and participant transformation.

Alumni tracking systems provide the foundation for sustained engagement with former participants. Successful systems balance the need for ongoing contact with respect for participants' privacy and autonomy. This might involve creating opt-in communication channels such as newsletters, social media groups, or periodic surveys that allow participants to share updates on their civic engagement journey. Some programs establish formal alumni networks that provide ongoing support, networking opportunities, and chances for peer mentoring between program cohorts.

Follow-up check-ins at regular intervals offer opportunities to gather systematic data about participant development over time. Rather than treating these as formal assessments, effective check-ins often take the form of informal conversations, creative exercises, or reflective activities that feel meaningful to participants rather than burdensome. The timing and frequency of check-ins should reflect program goals and participant preferences - some programs conduct brief surveys every six months, while others organize annual reunion gatherings that combine data collection with social connection and continued learning opportunities.

Peer networks and continued connections frequently provide the most sustainable form of long-term monitoring, as participants often maintain relationships with fellow program alumni even when formal program contact lapses. These organic networks can offer insights into how participants support each other's continued civic development and provide natural channels for gathering information about long-term impact.

Community feedback on participants' involvement offers an external perspective on program impact that complements self-reported data. Local organizations, community leaders, or other stakeholders may notice changes in participants' civic engagement that the individuals themselves might not recognize or report. This community-level feedback can validate program claims about civic impact and provide valuable insights for program improvement.



Creative documentation of personal transformation

Art-based civic education programs have a unique opportunity to use creative methods for tracking participant development that align with their pedagogical approach. These artistic documentation strategies can capture dimensions of personal growth that traditional assessment methods might miss while providing participants with meaningful opportunities for reflection and self-expression.

“Then and now” artistic portfolios offer powerful ways for participants to document their own transformation through creative work. At program completion, participants might create artistic pieces that reflect on their journey, comparing their current perspectives, skills, or civic engagement with their starting points. These portfolios could include visual art, poetry, photography, digital media, or performance pieces that capture personal growth in ways that surveys or interviews cannot. The process of creating these reflective works often generates insights for participants themselves, making the documentation process part of the continued learning experience.

Personal narrative development through art provides another avenue for tracking transformation over extended periods. Participants might create ongoing artistic journals, video diaries, or multimedia projects that document their civic journey beyond program completion. Some programs invite alumni to create annual “check-in” artworks that explore their current civic engagement, challenges they’re facing, or goals they’re pursuing. These narrative projects often reveal patterns of development that emerge slowly over time and might not be captured through more structured assessment approaches.

Creative documentation methods also offer opportunities for collective reflection and peer learning. Group art projects that explore shared experiences of civic growth can generate insights about program impact while strengthening community bonds among participants. Digital storytelling projects, community murals, or collaborative performance pieces can serve simultaneously as assessment tools and vehicles for continued civic engagement, extending the program’s impact into broader community contexts.

Evaluation Framework for CivicArt Training Programme

This framework is designed to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the CivicArt training programme, focusing on four central dimensions: community engagement attitudes, civic confidence and self-efficacy, participants' sense of personal power, and social connections and belonging. These dimensions were selected because they represent the most significant areas of growth that art-based civic education can foster. The framework also outlines methods for evaluating follow-up activities initiated by participants, ensuring that the project's multiplier effect and long-term sustainability are captured. The evaluation is both quantitative and qualitative, drawing on creative, participatory methods aligned with the ethos of CivicArt.

1. Community Engagement Attitudes

Community engagement attitudes refer to participants' awareness of local issues, their interest in civic affairs, and their sense of connection to their communities. This dimension assesses whether training deepens participants' commitment to contributing positively to their neighborhoods and strengthens their identity as community members.

Key indicators and tools include:

Indicator	Evaluation Tools & Methods
Increased awareness of community issues	Pre- and post-training surveys with Likert-scale items; group reflection exercises; community mapping activities.
Interest in local civic affairs	Participant diaries documenting local issues of interest; monitoring participation in local events.
Sense of community connection	Storytelling exercises; baseline vs. follow-up reflection on belonging; interviews with peers/community leaders.
Practical engagement with community initiatives	Tracking attendance in town halls, volunteer projects, or civic campaigns initiated post-training.



Qualitative analysis of community narratives, artworks created during the programme, and participants' own reflections provides rich data on how they perceive their role in their community. Quantitative data from surveys and attendance records provide a measurable picture of engagement.

2. Civic Confidence and Self-Efficacy

Civic confidence and self-efficacy focus on participants' belief in their ability to influence change. This includes their comfort with public speaking, willingness to express opinions, and confidence in leading or joining civic processes. Strengthening this dimension ensures that participants move from passive observers to active contributors in their societies.

Indicator	Evaluation Tools & Methods
Comfort with public speaking	Video-recorded presentations during and after training; peer evaluation forms rating confidence, clarity, and assertiveness.
Willingness to express civic opinions	Surveys assessing readiness to share views; observation of debates and group discussions.
Confidence in organizing/ participating in civic activities	Post-training follow-up surveys; number of civic events participants help organize.
Belief in capacity to influence positive change	Self-efficacy scales (e.g., adapted General Self-Efficacy Scale for civic contexts); reflective journals documenting shifts in confidence.

To capture the nuances of civic confidence, triangulation is essential: quantitative measures such as self-efficacy scales must be combined with qualitative data from reflective writing, creative expression, and trainer observations. Progress is visible not only in scores but in the quality of participation during civic dialogues or artistic actions.

3. Participants' Sense of Personal Power

Personal power refers to participants' perceived control over their circumstances and their ability to shape outcomes. In art-based civic education, empowerment often emerges through creative expression and collective action. This dimension evaluates how participants internalize agency and transform it into action.

Indicator	Evaluation Tools & Methods
Perceived control over personal circumstances	Baseline and follow-up empowerment questionnaires; 'River of My Path' creative reflection exercise.
Ability to shape outcomes in community life	Participant self-reports; documentation of civic initiatives started by participants.
Willingness to take initiative	Observation during group projects; follow-up reports on personal initiatives post-training.
Evidence of empowerment through art	Artistic portfolios ('before and after' creations); participants' own narratives of change.

Qualitative evidence is especially important here. Artistic portfolios and reflective narratives often capture personal empowerment more vividly than surveys. However, consistent follow-up interviews help ensure these transformations are sustained and applied in practice.

4. Social Connections and Sense of Belonging

This dimension examines the strength of participants' social networks and their feelings of inclusion. Art-based programmes often catalyze new relationships and community ties. Evaluating belonging requires looking at both individual experiences and collective dynamics.

Indicator	Evaluation Tools & Methods
Expansion of personal networks	Social network mapping pre- and post-training; documenting new connections established.



Sense of inclusion in community	Focus group discussions; peer testimonials; reflective diaries on belonging.
Collaboration in group projects	Observation by trainers; peer evaluations of teamwork quality.
Sustained connections post-training	Follow-up surveys tracking whether participants stay in contact or collaborate further.

Indicators of belonging are often expressed in qualitative terms: participants report stronger trust, empathy, and solidarity. However, quantitative mapping of networks provides measurable evidence of the growth of social capital.

5. After-Training Evaluation and Progress Tracking

Progress should be assessed by comparing baseline data with post-training outcomes. Paired questionnaires administered before and after the training provide quantifiable evidence of change. Creative methods such as artistic portfolios ('then and now' artworks) and reflective storytelling reveal qualitative dimensions of progress. Group focus sessions help triangulate findings and offer participants the chance to articulate their journeys.

6. Evaluating Follow-Up Activities

A vital element of CivicArt's sustainability is the evaluation of follow-up activities initiated by participants. These activities demonstrate whether participants transfer their learning into practice and whether multiplier effects are achieved in communities.

Indicator	Evaluation Tools & Methods
Number of follow-up activities implemented	Participant reports; project monitoring logs.

Audience reached through follow-up	Attendance sheets; digital analytics (views, shares, comments).
Quality of follow-up initiatives	External evaluator or community stakeholder feedback; peer review of initiatives.
Sustainability of initiatives	Tracking whether initiatives continue beyond project funding; evidence of new funding or partnerships.
Community impact of follow-up	Surveys/interviews with community members; media coverage analysis; case study documentation.

Follow-up evaluation should combine quantitative tracking of the number and reach of activities with qualitative assessment of their depth, creativity, and impact on local communities. Case studies provide detailed evidence of long-term transformations.



Quick Reference Card — Chapter 6: Follow-up and Evaluation



Big Question

? How can we meaningfully capture the invisible, emotional, and long-term impact of art-based civic education?



Key Ideas

- Artistic learning is non-linear, emotional, and deeply personal → hard to quantify.
- Standard tools miss shifts in empathy, agency, and belonging.
- Four key baseline dimensions:
 - » Community engagement attitudes
 - » Civic confidence & self-efficacy
 - » Sense of personal power
 - » Social connections & belonging
- Indicators of change: attitude shifts → behaviour change → long-term civic identity.
- Creative documentation (art portfolios, storytelling, video diaries) can double as evaluation.
- Evaluation = mix of quantitative + qualitative + creative methods.
- Challenges: political risk, weak cross-sector cooperation, low sustainability, legal/bureaucratic barriers.

** Use this card as a recap & action tool at the end of Chapter 6.**



Competencies Developed

- Critical reflection & self-assessment
- Tracking and demonstrating civic impact
- Using creative tools for evaluation
- Balancing safety, ethics & visibility
- Collaboration across institutions



Practical Steps

1. Establish a baseline (attitudes, confidence, power, belonging).
2. Track attitude shifts (confidence, empathy, critical thinking).
3. Document behaviour changes (volunteering, leadership, activism).
4. Use creative methods (then/now artworks, reflective journals, storytelling).
5. Build long-term alumni systems (networks, check-ins, reunions).
6. Include community feedback (leaders, peers, audiences).
7. Anticipate risks & obstacles → plan safety & legal strategies.



Reflection Prompts

- How do I currently track the impact of my activities — what is missing?
- Which creative evaluation method could I try (art journals, photo stories, collaborative murals)?
- How can I ensure follow-up so learning becomes long-term civic engagement?

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7. COMMON CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED IN IMPLEMENTING ART-BASED CIVIC EDUCATION

Most common challenges

Safety and political risk in contested contexts

Both the needs assessment and the regional context analysis underline heightened security risks, particularly in Georgia's recent protest climate and wartime Ukraine. While artists, facilitators, and participants operate in an inherently vulnerable space, particularly in contexts where political tensions run high and civil society faces increasing scrutiny, this challenge has become especially pronounced. The practitioners must navigate complex security considerations that directly impact their ability to engage youth in meaningful civic activities in the context where engaging in public or politically charged art may face legal, reputational, or physical threats.

The challenge manifests in multiple dimensions. Direct physical risk emerges when art-based activities are perceived as politically provocative or challenging to existing power structures. In Georgia, the recent protests surrounding the suspension of EU integration have created a climate where artistic expression aligned with pro-democracy movements faces potential state repression. Artists and facilitators who publicly display opposition through their work risk arrest, harassment, or other forms of government retaliation. In Ukraine permanent missile attacks make it almost impossible to hold open-air events.

“ The practitioners must navigate complex security considerations that directly impact their ability to engage youth in meaningful civic activities in the context where engaging in public or politically charged art may face legal, reputational, or physical threats ”

Legal vulnerability represents another significant concern. Public art interventions, street performances, and community installations often exist in legal gray areas, where permits may be denied, artwork removed, or participants prosecuted under vague regulations about public order or unauthorized gatherings. This creates a chilling effect where practitioners self-censor or avoid more visible forms of engagement.

Beyond direct state action, practitioners face institutional pressure from schools, cultural venues, or funding bodies that may withdraw support when activities are deemed too politically or ideologically sensitive. This forces programs to choose between impact and institutional backing, often resulting in watered-down content that fails to address the very civic issues young people need to understand. Social stigmatization also plays a role, particularly in

polarized environments where association with certain causes can affect employment, social relationships, or community standing. Youth workers and facilitators may find their professional reputations damaged, while participants, especially young people, may face pressure from families or peer groups to avoid “controversial” activities.

This constant assessment of risk creates psychological strain on practitioners, who must balance their commitment to meaningful civic education with personal and participant safety. This leads to operational constraints where activities are designed more around risk avoidance than educational effectiveness. Programs may avoid addressing current political issues, controversial topics, limit public visibility, or restrict participation to “safe” demographics, ultimately reducing their civic impact.

In the digital age, the challenge extends to online surveillance and digital security. Social media campaigns, online organizing, and digital art projects create data trails that can be monitored by authorities. Practitioners must develop digital security protocols while maintaining the accessibility and engagement that make art-based methods effective.

Weak cross-sector cooperation and limited institutional involvement

The fragmentation between educational institutions, cultural organizations, and civil society represents one of the most persistent structural barriers to effective art-based civic education. Educational institutions, while increasingly incorporating experiential learning, still largely operate within frameworks that emphasize standardized testing and traditional subject divisions, making it challenging for art-based civic education to be fully integrated into core curricula rather than positioned as supplementary programming. Cultural institutions like museums and theaters have artistic expertise but often lack understanding of pedagogical principles or civic education goals, focusing more on cultural appreciation than democratic participation skills. This creates a disconnect between high-quality artistic programming and meaningful civic learning outcomes. Meanwhile, NGOs and youth organizations bring valuable civic engagement expertise but frequently lack the cultural and institutional credibility needed to create compelling creative experiences that truly harness art's transformative potential. The credibility gap is especially challenging for youth-led organizations, which face additional barriers to recognition from established educational and cultural institutions despite their deep understanding of peer engagement and contemporary concerns.

Besides, different institutional priorities create fundamental misalignment. Schools prioritize



academic achievement metrics that rarely capture civic engagement outcomes. Cultural institutions focus on audience development and artistic excellence. NGOs emphasize social change and community mobilization. Without shared objectives and success metrics, collaboration becomes difficult to sustain beyond superficial partnerships. This challenge is increased by different professional cultures. Educators, artists, and civic activists often speak different professional languages, operate under different timelines, and hold different assumptions about effective practice. Teachers may prioritize classroom management and learning objectives, while artists emphasize creative process and authentic expression. Civic educators focus on social awareness and action outcomes. These different orientations require significant bridging work that few institutions invest in adequately.

“ Without shared objectives and success metrics, collaboration becomes difficult to sustain beyond superficial partnerships. Resource competition exacerbates these tensions ”

Resource competition exacerbates these tensions. Rather than viewing collaboration as mutually beneficial, institutions often see each other as competitors for limited funding, venue access, or youth participation. This competitive dynamic prevents the resource pooling that could make ambitious art-based civic education programs viable.

The absence of formal recognition mechanisms for art-based civic education creates additional institutional barriers. Schools cannot easily award academic credit for programs that don't fit standard subject categories. Cultural institutions cannot demonstrate educational impact using their traditional metrics. NGOs struggle to show concrete learning outcomes from artistic activities. This lack of credentialing means that high-quality programs remain invisible within formal education systems.

Insufficient methodological capacity and program sustainability challenges

Practitioners facilitating art-based civic education programs demonstrate concerning variability in their experience and preparedness for this specialized work. While many educators and facilitators show competency in using exhibitions, photography, or digital media as educational tools, a substantial portion lack prior experience with integrating artistic methods into civic learning contexts. This significant disparity in experience levels creates substantial inconsistencies in program quality and effectiveness across different implementations,

undermining the field's credibility and impact potential.

While the flexibility inherent in non-formal education allows for innovative and responsive programming, the lack of shared quality benchmarks and common professional standards creates challenges for scaling effective practices. This gap manifests in practitioners' struggles to balance artistic creativity with structured learning objectives, often resulting in programs that excel in either artistic quality or civic learning outcomes but rarely achieve both simultaneously. Moreover, the challenge is compounded by limited long-term evaluation practices that often fail to capture the unique civic outcomes of art-based activities. Many existing evaluation methods are not well-suited for measuring complex changes in civic engagement, democratic participation skills, or political efficacy that emerge through creative expression. This makes it difficult for practitioners to document their impact effectively, learn from successful approaches, or build compelling cases for continued support and resources.

"...the lack of shared quality benchmarks and common professional standards creates challenges for scaling effective practices..."

“ ...the lack of shared quality benchmarks and common professional standards creates challenges for scaling effective practices. ”

Limited sustained engagement and follow-up mechanisms beyond initial program activities leads to a significant drop-off in youth participation, which one of the most critical failures in program design nowadays. Many art-based civic education initiatives operate as isolated, one-time events without structured pathways for continued involvement, mentorship, or sustained civic action. This approach fundamentally undermines their potential for creating meaningful long-term behavioral change and developing lasting civic agency among participants. Besides, the absence of robust follow-up mechanisms means that initial enthusiasm and learning gains often dissipate without opportunities for reinforcement, progressive skill building, or real-world application of newly acquired civic competencies.

Legal and bureaucratic obstacles for public art and street interventions

Art-based civic education programs increasingly recognize the power of public spaces as venues for democratic expression and community engagement. However, street art, public installations, performances, and community events frequently encounter significant legal and



bureaucratic barriers that constrain their implementation and impact.

Thus, permit requirements for public art activities vary widely across jurisdictions and can be prohibitively complex and time-consuming to navigate. Many municipalities require extensive documentation, insurance coverage, and advance notice periods that exceed the capacity of grassroots organizations or youth-led initiatives to manage effectively. The application processes often demand professional expertise in legal compliance and event management that many community-based practitioners lack, creating barriers that favor well-resourced institutions over local grassroots efforts.

Censorship concerns add another layer of complexity, particularly for programs addressing controversial civic topics or operating in politically sensitive contexts. Local authorities may restrict content deemed politically provocative, culturally inappropriate, or potentially disruptive, leading to self-censorship among practitioners who anticipate resistance. This dynamic is especially problematic for civic education programs that aim to develop critical thinking and democratic debate skills, as the threat of content restrictions can undermine the very civic competencies the programs seek to foster.

The rapid removal or prohibition of unauthorized public art creates additional challenges for programs that rely on spontaneity and immediate community response. Street interventions and spontaneous art interventions, which often are powerful tools for civic engagement, face legal consequences that can criminalize participants and discredit educational initiatives. This legal vulnerability particularly affects youth participants, who may face disproportionate consequences for activities intended as civic learning experiences.

These bureaucratic and legal barriers disproportionately impact community-based and youth-led organizations that lack the resources for extensive advance planning, legal consultation, or permit compliance. The result is a systematic exclusion of precisely the voices and perspectives that art-based civic education aims to amplify, creating a contradiction between the democratic ideals of the approach and the practical constraints of its implementation.

Limited opportunities for scaling and sustainability

Above described challenges result in program inconsistency, where the quality and approach of art-based civic education varies dramatically depending on which institution leads the

effort. Educational institution-led programs may be pedagogically sound but artistically weak. Cultural institution programs may be creatively excellent but civically shallow. NGO-led initiatives may be politically relevant but lack artistic sophistication or educational structure. Scaling limitations emerge because successful pilots cannot easily be replicated across different institutional contexts. A program that works well within one organization's structure and culture may fail when attempted by institutions with different capacities, priorities, or constraints.

The sustainability challenge is particularly acute, as programs dependent on one institution's commitment remain vulnerable to leadership changes, budget cuts, or shifting priorities. Without multi-institutional investment, even successful programs can disappear when key champions move on or organizational priorities shift. From the youth perspective, this institutional fragmentation creates a disconnected learning experience where artistic activities, civic knowledge, and democratic participation remain artificially separated.



Quick Reference Card — Chapter 7: Common Challenges



Big Question

? How can we sustain art-based civic education when facing political, institutional, or practical obstacles — without losing creativity, safety, or impact?



Key Ideas

- Practitioners often operate in contested or politically sensitive contexts, where artistic expression can carry personal or collective risks.
- Challenges include safety and political pressure, limited cross-sector collaboration, methodological gaps, legal obstacles, and sustainability issues.
- Art-based civic education depends on a careful balance between freedom of expression and participant safety.
- Cooperation between schools, NGOs, and cultural institutions is often weak – shared goals and language are needed.
- Many programmes struggle with continuity and evaluation, resulting in one-off activities rather than sustained engagement.
- Building capacity, partnerships, and advocacy is essential to make creative civic learning both safe and sustainable.

** Use this card as a recap & action tool at the end of Chapter 7.**



Competencies Developed

- Critical thinking and risk awareness
- Ethical decision-making and safeguarding
- Cross-sector collaboration and communication
- Strategic planning and problem-solving
- Resilience and adaptability in complex contexts



Practical Steps

1. Assess risks before each activity – consider political, digital, and psychological safety.
2. Develop clear safety protocols and ensure all participants understand them.
3. Build alliances between educators, artists, and civic actors for stronger institutional backing.
4. Use creative problem-solving under public-expression limits
5. Document and share learning from challenges — transparency builds trust and resilience.
6. Plan for sustainability: ensure that each project has a follow-up pathway or network of support.



Reflection Prompts

- What political, legal, or social risks exist—and how do I reduce them?
- How do I deepen cooperation among art, education, and civic actors?
- Which small systemic change could make art-based civic education more sustainable in my community.



GLOSSARY



Glossary

Agency – The capacity of individuals, especially young people, to make choices and take action in shaping their lives and communities.

Artivism – The practice of combining artistic expression with activism to promote civic engagement, raise awareness, or inspire social change.

Attitudes – A component of competence referring to values, beliefs, and dispositions that shape how people approach learning, others, and civic life.

Baseline – The initial assessment of participants' knowledge, attitudes, or skills before a programme, used as a reference point for measuring change.

Civic Education – Educational activities aimed at building knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to democratic participation, social responsibility, and active citizenship.

Civic Identity – A person's sense of belonging, responsibility, and role in civic life and community participation.

Co-creation – A collaborative process where youth workers and participants design and implement activities together, ensuring ownership and shared responsibility.

Collective Learning – Learning that happens through group processes, where participants reflect, exchange, and co-create knowledge together.

Competence – A holistic combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes applied effectively in context.

Competence Framework – A structured model outlining the key competences youth workers or participants are expected to develop.

Critical Thinking – The ability to analyse information, question assumptions, and evaluate arguments before forming judgments.

Debriefing – A reflective discussion held after an activity, exercise, or experience to analyse what happened, what participants felt, and what they learned.

Divergent Thinking – The ability to generate multiple ideas, solutions, or perspectives when faced with a challenge, often used in creative and art-based learning.

Empowerment – The process of gaining confidence, skills, and agency to take initiative, make decisions, and influence one's environment or community.

Experiential Learning – A learning approach based on direct experience, reflection, and

application. Often expressed in the cycle: doing – reflecting – learning – applying.

Facilitation – The process of guiding a group through learning or decision-making in a participatory, inclusive, and learner-centred way.

Follow-Up Activities – Actions initiated by participants after a programme or training to apply what they learned in their communities, often serving as a multiplier effect.

Formal Education – Structured education taking place in schools, colleges, or universities, with official curricula, exams, and recognised certification.

Ground Rules (Group Agreement) – A collectively defined set of principles or rules that ensure safety, respect, and inclusion in a learning space.

Holistic Learning – An approach that integrates cognitive (knowledge), emotional (attitudes), and physical (skills/embodiment) aspects of learning.

Human Rights Education (HRE) – Learning that promotes knowledge, skills, and values related to human rights, aiming to foster dignity, equality, and participation.

Icebreakers – Short activities at the start of a programme designed to help participants relax, get to know each other, and begin building trust.

Inclusion – The practice of ensuring equal opportunities for all participants, especially those at risk of exclusion, so that every voice is valued and respected.

Informal Learning – Learning that happens spontaneously in daily life, without structured objectives or facilitation.

Iteration – A process of prototyping, testing, reflecting, and improving, often used in creative and civic project development.

Ladder of Participation – A model (Roger Hart, 1992) that describes different levels of youth participation, from tokenism to youth-led decision-making.

Learner-Centred – An approach that places participants' needs, interests, and experiences at the centre of the learning process.

Method – A specific tool or technique used in non-formal education, such as brainstorming, role play, or debates.

Methodology – The structured approach to learning that guides the choice and combination of methods (e.g., experiential learning, simulation, artistic creation).

Multiplier Effect – The ripple effect when participants transfer learning and initiate follow-up activities in their own communities.



Non-formal Education (NFE) – Organised learning outside formal institutions, voluntary, learner-centred, and holistic, focusing on competences (knowledge, skills, attitudes).

Ownership – A sense of responsibility and authorship participants feel when they have an active role in shaping activities and outcomes.

Participation – The active involvement of young people in decision-making, learning, and civic life, ranging from consultation to full youth-led initiatives.

Peer Learning – Learning that occurs when participants exchange knowledge, experiences, and support directly with each other.

Reflection – A structured moment for learners to analyse their experiences, emotions, and insights, and to connect them with broader learning or future actions.

Safe Space – A learning environment where participants feel respected, included, and free to express themselves without fear of judgment or harm.

Self-Assessment – A process where participants reflect on and evaluate their own learning and progress, instead of relying on external grading.

Simulation Game – A methodology where participants act as themselves in a scenario requiring decisions or problem-solving, to explore behaviours and social dynamics.

Somatic Awareness – The ability to notice and connect with bodily sensations, often used in creative and embodied learning.

Storytelling – The practice of using narrative, metaphor, and personal or collective stories to communicate meaning and foster learning.

Systems Thinking – An approach that looks at how different elements of a social, cultural, or political issue are interconnected, rather than analysing them in isolation.

Team Building – Activities designed to strengthen collaboration, trust, and cohesion within a group.

Transfer of Learning – The process of applying insights, skills, and attitudes gained in a learning activity to real-life situations and contexts.

Voluntary Participation – The principle that learners choose freely to take part in non-formal education, ensuring motivation and ownership.

YOCOMO – A competence model developed within the European Training Strategy that supports youth workers in structuring and reflecting on their professional learning processes.



CIVICART CONSORTIUM



Regional Charity Foundation Resonance

Resonance Foundation is a non-governmental, non-profit organization working at local, national, and international levels to develop civic initiatives, primarily targeting young people.

Resonance's main expertise relates to education for democracy and cross-sectoral initiatives for youth professional development, as well as the development of national and international alliances for knowledge and skill exchange in the field of youth work.

Resonance's projects address young people (14-30 years old), youth workers, NGOs, educational, governmental and self-governmental bodies, local communities, and businesses.

Since the organisation was established in 2003, it has initiated and partnered in more than 50 national and international projects, including youth exchanges, training programs, monitoring and advocacy campaigns, initiatives on youth policy development, organising local, national and international events.

Experience and Expertise

Resonance Foundation has been a partner in several Erasmus+ projects (KA1) on education for democracy and coordinated an Erasmus+ (KA2) project focused on youth entrepreneurship, media, and communication, both targeting young people from across Europe.

The organisation contributed to the establishment of over 30 cross-sectoral consortiums supporting youth initiatives in 14 regions of Ukraine, engaging youth workers, NGOs, local self-government, and schools.

To ensure sustainable impact, Resonance works closely with policymakers and key stakeholders shaping youth policy in Ukraine, including regional Departments of Education, members of Parliament, and youth NGOs.

Gergart

Founded in 2015 in the Kazbegi mountain region of Georgia, Gergart is a community development center supporting youth initiatives and encouraging active participation in municipal life

The mission of Gergart is to support the development of the regions of Georgia, especially Kazbegi municipality, by strengthening youth through non-formal education methods and innovative, creative approaches.

The main spheres of work encompass supporting and encouraging youth development, popularising non-formal education methods, and promoting and developing a culture of volunteering. Additionally, Gergart focuses on supporting the creation of a tolerant environment, promoting a healthy lifestyle, and fostering the concept of social entrepreneurship.

The organisation prioritises supporting the active involvement of vulnerable groups in social life, facilitating public participation processes, and stimulating and promoting environmental activities. Organisation's efforts extend to studying ecological problems and collaboratively working on implementing sustainable solutions to address them.

Experience and Expertise

As an organisation, Gergart is experienced in youth work. Gergart's team, and especially those involved in this project, has worked with different youth groups, including NEET youth from regions and youth with disabilities, and ensuring diversity of beneficiaries in every project/ activity is one of the main principles of our work.

Gergart has used art as a tool addressing different topics in various projects. Art (movie making, photography, blogging) as a methodology was used national and international projects.

KulturNest e.V.

KulturNest e.V. is a Berlin-based multidisciplinary organization of activists, social educators, artists, and trainers, officially founded in 2022. It focuses on innovative artistic and cultural practices to drive societal change

The association was officially founded in 2022 and started offering educational activities to diverse target groups, focusing particularly on innovative artistic and cultural practices. Among others, members of the association offer sensory labyrinth theatre for adults and children, applied improvisation for organized groups, forest walks for creatives, visual chats with individuals and groups of international communities in Lichtenberg, and more.

Their team has experience in planning and implementing international projects, developing creative and educational workshops, training courses in youth and adult education, non-formal education in schools and youth centres, and activities in art spaces and institutions.

Experience and Expertise

The association's experience explicitly brings visual communication and understanding of high-quality design to a field. It also has a well-developed network of Berlin-based organisations working with refugees and experience implementing forest walks in urban environments. Despite being a newcomer in capacity-building programs as a legal entity, KulturNest possesses great human resources.

The participation of KulturNest's team in the CivicArt project is crucial due to its diverse expertise and innovative approach to societal change through art and education. Furthermore, KulturNest brings a broad network among artists and social educators, which can also serve as a valuable resource for identifying and engaging with diverse artistic talents who can contribute to the project's objectives.

Association International Initiatives for Cooperation Letur (IICL)

Since 2016, IICL has been organizing various activities for the local community in collaboration with youth groups and local councils, both in Letur and neighboring areas like Sierra del Segura. It actively participates in the Letur Citizen Forum, where it helps organize events and projects related to social and environmental issues, and also has a say in local politics.

In addition to these efforts, IICL focuses on promoting culture and civic education. It helps young people from different backgrounds participate in exchange programs like Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps, fostering a greater understanding of different cultures and civic responsibility.

This includes ensuring that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in the municipality and surrounding region have equal access to these opportunities.

Experience and Expertise

Alongside these international programs, IICL also arranges local cultural events, workshops, and educational activities. By addressing the cultural and educational needs of the region, especially in areas where such activities are lacking, IICL contributes to building a stronger, more inclusive community.

Through its work in promoting culture and civic education, IICL aims to empower young people in Sierra del Segura de Albacete to become active and informed citizens, capable of making positive contributions to their communities and society.



RESONANCE
REGIONAL CHARITY FOUNDATION

Gergart



KULTUR
NEST e.V.

